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Accommodating demographic differences in managerial face-to-face conversations in Australian workplaces

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Faculty of Business

**Accommodating demographic differences in managerial
face-to-face conversations in Australian workplaces**

Ann Maree Rogerson

MMgmt (Dist)

**"This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the
award of the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration
of the
University of Wollongong"**

March 2015

ABSTRACT

Communication between individuals is influenced by the range and extent of perceived and actual differences that exist between interactants. Differences need to be accommodated in order to achieve effective communication outcomes and limit the influence of subjective biases and stereotypes. This study uses communication accommodation theory (CAT) to examine whether perceived demographic differences between interactants affect the outcome of face-to-face workplace conversations initiated by Australian managers and whether linguistic tactics are used to accommodate differences. One premise associated with CAT is that people modify their communication transmissions to highlight, reduce, or reinforce the differences between themselves and a message recipient during an interpersonal interaction.

Using an online survey, managers operating in a range of Australian organisations were asked to reflect on two workplace conversations initiated in the previous six months. The first conversation was with a subordinate, i.e. a 'downwards' interaction; the second conversation was with a superior, i.e. an 'upwards' conversation. Responses were received from 397 managers based in Australia. Demographic information was collected about each responding manager, as well as the managers' perceptions of the demographic attributes of the other person participating in each conversation. This data was used to determine where demographic differences and similarities existed between each set of interactants. Attributes examined included gender, age, organisational tenure (or the length of time working for the organisation), the length of time the manager had held their position, the length of working relationship between the interactants, each persons' level of education, their country of birth, and whether interactants use English language at home. Managers rated the perceived effectiveness of each conversation, identified whether or not specific linguistic tactics were used during the conversation and indicated whether they planned to alter their approach to future interactions with that person.

The number of demographic differences between the interactants was established and then analysed against the reported outcomes and future intents through regression, ANOVAs, and chi-square tests.

Only 5 upwards conversations (0.6 percent) of the total 794 conversations were between people who were perceived to be demographically similar to each other across all the demographic categories examined in the study. The association between position tenure, effective outcomes and the use of linguistic tactics was found to have the highest level of significance across both conversations in comparison to other demographic categories. More linguistic tactics were used in conversations with subordinates as compared to superiors. The relationship between gender and outcomes was only evident in conversations with superiors, however gender was associated with the use of specific linguistic tactics in conversations with subordinates. Age had the strongest association between the use of linguistic tactics and effective outcomes in both conversations. Other statistically significant relationships were found between the use of English and the effectiveness of conversations. The strongest relationship for non-effective outcomes occurred where interactants did not share the same first language background, whether or not it was English, highlighting difficulties in accommodating language-based differences for managers in multi-lingual workforces.

After reflecting on the outcome of the workplace conversations, managers were asked to specify whether they intended to alter aspects of future interactions with the subordinate or superior. Results indicated that some managers would alter their future conversations regardless of an effective or ineffective outcome, whereas others who reported a non-effective outcome would nevertheless not change the way they approach face-to-face conversations with the other person. Managers who considered adjusting or refining their approach in future interactions seek to improve the effectiveness of outcomes by increasing the use of accommodative communication practices. This finding held for both upward and downward conversations.

The implications of these results for managerial conversations in Australia's increasingly diverse workplaces are discussed.

Work contributing to this thesis has been presented at the following conferences:

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Ann Rogerson
March 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	x
1. Introduction.....	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Australian workforces in context.....	3
1.2 The research area	9
1.3 Significance of this research area	10
1.4 Gaps in the literature	13
1.5 Thesis aims.....	13
1.6 Uniqueness of this study.....	13
1.7 Structure of the thesis.....	14
1.8 Chapter summary	15
2. Literature Review	16
2.0 Introduction	16
2.1 Literature theme areas.....	16
2.2 Managers' face-to-face workplace conversations	17
2.3 Actual and perceived individual demographic differences in organisations	26
2.4 Accommodation of demographic differences using CAT	41
2.5 Gaps identified in the literature	51
2.6 Research questions	53
2.7 Chapter summary	53
3. Research Design and Methodology	55
3.0 Introduction	55
3.1 Identifying the research paradigm	55
3.2 Study design	56
3.3 Method	62
3.4 Determining the sample size	71
3.5 Ethical considerations.....	73
3.6 Study validity, reliability and evaluation of design	73
3.7 Evaluating strengths in the study design and method	76
3.8 Chapter summary	77
4. Data Analysis and Results	78
4.0 Introduction	78
4.1 Finalising the sample data	78
4.2 Data preparation	79

4.3	Revised sample population	82
4.4	Simplification of complex terms	82
4.5	Demographic characteristics of the sample	83
4.6	Calculating differences and similarities in the sample	88
4.7	Differences and similarities in demographic variables	89
4.8	Research question 1 (RQ1)	90
4.9	Research question 2 (RQ2)	117
4.10	Research question 3 (RQ3)	124
4.11	Research question 4 (RQ4)	127
4.12	Research question 5 (RQ5)	135
4.13	Chapter summary	138
5.	Discussion.....	139
5.0	Introduction.....	139
5.1	Research Question 1 (RQ1).....	140
5.2	Research Question 2 (RQ2).....	151
5.3	Research Question 3 (RQ3).....	154
5.4	Research Question 4 (RQ4).....	155
5.5	Research question 5 (RQ5)	160
5.6	Chapter summary.....	163
6.	Conclusion.....	164
6.0	Introduction.....	164
6.1	Theoretical implications of findings	164
6.2	Implications for professional practice	167
6.3	Limitations of the study.....	168
6.4	Future research recommendations	173
6.5	Contributions to theory and knowledge.....	178
6.6	Final notes	178
7.	REFERENCES	181
	Appendix A Study Questionnaire	201

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Employment to population ratio* 1971 – 2011 in Australia, by age and gender	4
Figure 1.2 Recent arrivals and Australian-born by age group and gender	6
Figure 1.3 Highest level of non-high school education achieved by employment category	8
Figure 1.4 Duration with employer/business by occupation in Australia	9
Figure 2.1 Literature review theme areas	16
Figure 2.2 Model of communication accommodation theory (CAT)	44
Figure 3.1 Intervening process explanation (after Lawrence 1997:3)	57
Figure 3.2 Screening questions	63
Figure 3.3 Survey questions relating to aspects of each conversation	65
Figure 3.4 Survey question 5	65
Figure 3.5 Survey question 6	66
Figure 3.6 Survey question 14	66
Figure 3.7 Survey question 9	68
Figure 6.1 Model of CAT with time factors	174

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Top 10 countries of origin: Immigrants to Australia	5
Table 3.1 Respondent age classifications	67
Table 3.2 Respondent age classifications	71
Table 3.3 Age and gender respondent categories	72
Table 4.1 Final sample	82
Table 4.2 Gender frequencies	83
Table 4.3 Age frequencies	84
Table 4.4 Organisational tenure frequencies	84
Table 4.5 Position tenure frequencies	85
Table 4.6 Relationship tenure (RT) frequencies	85
Table 4.7 Frequencies of highest level of education	86
Table 4.8 Frequencies for country of birth	86
Table 4.9 Frequencies for the use of English at home	87
Table 4.10 Number of demographic differences between interactants	88
Table 4.11 Similarities and differences in demographic variables	89
Table 4.12 Differences in demographic variables where there were 3 or 4 total differences	90
Table 4.13 Original and revised outcome variable codes	91
Table 4.14 Effect of gender differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness	94
Table 4.15 Effect of age differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness	97
Table 4.16 Effect of organisational tenure differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness	100
Table 4.17 Effect of position tenure differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness	104

Table 4.18 Effect of education differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness.....	108
Table 4.19 Effect of country of birth differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness	111
Table 4.20 Effect of use of differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness.....	113
Table 4.21 Significant results for RQ1	115
Table 4.22 Summary of significant directional results for RQ1	116
Table 4.23 Frequencies of linguistic tactics used in effective conversations.....	118
Table 4.24 Frequencies of linguistic tactic use in effective conversations where there were demographic differences	120
Table 4.25 Frequencies of linguistic tactic use in effective conversations by demographic category.....	122
Table 4.26 Frequencies of linguistic tactics used in conversations	125
Table 4.27 Results for the Tukey tests on the use of linguistic tactics in conversations	126
Table 4.28 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of a change in tone in effective conversations with demographic differences	129
Table 4.29 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of a change in pace in effective conversations with demographic differences	132
Table 4.30 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of changed words in effective conversations with demographic differences	132
Table 4.31 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of repeated words in effective conversations with demographic differences	134
Table 4.32 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of used simpler words in effective conversations with demographic differences	134
Table 4.33 Association between conversation outcomes and intent to alter future conversations	137

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Frequently used terms and acronyms used in this thesis are provided in the following table.

Term	Explanation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
C1	Conversation 1 downwards with a subordinate
C2	Conversation 2 upwards with a supervisor
Case number	Label and number applied to each data row of respondent data
CAT	Communication accommodation theory
ENL	English as a native language
ESL	English as a second language
IELTS	International English Language Testing Service
NESB	Non-English speaking background
OT	Organisational tenure: the length of time someone has worked for their employer
PT	Position tenure: the length of time someone has held their position
RT	Relationship tenure: the length of time someone has worked with the other person in the conversation
TAFE	Technical and Further Education colleges
VET	Vocational Education and Training

1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This thesis examines the accommodation of perceived demographic differences in face-to-face workplace conversations initiated by managers in Australia. Face-to-face conversations have a relational dimension (Locher 2010), as message sender and receiver relationships are defined and maintained through verbal, non-verbal and physical cues (Walther, Loh & Granka 2005). Cues can influence perceptions of the other person involved in the interaction (Madlock 2008; Spitzberg 1983) based on the conscious and/or unconscious decisions of individuals (Hoogervorst, Flier & Koopman 2004). In addition, demographic attributes such as gender, age, ethnicity, level of education, and the language a person uses at home have been shown to affect workplace communication relationships, processes, and results (Pelled, Ledford & Mohrman 1999). When framed within organisational contexts, Lawrence (1997:2) notes how functional roles and time working for an organisation add another “class of variables” influencing workplace conversations.

Increasing workforce diversity requires an understanding of how individual differences affect employees and their interactions in workplaces (Harrison, Price & Bell 1998) as individuals may identify themselves with one or more diversity categories (Willemyns, Callan & Gallois 2007). Diversity concepts extend beyond traditional categorisations of gender and ethnicity (Lindorff 2010) to include age, first language usage and employment tenure (Goldberg, Riordan & Zhang 2008) and other forms of diversity such as disability (Williams-Whitt & Taras 2008), religious affiliation (Manshor, Jusoh & Simun 2003), family status (Ng, He & Loong 2004), and sexual orientation (Hajek 2015). While elements of diversity have “invisible and hidden aspects” which are not always obvious or observable (Burgess, French & Strachan 2009:78), demographic diversity differences are more evident in face-to-face conversations due to the presence of auditory as well as visual cues (Dohen, Schwartz & Bailly 2010).

Interpersonal interactions are influenced by the differences between the perceived attributes of others compared to our own attributes (Syed & Kramar 2009) and the relational context where and how the interaction occurs (Gasiorek, Giles & Soliz 2015). These aspects establish the

sociohistorical context of an interaction, where differences requiring accommodation are identified (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005). Accommodation of actual or perceived dissimilarities limits the influence of individual subjective biases (Canary & Spitzberg 1990) or stereotypes (Hewstone & Giles 1997) on communication processes. Further, accommodation of perceived or actual differences improves the chance of achieving a conversation's intended outcome (Watson & Gallois 1998).

Individuals need to learn how to communicate effectively within diverse workforces where differences exist (Sadri & Tran 2002). At a strategic level, managing a workforce with varying sociohistorical backgrounds presents challenges for managers in conducting interpersonal communication events such as face-to-face conversations (Jones et al. 2004). Australia has one of the most culturally diverse workforces in the world due to migration (Leveson, Joiner & Bakalis 2009). This fact, coupled with Australian government regulations and policies promoting diversity and inclusivity in workplaces, make Australia an appropriate location to examine how differences between individuals and their demographic attributes influence interpersonal interactions.

This first chapter provides background on the research topic and why it requires investigation. The first section in chapter 1 discusses the range of diversity in workforces as it relates to gender, age, culture, language, education and tenure within the Australian working population. The second section identifies the research area. Section three outlines the importance of managerial communication, and accommodation in communication interactions. The fourth section notes the gaps in the literature followed by the aims of this thesis. The next section outlines the uniqueness of this study. These sections are followed by an overview of the thesis structure and a summary of chapter 1.

The next section provides a high level overview on Australian workforces.

1.1 Australian workforces in context

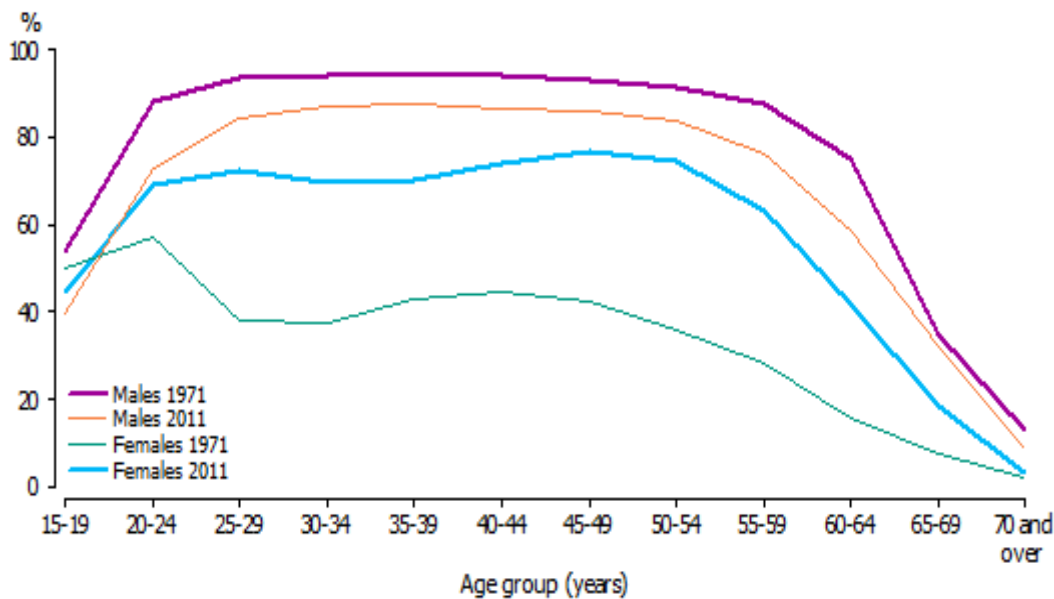
The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) classifies permanent and temporary residents aged between 15 and 64 years working at least one hour per week as members of the Australian workforce (ABS 2014c). The younger age limit of 15 years is based on the national minimum age for leaving high school. The upper age classification of 64 years is based on the former compulsory retirement age of the Australian Public Service - a provision removed in 1999 (ABS 2015b). The ceiling classification of active workforce participants is yet to be revised, despite ABS data reflecting an increasing number of people aged over 64 years who are workforce participants (ABS 2013d). The total Australian population reached 23.5 million people in June 2014 (ABS 2014a) with 11.67 million or almost half of the population reported as employed persons (ABS 2015b). Employed persons figures include full-time, part-time and casual workers, in addition to people who work on an unpaid basis in a family business or on a farm. Employed persons figures exclude members of the Australian Army, Navy and Air Force (ABS 2015b).

1.1.1 Gender issues in the Australian workforce

The 20th century post World War II Australian workplace primarily employed males full time (35-40 hours per week). At the time, males accounted for 70% of the total workforce (ABS 2015b). The lower female participation rate during this period resulted from women only remaining in paid labour until they married (Evans & Kelley 2008). The workforce male/female split altered in the 1970s when equal opportunity employment legislation was introduced “to protect against direct and indirect discrimination for groups such as women” (Burgess, French & Strachan 2009:77). At the end of June 2014, females comprised 45.9% of the total workforce (Australian Government 2014) with the only evident dip in female participation rates occurring during child-bearing years (ABS 2014b). Females continue to hold a lower number of managerial positions compared to men in Australian workplaces (ABS 2015a).

The increasing presence of females in Australian workplaces, together with a greater number of older workers remaining in employment is indicated in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Employment to population ratio* 1971 – 2011 in Australia, by age and gender



*Employed persons as a percentage of population

Source: 2071.0 - Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013 Where and how do Australia's older people live? (ABS 2013d).

Figure 1.1 shows the variations in age and gender in the workforce between 1971 and 2011 using data sourced from the Australian Census. The Census gathers survey information on individuals every five years under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, requiring every person present in Australia on census night to have their demographic data recorded. Therefore the figures presented in Figure 1.1 depicting age and gender related demographic population data are based on actual rather than projected population numbers.

1.1.2 Age issues in the Australian workforce

Actions to encourage older workers to remain employed beyond 64 years of age are a continuing focus in Australia. Government taxation provisions and legislative policies aim to reduce reliance on social security systems in retirement years, and address skill and labour shortages (Shacklock, Fulop & Hort 2007). Examples include the *Mature age worker tax offset* (MAWTO) provision tax incentive (ATO 2014), and the *Age Discrimination Act 2004 as amended* (Attorney-General Australia 2004) and subsequent amendments in the *Sex and Age Discrimination Legislation Amendment Act 2011* (Attorney-General Australia 2011). The tax offset and Acts were established in part to “remove barriers to work for older people and to

encourage them to stay in the workforce longer or re-enter the workforce” (ABS 2013d). However, Sloan (2011) reports that Australia performs better in involving younger people than older people in workplaces. The impact of older employees combining with new and younger entrants is that organisational workforces are increasingly multigenerational (Caldwell et al. 2009; Hewlett, Sherbin & Sumberg 2009).

1.1.3 Culture and language diversity in Australian workforces

A diversity of cultural backgrounds and languages exists in modern Australian workplaces. The 2006 and 2011 Australian Censuses note how cultural organisational diversity results from birth rates and immigration patterns reflecting the overall changing composition of Australian society (ABS 2009a; ABS 2012). Table 1.1 outlines the top ten countries of origin of migrants to Australia as identified in the 2011 Census.

Table 1.1 Top 10 countries of origin: Immigrants to Australia

Country of birth	Persons ('000)	Proportion of all overseas-born %	Median age (years)
United Kingdom	1 101.1	20.8	54
New Zealand	483.4	9.1	40
China (a)	319.0	6.0	35
India	295.4	5.6	31
Italy	185.4	3.5	68
Vietnam	185.0	3.5	43
Philippines	171.2	3.2	39
South Africa	145.7	2.8	39
Malaysia	116.2	2.2	39
Germany	108.0	2.0	62
Born elsewhere overseas	2 183.8	41.2	44
Total overseas-born	5 294.2	100	45

(a) Excludes Special Administrative Regions and Taiwan Province

Source:

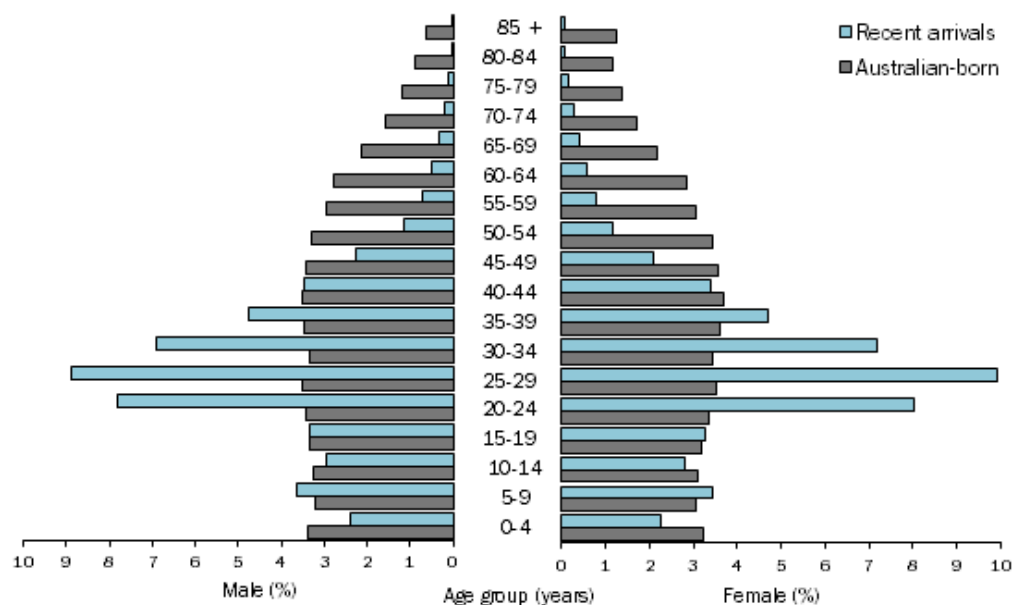
2071.0 Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013: Cultural Diversity in Australia (ABS 2012).

The 2010 *Intergenerational Report* (Australian Treasury 2010) forecasted how the Australian population will continue to grow through migration rather than birth rates. Betts (2010) challenges some of the Australian Treasury’s population forecasts as the Treasury figures were projected from a base which included over one million temporary residents. Categories of temporary Australian residents included New Zealand nationals (who are free from Australian immigration restrictions), international workers sponsored by Australian organisations, and

international students (Betts 2010:51). Betts is also critical of the reported numbers as the Australian Government controls immigration, and can therefore increase or limit migration in order to meet projections or political agendas. However Betts agrees with the 2010 Intergenerational Report that migrant population growth will exceed birth rate growth affecting the mix of cultural and first language backgrounds of people in Australian workplaces.

The ABS collects and routinely analyses migration data. ABS data provides a high level overview of the cultural composition of the Australian population at the time of the Census, as well as collecting country of origin data in the census. The census data displayed in Figure 1.2 shows a depiction of the Australian population by age and origin at the time of the 2011 Census.

Figure 1.2 Recent arrivals and Australian-born by age group and gender



Source:
2071.0 Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013: Cultural Diversity in Australia (ABS 2012)

The majority of first generation Australians shown in Figure 1.2 are aged between 20 and 40 years. Recent arrivals in Australia aged between 20 and 34 years outnumber people of a similar age born in Australia by more than two to one. This group of recent arrivals has the “highest proportion of people who spoke a language other than English at home” (ABS 2012). Syed and Murray (2009:427) state that the scale of, implications for, and impact on language

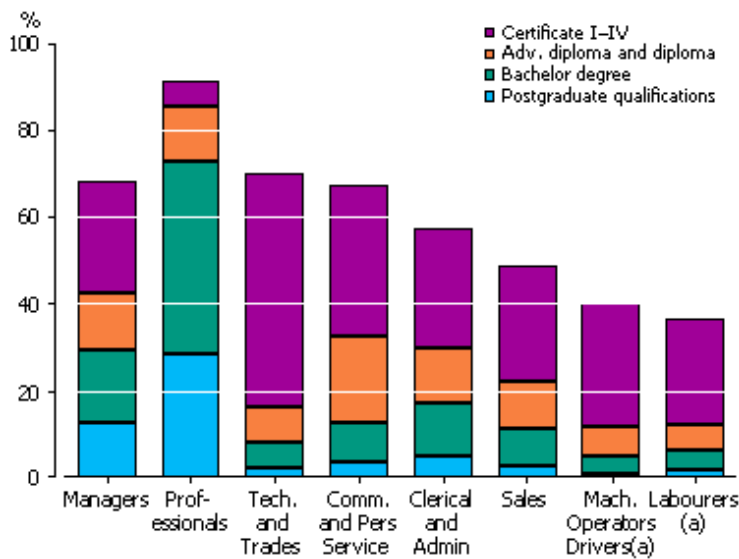
and cultural diversity on workplace communication are not recognised by many Australian organisations, describing the effect as the “English language deficit”.

Despite the communication difficulties identified in workforces where different language and cultural backgrounds exist (Lauring & Selmer 2013), diverse employee groups have the potential to deliver organisational benefits (Stevens, Plaut & Sanchez-Burks 2008). One benefit is the delivery of better services or products due to diverse workforces reflecting the composition of the local society (McMurray, Karim & Fisher 2010). A further benefit is the potential to develop new export opportunities as a form of competitive advantage as recent arrivals have active links back to their country of origin (Chavan 2005). Leveson, Joiner and Bakalis (2009:378) note how Australian government diversity policies seek to “capitalize on the linguistic and cultural skills, knowledge of overseas markets and business experience of people raised overseas”. Benefits extend to organisations already operating in Australia, and cause others expanding their presence or operations in Australia to be “internationally integrative and locally responsive” (Fan, Zhu & Nyland 2012:1).

1.1.4 Diversity in levels of education in Australian workforces

The ABS reports on diversity resulting from differing levels of education within the population (ABS 2009a; ABS 2010). Differences in the highest level of education achieved affect levels of employee comprehension and communication competence (Karmel 2011). Australia has shifted the focus of education beyond high school from vocational education and training (VET) to one that encourages the completion of higher education qualifications from universities (Birrell & Edwards 2009). A government report specifically commissioned to review higher education in Australia, known as the Bradley review, concluded that the Australian economy was transitioning towards favouring workers with higher education qualifications (Bradley et al. 2008) with employers expecting university graduates to come to Australian workplaces with better interpersonal and communication skills (Lindsay & Edge 2014). The ABS figures shown in Figure 1.3 indicate that after professionals, managers hold the largest number of bachelor level degree qualifications compared to other employment categories (ABS 2010).

Figure 1.3 Highest level of non-high school education achieved by employment category



Source:
4102.0 – Australian social trends. Australia's workers: Education and workplace training (ABS 2010)

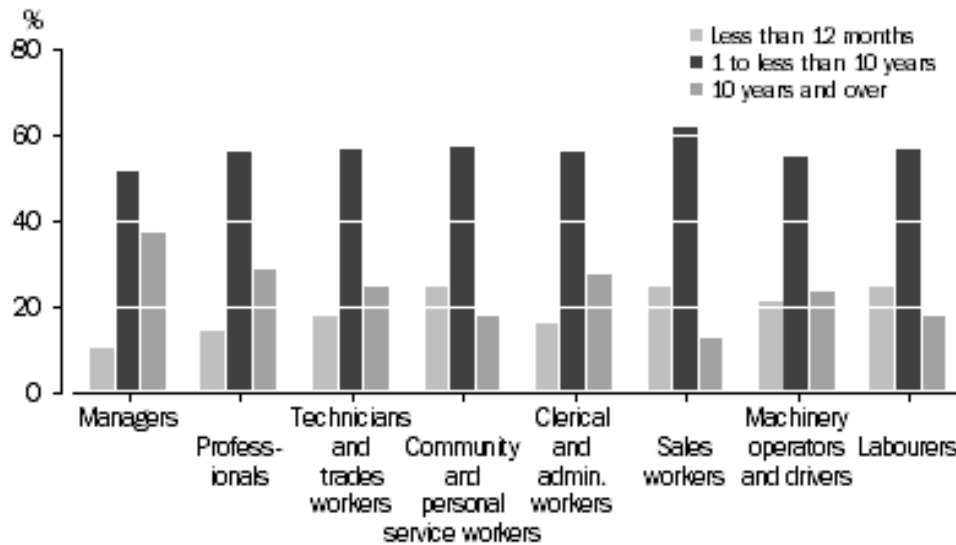
1.1.5 Diversity in organisational tenure in Australian workforces

The ABS also reports on diversity resulting from differing lengths of organisational tenure, or time spent working with an employer (ABS 2015b; ABS 2013b). Differences in organisational tenure affect the level of communication new employees have with other workers (Rollag 2004) and the use of constructive voice, where employees make their opinions and views known to others, including supervisors (Feldman & Ng 2013). The ABS report on workforce mobility provides data on the length of time employees remain with an employer (ABS 2013c). For the period to February 2013, 2.1 million people had worked with their employer for less than one year (ABS 2013c).

Reported differences in organisational tenure for workers in Australia are depicted in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4 shows that managers as an occupational group had the highest length of average tenure with their current employer at 10 years or over (ABS 2013c). This indicates that managers are the most stable occupational group in Australia. This makes them a particularly suitable group with which to study the accommodation of demographic differences in Australian workplaces.

Figure 1.4 Duration with employer/business by occupation in Australia



Source:

6209.0 - Labour Mobility, Australia, February 2013 (ABS 2013c)

1.1.6 Summary of Australian workforces in context

A consequence of changing workforce participation rates and immigration patterns in Australia is a broadening range of employee demographic attributes evident in Australian workplaces. This has created a situation where single or multiple demographic differences are likely to exist between interactants. Individual attitudes to specific demographic attributes such as ageism, sexism, or negative feelings towards cultural and ethnic differences have been found to inform and influence the effectiveness and outcomes of interactions when individuals are grouped together by category (Hubbert, Gudykunst & Guerrero 1999) including at work (Bryan 2002; Grice et al. 2006). Therefore, in order to achieve effective communication outcomes some form of accommodation needs to occur during interpersonal interactions where multiple demographic group memberships and differences are evident.

1.2 The research area

This thesis builds on research focussed on key areas of managerial workplace communication. This includes identifying areas of demographic differences and similarities exist between interactants in Australian workplaces; how these differences are accommodated by managers; and whether effective outcomes are achieved when some form of accommodation is used.

The next section provides an overview of the significance of this research area.

1.3 Significance of this research area

This section expands on the significance of the research areas relating managerial workplace communication, managing workplace diversity and accommodation in interpersonal communication interactions.

1.3.1 Importance of managerial communication

Communication is identified as a key aspect of managerial work (Hales 1999) requiring the manager to communicate with their employees “consistently and effectively” (Mackenzie 2010:536). Managers are members of communication networks (Fulk & Boyd 1991) which may be formal, following organisational structural lines (Downs & Adrian 2004) or customer bases (Johlke & Duhan 2000), or informal, following social ties (Esposito & Garing 2012), or both. Workplace communication occurs between individuals at an interpersonal (dyadic) or intergroup level (Willemyns, Callan & Gallois 2007). Intergroup communication considers relationships within and between groups from a social or societal perspective (Gallois & Giles 1998), whereas interpersonal communication focusses more on the process of conducting and interaction (Bambacas & Patrickson 2008). However interpersonal workplace communication is more than an act of transmission: it involves the construction and negotiation of meaning (Jian, Schmisser & Fairhurst 2008) and generation of understanding (Hoon 2007).

1.3.2 Managerial communication and managing workforce diversity

Managers as communicators can highlight differences and similarities between themselves and others, or accommodate the variances to benefit the individual in the first instance, and the organisation overall (Tsui, Porter & Egan 2002; Zhang et al. 2008). Recognising demographic differences and similarities between managers and direct reports can be critical to organisational success (Parker & Fischhoff 2005; Twenge & Campbell 2008), but can contribute to lost productivity if differences are not valued and supported (Little & Little 2006; Richard 2000). Negative impacts of diverse workforces where diversity is not supported or valued include high employee turnover (Ando & Kobayashi 2008), claims of stress, discrimination and

harassment (Burgess, French & Strachan 2009), and increased levels of conflict (Ismail, Richard & Taylor 2012).

Few researchers have sought to identify the impact of a range of individual demographic differences and similarities on actual workplace communication events (Grice et al. 2006; Jones et al. 2004). Where individual demographic differences are not understood, perceptions and biases may influence outcomes (Roberson, Galvin & Charles 2007). Misunderstandings generated because of individual differences are shown to create other intra-organisational issues such as conflict (Ando & Kobayashi 2008) and discrimination (Cruickshank 2007). Where differences are not effectively accommodated, managers may have to address concerns caused by each communication process, rather than focussing on employee development (Yates 2006). As a result, managerial efforts may need to “right the wrongs” generated by conflict and misunderstanding (Andiappan & Trevino 2011).

Syed and Kramar (2006:110) state that in Australia, both government and businesses “remain incapable of integrating multilevel perspectives of managing workforce diversity”. This is in spite of Australia’s myriad of “binding regulations that address diversity, discrimination and equity issues in the workplace” and that prescribe penalties where legislative requirements are ignored, avoided or breached (Burgess, French & Strachan 2009:79). A more effective use of managerial time would be to focus on other workplace requirements with greater long-term benefits for employees and the organisation, such as performance feedback (Sparr & Sonnentag 2008), employee development (Westerman & Yamamura 2007), and coaching (Longenecker 2010).

1.3.3 Accommodating differences as a communication skill

Interpersonal communication skills are important for people holding positions with employee management responsibilities (Bambacas & Patrickson 2008). Interpersonal communication skills are ‘soft’ or ‘people based’ skills in comparison to ‘hard’, knowledge based or technical skills (Andrews & Higson 2008). Soft skills include the ability to speak with others using appropriate words and terminology to achieve understanding on a daily basis (Hynes 2012) which is essential to accommodating perceived or actual differences between individuals.

Robles (2012) found that executives cited interpersonal communication as the second most important soft skill for managers to have after integrity, while the OECD's report into adult skills across 22 countries, states that interpersonal communication skills remain an essential attribute for 21st century workers (OECD 2013). Graduates require soft skills to manage "issues related to cross-cultural, gender, generational and status group communication" to work successfully in Australian organisations (Crossling & Ward 2002:56). Australian workplaces are characterised by "more complex worker activities, requiring more intricate worker interrelationships" (Esposto & Garing 2012:356). This applies to current managers as well as graduates entering the workforce (Gray 2010).

1.3.4 Examining accommodation in communication interactions

While interpersonal workplace communication is seen as a critical soft skill, the phenomenon still remains largely unexplored (DeKay 2012). Communication accommodation theory (CAT) provides a framework to examine how individuals adjust their communication to achieve certain outcomes while considering the consequences of motivations and actions within an interaction from both an interpersonal and intergroup context (Giles & Ogay 2007). Accommodation can be influenced by the sociohistorical context of the interaction which includes the inherent demographic factors associated with interactants (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005), and in an organisational setting, the position each individual holds (Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2003).

Where differences are perceived between interactants individuals have the option to either accommodate perceived or actual differences to achieve an effective outcome, or not accommodate in order to emphasise a difference in status or group membership (Jones et al. 1999). Salient group memberships can alter dependent upon the context of the interaction. In the case of managers they can be both a superior when conversing with a subordinate, then be required to adapt to the role of subordinate when interacting with their own superior.

While the importance of effective workplace communication as a managerial skill it is acknowledged there is a lack of understanding of how managers accommodate demographic differences in diverse workforces. This view is reinforced by the gaps identified in the literature which are highlighted next.

1.4 Gaps in the literature

The following gaps have been identified in the review of literature. First, there is an apparent lack of multiple demographic studies in relation to face-to-face workplace conversations and conversation effectiveness considering individual demographic differences. Second, there is limited analysis of managerial face-to-face workplace conversations in more than one direction within the same study; and third there are few CAT based studies where accommodation is examined across a range of demographic factors. A recent meta-analysis of studies using CAT shows individual differences are not commonly investigated. Typically intergroup perspectives predominate (Soliz & Giles 2014).

These factors led to articulating the aims of this thesis which are outlined in the next section.

1.5 Thesis aims

This thesis examines relationships between demographic differences and similarities and face-to-face conversation effectiveness where the interaction with a subordinate or a superior is initiated by a manager in an Australian workplace. It also examines whether linguistic strategies are used to accommodate perceived demographic differences, and whether managers use the outcomes of previous conversations to decide if they will change their approach to future conversations.

Face-to-face conversations were selected as the communication channel for this study, as they provide the best opportunity to gather clues or perceptions about certain demographic attributes. Managers were selected as an occupational group due to their stability in tenure (compared to other occupational categories) and their role in communicating up and down in organisations. By examining managerial dyadic interactions using a range of demographic variables, a broader understanding of the influence of real and perceived demographic differences on managerial face-to-face conversations in Australian workplaces can be achieved.

1.6 Uniqueness of this study

This study makes a unique contribution to theory and practice in a number of areas. Firstly, it considers differences between individuals and the impact on conversational effectiveness from several aspects of workplace diversity within the same design. Further, it explores upwards and

downwards communication considering multiple communication tactics, dual roles, and both effective and ineffective outcomes. The study also examines the association between accommodation and the number and type of demographic differences that are perceived to exist between interactants without limiting the study to a particular industry, level of experience, age group or gender.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 identified the significance of the research topic, recognising the increasing level of diversity in Australian workforces and the challenges for managers in adapting face-to-face conversations to effectively communicate with demographically dissimilar employee groups. The following chapter, Chapter 2, reviews literature relevant to the intersection of managerial workplace communication, organisational demography, and use of accommodation in workplace communication. The gaps in the literature which led to the research questions are identified, followed by the research questions for the study.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach for the study based on the paradigm of positivism. The framework and method used to collect the data is explained and justified. Decisions regarding the sample size and survey design are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the data and analysis from the sample of 397 workplace managers and the data related to their two face-to-face conversations – one initiated with a subordinate and one initiated with a superior. Demographic differences and similarities are identified before being analysed against conversation effectiveness, the number and type of linguistic tactics used in conversations and how managers intend to approach future interactions.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the quantitative analysis integrating the findings from the research questions and relevant literature.

Finally, Chapter 6 presents the conclusions, discusses the limitations of the study and makes recommendations about the application of the findings. Chapter 6 also outlines further research opportunities and possible future uses of the questionnaire instrument.

1.8 Chapter summary

This introductory chapter presented the background to the research project. A broad overview of the Australian working population was presented along with the significance of the topic and aims of the study. The uniqueness of this thesis was outlined and structure of the thesis was also presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

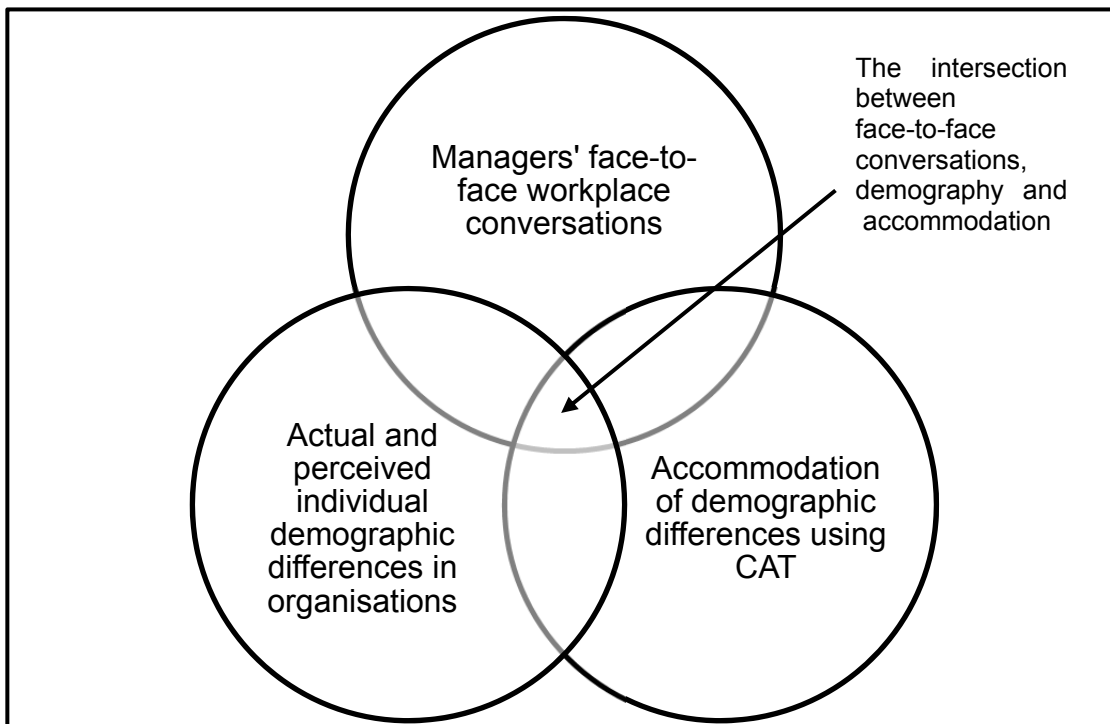
2.0 Introduction

Chapter 2 reviews literature relevant to the aims of the thesis. The first section shows the literature review theme areas and where the study is situated in terms of these themes. The second section defines and reviews communication as an aspect of managerial work. Section three reviews organisational demography focussing on measuring individual employee demographic attributes. The fourth section reviews accommodation of individual differences underpinned by communication accommodation theory (CAT) while section five presents the gaps identified in the literature. Section six presents the research questions, followed by a summary of the chapter.

2.1 Literature theme areas

Literature in this chapter is reviewed under the three topic areas shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Literature review theme areas



The study is situated at the intersection of the three circles indicated by the arrow in Figure 2.1 – investigating the accommodation of perceived demographic differences in managerial

workplace face-to-face conversations; therefore the literature is reviewed under these topic areas which form the next three sections of chapter 2. The literature reviewed includes studies from Australia, New Zealand, North America (U.S.A. and Canada) and parts of Europe, focussing primarily on publications from the past 20 years.

2.2 Managers' face-to-face workplace conversations

Section 2.2 examines interpersonal communication as an aspect of managerial work including managerial communication and organisational relationships, the importance of good managerial communication, and face-to-face conversations as a managerial communications channel.

2.2.1 Managerial communication and organisational relationships

Subsection 2.2.1 examines managerial communication in terms of organisational relationships. First, the work of managers is defined including their managerial communication responsibilities. Next, superior-subordinate communication is discussed including the directional aspects of workplace communication and the purpose of managerial communication.

2.2.1.1 What managers do

Mintzberg (1975:168) defines a manager as someone in charge of units of work, vested with a formal level of authority giving rise to responsibilities for people within the unit. The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) defines managers as people who “plan, organise, direct, control, coordinate and review the operations of government, commercial, agricultural, industrial, non-profit and other organisations, and departments” (ABS 2013a). The ANZSCO definition acknowledges managerial positions include people in all types of industries with varying titles, levels and responsibilities within organisational hierarchies. The latest ANZSCO revision of work titles recognises 99 different delineations of managerial specialisations ranging from general managers and legislators to farm, retail, hospitality and service managers (ABS 2013a).

2.2.1.2 Managerial communication responsibilities

The literature identifies a variety of managerial communication responsibilities within organisations. Managerial communication establishes and maintains support between organisational links (McDonald et al. 2010) while shaping the overall work environment (Norris-Watts & Levy 2004). Managerial communication responsibilities include developing and maintaining relationships between employees and superiors regardless of position title or industry (Brower et al. 2008). Positive relationships between managers and subordinates assist employees to succeed and achieve organisational goals (Hindi, Miller & Catt 2004; Johlke & Duhan 2000). Reasons managers initiate interpersonal communication include interactions for work or social purposes, incorporating oral and written forms (Rice & Shook 1990).

Managers spend up to 80% of their day communicating in some form (Luthans 1988; Mintzberg 1975). Tengblad (2006) revisited and compared Mintzberg's (1975) analysis by interviewing 21st century leaders to determine if there had been a shift in the type of work conducted. Tengblad found that Mintzberg's earlier propositions remained valid but there was a substantial increase in the time spent meeting and communicating with subordinates compared to 30 years before. Both Mintzberg's and Tengblad's work focussed on the most senior executive levels within organisations so it could be argued that the proportions of time spent communicating may be different for managers at other levels. Regardless, Mintzberg applies the findings from the studies of senior executives to the responsibilities of all managers. This position was evident in earlier papers clarifying the nature of managerial work (Mintzberg 1975; Mintzberg 1994) and later work discussing the managerial relationship responsibilities that involve internal communication (Gosling & Mintzberg 2003) and a focus on employees as people (Mintzberg 2010). It is interesting to note one key shift in Mintzberg's work. The 1975 paper refers to managers as 'he' (Mintzberg 1975), however subsequent papers and books acknowledge that managerial roles can be held by males or females (Mintzberg 1994; Mintzberg 2010; Mintzberg 2004; Mintzberg 2011).

2.2.1.3 Superior-subordinate communication

Superior and subordinate positions exist throughout organisations. Hierarchical organisational relationships establish superior-subordinate dyads where one party operates in a senior position compared to one or more other people. Superiors and subordinates are members of distinct organisational groups differing “in terms of their roles, relative power and status” (Gardner & Jones 1999:186) note that. Jablin (1979:1202) defines superior-subordinate communication as “exchanges of information and influence between organisational members, at least one of whom has formal (as defined by official organisational sources) authority to direct and evaluate the activities of other organisational members”. Managers alter and adapt roles related to identity, communication and relationship responsibilities depending upon the situation or context, alternating between roles of superior and subordinate (Mueller & Lee 2002). Hales (2005:484) describes the two-way collection and dissemination process as the manager acting and operating “as a communication channel up and down”. While the two-way information communication role of managerial work has been identified, few studies explore the directional aspect of workplace communication in a face-to-face context, particularly within a single research project.

2.2.1.4 Directional aspects of managerial communication

Managerial communication has aspects of directionality (Downs & Adrian 2004) as managers are required to interact with people at lower levels, the same level or higher levels in an organisation. Downwards communication occurs with employees holding subordinate positions (Andiappan & Trevino 2011; Gardner & Jones 1999; McCroskey & Richmond 2000). Horizontal communication occurs with peers and associates on a similar hierarchical level (Campbell, White & Johnson 2003; McDonald et al. 2010). Communication in an upwards direction takes place with others holding more senior positions (Allen & Griffeth 1997; Heslin & Latham 2004; Rogers & Lee-Wong 2003; Tourish & Robson 2006).

Studies examining workplace interactions tend to investigate communication events in a single direction rather than two-way or multi-directions. Research in downwards communication has considered the effect of a superior’s communication practices on the outcomes of interactions

with subordinates. Hoogervorst, Flier and Koopman (2004) surveyed 75 workplace units across a variety of industries in the Netherlands. They identified that managers achieved more positive outcomes during periods of change by using consistent implicit (hidden messages via verbal and physical cues) and explicit (formal written or verbal organisational messages) communication. Mayfield and Mayfield (2009) investigated the effect of a manager's motivating language on the absenteeism patterns of subordinates, reporting that the way managers communicate has a positive effect on employee attendance. While Mayfield and Mayfield's (2009) findings were based on a student sample, the participants had an average of five years full time work experience so the study provides some insight into managerial communication practice from the perspective of early career employees.

Studies that examine the flow of communication in an upwards direction provide another perspective on subordinate-superior interactions. The attitude health care managers have towards receiving critical feedback from their subordinates influences whether employees are prepared to raise issues of concern with superiors (Tourish & Robson 2004). Tourish and Robson concluded that managers actively discourage negative feedback from subordinates while promoting the receipt of positive upwards feedback from the same group of employees. Kassing et al. (2012) surveyed a range of people across a variety of industries gathering responses to attribution statements. People holding managerial positions were less likely to express dissent upwards, yet would encourage subordinates to express dissent to them. They concluded that employees who express dissent have a desire to see their workplace improve as they intend to stay. A limitation of Kassing et al.'s study was that the survey lacked categorised or free format fields and so did not gather information on the types of dissent that might be expressed.

While these studies examine a directional component of a workplace interaction, they do not consider the multi-directional role of managerial communication and the effects of interpersonal and situational differences on dyadic level outcomes.

2.2.1.5 Reasons for managerial communication

Managers initiate communication within the workplace for a variety of reasons (Ford & Ford 1995; Heracleous 2001). The purpose of managerial communication can be formal, for example, meetings for a specific intention such as performance feedback (Lizzio, Wilson & MacKay 2008; Whitaker, Dahling & Levy 2007). Planned or unplanned interactions can be initiated for information gathering, clarification, and dissemination (Donabedian, McKinnon & Burns 1998; Nielsen 2009). Casual communications take place for social interaction (Trevino, Webster & Stein 2000) or to support organisational strategies and norms (Hogg, van Knippenberg & Rast 2012). Workplace related and casual conversations with subordinates assist in building organisational connections and relationships (McDonald et al. 2010). Problems and disagreements may necessitate additional interactions to rectify issues (Daft, Lengel & Trevino 1987; Gardner & Jones 1999; Tourish & Robson 2004), resulting in interruptions and criticisms, potentially generating the need for further interactions (Morand 2000).

Giving and receiving feedback is a key leadership skill (Goleman 2000; Longenecker 2010) and failure to monitor and feedback employee performance can be a source of managerial failure (Longenecker, Neubert & Fink 2007). The scope and design of feedback can comprise long term performance development, coaching, providing praise, or criticism to manage non-acceptable behaviour or behaviour divergent from organisation or positional requirements. Anseel and Lievens (2007) examined Belgian government employee perceptions of supervisory feedback using the Feedback Environment Scale (Norris-Watts & Levy 2004) testing its relationship with Leader-Membership Exchange theory (LMX) and job satisfaction. They reported a positive correlation between the quality of the relationship between an employee and their supervisor, the level of feedback received, and the level of job satisfaction. This study as with other studies was based on general perceptions of supervisory communication rather than an investigation into specific dyadic relationships.

The next subsection examines communication effectiveness in workplaces.

2.2.2 Communication effectiveness

This subsection examines what makes communication effective and the importance of good managerial communication.

2.2.2.1 Measuring communication effectiveness

Communication effectiveness is evaluated by a variety of measures including whether shared meaning between interactants is reached (Hubbert, Gudykunst & Guerrero 1999), misunderstanding is avoided (O'Leary-Kelly & Newman 2003), and/or whether the reason for initiating the interaction is achieved (Ilgen & Davis 2000). Assessments of communication effectiveness vary according to the type of message being delivered, for example whether the interaction is for information, task or critical purposes (Sheer & Chen 2004; Shu & Jiaying 2010), the person initiating the interaction (Garrett & Danziger 2007), or who evaluates the level of communication effectiveness (Zwijze-Koning & de Jong 2007).

Keyton et al. (2013) had a group of adult workers rate themselves against 44 verbal communication behaviours to determine self-perceptions of communication effectiveness. Communicating thanks, showing respect and listening were the behaviours reported to have the greatest influence on ratings of communication effectiveness. These findings were based on self-ratings against communication behaviour statements where respondents were asked to reflect on their most recent day at work rather than rating effectiveness of interpersonal interactions. While the findings are interesting, they are not useful in measuring interpersonal conversation effectiveness against a specific dyad. Jorfi, Fauzy Bin Yacco and Md Shah (2012) reported a link between a supervisor's level of emotional intelligence and effective workplace communication, but did not define what effective communication was.

Variances in perceptions of effectiveness lead to disagreements and misinterpretations between managers and subordinates about the quality of their relationship (Ismail, Richard & Taylor 2012; Zhang et al. 2008). However disagreements and misinterpretations are minimised when managers develop interpersonal communication competencies designed to improve and maintain positive relationships (Campbell, White & Johnson 2003; Longenecker 2010; Longenecker & Fink 2012).

2.2.2.2 Consequence of ineffective communication

While effective communication enhances perceptions of a manager's interpersonal skills (Kochanowski, Seifert & Yukl 2009), ineffective communication can damage workplace connections (Rogers & Lee-Wong 2003). Ineffective communication means that the intent of the communication is not achieved, or misunderstanding occurs due to the lack of shared meaning. Ineffective communication can lead to other problems such as increases in staff turnover (Ng & Sorensen 2008) and lower productivity (Esposto 2011).

Consequences of ineffective communication may also include workplace incivility (Estes & Wang 2008). A lack of awareness of the importance of effective communication may lead to breaches of policies and government regulations (Burgess, French & Strachan 2009). Longenecker, Neubert and Fink's (2007) research using focus groups with 1040 U.S.A. managers concluded that ineffective communication skills and practices such as a lack of information sharing in times of change was the number one reason for managerial failure. The second reason for failure was managers having poor relationship and interpersonal skills which "unnecessarily create barriers and impediments to getting things done" (Longenecker, Neubert & Fink 2007:149). Therefore it is important in this study to examine ineffective as well as effective outcomes of face-to-face conversations.

The following section examines face-to-face conversations as a managerial communication channel.

2.2.3 Face-to-face conversations as a workplace communication channel

This subsection defines face-to-face conversations, reviews the benefits and discusses the cues available in face-to-face interactions. Next, superior-subordinate communication is discussed followed by a review of the purpose of managerial communication.

2.2.3.1 Defining face-to-face conversations

Conversations can comprise interpersonal interactions on a "cluster of interrelated speech acts" which may occur over "hours, days or months", or be confined to a single instance (Ford & Ford 1995:545-6). Face-to-face conversations involving interactants located in the same place are

seen as “the most fundamental and pervasive means of conducting human affairs” (Crystal 2006). Face-to-face conversations are considered the richest channel for interpersonal communication as immediate feedback through visual and verbal signals is available to correct interpretations and increase understanding (Daft & Lengel 1984:8-9). Richness is enhanced by the capacity of face-to-face conversations to employ multiple cues to convey meaning and emotions (Daft & Lengel 1984; Daft, Lengel & Trevino 1987; Trevino et al. 1990). Face-to-face conversations facilitate and promote the flow of managerial communication “to, from and among their employees” (Groysberg & Slind 2012:77-78). Where face-to-face conversations can be used, the personal intimacy achieved during the interaction enhances trust and builds employee engagement (Mackenzie 2010; Grunberg et al. 2008) while keeping employees informed and providing a sense of security about their place in the organisation (Mishra, Boynton & Mishra 2014). However, face-to-face conversation between managers, subordinates and superiors is not always possible, practical or convenient for every interaction.

2.2.3.2 Benefits of face-to-face communication

Subordinates have been reported to prefer the benefits of face-to-face conversations with supervisors such as viewing their boss speaking in an animated way which has a positive impact on subordinates’ motivation and satisfaction with their work (Richmond & McCroskey 2000). Personal feelings about another person are unconsciously infused into our interpersonal interactions, which can consequently influence whether a communication outcome is perceived as positive or negative (Hoogervorst, Flier & Koopman 2004). Dasborough (2006) conducted a series of focus groups with some Australian employees and managers seeking insight into their perceptions about behaviours displayed in face-to-face interactions. She reported that emotions displayed by superiors influenced the emotions of the employees with poor face-to-face interactions with a superior generating negative emotions such as “employee anger, annoyance, frustration, disappointment and, in extreme cases, loathing”. Positive emotions and behaviours displayed by superiors were found to translate into positive behaviour in employees indicating that face-to-face interactions have a significant influence on employee attitudes and performance (Dasborough 2006:172).

2.2.3.3 Cues available in face-to-face conversations

Face-to-face conversations allow access to the interplay of visual and auditory cues and enhance the psychological, affective and social aspects of interactions (Dohen, Schwartz & Bailly 2010). Face-to-face conversations establish a physical proximity where communication is not mediated by technology and allows for the exchange of verbal, non-verbal and physical cues. Interactants transmit and receive impressions using cues to seek information about each other's "characteristics, attitudes, and emotions" (Walther, Loh & Granka 2005:37).

A physical presence with/or among interactants provides access to gestures and facial expressions which enhance messages and increase the potential for understanding (Lengel & Daft 1988). Impression exchanges in interpersonal communication have been described as "relational work" because cues are used to highlight "the relations interlocutors have with each other" (Locher 2010:510).

Murray and Peyrefitte (2007) surveyed five hospitals in the U.S.A. comparing the effectiveness of face-to-face conversations with seminars and email as ways of sharing knowledge among staff. Results were consistent across hospital administrators, staff nurses and nursing directors. Face-to-face conversations were found to be necessary and most effective for discussing training and development opportunities, dealing with complaints, and discussing difficult organisational issues. Salis and Williams (2010) who examined the association between organisational knowledge flows and face-to-face communication in British trading establishments made similar findings. The authors found that productivity increases resulted from managers using face-to-face conversations as a regular form of communication with employees.

Face-to-face conversations deliver other benefits including developing rapport between interlocutors (Campbell, White & Johnson 2003) and minimising the negative impacts of change (Ford 1999). A study that examined Australian manufacturing managers' communication preferences found that face-to-face conversations were identified as the preferred communication channel for delivering complex information messages to subordinates where immediate feedback was required (Salmon & Joiner 2005).

2.2.4 Summary of research on managerial communication

Managerial positions encompass a range of titles, responsibilities and hierarchical levels but central to the role of manager is the requirement to communicate. Skilled communication is essential for managerial effectiveness, and ineffective communication can lead to managers failing themselves as well as their employees and organisations. Organisational audits can highlight internal communication issues while identifying other situational factors may impact on the effectiveness of interactions.

Face-to-face conversations are an important way for managers to carry out their responsibilities. While there are a number of channels available to managers to conduct interpersonal interactions, the immediacy in face-to-face conversations is preferred for minimising ambiguity, and explaining complex concepts.

The next section examines the literature related to various demographic categories in an organisational context.

2.3 Actual and perceived individual demographic differences in organisations

In this section I examine the demographic attributes of people in organisations. The first subsection discusses demography and organisations. The second reviews perceptions of demography versus actualities and then discusses some specific attributes that are important in organisational contexts.

2.3.1 Demography and organisations

Pfeffer (1983) defines organisational demography as: “the composition, in terms of basic attributes such as age, sex, educational level, length of service or residence, race and so forth of the social unit under study” (Pfeffer 1983:303). Over the past three decades, the effects of demography on functions and processes within workplaces have received increasing recognition (Joshi, Liao & Roh 2011; Riordan & Wayne 2008; Tsui, Porter & Egan 2002). This interest acknowledges that workforces have and continue to become more diverse (Avery et al. 2012; Stevens, Plaut & Sanchez-Burks 2008). In an organisational context, demographic differences or similarities are studied by examining the attributes of groups and how groups

interact (Kirkman, Tesluk & Rosen 2004; Pfeffer 1984; Riordan & Wayne 2008). Research into organisational demography identifies that demographic differences impact on organisational processes and outcomes (Goldberg, Riordan & Zhang 2008; Posthuma & Campion 2009), including influencing workplace communication (Grice et al. 2006; Pelled, Ledford & Mohrman 1999).

Lawrence (1997) separates demographic variables into three categories. The first category described as the immutable attributes, or unalterable factors includes gender, age and ethnicity. The second set of attributes encompasses the individual's relationship with the organisation, such as the position held and length of tenure with the organisation. The final group, social attributes, categorises individual positions in society such as marital or family status (Lawrence 1997:5).

2.3.1.1 Identifying demographic variables

Pelled (1996) describes demographic variables in terms of visibility or how easily attributes are discerned from visual cues. High visibility attributes such as age, gender and race, are considered low in job relatedness, whereas education and tenure have a high connection to job relatedness, yet are low in visibility (Pelled 1996:619). Riordan (2001:163) describes tenure, education and organisational position held as nonvisible attributes, but goes on to group these demographic dimensions with age, race/ethnicity and gender, labelling them as surface-level diversity variables.

Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) highlight the potential insights of examining organisational demography:

...knowing the comparative similarity or dissimilarity in given demographic attributes of a superior and a subordinate or of the members of an interacting work team may provide additional information about the members' characteristic attitudes and behaviors, and more important, insight into the processes through which demography affects job outcomes. (Tsui & O'Reilly 1989:403)

Impression formation is enhanced by perceived similarity (Ruscher, Cralley & O'Farrell 2005). Newly acquainted dyads use visible attributes to form impressions about the other person in an

introductory face-to-face conversation where the visibility of surface level demographic variables is greater.

2.3.2 Perceptions of demographic differences versus actualities

People vary in how they perceive demographic factors (Caldwell et al. 2009; Goldberg, Riordan & Zhang 2008). Inherent or birth-related characteristics such as gender, age and cultural background are embodied within individuals, but perceptions of inherent attributes do not always match reality, which may lead to misconceptions (Lester et al. 2012). One reason lies in the cues available for interpretation – linguistic, visual or otherwise and the historical experiences, stereotypes or biases that are part of each individual (Lau & Murnighan 2005; Pelled, Ledford & Mohrman 1999; Riordan & Shore 1997). Gallois, Ogay and Giles (2005) refer to groupings of social and historical influences on communication interactions as sociohistorical factors. Sociohistorical factors available for interpretation are particularly evident in face-to-face conversations compared to other communication channels due to the availability of auditory and visual cues.

Perceived or actual demographic attributes may facilitate relations with, or create distance from a group sharing different attributes (Caldwell et al. 2009; Rosen, Levy & Hall 2006). Connections can be made by an individual or by someone with whom the individual is associated (Avery, McKay & Wilson 2007). Connections operate at individual, group or organisational levels (Joshi, Liao & Roh 2011) and further influence perceptions, as each person builds on their experiences to form impressions (Ruscher & Hammer 2006).

Social background information about a person influences perceptions of their speech and identification of differences (Niedzielski 1999). The cumulative effects of consistent social and cultural information shared through communication reinforce the assimilation of stereotypes (Kashima 2000). Stereotypes are not confined to culture, but can relate to other demographic factors such as age, gender and language (Cheung, Kam & Ngan 2011; Hummert et al. 1998) further heightening misunderstandings, misinterpretation and conflict (Li & Hambrick 2005; Thatcher, Jehn & Zanutto 2003).

2.3.2.1 Relational demography

Relational demography studies examine the impact of one or more demographic attributes on individual level outcomes (Avery et al. 2012). Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) consider relational demography to be a component of organisational social relationships such as superior-subordinate dyads. Social relationships may have underlying motives or hidden agendas influencing communication interactions, for example where individuals attempt to enhance their status or reduce uncertainty about the quality of relationships (Hogg & Terry 2000). Relational demography research is grounded in social identity theory (Tajfel 1974), which suggests that individuals determine their social identity by classifying themselves and others and attach values to various social categorisations (Goldberg, Riordan & Zhang 2008).

2.3.2.2 Relationships between demographic factors and organisational phenomena

Research examining relationships between demographic factors, individual behaviours and organisational communication has focused on outcomes such as trust (Brower et al. 2008; Zhang et al. 2008), conflict (Canary & Spitzberg 1990; Canary & Spitzberg 1989; Pelled 1996), commitment, and turnover (Riordan & Wayne 2008). Other studies explore potential connections between demographic attributes and organisational change (Caldwell et al. 2009), work attitudes (Ismail, Richard & Taylor 2012) and decision-making (Maruping & Agarwal 2004; Parker & Fischhoff 2005; Pelled, Ledford & Mohrman 1999). Johlke and Duhan (2000) recommended exercising caution when evaluating comparative results linking demographic data in real world organisations and processes like communication. Results can be skewed depending on the demographic data collected (i.e. perceptions or actualities), and the nature or industry of the work undertaken. This is evident in the area of gender, which is the first area of individual demographic literature examined in the next subsection, followed by a review of literature related to age, tenure, education, country of birth and language use.

2.3.3 Gender

Gender-based studies in organisations range from managerial accounts of how gender affects promotion decisions (Bobocel & Farrell 1996) to diversity and discrimination issues (Burgess, French & Strachan 2009; Sappey et al. 2006). Twenge and Campbell (2008) argue that many

gender-based differences between male and female managers are a result of sex-based stereotypes shaping worker expectations. Gender-based identities have roots in meanings learned during childhood which are later used to interpret images of “femaleness and maleness” (Ting-Toomey 2005a:213-214). Despite these findings, Joshi, Lio and Roh (2011) report in their review of over two decades of demography related research, gender remains a demographic of interest in organisational studies and one of the most popular variables in relational demography research.

Gender-based differences in communication studies are apparent in the style of language (Mulac et al. 2013; Namy, Nygaard & Sauerteig 2002) and level of assertiveness used in interactions (Caldwell et al. 2009). Another gender-based variation is whether the language used is considered tentative by including tag questions such as “isn’t that the way it is done?” and disclaimers such as “I’m not really sure” (Reid et al. 2009). Dennis, Kinney and Hung (1999) found females preferred to deliver ambiguous (equivocal) messages to other females in a face-to-face rather than computer-mediated interaction, due to the availability of non-verbal cues such as gestures or touch. The authors also reported that this was not the case with male-to-male or female-to-male (or vice versa) interactions, where males were not concerned about which channel was selected to deliver a message open to interpretation. They indicated that their findings had implications for managers delivering messages in workplaces, however their study was based on a college student population where the average age of respondents was 20.8 years, and respondents lacked real-world experience (Dennis, Kinney and Hung 1999). This is an issue in many gender related studies where student populations are used to test hypotheses in simulated or hypothetical organisational situations. Examples include a study focussed on leadership role and gender role stereotypes (Embry, Padgett & Caldwell 2008), and the examination of stereotype threat and leadership communication (McGlone & Pfister 2015). Both studies used undergraduate students to examine and report on findings that female and male gender stereotypes did influence communication outcomes, however both sets of authors indicate findings should be validated using real world situations.

How males and females use language in the workplace influences evaluations of work performance and promotion prospects (Sheridan 2007). Sheridan’s case study of an American

multi-national company challenges some of the notions associated with gender and language use, indicating females already use leadership language skills such as assertiveness, and therefore a lack of executive language skills is not a reason to prevent females rising to higher management levels. Her interviews revealed that females were far more effective at using language that supports organisational change than their male counterparts, for example, “when response to change is needed, when coping with ambiguous situations, when problems require a long-range perspective and when a variety of values need to be understood” (Sheridan 2007:333). It could be argued that these perspectives came to light in the interviews as the researcher was female, but this could also be countered with the argument that male-based perspectives could also arise from studies conducted by males. Hoobler, Lemmon and Wayne (2011) surveyed subordinates and supervisors within a mid-west U.S.A. transportation company reporting that women are not receiving sufficient opportunities or encouragement to progress to more senior roles. They note that women are instead being limited by gender biases stereotyping males rather than females as managers. The authors call for more research into the negative impact of stereotypical biases within organisations to dispel the “cognitive traps and behavioural barriers” linking men with more senior positions and limiting female progression to more senior ranks (Hoobler, Lemmon & Wayne 2011:723). Their findings could also be linked to the gender biases which may exist in certain industries or occupations which are examined next.

Research involving the nursing profession highlights the female skew of that occupation (Fraser & Schwind 2011; McDonald et al. 2010; Murray & Peyrefitte 2007). Johlke & Duhan (2000) examined gender effects into supervisory communication in pest control firms, but due to a low number of female respondents in a male dominated industry, females were excluded from the final data analysis. Allen and Griffeth (1997) in their study of a U.S.A. telephone company identified a relationship between gender and upwards communication with supervisors. Their survey results indicated that females sent and received less information than males, though the authors acknowledge that some of this effect is due to more males holding senior positions in the organisation being studied.

Styles of communication have been given gender-based labels referring to features of language or approaches to interactions used by both genders. Feminine communication styles are reported to include a social approach using emotive words and phrases (Palomares 2004), and a greater number of words in the interaction (Mulac et al. 2013). This is in comparison to a more masculine style that involves the use of direct terms, less emotion, fewer words, and more negation and assertiveness (Mulac et al. 2013). Barrett (2004) reported that senior women in Australia adopt a stronger, more masculine and assertive communication strategy to achieve certain outcomes, yet adopt a more indirect feminine approach to try and make themselves more noticed for promotion. Willemyns, Gallois, and Callan (2009) studied a group of management and psychology students who had at least six months full-time work experience examining positive and negative communication situations with managers. They reported that female managers were described as dominating when they used assertive language, yet the sample accommodated male managers' use of assertive language. The authors attributed the outcome to sex-role stereotypes. Violanti and Jurczak (2011) surveyed 213 people with more than five years of employment history across a range of U.S.A. organisations to determine their perceptions of their managers' communication style. They reported that subordinates preferred their leaders to use feminine communication styles to build interpersonal relationships regardless of whether the interaction was conducted by a man or a woman. When it comes to delivering task information, they reported no preference between the use of masculine and feminine communication styles.

The next section discusses age literature in an organisational context.

2.3.4 Age

Age appears to be the most frequent demographic measure reported. Age defines generational cohorts (Lester et al. 2012), and whether an individual is considered old or young (Hair Collins, Hair Jr & Rocco 2009). Chronological age provides a continuous variable useful for statistical analysis (Riordan & Wayne 2008). Cleveland and Shore (1992) commented that age is actually a subjective measure, as perceptions of age will differ depending on context. A similar criticism is levelled at age labels categorising individuals as old or young. Designating someone as old or young reinforces negative age-based stereotypes (Cleveland & Shore 1992). Posthuma and

Campion (2009) examined over 100 journals and books that reported on age based stereotypes to highlight the effect of stereotypes on older workers, yet they did not clarify which ages defined someone as being an older worker. McCann and Giles (2006) investigated intergenerational communication accommodation in Thai and American banks from the perspective of younger workers aged 18-35 years. Older workers were classified as 50 years and over. In a later study by Giles, Ryan & Anas (2008) into non-workplace perceptions of intergenerational communication accommodation behaviour in Canada, young adults were defined as 17-22 years, and older adults as 64-94 years. These studies highlight how age grouping labels should be carefully evaluated, particularly when comparing results.

Some researchers examine age-related issues via generational labels such as Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Different authors use the same label to define a generational cohort such as Baby Boomers, yet the age range associated with the label is different. For example, while some agreement exists about the Baby Boomer generation commencing in 1946 after World War II (Einolf 2009; McGuire, By & Hutchings 2007; Westerman & Yamamura 2007), the end date appears less certain, with some researchers report the Boomer generation ending in 1961 (Cennamo & Gardner 2008) and others in 1964 (Westerman & Yamamura 2007). The ABS 2006 Census data designated Baby Boomers as people born between 1946 and 1966 (ABS 2009b). Lamm and Meeks (2009) stated Baby Boomers were born between 1941 and 1960, and modified their results by removing anyone born in the two years at the start or end of the cohort. Pre-defining age related cohorts with demographic or marketing related labels such as Baby Boomers or Generation Y can lead to preconceived ideas and perceptions about individuals associated with each cohort, creating another form of stereotype (Sheahan 2005).

Westerman and Yamamura (2007) examined attitudes to work in Baby Boomer, Generation X and Generation Y by surveying accountants based in the western U.S.A. Their results suggest that Baby Boomers had a higher level of work satisfaction due to good relationships with others, leading to lower intention to leave their employer compared to Generation X and Y employees. Cennamo and Gardner (2008) and Hewlett, Sherbin and Shumberg (2009) discussed the different work motivations of Baby Boomers and Generation Y reporting that workplaces need to

become more flexible to engage employees from different birth cohorts. These studies consider the effect of age and age groupings on attitudes and motivation to work, but do not examine age effects in relation to workplace communication.

Other studies define age but vary in how they treat age. Age is either not reported, reported as an average, or the study incorrectly assumes the population is representative of the age group of interest. For example, in studies using undergraduate respondent groups, age can be reasonably assumed to relate to young adults aged under 25 years. However, with older adults returning to study, age-based averages may be skewed. In another example, Willemyns, Gallois and Callan (2009) used communication accommodation theory to study the impact of gender and role identity on employees' perceptions of managerial communication styles. They recruited management and psychology students with at least 6 months full-time employment experience. Respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 58 years with 22.12 years as the mean for females, and 19.52 years for males. Using university student sample populations to investigate workplace related research, results involving average ages should be viewed with caution as they do not reflect the reality of age distributions in organisations or the generalisability of age on a particular outcome. Studies examining workplace phenomena but using students instead of full-time workers may however provide useful background to prompt further research within organisations.

The next demographic category discussed is organisational tenure.

2.3.5 Organisational Tenure

Organisational tenure specifies the length of time an individual has worked for an organisation (Finkelstein & Hambrick 1990) but in some studies this is indicated as job tenure (Brown & Light 1992). Caldwell et al. (2009:455) argue that "tenure represents a different psychological influence on workers" establishing a level of familiarity with the organisation. They further state that tenure influences organisational processes and how workers see themselves as members of the workplace. As a descriptive label for a measure of time, tenure can be classified in various ways when related to individuals and organisations (Feldman & Ng 2010). Position tenure (Richard, Wu & Chadwick 2009), also described as job experience (Sturman 2003) is

another tenure type which classifies the period of time an individual has held their current position, or experience in similar positions within an organisational hierarchy. Further types of tenure are relational tenure (the working relationship between two individuals) (Feldman & Ng 2010), the length of time an individual has reported to another person (Shelby 1998), or industry tenure or the time working in a particular industry (Finkelstein & Hambrick 1990). Downs and Adrian noted that collecting tenure data during organisational communication audits resulted in “strengths and dissatisfactions when we had not anticipated them” (2004:121) and recommend that tenure be considered as a measure in workplace communication studies.

Effective managerial communication skills influence employee commitment and organisational tenure (Bambacas & Patrickson 2008). Longer organisational tenure delivers benefits through lower employee turnover (Sørensen 2000). Other benefits include saving time, money and resources when hiring, training and developing new staff (Guthrie 2001). Studies including tenure as a variable report three key areas of tenure’s influence on individual performance and effectiveness. Firstly, a meta-analysis by Ng and Sorensen (2008) of studies related to supervisory support and worker attitudes reported the length of organisational relationship and supervisory support affect individual alignment with organisational culture, with longer tenure positively influencing engagement and commitment. Secondly, experience or the time spent in a role affects the volume of information available for decision making processes leading to better task and people related decisions (Sørensen 2000; Pelled, Ledford & Mohrman 1999). Finally the length of working relationship between superiors and subordinates lowers the level of conflict and increases the frequency of dyadic interaction. Longer supervisor-subordinate relationships are shown to reduce levels of conflict through an increased understanding built over time (Ismail, Richard & Taylor 2012).

Tenure as an isolated demographic grouping has received little research attention, but it is a factor of interest in some multi-category studies or reviews. Finkelstein and Hambrick (1990) examined top management team tenure, finding an influence on organisational outcomes, concluding “tenure was much more predictive than age”. Wright and Bonnett (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of literature examining links between tenure, job performance and organisational commitment. They noted that the correlation between commitment and

performance “decays exponentially as a function of tenure” and describe tenure as a moderating effect requiring further investigation (Wright & Bonett 2002:1188). Ngo and Loi (2009) reported that differences in organisation tenure and gender are the most significant predictors of employee performance effectiveness and high-trust relationships.

Kassing’s (2008) study into the communication of dissent in Arizona-based organisations gathered data on the tenure of managers and employees but only provided tenure averages for the population without testing the relationship between tenure and dissent. However, he acknowledges there is likely to be a difference in the way dissent communication occurs with new employees compared to workers with longer organisational tenure, recommending it as an area for future research. Despite highlighting tenure as an area of interest, a later study by Kassing et al. (2012) into dissent and engagement again gathered data on job tenure without analysing the effect of tenure on results. While tenure is identified as a demographic factor influencing trust (Ismail, Richard & Taylor 2012) and reducing conflict (Feldman & Ng 2010), it lacks a dedicated body of research, particularly related to the impact of tenure on managerial communication.

The next section discusses education as a demographic category in an organisational context.

2.3.6 Education

Individual educational achievement, or the perceived level of education achieved, is a variable of interest in studies of organisational demography (Riordan & Wayne 2008). Tsui and O’Reilly (1989) reported that dyadic similarities or differences in education levels affects understanding, confidence and power in workplaces. Pelled, Ledford and Mohrman (1999) surveyed a U.S.A. manufacturing company and reported how individual education levels are highly related to the ability to complete workplace tasks, and that individuals perceived to hold higher education qualifications are held in higher regard within the workplace. Potential employees holding higher qualifications than their hiring manager were less likely to be offered or appointed to the position (Erdogan et al. 2011; Manshor, Jusoh & Simun 2003). The reason proffered by hiring managers in Erdogan et al.’s (2011) study was that employees are more likely to leave the organisation to find a position commensurate to their qualifications. It could also be argued that

this reasoning provides an excuse to avoid employing a subordinate with better qualifications than their own.

There are some situations where a subordinate may have higher education qualifications than their supervisor. Despite policies facilitating skilled migration with appropriate tertiary qualifications, Hawthorne's (2005) review of employability and access to work for migrants to Australia found that this did not guarantee new arrivals work in their area of specialisation. Many migrants are reported as taking on unskilled or entry-level positions to make a living until a better position can be achieved (Almeida & Fernando 2012), resulting in qualifications that facilitate migration not being used. To improve chances of gaining the desired position Shultz, Olson and Wang (2011) note many applicants omit some qualifications so they do not appear overqualified. The end result is that perceptions about an individual's level of education based on a job application can be quite different from reality.

Barbuto Jr et al. (2007) found that interaction effects exist between education and gender, and between education and age in their study of leadership and influencing tactics across a range of commercial and government organisations. Subordinates gave the highest performance ratings to leaders who were perceived to hold higher degrees. Education was found to have no impact on leadership influencing tactics but communication as a specific action or process was not investigated. Bakan, Buyukbese and Ershan (2011) identified a statistically significant relationship in Turkish workplaces between education levels and employee commitment. Employees with tertiary qualifications were more committed to staying with their employer than high school graduates, although results were confined to a single organisation, and consequently their results may be biased, based on other contextual factors.

The country and place where people were educated and their level of English language proficiency influence perceptions of a person's highest level of education. Data from the 2006 Australian census revealed migrants with poorer English communication skills were overlooked for positions despite having appropriate qualifications (Birrell & Healy 2008). A study examining demographic factors against employment processes in Malaysia, found employers' preferences for specific race and religion backgrounds outweighed higher education qualifications (Manshor, Jusoh & Simun 2003). Selecting employees on the basis of race and/or religion would breach

one or more of Australia's diversity, discrimination and equity laws, and if proved, would expose an employer to prosecution.

The next section discusses the demographic issues of ethnicity, national culture and cultural backgrounds.

2.3.7 Ethnicity, national culture, cultural backgrounds

The impact of ethnicity, national culture and cultural backgrounds on communication is a popular area of study, particularly when compared to other demographic categories such as tenure and education. While race, ethnicity and culture are consistently considered as separate concepts, "culture" is the preferred term in communication disciplines (Jackson II & Garner 1998). Ting-Toomey (2005b:72) notes that culture is "learned, modified, and passed down from one generation to the next" through communication. Approaches to cultural communication studies can be divided into categories including how culture is integrated into communication, cultural variability, identity management, networks, and how accommodation or adjustment occurs between individuals (Gudykunst et al. 2005).

Ayoko (2007:111) examined culturally diverse workgroups in public and private organisations in Australia whose members were perceived as "observably different in ethnicity". She found that communication openness moderates reactions to conflict within culturally diverse workgroups and that low levels of communication openness result in increased bullying. Other diversity factors such as gender and age were not examined but were noted as possibly influencing the results. Leveson, Joiner and Bakalis (2009) showed employee commitment in an Australian financial institution is influenced by an organisation's ability to manage diversity issues. Positive views held by U.K. employees about cultural diversity management are thought to link to career satisfaction and organisational performance (Hicks-Clarke & Iles 2000) but it was not clear how employees gain positive views about diversity and whether their views are related to managerial communication.

Perceptions of age are influenced by culture, but the relationship between age identification and culture was less strong for Australian respondents than respondents from predominantly Asian cultures (McCann et al. 2004). Gudykunst et al. (2005) argue that overcoming cultural

differences helps achieve effective communication outcomes. However this phenomenon is not the sole domain of cultural influences as it may apply to other demographic or other differences existing between interactants such as the difference in language and linguistic features which are discussed next.

2.3.8 Language use and linguistic features

Language influences management thought and actions through the interaction of linguistic features such as lexicon, letters, characters, grammar, inflection, intonation, phonemes, morphemes, prosody, semantics, syntax, aspect, content, and context (West & Graham 2004:243). Linguistic elements such as tone and lexical sequence can vary in emphasis (Watt, Llamas & Johnson 2010) with approaches and interpretations of linguistic features varying from person to person (Ford & Ford 1995). Word selection and linguistic tactics such as voice, tone, and pace can enhance meaning and assist with achieving understanding (Daft & Lengel 1984; Daft, Lengel & Trevino 1987) while the words and phrasing used by message senders contributes to message receivers' perceptions of communication effectiveness (Sharbrough, Simmons & Cantrill 2006).

West and Graham (2004) found strong links exist between individual behaviour and the national language spoken by an employee or manager using the concept of linguistic distance to link national languages to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede & Bond 1984). The relationship between national language and culture applied for most languages including English, French, Hebrew, and Japanese, but not for Chinese (West & Graham 2004). However, with West and Graham's Chinese results, there was no distinction between Mandarin and Cantonese as individual languages, nor were any tests conducted on variations within English (for example: American English, Australian English, British English, Canadian English) as countries that had English noted as a national language were grouped together.

Proficiency in English is required as an Australian immigration requirement to support assimilation into Australian society and workplaces (Birrell & Healy 2008). A level of English language proficiency is also an expectation of employers in the U.S.A., and can indicate the level of acculturation achieved by an individual when adapting to the culture and language of

the new host country (Jian 2012). Lauring and Selmer (2013) found in their study of Danish multinational workplaces that the use of English increases with the level of language diversity within an organisation and that linguistic diversity and perceptions of management communication effectiveness are influenced by the age of interactants. Issues of gender and culture as well as a lack of English were found to affect migrant women's employment opportunities in Australia (Syed & Murray 2009).

The words used during a conversation may provide clues to a person's ethnicity or nationality, although this can be misleading, particularly when someone has resided in another country for an extended period of time (Eades et al. 2003). Pronunciation is affected by accent or emphasis which is useful in achieving assimilation (Pantos & Perkins 2013) and may lead to misperceptions about a person's country of residence (Watt, Llamas & Johnson 2010). Cargile and Giles (1997) examined the influence of accent on listener reactions, concluding that results based on accented speech appear inconsistent due to differences in messages, social backgrounds and contexts.

2.3.9 Summary of demography and organisations

Individual demographic similarities and differences remain an area of interest in organisational research. The literature demonstrates that a range of demographic attributes can be examined in relation to organisational phenomena including communication, but most studies focus on a single or limited range of demographic attributes. Focussing on a single demographic factor provides insight into an issue, but ignores the fact that individuals belong to many demographic categories where the attribute under investigation may not be the one which affects outcomes. Face-to-face conversations provide the best opportunity for individuals to perceive the demographic attributes of others due to the range of available verbal, non-verbal and physical cues and enable an examination of the effect of differences on conversation effectiveness.

The next section examines the literature related to the theory of accommodation in communication interactions considering how demographic differences are accommodated or not accommodated in an organisational context.

2.4 Accommodation of demographic differences using CAT

Section 2.4 examines the accommodation of individual demographic differences with reference to communication accommodation theory (CAT). I discuss CAT as a theory, outlining its assumptions and accommodation strategies before reviewing CAT research in organisational contexts.

2.4.1 Communication accommodation theory (CAT)

CAT provides a theoretical basis to examine accommodation of individual differences in communication interactions (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005; Giles 1980; Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991; Giles & Gasiorek 2013; Street & Giles 1982; Williams et al. 1997). CAT's main premise is that interactants alter, adapt or adjust aspects of speech, such as vocal characteristics to accommodate, maintain or even emphasise differences (Street & Giles 1982). Gallois, Ogay and Giles (2005:121) note that CAT is used to investigate "the links between language, context and identity" which has stimulated research into motivated communication within specific interactions including family, social, international and organisational settings. CAT provides assumptions and premises "to explain linguistic and behavioral choices, as well as how fellow interactants perceive, evaluate and react to these choices" (Gasiorek & Giles 2012:310). Willemyns, Gallois and Callan (2006) argue that CAT is the best articulated theory to examine communication and language interactions, behaviours and evaluations from a social identity perspective.

Like organisational demography, CAT's origins are in social psychology, evolving from social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel 1974). SIT outlines how our sense of self is determined by the social groups we belong to and identify with and our use of group associations to distinguish ourselves from others (Hogg & Terry 2000). A key component of SIT is in-group (belonging) or out-group (outsider) membership (Riordan & Goldberg 2010). In order to reinforce group memberships, SIT posits that individuals seek to reinforce differences between themselves and out-group members as a means of enhancing self-esteem (Tajfel 1974; Terry, Hogg & White 1999).

The conversational side of SIT gave rise to speech accommodation theory (SAT) (Street & Giles 1982). The scope of SAT broadened to encompass interpersonal and intergroup communication (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005), and this provided the origins of the theory now known as CAT (Pitts & Harwood 2015). It is beyond the scope of this literature review to give a complete account for CAT's development, but a full history of CAT is presented in *Communication Accommodation Theory: A look back and a look ahead* (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005).

For more than the past three decades CAT has demonstrated its usefulness, being tested and validated in a wide variety of contexts (Gasiorek, Giles & Soliz 2015). Studies using CAT have examined verbal and non-verbal behaviours (Gallois & Callan 1988), intergenerational effects (Coupland et al. 1988; Giles, Ryan & Anas 2008; Harwood & Giles 1993; Ng, He & Loong 2004; Williams et al. 1997), cross cultural situations (Ayoko, Härtel & Callan 2002; Harzing & Maznevski 2002) in a range of workplace communication settings.

The following subsection focusses on the key general assumptions of CAT.

2.4.2 CAT assumptions

CAT relies on some key general assumptions around the sociohistorical context, personal and social identities and conversational tactics which are outlined in the following subsections.

2.4.2.1 Assumption 1: Sociohistorical context

First, communication interactions are influenced by the sociohistorical context in which the interaction is embedded (Giles et al. 2006:10) which is influenced directly by the contact opportunities available and motivation for the communication. Indirect influences include individual perceptions of context and previous histories of interactants (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005; Giles & Ogay 2007). In addition, interactants can perceive varying group memberships from their own or the interlocutor's inherent or displayed behaviours, which may be further influenced by norms, biases and stereotypes (Ayoko, Härtel & Callan 2002).

2.4.2.2 Assumption 2: Personal and social identities

Second, personal and social identities are negotiated during interactions stemming from initial orientations or perspectives held by participants (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005; Giles & Ogay 2007). Negotiations involve behaviours and tactics occurring in dynamic environments influenced by the message sender's perceptions and behaviour and by the behaviours and perceptions of interlocutors (Jones et al. 1999). As communication events are interactive and dynamic, interlocutors can exhibit changing motives and identities during a communication event. As a result, varying group memberships affect communications processes, outcomes and future intentions within the same encounters (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005). Ting-Toomey (2005a) describes this process as identity negotiation, where individuals range between a desire to belong or assimilate, and the need to establish distinctiveness.

2.4.2.3 Assumption 3: Use of conversational tactics

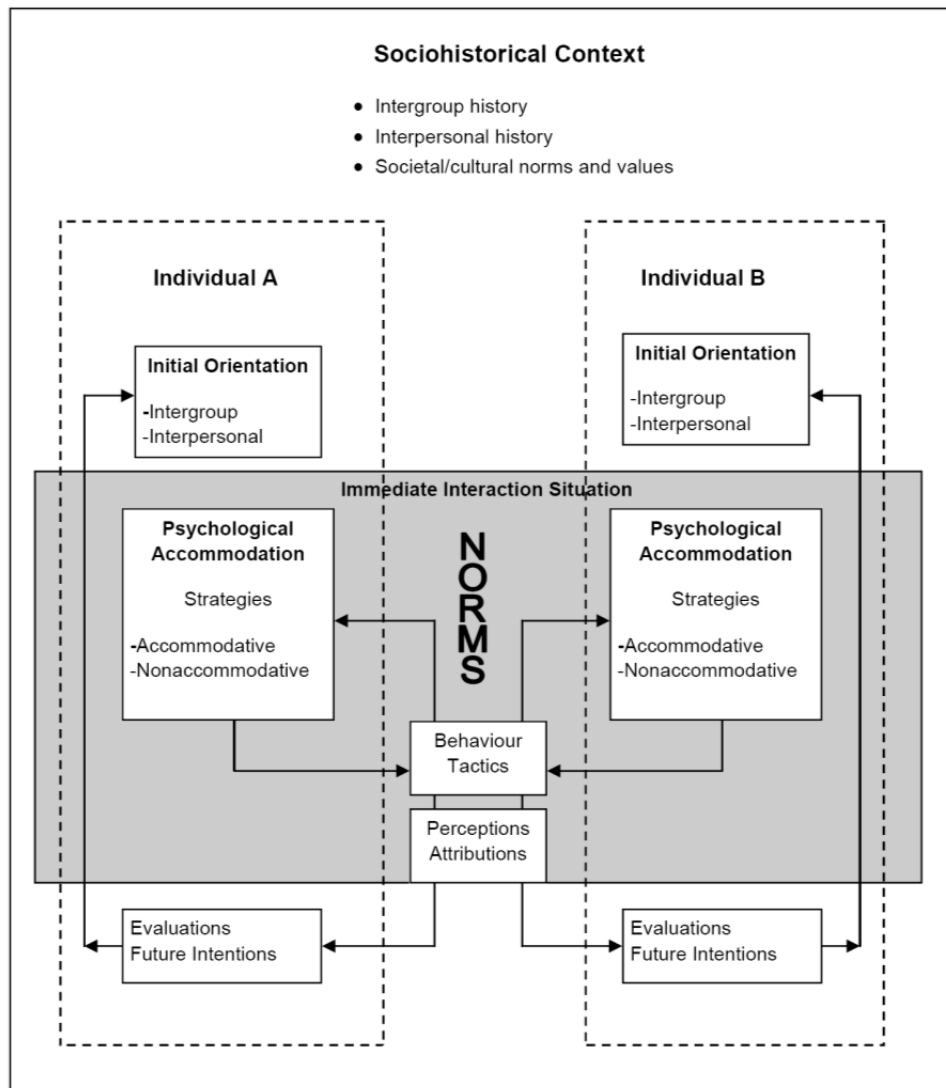
The third assumption in CAT is that interactants employ conversational tactics (Jones et al. 1999) to accommodate perceived differences and achieve outcomes (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005). Conversational tactics include the use of tone, accent, pace, word selection and emphasis on the words used (Watt, Llamas & Johnson 2010). During exchanges, individuals alter communication behaviours to achieve goals or outcomes (Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2009). However, due to varying social, situational and historical norms (socio-historic factors) and motivation factors, interactants also have varying expectations regarding optimal levels of accommodation (Giles & Ogay 2007:728). Individual differences, negotiations and altering behaviours during interactions, mean these expectations may or may not be met. Expectations also vary depending on whether the situation is, for example, an intergenerational social interaction (Giles, Ryan & Anas 2008; Lin, Harwood & Hummert 2008; Williams et al. 1997) or an interaction taking place in an organisational setting (Aritz & Walker 2010; Ayoko, Härtel & Callan 2002; Richmond & McCroskey 2000).

The next section presents a model of CAT from the perspective of interactions between individuals.

2.4.3 Model of CAT

Gallois, Ogay and Giles (2005) presented a refined model of CAT encompassing the theory's three general assumptions as a general theory of intergroup communication. Figure 2.2 shows the model of CAT from the perspective of two interactants – Individual A and Individual B.

Figure 2.2 Model of communication accommodation theory (CAT)



Source: Gallois, Ogay and Giles (2005:135)

Initial orientations brought to the interaction situation include the previous history of each individual (Individual A and Individual B), the history existing between the interactants, and societal and social norms and values relevant to the situation or context. Interlocutors adopt an accommodation strategy: accommodative (convergence), or non-accommodative (divergent or

maintenance) which can be dependent upon the immediate interaction situation or motivation of each individual and the norms of the situation. Evaluations of the effectiveness of the current interaction and future intentions to accommodate or not accommodate influence later interactions with the other person.

The next section defines accommodation.

2.4.4 Defining accommodation

Accommodation in a communication context describes the pursuit of communication alignment to facilitate understanding between message initiators and receivers during an interaction motivated to achieve an outcome (Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991). Gallois, Ogay and Giles (2005) describe accommodation as “a process through which interactants regulate their communication” through the use of behavioural moves in the form of conversational tactics such as changes in the pace of speech, adopting accents, or selection of words. Conversational tactics assist in achieving accommodation or non-accommodation strategies in an interpersonal interaction.

2.4.5 Accommodation strategies

Accommodative strategies aim to gain approval from or alignment with the other person (Jones et al. 1999). In an organisational context managers as communicators can highlight their similarities with the other person to consolidate positive interactions (Adams 2005) or, alternatively, utilise perceived differences for some type of situational advantage (Ando & Kobayashi 2008). Accommodating actual and perceived differences achieves effective interaction outcomes, which ultimately benefits the organisation overall (Tsui, Porter & Egan 2002; Zhang et al. 2008). On the other hand, fear of or an inability to effectively communicate, including accommodating individual differences between superior and subordinates, can lead to managers avoiding employee interactions altogether (Jackman & Strober 2003; McGuire, By & Hutchings 2007).

The original focus of accommodation strategies within CAT were convergence, divergence and maintenance (Aritz & Walker 2010; Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005; Giles & Ogay 2007; McCann & Giles 2006). Studies using CAT have now also identified other accommodation strategies

influencing interactions such as under-accommodation (Hajek 2015), and over-accommodation (Gasiorek, Giles & Soliz 2015; Giles & Ogay 2007). Convergence, divergence and maintenance accommodation strategies are introduced in the following sections as they are particularly relevant to subordinate and superordinate relations and discussed further in section 2.4.9.

2.4.6 Convergence

Convergence occurs when interactants seek to adapt to the differences between themselves and others, meaning interlocutors transition to similar (converged) styles (Giles & Ogay 2007). Message senders alter linguistic elements through such conversational tactics as speech rate, lexical diversity, accents, and word choice to minimise or accommodate perceived and/or real sociohistorical differences between groups of interactants (Giles 2008). Achieving a degree of convergence improves the likelihood of achieving effective outcomes or results (McCann & Giles 2006) or gaining approval from another person (Giles & Ogay 2007).

This is a different approach to divergence which is a non-accommodative strategy and defined in the next section.

2.4.7 Divergence

Divergence occurs when an individual adjusts their communication style during an interaction to differentiate or distinguish themselves from the other person and their perceived characteristics (Jones et al. 1999). When divergence occurs the likelihood of an ineffective communication outcome increases due to the use of non-accommodative strategies (Gasiorek & Giles 2012). Non-accommodative strategies accentuate perceived or real differences between sociohistorical groups attributed to senders and receivers (Giles et al. 2006). Non-accommodative strategies include emphasising personal differences (rank, experience) or conversational control actions like interrupting the other person's responses. To maximise differences between interactants "negative and even hostile behaviour" can occur. However, as Gallois, Ogay and Giles (2005:141) point out, non-accommodation strategies are not always obvious.

If there is no divergence or convergence, the alternative strategy is maintenance which is defined in the next section.

2.4.8 Maintenance

Maintenance strategies exist where interlocutors communicate consistent with their usual interaction style, regardless of perceptions, cues or behaviours of the other person. This means an interactant uses no accommodation strategies to move towards (converge) or away from (diverge) the other person (Giles & Ogay 2007). The perceived success or approval resulting from maintenance strategies depends on the level of similarity between individuals, the motivation for the interaction, and the outcomes the communication seeks to achieve (Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2006).

Accommodation strategies may differ due to the direction of the conversation – that is interacting with an individual who is more senior, junior, or equally ranked in areas such as age, status or position.

2.4.9 Direction of conversation and accommodation strategies

Giles and Ogay (2007) report on relationships that exist between convergence or divergence and the direction of accommodation. Upwards convergence occurs through the adoption or use of language, phrasing or pacing to align with someone holding a higher status. Upwards divergence occurs when linguistic strategies are used to emphasise the other person's higher status. In cases of downwards convergence individuals seek to achieve similarity with someone of lower status, to facilitate understanding, and demonstrate an ability to communicate using the other person's frame of reference (Sheahan 2005). Downwards divergence emphasises differences as a power-based tactic, for example, where a supervisor wants to establish interpersonal control (Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2003).

The application of CAT is still being broadened through studies which examine more complex interpersonal interactions and surrounding influences such as facework or face management which are reviewed in the next section.

2.4.10 Accommodation and face issues

Facework refers to the use of communication strategies to protect one's own face by minimising threats to self-esteem or to challenge or support someone else's self-esteem (Ting-Toomey

2005b). Face issues arise when an individual needs “to feel valued and respected” (Willemyns 2005:16). Oetzel, Garcia and Ting-Toomey (2008) reported facework strategies (such as indicating respect or using problem solving approaches) preserve an individual's sense of face during perceived conflicts, particularly in cross-cultural contexts. Dominating facework approaches involve defensive, emotive or aggressive behaviours or the intentional use of linguistic tactics to diminish another person's face. Subordinates indicated that a negative impact on face occurs when supervisors deliver negative feedback or unwarranted criticism, and that this causes greater embarrassment when it is done in front of other employees (Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2000). Communication involving negative approaches to interactions for example using as criticism or blame, damage the other person's sense of self even when the feedback is based on fact and supported by evidence (Lizzio, Wilson & MacKay 2008).

Jones et al. (1999) note face management is an important part of accommodation. Gardner and Jones (1999) reported differences in how supervisors and subordinates perceive face threats noting that supervisors mentioned threats to positive face (positive perceptions of performance or status), whereas subordinates perceived face threats as negative (having negative personal consequences). Gardner and Jones (1999) credited differing organisational roles as the reason for the variation in perspectives. Willemyns (2005:16) reported that face issues emerged as a major theme in a study of cross-cultural communication and leadership in the United Arab Emirates, but commented “face communication is a relatively new and untested concept in CAT” recommending it as an area for future studies particularly in an organisational context..

2.4.11 CAT research in organisational contexts

CAT has been used in a number of organisational studies including non-specific workplaces (Gardner & Jones 1999), financial institutions (McCann & Giles 2006; McCann & Giles 2007), student-faculty interactions in higher education (Hornsey & Gallois 1998; Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2006), and health care professionals (Watson & Gallois 1998; Watson & Gallois 2002).

Gardner and Jones (1999) tested some best and worst case workplace communication scenarios with 358 participants to identify strategies considered counter-accommodative, accommodative or over-accommodative. People with some supervisory experience were asked to respond to downwards communication, while those without supervisory experience responded to upwards scenarios. Best communication scenarios accommodated perceived and actual differences, where superiors used strategies that were clear, direct and considerate, and subordinates were open and listened to feedback. Worst case communication involved over-accommodating (patronising) and counter-accommodation (divergent strategies). Supervisors and subordinates agreed on best cases of communication (improving clarity; achieving positive outcomes), whereas worst cases suggested the influence of interactants' threatening behaviours (aggression or being overly demanding).

Ayoko, Härtel and Callan (2002) used CAT to examine conflict situations within culturally diverse workgroups in Australia, using a multi-method approach involving interviews, observations and self-reports. Interruption (divergent) strategies used to compensate for cultural differences led to destructive conflict (non-accommodation), while greater use of strategies preventing interruption and promoting free discussion led to productive conflict (accommodation). Where leaders of workgroups actively used communication strategies such as adjusting speech rate, using pauses or gestures to accommodate differences, workgroup communication breakdowns were overcome, leading to more effective outcomes.

Grice et al. (2006) investigated communication patterns across organisational boundaries in a public hospital where multiple group memberships were evident. Healthcare professionals could be a member of a workplace team (for example in an operating theatre), and an occupational grouping (for example doctors or nurses). Dual memberships established two categories within teams: double in-group (same team and occupation) and partial in-group (same team / different occupation). Demographic variables were collected to control for pre-existing differences in age, gender, managerial level, organisational tenure and education, but demographic results were not reported. The study focussed on in-group and out-group behaviours measured on a 5 point Likert scale against attribution statements. In-group biases were associated with positive ratings of communication and information sharing. Where

multiple group memberships were found, other group memberships influenced communication effectiveness, particularly where the composition of the team was heterogeneous.

McCann and Giles (2007) investigated intergenerational communication in banks, adding a cross-cultural element by comparing results from Thailand and the U.S.A. They found young workers preferred to communicate with people of the same age but communication with older workers (aged 50 years and over) was more problematic. Older workers were perceived to be non-accommodative, and to use divergent strategies such as issuing directives and acting superior. Despite the negative perceptions, younger workers remained respectful to the older person's needs. Cultural comparisons revealed that young Thai adults viewed workplace conversations as more difficult than their American counterparts.

Giles and Ogay (2007) found strong situational norms and aspects of power and status exist between interactants within organisations, stating that power and status provide an interesting communication context to examine accommodation. Jones et al. (1999) analysed conversational interactions between students, and between students and faculty to examine aspects of status in an educational context. Status determined the communication strategies for interpersonal control and males and females structured their interactions in different ways. A later study by Willemyns, Gallois and Callan (2006) analysed dyadic interactions between supervisors and postgraduate students (PhD and Masters). This study identified some supervisory attempts at accommodation by using relational strategies such as turn taking and encouraging participation to reduce status gaps created by differences in qualifications and role. However, some conclusions do not necessarily apply to workplaces in general because the purpose of the supervisor-postgraduate relationship is to develop autonomous research capabilities enabling the interactant to reach a higher level of qualification which is quite different to maintaining status differences in a workplace hierarchy.

Investigations using CAT in a workplace context have used interviews, conversation content analysis and surveys, but used limited ranges of demographic data to examine accommodation. CAT focuses on explaining the context of a specific communication encounter, while assuming "the existence of intergroup and interpersonal markers" (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005:138). McCann and Giles (2006:99-100) called for future studies to include "rank and age-varied

groups” including “newcomers, middle-managers, gender, [and] ethnicity” while investigating links between communication perceptions and behaviours within actual communication episodes. This study attempts to address some of these issues.

2.4.12 Summary of CAT

The accommodation of individual differences remains an area of interest in communication studies. CAT provides a basis for examining whether people modify their communication transmissions to highlight, reduce, or reinforce differences in an interaction to achieve understanding. CAT acknowledges a range of sociohistorical factors may affect an individual’s communication interactions which could include gender, age, cultural background, educational achievements and organisational tenure in addition to other situational or contextual issues. To date few investigations using CAT have examined a range of demographic factors in relation to managerial face-to-face conversation and evaluations of effectiveness. However, CAT does not outline processes for assessing the effect of a range of demographic factors on an interaction situation. Instead studies have pre-determined the demographic factors of interest using those factors to recruit the sample. This study provides an opportunity to examine the accommodation of demographic differences across a range of demographic factors in more than one direction in the context of a face-to-face workplace conversation.

The next section summarises the gaps identified in the literature reviewed.

2.5 Gaps identified in the literature

Section 2.5 expands upon the gaps identified in the literature outlined in section 1.3. These gaps are discussed in the following subsections.

2.5.1 Gap 1: Examining the effect of multiple demographic factors in workplace conversations

Relatively few relational demography studies have focussed on a broad range of attributes with the potential to influence face-to-face interactions within manager-employee relationship dyads (Shore, Cleveland & Goldberg 2003:529; Tsui, Porter & Egan 2002). This could be due to the

sample sizes required, the difficulty in gaining access to dyads, or the absence of an agreed methodological approach using an overarching communication theory.

2.5.2 Gap 2: Examining communication interactions in more than one direction

Workplace communication studies tend to focus on examining a communication relationship in one direction (upwards with a superior, or downwards with a subordinate), between peer groups or people on the same status level, or within a dyad, network or workgroup. Some research into dyadic relationships (for example Hair Collins, Hair Jr & Rocco 2009) sought the impressions of subordinates on the communication effectiveness of a superior, yet it appears few studies have examined the effectiveness of conversations when an individual communicates in two different directions within a workplace setting.

2.5.3 Gap 3: Examining a range of demographic differences with CAT

CAT acknowledges a variety of sociohistorical factors can impact interpersonal interactions but does not outline a process for examining the influence of multiple demographic differences on a communication event. Studies utilising CAT typically pre-determine the socio-historic or demographic parameters of interest “taking them as read” before surveying or interviewing respondents (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005:138). Several CAT studies use specific age classifications or employment groups as the predetermined sociohistorical factors for respondent recruitment. Examples include the comparison of intergenerational age differences with law enforcement officers (Giles et al. 2006), bankers (McCann & Giles 2006), higher education students and academics (Hornsey & Gallois 1998; Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2006), and health workers (Grice et al. 2006; Watson & Gallois 1998). Pre-determining demographic factors of interest circumvents the need to consider several demographic variables in a particular communication context. This study addresses this gap by directly tackling CAT with regard to gender and age, in addition to tenure, education, country of birth and use of English.

2.5.4 Summary of gaps identified in the literature

The identification of gaps in the literature led to the formation of the research questions presented in section 2.6.

2.6 Research questions

To address the research aims and gaps in workplace communication studies and some suggestions made for future research, the following five research questions are posed to examine the accommodation of individual perceived and actual demographic differences in self-reported face-to-face managerial conversations in Australian workplaces.

Research question 1 (RQ1)

Is there an association between demographic differences or similarities between interactants and face-to-face conversation effectiveness or ineffectiveness?

Research question 2 (RQ2)

Is there an association between the use of one or more accommodation tactics and effective face-to-face conversation outcomes when there is a demographic difference between interactants?

Research question 3 (RQ3)

Is there an association between the number of accommodation tactics used and overall face-to-face conversation effectiveness or ineffectiveness?

Research question 4 (RQ4)

Where a demographic difference is evident is there an association between the use of a specific accommodation tactic and the proportion of effective face-to-face conversations?

Research question 5 (RQ5)

When considering how to approach a future conversation with the other person,

- (a) do managers reporting an effective outcome plan not to change their approach?
- (b) do managers reporting an ineffective outcome plan to change their approach?

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed communication as an aspect of managerial work, organisational demography and considered the effect of individual differences on interactions and outcomes.

It also considered the contribution of CAT to understanding workplace communication. Gaps in the literature were identified in the area of perceived and actual demographic factors influencing managerial face-to-face workplace conversations and this was followed by the presentation of the research questions.

The following chapter outlines the research paradigm, the design of the study, and the methods used to gather and analyse the data. Ethical considerations are also reviewed.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter 3 outlines the study design and research methods selected to gather the conversation and demographic data to answer the research questions arising from the gaps in the literature identified in Chapter 2.

This chapter is presented in seven sections. First the research paradigm is identified. Next, the study design is described together with the rationale for determining the data to be collected to answer the research questions. The third section outlines the method including decisions on questionnaire design while the fourth section discusses the sample and recruitment procedures and notes ethical issues considered. The fifth section outlines ethical considerations followed by section six which discusses issues of reliability, validity, and evaluates the study design. Section seven discusses the strengths of the research methodology and the mitigation of potential weaknesses, followed by a summary of the chapter.

3.1 Identifying the research paradigm

Debate exists within organisational communication and management research as to the preferred paradigm of enquiry (Challenger & Shepherd 2013). There is also no dominant research paradigm associated with CAT, as previous studies have used quantitative, qualitative and mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) approaches (Soliz & Giles 2014). The paradigm of enquiry for this study is primarily positivist due to a focus on quantitative data analysis techniques.

Positivist studies focus on “objective description and explanation” (Veal 2005) where reality is discovered through empirical measurement (Sellick 2003). Studies looking at individual communications in light of demographic attributes lend themselves to positivist research (Gudykunst et al. 2005). Positivist studies use quantitative data and statistical analysis to measure assumptions and significance against theory and draw inferences from a specific sample (Hallebone & Priest 2009) avoiding or excluding the use of qualitative data. Jones et al.(2004:725) consider a purely positivist approach to investigations as a limitation in

communication research at an organisational level and instead call for a triangulated approach involving interpretive in addition to quantitative methods to provide insight into results.

With these perspectives in mind this study adopted a primarily positivist approach but included some interpretive elements to draw insights from the sample. The following sections outline the various design decisions made to incorporate these perspectives into the study.

3.2 Study design

This section provides an overview of the study design. As a result of incorporating demographic elements into a study investigating accommodation of differences in communication interactions, an approach was required that considered the use of complementary theories or frameworks to examine aspects of organisational demography with CAT as a theoretical base. These considerations are discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.2.1 Use of complementary theories or frameworks in CAT studies

The CAT model shown in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.2) identifies many aspects that can influence an interpersonal interaction but does not provide a guide on how to examine multiple sociohistorical or demographic factors in a research project. As discussed in section 2.5.4 previous studies using CAT have pre-determined the sociohistorical factors of interest, rather than examining the effect of a range of factors as part of the study. Gallois, Ogay and Giles (2005:138) highlight that the broad scope of CAT requires different theories to describe how other processes influence communication interactions. However, as Jones et al. (2004) point out, no one set of complementary theories or approaches has been adopted in communication or CAT related studies to the exclusion of others, therefore a complementary theoretical perspective and supporting framework considering CAT and organisational demography were required.

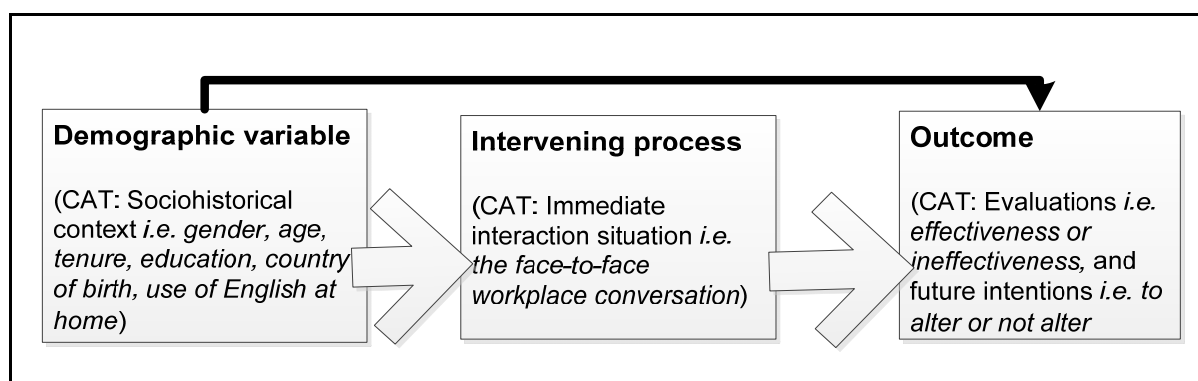
3.2.2 Use of complementary theories or frameworks in organisational demography studies

The use of complementary theories to examine organisational phenomena is not limited to communications research but applies equally to studies of demography. Lawrence (1997)

identifies how organisational demography studies require additional theoretical constructs to examine employee/work relationships and proposes three interpretations to facilitate this. The first interpretation, instrumental prediction, relies on demography to accurately and consistently predict organisational outcomes where personal involvement makes no difference to results. The second interpretation, indicator explanation, focuses on organisational relationships where demographic variables become reasonable substitutes for subjective concepts such as individual thoughts and actions (Lawrence 1997:4). The first two interpretations support direct relationships between demographic factors and an organisational outcome, which would not facilitate the testing of accommodation of demographic differences during an interaction. The third interpretation, the Intervening Process Explanation (IPE), links a demographic variable to an organisational outcome, through an intervening process (Lawrence 1997:3-4) in addition to considering the direct relationship between a demographic variable and an outcome. The IPE provides an appropriate framework to link demography (or sociohistorical factors in CAT), the use of accommodation in conversations and the evaluation of effectiveness of interactions.

In Figure 1.3 the structure of the IPE has been overlaid with elements of the CAT model presented in Figure 2.2. This shows the IPE process in the context of the study.

Figure 3.1 Intervening process explanation (after Lawrence 1997:3)



The IPE framework positions the influence of demographic factors (in this study: demographic differences) on an intervening process (in this study: a face-to-face workplace conversation where accommodation strategies could be used) and an outcome (in this study: the evaluation of conversation effectiveness).

Two areas of investigation are possible in using the IPE. The first measure (indicated by the narrow black arrow in Figure 3.1) considers the direct relationship between the demographic variable and the outcome – which aligns with research question RQ1. The second measure (indicated with the large block arrows in Figure 3.1) considers the relationships between the demographic variables, the use of accommodation tactics and the conversation outcome – which aligns with research questions RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4. RQ5 focusses solely on the relationship between conversation outcomes and future intent. It therefore does not require the inclusion of demographic variables and so falls outside the IPE design. However, by extending what is included in outcomes to include future intent, the study design allows for the collection of data to examine this part of the CAT model.

The IPE framework is appropriate for this study as it presents no theoretical conflict with CAT. Referring to the CAT model shown in Figure 2.2, the demographic variable aligns with CAT's sociohistorical context belonging to the interactants, and the face-to-face workplace conversation operates as the immediate interaction situation for CAT and as the intervening process for the IPE positioned between the sociohistorical contexts of the individuals and the evaluations of effectiveness. The immediate interaction situation relates to the second assumption of CAT as discussed in section 2.4.2.2 which involves the situation where identities and meanings are exchanged (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005:135-136).

Having determined a framework to underpin the study, the next decision was to determine how to collect the data.

3.2.3 Determining how to collect the data

A self-reporting questionnaire was selected for data collection. This method was selected as being the most effective and efficient way of collecting a range of demographic data about respondents and interactants in addition to key aspects of the face-to-face conversations such as the use of linguistic tactics, and evaluations of effectiveness. Veal (2005:144) promotes the efficiency of self-completion questionnaires for their capacity in "gathering a wide range of complex information on individuals". Downs and Adrian (2004) report self-completion questionnaires are the most effective way of efficiently collecting responses to a variety of topics

in a single instance, while Hargie and Tourish (2009) support this approach as a valid means of collecting quantitative data in organisational communication contexts.

Some benefits in using self-completion questionnaires are the availability of standardised data for analysis, and the potential to collect sensitive information not usually disclosed via another method of data gathering (Downs & Adrian 2004). Self-reporting questionnaires are shown to be valid in sociolinguistic research (Dollinger 2012) and have been used in other studies where CAT was the theory of interest (for example: Giles et al. 2002; McCann & Giles 2006). Willemyns, Gallois and Callan (2003) used a self-completion questionnaire to investigate aspects of trust between supervisors and subordinates. A later study by Willemyns (2005) used self-reporting questionnaires to examine accommodative communication practices in the United Arab Emirates. These studies demonstrate that the decision to use a self-reporting questionnaire is appropriate for this style of CAT based study.

The next decision in designing the study was determining the demographic factors to be collected in the questionnaire.

3.2.4 Deciding which demographic factors to include in the design

There are a range of individual demographic factors that could be of interest in this study. However, when the number of demographic variables is broadened, the chances of gaining meaningful and stable results are reduced (Field 2013). This could explain why previous interpersonal communication studies limit the factors of interest, or pre-select the demographic attributes and use those factors to recruit the sample.

As highlighted in sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4, gender and age are popular measures in communication and demographic studies and were the first two demographic categories selected. For practical and statistical reasons, the number of demographic and situational factors recorded during the survey process had to be limited, which influenced the final selections. Practical reasons included the survey length, and the information which could reasonably be perceived about another person. Data validity reasons centred on achieving sufficient sample sizes to conduct statistical analysis across a number of variables. After reviewing the literature and considering the aims of the study, it was decided to include the

demographic categories of tenure (organisation, position and relationship), the highest level of education achieved, country of birth, and use of English language at home.

3.2.5 Collecting perceived demographic data

A key premise of CAT is that perceptions about others influence interactions. Individuals make comparisons between sociohistorical actualities and demographic perceptions (Ayoko, Härtel & Callan 2002; Gallois & Giles 1998; Giles, Ryan & Anas 2008). Actualities and perceptions of demographic factors “in turn influence evaluations and future intentions” (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005:136). As a result it was important to collect perceived rather than actual demographic factors of the other person in the conversation to test how accommodation of perceived attributes and outcomes relates to the use of linguistic strategies. This considers the second assumption of CAT discussed in section 2.4.2.2 where personal identities are acknowledged (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005:135-136).

3.2.6 Face-to-face conversations as the intervening process

Face-to-face workplace conversations were selected as the intervening process (Figure 3.1) or immediate interaction situation (Figure 2.2) and addresses the first assumption in CAT discussed in 2.4.2.1 by providing a sociohistorical context. Face-to-face conversations provide the best opportunity for managers to perceive the selected demographic attributes of the other person due to the availability of auditory and visual cues (Hornsey & Gallois 1998).

3.2.7 Collecting data on two face-to-face conversations

The study was designed to collect data on two face-to-face conversations to compare results. Rather than asking respondents to reflect on two face-to-face conversations with the same person or two different subordinates, it was decided to compare conversations in two different directions. Therefore the study called for respondents to reflect on one face-to-face conversation between themselves and a subordinate and another between themselves and their superior. The collection of data on more than one conversation allows for comparative analysis of the two face-to-face conversations initiated in different directions by the same person. Comparative analysis provides a better understanding of phenomena when an

assessment is made between “two or more meaningful contrasting cases or situations” (Bryman & Bell 2011:63).

Comparative analysis has been used in previous CAT studies. Williams and Giles (1996) analysed conversations between younger and older people using two distinct age groupings to establish a clear point of comparison. McCann and Giles (2006) followed a similar approach investigating the accommodation practices of older and younger bankers between the U.S.A. and Thailand which considered comparative ages in addition to nationality based differences. Consequently this study was designed to allow for the collection of two sets of face-to-face conversation data, but it also needed to collect data to test whether managers accommodate demographic differences.

3.2.8 Conversation outcomes

As discussed in section 3.2.2, the outcome in the IPE framework aligns with the evaluations of effectiveness in the CAT model (Figure 2.2) and provides a means of testing whether the use of linguistic tactics results in accommodation of demographic differences. Besides considering the effectiveness of an interaction, the CAT model also depicts how evaluations of effectiveness influence future interactions which prompted research question RQ5. Consequently, it was decided to include questions to capture both the effectiveness of the conversation, and the possible intent to alter the way a person would speak in future face-to-face conversations.

3.2.9 Summary of the study design

This section outlined how complementary theories and frameworks are necessary to investigate the relationship between aspects of organisational demography and managerial conversations and why a self-reporting questionnaire was the method chosen for data collection. Key considerations for data collection were also reviewed.

The next section discusses the method of designing and delivering the survey to collect data.

3.3 Method

This section discusses how the questions in the survey were designed and how the method of administering the survey was selected. Information about recruiting the sample and the criteria for qualifying for participation are also discussed.

3.3.1 Questionnaire design

All data was gathered using a single online survey instrument. The survey was designed to collect self-report data on each respondent manager in addition to perceived data about one of their subordinates, and a superior the respondent reports to. This allowed for demographic differences and similarities to be calculated. The questionnaire also had to gather information about the use of linguistic tactics and the perceived outcome of each face-to-face conversation to determine if there was a relationship between the reported use of accommodation tactics and the effectiveness of interactions. Existing survey tools were examined to determine if elements could be adopted for the questionnaire, however no existing instrument encompassed the required fields so a new questionnaire was designed.

The selection and style of questions included in the questionnaire are discussed in the following sections. A copy of the final questionnaire used for this study is provided in Appendix A Study Questionnaire. For ease of reference some questions are reproduced to demonstrate the measures selected against the relevant sections.

3.3.2 Screening questions

A set of screening questions were positioned before the main body of the questionnaire (numbered S1-S6) as shown in Table 3.2

Figure 3.2 Screening questions

Question Number	Question
S1	<i>Do you have employees reporting directly to you?</i>
S2	<i>Have you had people reporting to you for longer than 12 months?</i>
S3	<i>In your position in the workplace do you report to someone else?</i>
S4	<i>How many people work in your company or organisation?</i>
S5	<i>Are you...Male or Female?</i>
S6	<i>Which category below indicates your age?</i>

Screening questions are designed to identify a specific population eligible for a study and terminate those ineligible (Callegaro & DiSogra 2008). Screening questions in this study determined if respondents could answer questions about a conversation with a subordinate (S1) and a superior (S3). Screening question S2 determined whether potential respondents had managed other people for a minimum of 12 months providing both an opportunity for a range of experiences to be reflected upon in addition to establishing some level of managerial experience. There were also screening questions to ensure that the workplace contained more than 50 people (S4) to increase the likelihood and validate that there was some form of hierarchy within the organisation that incorporated middle-management. The final screening questions related to the quotas for gender (S5) and age (S6). The age question was specifically designed to exclude respondents under the age of 18 years in line with ethics approval.

3.3.3 Order of questions

The order of questions has been shown to influence respondents' answers in web based surveys (Couper 2008; Couper 2000), therefore careful consideration was given to the placement of questions within the survey. Two main groups of questions followed the screening questions. The first was for the downwards conversation with a subordinate (for reference purposes called conversation 1), the second for an upwards conversation with a superior (for reference purposes called conversation 2).

Each section within the questionnaire was structured in the same way. Questions about the face-to-face conversation, the rating of its effectiveness and intent to change a future interaction

were followed by questions about the use or non-use of linguistic tactics to test for accommodation. The method of collecting self-report data about the face-to-face conversation, the rating of effectiveness of the face-to-face conversation, and collecting data on the type of linguistic tactic used in the face-to-face conversation are discussed next.

3.3.4 Collecting data about the face-to-face conversation

The key principles of Flanagan's (1954) critical incident technique (CIT) were used to establish a reference point for respondents to identify the other person in the conversation and reflect on whether accommodation strategies were used in each face-to-face conversation. CIT relates investigations to intentional (subjective) experiences within a frame of reference, regardless of whether experiences are positive or negative (Flanagan 1954). The CIT method of enquiry is designed to collect "functional or behavioural descriptions of events or problems" (Butterfield et al. 2005:476), but due to the results of practical application of CIT in communication audits, Downs and Adrian (2004) relabelled the critical incident a "critical experience". The ICA audit survey version in Hargie and Tourish's (2009) handbook on communication audits includes a CIT style question, adopting Downs and Adrian's label of critical experience to assist in identifying sources of effective or ineffective communication (Hargie & Tourish 2009:434).

While the CIT is primarily a qualitative measure (Butterfield et al. 2005; Zwijze-Koning & de Jong 2007) a recalled conversation has previously been used as a frame of reference in a CAT quantitative study. Giles, Ryan and Anas (2008:23) examined Canadian intergenerational communication practices asking respondents "to envision past conversations" before providing responses to Likert-based questions so that answers were based on a situation, but their study did not report whether qualitative information about the conversation was collected.

To gather insights into responses evaluating conversation effectiveness and future intent, respondents were asked to recall, and in a free format field record, points from a face-to-face conversation about a reasonably important workplace issue. Willemyns used questionnaires to collect descriptive contextual information about workplace conversations about certain aspects of a subordinate-manager interaction as part of his PhD thesis study (Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2000). In his study participants were asked to write up to one page describing the

conversation in as much detail that could be remembered. For this study, descriptive contextual information was gathered via three questions to group together recalled aspects of the conversation. Managers were provided a free format text box to record information they felt was pertinent to the conversations being recalled. Figure 3.3 show the questions and explanatory help notes for questions 2, 3 and 4 (conversation 1 with the subordinate). The same questions for conversation 2 with superiors were posed to respondents in questions 19, 20 and 21.

Figure 3.3 Survey questions relating to aspects of each conversation

Q2 Please briefly describe what you believe prompted you to initiate the conversation.

Help Comment [for example, received some customer complaints, progress reports highlighted issues]

Q3 Briefly summarise the content of the conversation.

Help Comment [for example, we discussed how the person was not meeting the turnaround times for service issues]

Q4 How did the person respond to your comments?

Help Comment [for example, became very angry about being questioned about the quality of their work, pleased to get some positive feedback]

3.3.5 Collecting data to rate effectiveness and intent to change

Conversation effectiveness (questions 5 and 22) was measured on a five-point scale with anchors ranging from 1 (totally ineffective) to 5 (totally effective) as reproduced in Figure 3.4. A help comment was provided to clarify what was meant by conversation effectiveness.

Figure 3.4 Survey question 5

Q5 Please rate how effective you feel the conversation was. Was it... [multiple choice 1 answer only]

Help Comment [for example, did the conversation achieve the outcome you intended?]

1. Totally ineffective
 2. Somewhat ineffective
 3. Neither ineffective or effective
 4. Somewhat effective
 5. Totally effective
-

3.3.6 Collecting data on the intent to alter future conversations

Responses to the question on whether the respondent intended to alter some aspect of a future face-to-face conversation with the same person were captured in questions 6 (reproduced in Figure 3.5) and question 23.

Figure 3.5 Survey question 6

Q6 The next time you had a conversation with this person would you alter how you spoke with them in anyway? [no/yes response]

1. No, I would not alter the way I spoke in the next conversation [*took respondent to Q7*]
 2. Yes, I would alter the way I spoke [*took respondent to comment box*]
-

Where a respondent indicated they would alter a future conversation, they were taken to a text box which sought comments on what they would alter in the next conversation (questions 6a and 23a).

3.3.7 Collecting data to test for accommodation

The third assumption of CAT (discussed in section 2.4.3) is that interactants employ conversational tactics to accommodate or not accommodate perceived differences in order to achieve an outcome. Therefore the questionnaire also asked respondents to indicate if they used any conversational tactics involving changes to speech tone of voice, pacing, words used or the way words were used during the conversation to test for accommodation (questions 14 reproduced in Figure 3.6 and question 32).

Figure 3.6 Survey question 14

Q14 During the face-to-face conversation with this person, were you aware of changing anything about the way you normally speak? For example, did you speak more slowly than normal to make sure you were understood? For each of the following please indicate whether or not you changed that aspect of your speech. Choose as many as apply.

	Yes	No
I changed the tone of my voice		
I changed the pace of my speech		
I changed the words that I used		
I repeated the words that I said		
I used simpler words		

The list of linguistic tactics shown in Figure 3.6 was randomised when presented to respondents to avoid question order bias which can influence results (Krosnick 1999).

Testing for accommodation was limited to linguistic tactics rather than non-linguistic behaviours. Linguistic tactics are associated with aspects of speech such as paralanguage features that relate to the manner of speaking including the use of tone and pace, or lexical features such as word selection (Crystal 2006). Non-linguistic behaviours include proxemics, or how individuals perceive, use and behave within spaces (Hall 1966:94-95), or what a person does such as body motions, gestures, and gazes (Hargie & Marshall 1986) which are better suited to studies designed around observation rather than questionnaires. While non-linguistic behaviours are relevant influences on face-to-face interpersonal workplace communication, gathering data on any or all of these aspects would have diverted attention from the accommodation of individual demographic attributes through the use of linguistic tactics.

3.3.8 Demographic Questions

Demographic questions were designed around elements of existing survey instruments. Age data was collected using the categories shown in the revised version of the International Communication Association (ICA) audit survey (Hargie & Tourish 2009) and shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Respondent age classifications

Age group classification	29 years and under	30 to 39 years old	40 to 49 years old	50 years and over
---------------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------

Other demographic questions were based on the design, options and phrasing used for the gender, highest level of education achieved, country of birth and language used at home sections in the 2011 Australian Census (ABS 2011a). Questions relating to tenure were grouped into 6 bands capturing periods from less than one year to over 15 years. They were based on the background information questions in a version of the ICA organisational audit questionnaire (Hargie & Tourish 2009:422).

Demographic questions about the other person in the conversation were positioned at the end of the relevant conversation section, with the overall survey finishing with the demographic questions about the respondent. The positioning of demographic questions after other

questions was deliberate. Separating perceptual questions such as the evaluation of effectiveness from demographic questions is recommended by authors such as Crompton and Wagner (1994) to minimise the potential for demographic perceptual biases influencing results.

3.3.9 Validation and question logic

Validation and question logic rules were applied to certain questions to ensure respondents completed all compulsory fields, preventing what Osborne (2012:105) describes as missingness. The range of possible answers to some questions was limited, for example ,age, gender, tenure and education, labelled by Zikmund (2013) as fixed alternative questions where participants select the response closest to their own point of view. Examples of questions with fixed alternatives were question 9 (reproduced in Figure 3.7.) and question 26, which asked respondents to indicate the perceived age of the other person. Respondents were unable to progress further until an answer was provided from the listed options.

Figure 3.7 Survey question 9

Q9 Which category below do you believe indicates or is your best guess of the age of the person you spoke with? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. 29 or younger
 2. 30-39
 3. 40-49
 4. 50 or older
-

Questions with fixed values were programmed so responses could be coded during collection. This approach served a number of purposes. Firstly, respondents were directly responsible for answers without intermediary bias (Berk 1983; Canary & Spitzberg 1990; Stone & Shiffman 2002). Secondly, potential issues caused by miscoding or keystroke errors are reduced (Sue & Ritter 2012). While any survey (written or online) may contain respondent errors (Krosnick 1999), data entry errors (entering paper survey data into the study database) are avoided (Couper 2000; Kraut et al. 2004). In addition, the survey programming validates data before responses are captured into the project database ensuring that responses are recorded within the rules established for the question (Bryman & Bell 2011; Sue & Ritter 2012). Thirdly, once the survey closed, the data was available for immediate use, and delivered in a format for upload into statistical analysis software, SPSS.

3.3.10 Testing the survey design

A complete draft of the online questionnaire was built in Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) and trialled with a group of part-time postgraduate students holding managerial positions. Testing a questionnaire is an important step in study to ensure respondents from all levels of education can understand the question being asked without talking down to respondents holding higher qualifications (Zikmund 2013). Bryman and Bell (2011:262) explain how piloting ensures questions operate as they should and that the survey programming functions correctly which is important as there is no interviewer to clarify points of confusion. The trial via Survey Monkey assessed the approximate length of time to complete the survey at around 15 minutes. Feedback from trial participants resulted in some questions being rephrased to improve ease of understanding, and clarifying some ambiguities through the use of simpler terms and explanations.

3.3.11 Final design

The final survey instrument is labelled the Demography and Recalled Communication Instrument (DARCI). An introductory section familiarised respondents with the objectives of the survey, and provided contact details for the researcher and ethical information. After being determined to be eligible, respondents were given 37 questions to answer comprising a mix of categorised, free format and dichotomous questions.

3.3.12 Delivering the questionnaire to the sample

An online survey tool was determined to be the most appropriate way of delivering the self-reporting questionnaire to the target population, and a panel service provider contracted to distribute the online survey (discussed further in section 3.4.2). Dollinger (2012:75) highlights how technological methods of online questionnaire distribution, coupled with the ability to have responses automatically collated and categorised provide “unrivalled time-effectiveness when compared to any other data gathering methods”. They go further to state that electronic self-completion questionnaires are an economical way of collecting data from a range of respondents. Self-completion online questionnaires can encourage participants to be more truthful in responses (Booth-Kewley, Larson & Miyoshi 2007), particularly in relation to sensitive

questions when they know that their identity remains anonymous to the researcher (Kays, Gathercoal & Buhrow 2012). While no self-report instrument can guarantee that respondents report frankly and truthfully, Spector (1994) argues that most researchers and reviewers would accept that self-report instruments do a reasonably good job of reflecting people's perceptions of their job and their affective responses to work.

Online questionnaires provided some added benefits in the data collection process. Online surveys can require presentation of questions in a specific order, preventing respondents from looking through the questionnaire in advance. Evans and Mathur (2005) report that using online surveys in this way reduces survey bias and errors. Online surveys can use programmed validation rules (Sue & Ritter 2012). Validation rules alert respondents to complete missing areas where questions have been classified as "must answer", and direct participants to the next question area to be answered depending on responses to other questions (known as skip logic). The question validation and programming rules are noted on the copy of the questionnaire provided in Appendix A Study Questionnaire. Programming online surveys in this way invokes error trapping (Zikmund 2013) and reduces the instances of incomplete response sets. Ultimately this increases the number of useable survey responses achieved in a shorter period of time.

Having determined the overall design of the questionnaire, the next decision was selecting participants.

3.3.13 Selecting the participants for the sample

Managers as an occupational group were the target population with middle-managers providing the best prospect of recruiting respondents with dual reporting responsibilities. The study was designed around managers speaking with subordinates and superiors, therefore mid-level managers or middle managers were targeted for the sample. A quota sampling approach was used to ensure that certain demographic characteristics were evident in the managers recruited for the survey (Zikmund 2013). While quota sampling is a non-representative population limiting generalisability to Australian managers, this approach ensured that specific demographic attributes achieved a minimum number of responses to facilitate the planned statistical analysis.

Age groupings and gender were considered to be the most important demographic factors to specify target quotas for respondent recruitment purposes based on the intergenerational origins of CAT (Giles, Ryan & Anas 2008; McCann & Giles 2006). The most complex area for determining where to split or segment respondents was age. Table 3.2 shows the age brackets selected to categorise respondents.

Table 3.2 Respondent age classifications

Age group classification	29 years and under	30 to 39 years old	40 to 49 years old	50 years and over
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Age categories shown in Table 3.2 form part of the ICA audit survey (Goldhaber 1976; Hargie & Tourish 2009). Collecting a broad range of age data addresses a call by McCann and Giles (2006) to consider other age comparisons outside of studies designed to highlight generational differences. To provide a consistent basis for comparison between genders an even distribution of male and female respondents was sought across the selected age groups.

Therefore, three recruitment criteria formed the core brief to the panel research company: age, gender and current workplace role. The next step was determining the sample size.

3.4 Determining the sample size

A number of factors were considered when determining the sample size. Field (2013) notes that 30 respondents under each category is the widely accepted minimum number required to achieve a normal distribution. Based on the age and gender criteria outlined in section 3.3 the minimum sample size would be N=240 persons ((30 males + 30 females) x 4 age categories). However, consideration had to be given to the number of other demographic categories being examined which meant trying to achieve the maximum number of responses over the minimum N=240 within the available budget. Ultimately a sample of N=400 was determined as the maximum population achievable given budget constraints which provided a target to divide between the age and gender groupings. Table 3.2 shows the final gender and age target quotas determined for the study.

Table 3.3 Age and gender respondent categories

Age group classification	Under 30	30 to 39 years old	40 to 49 years old	50 years and over
Number and gender of respondents sought	50 female 50 male	50 female 50 male	50 female 50 male	50 female 50 male

3.4.1 Industry group

To provide a broad perspective on accommodation in Australian workplaces it was decided not to limit participation to a particular industry group or organisation. Some occupational groups in Australia have a dominance of one gender over another, such as a male dominance in technical and construction careers, and female dominance in service and administration (ABS 2015b). These occupational sector dominances could skew and confound results particularly in the area of gender effects. Riordan and Wayne (2001) report that individual organisations have naturally skewed populations which can mask the effects of demographic similarities and differences, and when a study is confined to one organisation may result in restricted and possibly biased outcomes. Therefore all industry groups had the potential of being represented in the study; however this factor did not form part of the recruitment or respondent screening procedures.

3.4.2 Panel Service Provider

To reach the number of mid-level managers required for the study, a panel service provider was contracted to recruit respondents and administer the online survey. Recruitment was based on the pre-defined sample numbers and criteria outlined in Table 3.3. They suggested that the time taken to complete the questionnaire was budgeted based a completion time between 16 and 20 minutes as the trial (discussed in 3.3.7) used postgraduate students more familiar with survey design and the purpose of the study.

A specific panel provider was selected that maintains an Australian respondent database where empanelled participants are categorised by occupational group and sub-role for example: middle manager/department manager, and junior manager/supervisor/team leader. The panel provider invited potential respondents identified as holding a middle manager or department manager position via email indicating the estimated time commitment of 20 minutes. The email contained a direct link to the panel provider's website which housed the questionnaire.

This approach meant there was a higher likelihood for those managers to have people reporting to them, and that they in turn reported to someone else. This method ensured links could continue to be sent to panellists whose profiles matched the study criteria until a sufficient number of completed survey responses and specific minimum quotas for age and gender were achieved.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The research design and data collection methods were approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong. The purpose of the research was explained on the introductory page of the survey, specifying the confidentiality arrangements, data collection and storage specifications. Where a potential respondent was identified to be under the age of 18 years via the age screening question (S6), they were removed from the survey process before entering the main section of the survey instrument.

Survey participants had to click on a 'next' button as part of the consent process before entering the section containing the screening questions. Where participants chose not to proceed, the survey session was terminated and no data was collected. Respondents could exit the survey at any time before completion, and any partially completed surveys were removed from the project database. While some personal information was collected (gender, age, level of education, nationality and ethnicity), none of the information was linked to an identifiable individual and the data was de-identified prior to delivery of the data by the panel service provider. As a result, privacy considerations for study participants and their respective employers were not compromised.

3.6 Study validity, reliability and evaluation of design

The concerns of validity and the associated concept of reliability are critical criteria for evaluating research projects and the subsequent quality of results (Bryman & Bell 2011) and are important aspects to be addressed in the reporting of positivist based studies (Hallebone & Priest 2009).

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is concerned with the ability of the survey instrument to gather information in line with the conceptual aims in a manner that is theoretically sound (Field 2013; Zikmund 2013). The previous sections outline how the questionnaire was designed considering the conceptual aims in the study, key assumptions of CAT, and the research questions. While design and preliminary testing established that the questionnaire was drawing responses as planned, Sue and Ritter (2012:55) state the validity of responses of an online questionnaire can be compromised in three ways. Firstly respondents may feel pressured to answer in a particular way, secondly respondents may not know or be unable to estimate what is required in answering the question, and finally respondents may have little relationship or interest in the topic being investigated. These issues were addressed in the study design in the following ways. Firstly, the use of the critical incident technique enabled respondents to self-select the event described. In addition, the design of questions collecting demographic information was based on existing instruments and positioned in the survey to minimise perceptual bias. Through the use of an active panel, respondents could choose to participate in a survey of interest and relevance to them.

As a further test, the final questionnaire had a soft or limited release launch from the panel provider with preliminary results delivered for review after three days. Preliminary data from 20 male and female respondents across all age categories confirmed that respondents could navigate and complete all survey questions (including free-text fields) in a live environment and that questionnaire fields were capturing data in the same way as the draft survey test.

3.6.1.1 Other validity issues

Other issues related to validity involve measurement or construct validity, internal validity or the issue of causality, and external validity to consider whether results can be generalised beyond the scope of the study (Bryman & Bell 2011).

As this study did not use a previous instrument, the best attempt at achieving measurement validity for demographic data collected in the questionnaire was to use the accepted construct of census question design. The design of demographic questions was based on the

demographic sections of the most recent Australian census (ABS 2011a). While self-reported demographic survey data in this study cannot be validated through the use of organisational records or official documentation, the same issue arises with census related responses. Therefore a self-completion online questionnaire was considered an appropriate method to use for collecting data relating to the respondent, and the perceived demographic attributes for the other person in the conversation in this study.

Internal validity or causality is a concern with quantitative research where studies seek explanations for a phenomenon (Bryman & Bell 2011). Internal validity refers to determining if conclusions drawn regarding relationships between independent and dependent variables are valid, and whether the independent variable is solely responsible for changes observed (Zikmund 2013). What constitutes internal validity is the subject of continuing debate with demographic data based studies as there is no universally agreed approach to demographic measurement (Riordan & Wayne 2008; Stewart & Garcia-Prieto 2008; Thatcher & Patel 2011). In this study, relationships between independent and dependent demographic variables were examined through the use of a range of statistical tests appropriate for the type of data, validation rules within statistical tests, post-hoc tests and reporting effect sizes. The aim was to identify associations between the use of linguistic tactics to accommodate demographic differences in face-to-face workplace conversations rather than determine causality.

External validity refers to the ability to generalise results to real world situations as the study may not represent the true situation and conditions related to the subject are important (Bryman & Bell 2011). This is of particular concern when students act as surrogates or substitutes for organisational members, as it is difficult to guarantee they are similar to the real people they are trying to portray (Zikmund 2013). Another issue arises in trying to generalise results to occupational roles or activities when a study is confined to a particular organisation or industry which may have its own biases within the workforce.

In order to address the external validity issues, this study sourced real managers through a research panel provider to avoid the use of student surrogates, and limit demographic biases evident within certain industries. Target quotas were also set across age bands and genders to achieve an even distribution of respondents in order to examine gender and age effects rather

than achieve a population representative of the gender and age composition of the Australian workforce. Recruiting a representative sample may limit statistical testing possible for some demographic categories. The intention was to provide insight into the accommodation of demographic differences related to Australian workforces, rather than provide a totally representative population of Australian organisations.

3.6.2 Reliability

The nature of the online survey means that any data collected is coded as each question is answered (Bryman & Bell 2011; Dillman, Smyth & Christian 2009). The programming rules built into the survey process ensure all fields are completed and questions are answered in a specific order (Sue & Ritter 2012). The assessment of effectiveness and future intentions is a subjective measure based on the respondents' perceptions, and therefore cannot be measured in terms of accuracy nor assessed with regard to the reliability of the answers provided. However, the approach used in gathering self-report data is a popular method in organisational research (Bryman & Bell 2011) and in communication studies (Downs & Adrian 2004; Hargie & Tourish 2009) and studies involving CAT (for example: Giles et al. 2002; Giles et al. 2000; Harwood et al. 2001; McCann & Giles 2006). My thesis has not been designed to replicate an existing study, nor designed to be a longitudinal study, so replicability can only accurately be measured at a later time with another sample using the same questionnaire and statistical analysis techniques.

3.7 Evaluating strengths in the study design and method

This section looks at the strengths in the design of this research project and the method used to collect the data.

3.7.1 Strengths in the study design and method

The strengths in the study design are the specific recruitment criteria for the sample, the method of collecting data and the design of questions. Sourcing the sample through a panel provider avoided the use of student surrogates, thereby improving the likelihood of gathering demographic and face-to-face conversation data related to real Australian workplaces. The use of a panel provider meant that respondent anonymity was guaranteed, and that the data were

delivered ready to load into SPSS saving time and possible error in data entry. Specific inclusion criteria filtered through the screening questions ensured as far as reasonably possible that only Australian managers with genuine managerial experience were included in the sample. Using an online survey delivered via a panel service provider ensured that fully completed questionnaires were received to conduct the analysis and that minimum sample quotas were fulfilled. Using questions designed for other studies such as the demographic questions in the Australian Census provided the best chance of collecting the data needed for analysis.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the theoretical assumptions surrounding the research methodology and the outline of the data collection design. By using complementary theories and adapting the intervening process construct, a framework and method were established to examine relationships between managerial sociohistorical demographic elements and accommodative communication practices.

The framework underpinning the data collection method, including the use of a questionnaire administered to an online panel, was discussed including the design of the instrument itself. The reasoning behind the sample population size and demographic categorisations was provided and the techniques related to data collection objectives were discussed. Finally an evaluation of the validity, reliability, strengths and weaknesses of the study design was outlined.

The following chapter presents the response rates for the online survey, the preparation of data for analysis, and results of the analysis against each research question.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

Chapter 4 details population counts, data preparation, data analysis processes and results. The first section details the sample composition and response rates. The second section outlines how the data were received and prepared for analysis followed by section three which presents the composition of the final sample population. The fourth section discusses the classification and review of variables, followed by section five which presents the demographics of the sample population. Section six discusses the calculation of demographic similarities and differences, and section seven provides an initial analysis of demographic similarities and differences. Sections eight to twelve present the results in relation to each research question, followed by a summary of the chapter.

4.1 Finalising the sample data

This section describes the response rates achieved and the time taken by respondents to complete the online questionnaire.

4.1.1 Respondent numbers and completion times

The survey was opened to respondents without a predefined cut-off date. Based on advice from the panel service provider, it was anticipated that the various demographic quotas relating to age and gender would be achieved within a few weeks. Responses were monitored via a reporting process established with the panel provider to assess the numbers of survey completions against the quotas set for each age and gender category. During the first week of full launch, it became apparent the youngest managerial demographic set (under 30 years male/female) would be the most difficult to achieve. A number of factors could have been responsible including the size of the organisation and the ages and reporting relationships of the managers in the panel.

After two weeks, all age categories for 30 years and over were close to their quotas, with the overall number of survey completions reaching 378. The only category having fewer than 30 respondents was the males under 30 years. In an attempt to achieve some more responses in

this age group the survey was left open for an additional week. Other demographic groups were also reopened to achieve an overall total as close to 400 responses as possible. After one more week, the males under 30 category had achieved 31 responses with N=398 surveys completed. The average time taken to complete the survey time was 16 minutes 13 seconds (based on the 90% of respondents who took 1 hour or less), which was well within the projected completion time of 20 minutes discussed in section 3.4.2.

Once the questionnaires were completed, the de-identified data files were received. The data had to be reviewed and prepared for analysis which is discussed next.

4.2 Data preparation

This section details the process of managing and labelling data, identifying errors and inconsistencies in the data, and how errors and inconsistencies were dealt with.

4.2.1 Managing the data and labelling data fields

The data was managed and analysed in SPSS (version 21 release 21.0.0.0, 2012). Each set of survey responses was allocated a case number (1-398).

A total of 1,194 sets of individual demographic data were uploaded into SPSS (398 completed questionnaires x respondents/subordinates/superiors). To distinguish the different types of demographic data within the dataset, data relating to the respondent was labelled with R followed by the category (for example: RGender), data relating to the subordinate employee was labelled with an E followed by the category (for example: EGender) and data relating to the superior was labelled with an S followed by the category (for example: SGender). It was found that this labelling convention assisted with ensuring the correct fields were selected for analysis within and between conversations.

Data relating to 796 conversations were also uploaded (398 downward and 398 upwards conversations). To distinguish the different conversations within the dataset, conversations with a subordinate were labelled and referred to as conversation 1 or C1; and upwards conversations with a superior were labelled and referred to as conversation 2 or C2 based on the order within the questionnaire.

The labelling conventions of case numbers, sets of demographic data and conversation labels are used throughout the rest of this thesis.

4.2.2 Identifying where errors and inconsistencies were likely to occur

As the majority of survey questions were programmed with fixed alternatives, the primary source of errors or inconsistencies was most likely to be where a free text field had been used. One example was in questions 14b (C1) and 32b (C2) where managers were asked about the linguistic tactics used during the face-to-face conversation. A free text 'other' field was provided to capture answers where none of the categories presented corresponded with a manager's perceptions and the respondent wished to record an alternative answer. SPSS was used to generate preliminary frequency counts to identify where free text 'other' option choices had been selected. Once identified, these fields were reviewed for errors and inconsistencies, and a data diary was kept to record changes and actions to the dataset such as recoding actions and reasons. This process is discussed next.

4.2.3 Treatment of errors and inconsistencies in free text fields

The free text responses in the 'other' field were initially reviewed to determine if the response aligned with one of the existing question categories. In some instances the response in the 'other' category related to a valid option so these cases were recoded to the relevant valid option. In other cases the responses in the 'other' field did not relate to a valid option and did not accurately relate to the question. An example of this is where some respondents used the free text area in the country of birth questions (questions 13 and 31) to note the other person came from a region, rather than a country within a region. A similar issue arose with the use of English at home (questions 15 and 33).

Cases 10 & 124 (C1) noted Europe as the country of origin but reported the subordinates were perceived to speak English at home. This could be the result of the United Kingdom being a part of Europe, and/or the person having an excellent command of English but speaking with an accent. Another possibility is that the subordinate or superior may have spent some time living in an English speaking country. Others cases had unusual or incongruous descriptions of the language used at home. Case 338 (C2) indicated that the superior did not use English at home

and was not born in Australia yet the free format response noted the language (not English) the superior used was Australian. This could occur where a person was born overseas to Australian parents, or was naturalised as an Australian.

The main area where errors or inconsistencies were identified was about the language the other person was perceived to use at home (questions 16 and 34). Some respondents named accents (for example; case 24: C2 “Asian”) or a variant of English recognised as a language (for example; case 324:C2 “British”). Fuertes et al. (2012) report a person’s accent can influence how others perceive them, and their language preferences for writing and speaking. Due to dissimilarities in each respondent’s accent experiences, it is not always possible for individuals to discern differences to allow a clearer definition of actual countries of origin (Eades et al. 2003), or correctly identify variations in English languages (for example: American English, Australian English, British English, or Canadian English). Pantos and Perkins (2013) note that individuals classify someone else’s speech based on the listener’s normative accent experiences, and therefore a language may not be correctly identified. Due to the range of responses appearing in free-text fields relating to demographic questions, some decision were required about how to treat this data before analysis could take place.

4.2.4 How errors and inconsistencies were dealt with

As data was depersonalised, it was not possible to contact individual respondents to clarify meaning or explore answers to address errors and inconsistencies. Because of the range of variations in free text areas, most were left unaltered, as the purpose of the study was to work with perceived differences.

As some country of birth responses related to regions rather than countries, the country of birth categories were collapsed into ‘born in Australia’ and ‘born outside of Australia’. Responses related to accents that could be confidently categorised as variants of English (for example: American English, Australian English, British English, or Canadian English) were recoded to the category of using English at home. There were other cases where other accents could be categorised with a reasonable level of confidence as not being English (for example: “Asian” as mentioned above) but the specific language could not be determined. Consequently the

language categories were collapsed into a new two category variable: 'use of English at home' or 'use of a language other than English at home'¹.

While reviewing the free format fields, one set of responses (case 255) was identified as not relating to a face-to-face conversation so this case was deleted from the data². All other cases retained their original case numbers.

4.3 Revised sample population

Table 4.1 shows the final age and gender frequencies of the sample population following the removal of case 255. This is the final sample used for the data analysis reported in this chapter.

Table 4.1 Final sample

Age Group	Adjusted Sample		
	Male	Female	Total
Under 30	31	47	78
30-39	53	54	107
40-49	53	53	106
50 and over	51	55	106
Totals	188	209	397

After the removal of case 255 a total of 1,191 sets of individual demographic data (397 valid questionnaires x respondents/subordinates/superiors) and 794 conversations (397 downward and 397 upwards conversations) were available for analysis.

4.4 Simplification of complex terms

A number of complex terms have been simplified within the following sections for the sake of clarity and brevity. Therefore within the following sections the word 'perceived' has been omitted so where demographic data is reported for the subordinate or superior, it should be

¹ Collapsing the languages other than English categories meant that cases could not be identified where the manager and the other person spoke the same language other than English, and whether this relationship influenced the effectiveness of conversations.

² The inconsistency in case 255 was identified when examining the free format question responses. In C2 question 32b the respondent noted "Sorry, I missed the fact earlier that it had to be face to face – we actually work in different sites". This oversight occurred despite 15 prior mentions of the study being focussed on face-to-face conversations. This was the only case of its type identified during the data cleaning process.

read as 'perceived demographic data'. All notations of conversation refer to the self-reported face-to-face conversation between the interactants.

4.5 Demographic characteristics of the sample

The following sub-sections present the demographic information of the sample. Each section summarises the demographic data for the 397 respondent managers together with the demographic data in the downwards conversation with the subordinate (conversation 1:C1) and the upwards conversation with the superior (conversation 2:C2). The frequencies are presented by demographic category in the following order: gender, age, organisational tenure, position tenure, highest level of education, country of birth and use of English at home.

4.5.1 Gender

Table 4.2 shows the gender frequencies in the sample for the manager and the other person for both conversations.

Table 4.2 Gender frequencies

Gender N=397	Manager		Subordinate Conversation 1		Superior Conversation 2		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Males	188	47.4	195	49.1	245	61.7	628	52.7
Females	209	52.6	202	50.9	152	38.3	563	47.3
Total	397	100	397	100	397	100	1191	100

There were more female managers (n=209, 52.5%) than male managers (n=188, 47.4%) in the sample which was a consequence of opening up the age categories for extra respondents without restricting the gender categories. The gender of the other person in conversation 1 was fairly evenly spread between males (n=195, 49.1%) and females (n=202, 50.9%). For conversation 2, more males were reported as being the superior involved in the conversation (n=245, 61.7%) than female superiors (n=152, 38.3%). This was in line with the higher proportion of males holding managerial positions in the Australian workforce (ABS 2015b).

4.5.2 Age

Table 4.3 shows the ages of respondents and ages of the other person for both conversations.

Table 4.3 Age frequencies

Age N=397	Manager		Subordinate Conversation 1		Superior Conversation 2		Total	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Less than 30 years	78	19.6	149	37.5	58	14.6	285	24
30-39 years	107	27.0	118	29.7	100	25.2	325	27
40-49 years	106	26.7	81	20.4	119	30.0	306	26
50 years and over	106	26.7	49	12.3	120	30.2	275	23
Total	397	100	397	100	397	100	1191	100

The majority of downwards conversations were reported to be with subordinates aged under 40 (n=267, 67.2%). The majority of upwards conversations were with a superior aged over 40 (n=239, 60.2%). Only n=58 or 14.6% of upwards conversations were with a superior aged under 30. These figures reflect the expected alignment between increased age and more senior employee positions.

4.5.3 Organisational tenure

Table 4.4 shows the organisational tenure (OT) of managers and the other person for both conversations.

Table 4.4 Organisational tenure frequencies

Organisational tenure (OT) N=397	Respondent		Subordinate Conversation 1		Superior Conversation 2		Total	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
< 1 year	13	3.3	86	21.7	34	8.6	133	11
1 - 3 years	74	18.6	139	35.0	89	22.4	302	25
4 - 5 years	82	20.7	77	19.4	68	17.1	227	19
6 - 10 years	96	24.2	52	13.1	66	16.6	214	18
10 years or more	132	33.3	43	10.8	140	35.3	315	26
Total	397	100	397	100	397	100	1191	100

Over half of the subordinates involved in conversation 1 were reported to have an OT of less than three years (n=225, 56.7%). In conversation 2, most of the managers and superiors in the sample were reported as having OT of six years or more (respondent: n= 226, 57.5%; superior: n=206, 51.9%).

4.5.4 Position tenure

Table 4.5 shows the position tenure (PT) for the manager and the superior. The perceived position tenure for the subordinate was not collected.

Table 4.5 Position tenure frequencies

Position tenure (PT)	Manager		Superior Conversation 2			
N=397	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Total	%
Position Tenure – (PT)						
< 1 year	36	9.1	59	14.9	95	12.0
1 - 3 years	156	39.3	134	33.8	290	36.5
4 - 5 years	97	24.4	95	23.9	192	24.2
6 - 10 years	56	14.1	53	13.4	109	13.7
10 years or more	52	13.1	56	14.1	108	13.6
Total	397	100	397	100	794	100

The greatest number of people were reported as being in their current position for three years or less for both the manager (n=192, 48.4%) and the superior (n=193, 48.7%). These figures indicate more managers and their superiors in the sample had held their position for a shorter rather than longer period of time.

4.5.5 Relationship tenure in the sample

Table 4.6 shows the length of relationship tenure (PT) between the manager and the subordinate and between the manager and their superior.

Table 4.6 Relationship tenure (RT) frequencies

Relationship tenure (RT)	With subordinate Conversation 1		With superior Conversation 2			
N=397	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Total	%
< 1 year	162	40.8	111	28.0	273	34.4
1 - 3 years	166	41.8	148	37.3	314	39.5
4 - 5 years	39	9.8	80	20.2	119	15.0
6 years or more	30	7.6	58	14.6	88	11.1
Total	397	100	397	100	794	100

The largest relationship tenure category was where the interactants had worked together for less than three years. This was true for both conversations (C1: n=338, 82.6%; C2: n=259, 65.3 %).

4.5.6 Highest level of education

Table 4.7 shows the frequencies for the highest level of education reported.

Table 4.7 Frequencies of highest level of education

Highest level of education N=397	Manager		Subordinate Conversation 1		Superior Conversation 2		Total	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
High school or equivalent	57	14.4	143	36.0	78	19.6	278	23.3
College, VET or TAFE diploma	98	24.7	105	26.4	88	22.2	291	24.4
Bachelor degree	136	34.3	101	25.4	136	34.3	373	31.3
Postgraduate degree	106	26.6	49	12.1	95	23.9	250	21.0
Total	397	100	397	100	397	100	1191	100

The largest proportion of managers reported holding a bachelor's degree (n=136, 34.3%). When the bachelor's degree category is combined with higher post graduate degrees, over 60% of managers reported holding some form of university level qualification (n=242, 60.9%). The greatest number of subordinates were reported as having a high school (or an equivalent) level of education (n=143, 36.0%), whereas the largest education category for superiors was at least a bachelor's degree (n=136, 34.3%).

4.5.7 Country of birth

Table 4.8 shows the frequency counts for the country of birth in the sample after country of birth categories were collapsed.

Table 4.8 Frequencies for country of birth

Country of birth N=397	Respondent		Subordinate Conversation 1		Superior Conversation 2		Total	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Australia	305	76.8	301	75.8	310	78.1	916	76.9
Born outside of Australia	92	23.2	96	24.2	87	21.9	275	23.1
Total	397	100	397	100	397	100	1191	100

The majority of people in the sample were reported to be born in Australia which was expected due to the location of the study. A fairly similar proportion of people was identified as being born in Australia for all three groups: the respondent (n=305, 76.8%), the subordinate (n=301, 75.8%); and the superior (n=310, 78.1%).

4.5.8 Use of English at home

Table 4.9 shows the frequency counts for the reported use of English at home in the sample after the use of languages other than English categories were collapsed.

Table 4.9 Frequencies for the use of English at home

Use of English at home N=397	Respondent		Subordinate Conversation 1		Superior Conversation 2		Total	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
English only at home	335	84.4	302	76.1	346	87.2	983	82.5
Language other than English at home	62	15.6	95	23.9	51	12.8	208	17.5
Total	397	100	397	100	397	100	1191	100

The majority of all people in the sample were reported to speak English at home. This was expected as the majority of the Australian population (81% in 2011) speak English at home (ABS 2012). There were fewer subordinates reporting to be using English at home (n=302) compared to respondents (n=335) and superiors (n=346) in the same category.

4.5.9 Summary of the sample demographic characteristics

A number of demographic frequencies such as the country of birth and use of English at home were expected due to the study being conducted in Australia. Some frequencies that were not expected were the number of shorter term rather than longer term working relationships with subordinates and superiors, and the large number of subordinates reported to hold non-university qualifications.

The next section outlines the process of determining the demographic differences and similarities in the sample.

4.6 Calculating differences and similarities in the sample

Some of the research questions posed in section 2.6 required a calculation of the number of demographic differences between the respondent and the other person in the conversation. To calculate the demographic differences between interactants in the sample a dummy variable was created where zero (0) indicated the comparative demographic variable category had the same response, and one (1) indicated the demographic variables were different. This method of determining demographic differences and similarities is consistent with the procedure used in previous demographic studies, for example Tsui, Egan and O'Reilly (1992).

Table 4.10 shows the number of demographic differences between the manager and the other person in the conversation.

Table 4.10 Number of demographic differences between interactants

Number of demographic differences N= 397	Conversation 1 Downwards Respondent/Subordinate	Conversation 2 Upwards Respondent/Superior
0 differences	0 (0.0%)	5 (1.3%)
1 difference	9 (2.3%)	24 (6.0%)
2 differences	59 (14.9%)	54 (13.6%)
3 differences	87 (21.9%)	137 (34.5%)
4 differences	116 (29.2%)	92 (23.2%)
5 differences	80 (20.2%)	57 (14.4%)
6 differences	38 (9.6%)	24 (6.0%)
7 differences	8 (2.0%)	4 (1.0%)
Total	397 (100%)	397 (100%)

For conversation 1, the largest categories of difference indicated four differences in demographic attributes between the respondent and a subordinate (n=116, 29.2%). For conversation 2, the largest category indicated 3 differences in demographic attributes between the respondent and a superior (n=137, 34.5%).

There were no instances in downwards conversations where all demographic variables were the same between the respondent and the subordinate. However, for conversation 2, there were five cases (n=5, 1.3%) where there were no demographic differences perceived between the respondent and the superior apart from the individual differences in positions held in the organisation.

The next section presents the differences and similarities for each demographic category in the sample.

4.7 Differences and similarities in demographic variables

Table 4.11 presents the frequency counts of the differences and similarities in the demographic categories for both conversations³.

Table 4.11 Similarities and differences in demographic variables

Demographic variable and category N=397	Conversation 1 Downwards		Conversation 2 Upwards	
	Differences	Similarities	Differences	Similarities
Gender	109 (27.5%)	288 (72.5%)	141 (35.5%)	256 (64.5%)
Age	343 (86.4%)	54 (13.6%)	301 (75.8%)	96 (24.2%)
Organisational tenure (OT)	325 (81.9%)	72 (18.1%)	289 (72.8%)	108 (27.2%)
Position tenure (PT)	259 (65.2%)	138 (34.8%)	212 (53.4%)	185 (46.6%)
Level of education	263 (66.2%)	134 (33.8%)	225 (56.7%)	172 (43.3%)
Country of birth	132 (33.2%)	265 (66.8%)	113 (28.5%)	284 (71.5%)
Use of English at home	105 (26.4%)	292 (73.6%)	87 (21.9%)	310 (78.1%)

The largest category of demographic differences was age (C1:n=343, 86.4%; C2:n=301, 75.8%), the second most frequent was organisational tenure (C1:n=326, 81.9%; C2:n=289, 72.8%), followed by the difference in the highest level of education achieved (C1:n=263, 66.2%; C2:n=225, 56.7%). The smallest category for both conversations was in the use of English at home (C1:n=105, 26.4%; C2:n=87, 21.9%).

It would have been interesting to analyse whether there were any clusters within the demographic differences and similarities, however due to the binary level data that identified the similarities and differences clustering could not be achieved.

As Table 4.10 identified that the largest number of cases had either three or four demographic differences, a further frequency count was conducted to determine if there was any consistency between number of demographic differences, and the differences in demographic variables. These counts are presented in Table 4.12.

³ While data about relationship tenure was collected (questions C1:11, C2:29), differences in relationship tenure (RT) could not be measured as this category was a single measure reported from the managers' recollection of the length of reporting relationship.

The largest category of demographic difference where there were 3 or 4 total differences was age (C1:n=178; C2:n=180) followed by organisational tenure (C1:n=174; C2:n=173) which was the same as for Table 4.11. The next largest count for conversation 1 was for differences in position tenure (C1:n=133) which was different to the results shown in Table 4.11, albeit only a slight difference. The third highest result for conversation 2 was in the area of education (C2:n=134) which was consistent with the results shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.12 Differences in demographic variables where there were 3 or 4 total differences

Demographic variable and category	Conversation 1 Downwards	Conversation 2 Upwards
	Differences	Differences
Gender	36	77
Age	178	180
Organisational tenure (OT)	174	173
Position tenure (PT)	133	125
Level of education	130	134
Country of birth	41	53
Use of English at home	33	37

The following sections present the data analysis related to the research questions.

4.8 Research question 1 (RQ1)

Research question 1 (RQ1) asked if there was an association between demographic differences or similarities and conversation effectiveness or ineffectiveness. To examine RQ1 the conversation outcomes and demographic differences and similarities were analysed using linear regression in SPSS. The effectiveness of the conversation was the dependent variable with the number of differences under each demographic category used as the independent variable. Linear regression identified that demographic differences did not predict the effectiveness of both conversations. For conversation 1: $F(1,396) = .390, p > .10, R^2 = .001$, and adjusted $R^2 = -.002$. For conversation 2: $F(1,396) = 2.457, p > .10, R^2 = .006$, and adjusted $R^2 = .004$.

The adjusted r^2 results indicated it was not worthwhile investigating the relationship between demographic differences and reported outcomes in a multivariate way. Consequently a non-parametric approach using chi-square (χ^2) tests was determined as being an appropriate way to analyse data to answer RQ1. To establish the 2x2 relationship necessary for the chi-square tests a collapsed outcome variable was required. While some information is lost by collapsing

the outcome variable and it is less fine-grained method of investigating data, this was the only way to examine data for RQ1. The creation of this variable is discussed next.

4.8.1 Collapsing the outcome variables

Two categories (effective or ineffective outcomes) were chosen based on the categories used to evaluate workplace conversations using CIT as used in communication audits by Hargie and Tourish (2009). The two effective outcomes were combined into a single effective outcome category, while the remaining outcomes were combined into a single ineffective category. A summary of the original and revised outcome variable codes is shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Original and revised outcome variable codes

Question	Original Scale	Revised Scale
Q5.1 (C1)/ Q22.1 (C2) Outcome of conversation	1. Totally ineffective	} 0. Not effective
	2. Somewhat ineffective	
	3. Neither ineffective or effective	
	4. Somewhat effective	} 1. Effective
	5. Totally effective	

After collapsing the outcome variable for effective and ineffective conversations, n=322 (83.6%) of downwards conversations with a subordinate were reported as being effective whereas n=305 (76.8%) of upwards conversations with a superior were reported as being effective.

4.8.2 Presenting the results of tests comparing demographic similarities and differences to outcomes

The following subsections report results indicating levels of significance and high level commentary on relationships of significance. Tables in the following subsections show frequencies and the results of the categorical data analysis. Where there were more than two categories within a demographic variable (age, organisational tenure, position tenure and highest level of education) a loglinear analysis was conducted, followed by chi-squares (χ^2) using collapsed variables to examine effects. Where there were only two categories within a demographic variable (gender, country of birth and use of English at home) only the 2x2 chi-squares contingencies were generated to examine effects. Each 2x2 contingency table shows the expected and actual frequencies, the percentages within subsets and demographic

categories. In addition the standardised residuals (z scores) within subsets are presented. Standardised residuals can identify if a particular subset influences the results while indicating the level and direction of any effect (Field, 2013). Statistically significant associations in each table at the $p \leq .05$ level of significance are highlighted by coloured shading (red = counts fewer than expected; green = counts greater than expected).

After collapsing the outcome variables, there were some instances where ineffective outcomes had frequencies less than five (<5) making the chi-square results invalid. Where this occurred Fisher's Exact Test values are reported. This test provides a way of determining the chi-square statistic when the sample size is small (Fisher, Marshall & Mitchell 2011). Effect sizes in this section are reported using Cramér's V as this measure works for two or more categorical variables (Field 2013).

The following sub-sections report on the tests conducted for demographic differences and similarities in each demographic category (gender, age, organisational tenure, position tenure highest level of education, country of birth and use of English at home) against conversation effectiveness to answer RQ1.

4.8.3 Effect of gender differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

In conversations between managers and subordinates, differences and similarities in gender did not affect the proportion of reported effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 332) = .001, p > .10, V = .00$, or ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 65) = .062, p > .10, V = .03$. There were no significant relationships within the subsets of gender for downwards conversations.

In contrast, differences and similarities in gender between the manager and their superior were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 305) = 17.889, p < .001, V = .24$ and significant for ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 92) = 9.547, p < .05, V = .32$ meaning the relationship between gender and outcomes of conversations with superiors is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there are strong associations between demographic differences and similarities and conversation outcomes. Significantly fewer male managers reported effective outcomes when the conversation was with a female superior ($p < .05$) and

significantly more females than expected reported effective outcomes in conversations with male superiors ($p < .05$). These results indicate the relationship between effective conversation outcomes and a manager and a superior of a different gender are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 4.14 shows the frequency counts and significance of results for male and female managers compared to the gender differences and similarities for the other person and conversation effectiveness.

More effective outcomes were reported where there were similarities in gender (C1: $n=236$, 59.4%; C2: $n=198$, 49.9%) rather than differences in gender (C1: $n=96$, 24.2%; C2: $n=107$, 27.0%). More effective outcomes were reported when there were differences in gender for conversations with superiors ($n=107$, 27.0%) compared to subordinates ($n=96$, 24.2%). More females reported effective outcomes when differences existed (C1: $n=51$; C2: $n=72$) compared to men (C1: $n=45$; C2: $n=35$). The proportion of females reporting effective outcomes where the other person was male was greatest for upwards conversations.

Table 4.14 Effect of gender differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

Gender N=397		Conversation 1 Downwards				Conversation 2 Upwards				
Outcome	Effective		Ineffective		Total	Effective		Ineffective		Total
	Different	Same	Different	Same		Different	Same	Different	Same	
Male expected	45.1	110.9	6.4	25.6	188	52.6	97.4	14	24	188
Male count	45	111	6	26	188	35	115	7	31	188
Within males	23.9%	59.0%	3.2%	13.8%	100%	23.3%	76.7%	18.4%	81.6%	100%
z score	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.1		-2.4*	1.8	-1.9	1.4	
Female expected	50.9	125.1	6.6	26.4	209	54.4	100.6	20	34	209
Female count	51	125	7	26	209	72	83	27	27	209
Within females	24.4%	59.8%	3.3%	12.4%	100%	34.4%	39.7%	12.9%	12.9%	100%
z score	0.0	0.0	0.2	-0.1		2.4*	-1.8	1.6	-1.2	
Total	96	236	13	52	397	107	198	34	58	397
% within attribute	24.2%	59.4%	3.3%	13.1%	100%	27.0%	49.9%	8.6%	14.6%	100%

* $p < .05$

More ineffective outcomes were associated with similarities in gender (C1: n=52, 13.1%; C2: n=58, 14.6%), rather than differences in gender. More ineffective outcomes were reported when there were differences in gender between the manager and a superior (n=34, 8.6%) compared to conversations with a subordinate (n=13, 3.3%). More females reported ineffective outcomes when differences in gender existed (C1: n=7; C2: n=27) compared to men (C1: n=6, C2: n=7).

4.8.4 Effect of age differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

An initial frequency count performed to ensure loglinear assumptions were not violated identified a cell count of zero in one of the 50 years and over age categories. Consequently a new collapsed variable of respondents 40 years and over was created to run a valid loglinear analysis. The results of the three-way loglinear analysis (**conversation outcome x respondent age x differences and similarities in age**) using the new collapsed age variable produced a final model that did not retain all effects in either conversation. The likelihood ratio of this model in conversations with subordinates was $\chi^2(3) = 1.216, p > .10$, and in conversations with superiors $\chi^2(3) = 1.145, p > .10$ indicating the overall three-way relationships were not significant.

To test if other effects of age differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness were evident separate chi-square tests using collapsed age variables (≤ 39 years; 40 years and over) and collapsed outcome variables were conducted. Despite collapsing the respondent age variable there were still some cells less than the minimum five, meaning the minimum assumptions for chi-square tests could not be met. Fisher's Exact Test was used to test for relationships of significance where these low cell counts were observed.

Results of the subsequent chi-square tests revealed that differences and similarities in age between the manager and their subordinate were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(2, n = 332) = 13.802, p < .001, V = .20$. Fisher's Exact Test for ineffective outcomes found that differences and similarities in ages were significant $p < .05, V = .30$. Consequently the relationship between age and outcomes of conversations with subordinates is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicated there are strong associations between

manager/subordinate differences and similarities in age and conversation outcomes. Significantly more managers in the 39 years or younger category reported effective outcomes when age similarities with subordinates were evident which is significant ($p < .05$) showing the relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Significantly fewer managers in the 40 years and over category reported effective outcomes when age similarities with subordinates were evident which is significant ($p < .05$) showing the relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance. These were the only relationships of significance within downwards conversations.

Differences and similarities in age between the manager and their superior were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(2, n = 305) = 6.224, p < .01, V = .14$ and significant for ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(2, n = 92) = 4.393, p < .05, V = .22$ meaning the association between age and outcomes of conversations with superiors is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there is an association for effective outcomes and a stronger association for ineffective outcomes when manager/superior differences and similarities in age are evident. There were no relationships of significance within the subsets of age for upwards conversations.

Table 4.15 shows the frequency counts and significant results for the respondents' age compared to the age differences and similarities of the other person and conversation effectiveness.

More effective conversation outcomes were associated with differences in age (C1: $n=286$, 72.0%; C2: $n=229$, 57.7%) rather than similarities in age. More managers over 40 years of age reported effective outcomes in conversations where age differences existed (C1: $n=165$; C2: $n=137$) compared to managers aged 39 years or younger (C1: $n=121$; C2: $n=92$).

More managers ≤ 39 years had more ineffective conversations with subordinates in the same age category ($n=33$) and fewer managers 40 year or older reported fewer ineffective conversations with a superior of a similar age ($n=5$). More managers over 40 years or older reported ineffective outcomes in conversations where age differences existed (C1: $n=33$; C2: $n=37$). More managers 39 years or younger had ineffective conversations with subordinates ($n=7$,) and with superiors ($n=15$) in the same age category.

Table 4.15 Effect of age differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

Age N=397 Outcome	Conversation 1 Downwards					Conversation 2 Upwards				
	Effective		Ineffective		Total	Effective		Ineffective		Total
	Different	Same	Different	Same		Different	Same	Different	Same	
≤39 years expected	132.7	21.3	27.2	3.8	107	101.4	33.6	39.1	10.9	107
≤39 years and less	121	33	24	7	107	92	43	35	15	107
Within ≤39 years	65.4%	17.8%	13.0%	3.8%	100%	49.7%	24.3%	15.9%	14.0%	100%
z score	-0.7	2.5*	~	~		-0.9	1.6	-0.7	1.3	
40 years + expected	153.3	24.7	29.8	4.2	212	127.6	42.4	32.9	9.1	212
40 years + count	165	13	33	1	212	137	33	37	5	212
Within 40 years+	77.8%	6.1%	15.6%	0.5%	100%	64.6%	15.6%	17.5%	2.4%	100%
z score	0.9	-2.3*	~	~		0.8	-1.4	0.7	-1.4	
Total	286	46	57	8	397	229	76	72	20	397
% within attribute	72.0%	11.6%	14.4%	2.0%	100%	57.7%	19.1%	18.1%	5.0%	100%

* $p < .05$

~ z score invalid as cells counts <5

4.8.5 Effect of organisational tenure differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

An initial frequency count performed to ensure loglinear assumptions were not violated identified that there were a few cell counts of zero in some of the organisational tenure (OT) categories. Consequently two new collapsed variables of respondents with 3 years or less OT and 6 years or more OT were created to run a valid loglinear analysis. The results of the three-way loglinear analysis (**conversation outcome x length of OT x differences and similarities in OT**) using the new collapsed OT variables produced a final model that did not retain all effects in either conversation. The likelihood ratio of this model in conversations with subordinates was $\chi^2(2) = 1.687$, $p > .10$, and in conversations with superiors $\chi^2(2) = 1.545$, $p > .10$ indicating the overall three-way relationships were not significant.

To test if other effects of OT differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness were evident separate chi-square tests using collapsed OT variables (3 years or less; more than 3 years) and collapsed outcome variables were conducted.

Results of the subsequent chi-square tests revealed that differences and similarities in OT between managers and subordinates were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 332) = 39.652$, $p < .001$, $V = .35$ and ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 65) = 13.433$, $p \leq .001$, $V = .46$. This means the relationship between OT and the outcome of conversations with a subordinate is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there are strong associations between organisational tenure and both effective and ineffective outcomes. Significantly fewer managers with less than 3 years OT reported effective outcomes when the conversation was with a person with longer OT ($p < .05$) and significantly more managers than expected reported effective ($p < .001$) and ineffective ($p < .01$) outcomes where both interactants OT was less than 3 years. Significantly fewer managers with OT more than 3 years reported effective outcomes when the conversation was with a person with the same OT ($p < .01$). These results suggest that the relationship between managers and subordinates OT for effective outcomes is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In conversations between managers and superiors differences and similarities in OT did not affect the proportion of reported effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 305) = 1.236, p > .10, V = .06$, or ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 92) = .2282, p > .10, V = .16$. There were no significant relationships within the subsets of OT for upwards conversations.

Table 4.16 shows the frequency counts and significant results for the respondents' OT compared to the OT differences and similarities of the other person and conversation effectiveness.

There were more effective conversations when OT differences with subordinates were indicated ($n=274, 69.0\%$) as compared to conversations with superiors ($n=223, 56.2\%$). This result was expected as managers were more likely to have a greater organisational tenure than their subordinates. More people with OT greater than 3 years reported effective outcomes when there were OT differences (C1: $n=234$; C2: $n=179$) compared to similarities (C1: $n=28$; C2: $n=61$).

There were more ineffective conversations when OT differences with supervisors were indicated ($n=66, 16.6\%$) as compared to conversations with subordinates ($n=51, 12.8\%$). Where the manager had an OT of greater than 3 years more ineffective outcomes were associated with differences in OT (C1: $n=43$, C2: $n=53$), rather than similarities in OT (C1: $n=5$, C2: $n=17$).

Table 4.16 Effect of organisational tenure differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

Organisational Tenure N=397		Conversation 1 Downwards				Conversation 2 Upwards				
Outcome	Effective		Ineffective		Total	Effective		Ineffective		Total
	Different	Same	Different	Same		Different	Same	Different	Same	
3 years of less expected	57.8	12.2	13.3	3.7	87	47.5	17.5	15.8	6.2	87
3 years or less count	40	30	8	9	87	44	21	13	9	87
Within 3 years or less	46.0%	34.5%	9.2%	10.3%	100.0%	50.6%	24.1%	14.9%	10.3%	100.0%
z score	-2.3*	5.1***	-1.5	2.8**		-0.5	0.8	-0.7	1.1	
More than 3 years expected	216.2	45.8	37.7	10.3	310	175.5	64.5	50.2	19.8	310
More than 3 years count	234	28	43	5	310	179	61	53	17	310
Within more than 3 years	75.5%	9.0%	13.9%	1.6%	100.0%	57.7%	19.7%	17.1%	5.5%	100.0%
z score	1.2	-2.6**	0.9	-1.7		0.4	-0.4	0.4	-0.6	
Total	274	58	51	14	397	223	82	66	26	397
% within attribute	69.0%	14.6%	12.8%	3.5%	100%	56.2%	20.7%	16.6%	6.5%	100%

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

4.8.6 Effect of position tenure differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

An initial frequency count performed to ensure loglinear assumptions were not violated identified there were a few cell counts of zero in some position tenure (PT) categories. Consequently two new collapsed variables of respondents with 3 years or less PT and 6 years or more PT were created to run a valid loglinear analysis for conversation 2. Further zero cell counts in conversation 1 required another set of collapsed variables was required to run a valid loglinear analysis for conversation 1 (3 years or less, more than 3 years). The results of the three-way loglinear analysis (**conversation outcome x length of PT x differences and similarities in PT**) using the new collapsed PT variables for the relevant conversations produced a final model that did not retain all effects in either conversation. The likelihood ratio of this model in conversations with subordinates was $\chi^2(1) = .002, p > .10$, and in conversations with superiors $\chi^2(2) = 4.363, p > .10$ indicating the overall three-way relationships were not significant. While the overall three-way relationships were not significant it is worth recording that the three-way result for conversation 2 (sig .113) was close to being significant at the $p \leq .10$ level. This was the only three-way loglinear analysis result that was close to a statistical level of significance in any demographic category analysed using loglinear regression.

To test if other effects of PT differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness were evident, separate chi-squares tests using the new collapsed PT variable created for conversation 1 (3 years or less, more than 3 years) and collapsed outcome variables were conducted. There were still some cell counts less than five for ineffective outcomes so Fisher's Exact Test was used to test for relationships of significance where low cell counts remained.

Results of the subsequent chi-square tests revealed that differences and similarities in PT between managers and subordinates were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 332) = 97.041, p < .001, V = .54$. Fisher's Exact Test showed that ineffective outcomes were also highly significant $p < .001, V = .53$. This means the relationship between PT and the outcome of conversations with a subordinate is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there is a very strong association between position tenure and both effective and

ineffective outcomes in downwards conversations. All subsets of effective conversations with subordinates had highly significant results. Significantly fewer managers with PT less than 3 years reported effective outcomes when the subordinate had longer PT ($p < .001$) and significantly more managers than expected reported effective outcomes where both interactants' PT was less than 3 years ($p < .001$). Both of these results are highly significant suggesting that the relationship between managers' and subordinates' PT and effective conversation outcomes is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Relationships within ineffective conversations could not be tested due to small cell counts.

Differences and similarities in position tenure between managers and superiors were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 305) = 23.805, p < .001, V = .28$ and ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 92) = 21.777, p < .001, V = .49$. This means the relationship between PT and the outcome of conversations with a superior is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there is strong association with position tenure in upwards conversations for both effective and ineffective outcomes. All subsets of effective and ineffective conversations with superiors had significant results which was not surprising given the level of significance identified in the loglinear analysis. Significantly fewer managers with PT less than 3 years reported effective or ineffective outcomes when the superiors had longer PT ($p < .05$) and where both interactants' PT was more than 3 years ($p < .05$). Significantly more managers with PT less than 3 years reported effective ($p < .05$) and ineffective outcomes ($p < .01$) when the superiors had the same PT and where the manager had a longer PT than their superior ($p < .05$). All of these results suggest that the relationship between managers' and superiors' PT and conversation outcomes is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 4.17 shows the frequency counts and significant results for the respondents' PT compared to the PT differences and similarities of the other person and conversation effectiveness.

There were more effective conversations when PT differences with subordinates were indicated ($n=210, 52.9\%$) as compared to conversations with superiors ($n=159, 40.1\%$). More people with PT less than 3 years reported effective outcomes when there were OT similarities (C1:

n=105; C2: n=95) compared to differences (C1: n=63; C2: n=59). More people with PT greater than 3 years reported effective outcomes when there were OT differences (C1: n=147; C2: n=100) compared to similarities (C1: n=17; C2: n=51).

There were more ineffective conversations when OT differences with supervisors were indicated (n=53, 13.4%) as compared to conversations with subordinates (n=49, 12.3%). Where the manager had less than 3 years PT more ineffective outcomes were associated with similarities in PT (C1:n=13; C2:n=27) rather than differences in PT (C1:n=11; C2:n=11). Where the manager had more than 3 years PT more ineffective outcomes were associated with differences in OT (C1: n=38, C2: n=42) rather than similarities in PT (C1: n=3, C2: n=12).

Table 4.17 Effect of position tenure differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

Position Tenure N=397						Conversation 1 Downwards					Conversation 2 Upwards				
Outcome	Effective		Ineffective		Total	Effective		Ineffective		Total	Effective		Ineffective		Total
	Different	Same	Different	Same		Different	Same	Different	Same		Different	Same	Different	Same	
3 years or less expected	106.3	61.7	18.1	5.9	192	80.3	73.7	21.9	16.1	192					
3 years or less count	63	105	11	13	192	59	95	11	27	192					
Within 3 years or less	32.8%	54.7%	5.7%	6.8%	100.0%	30.7%	49.5%	5.7%	14.1%	220.7%					
z score	-4.2***	5.5***	~	~		-2.4*	2.5*	-2.3*	2.7**						
More than 3 years expected	103.7	60.3	30.9	10.1	205	78.7	72.3	31.1	22.9	205					
More than 3 years count	147	17	38	3	205	100	51	42	12	205					
Within more than 3 years	71.7%	8.3%	18.5%	1.5%	100.0%	48.8%	24.9%	20.5%	5.9%	66.1%					
z score	4.2***	-5.6***	~	~		2.4*	-2.5*	2.0*	-2.3*						
Total	210	122	49	16	397	159	146	53	39	397					
% within attribute	52.9%	30.7%	12.3%	4.1%	100.0%	40.1%	36.7%	13.4%	9.8%	100.0%					

* $\rho < .05$ *** $\rho < .001$

~ z score invalid as cells counts <5

4.8.7 Effect of the highest level of education differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

An initial frequency count performed to ensure loglinear assumptions were not violated identified that there were a few cell counts of zero in some of the highest level of education categories. Consequently one new collapsed variables of respondents with university level qualifications was created to run a valid loglinear analysis. The results of the three-way loglinear analysis (**conversation outcome x highest level of education x differences and similarities in highest level of education**) using the new collapsed education variable produced a final model that did not retain all effects in either conversation. The likelihood ratio of this model in conversations with subordinates was $\chi^2(2) = .941, p > .10$, and in conversations with superiors $\chi^2(2) = .741, p > .10$ indicating the overall three-way relationships were not significant.

To test if other effects of education differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness were evident separate chi-squares tests using collapsed variables (non-university qualification, university qualification) and collapsed outcome variables were conducted.

Results of the subsequent chi-square tests revealed that differences and similarities in education between managers and subordinates were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 332) = 46.910, p < .001, V = .38$ and significant for ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 65) = 4.420, p < .05, V = .26$. This means the relationship between the highest level of education and the outcome of conversations with a subordinate is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there is a moderate association between the highest level of education in downwards conversations for both effective and ineffective outcomes.

All subsets of effective conversations with subordinates had significant results. Significantly more managers holding university qualifications reported effective outcomes when the subordinate did not have a university qualification ($p < .05$). More managers than expected reported effective outcomes where both interactants did not hold a university level qualification which ($p < .001$) a result that was highly significant. Fewer managers not holding university qualifications reported effective outcomes when the subordinate held a university level

qualification ($p < .01$) while fewer managers holding a university level qualification reported effective outcomes where their superior also held a university level qualification ($p < .001$). All of these results suggest that the relationship between managers' and subordinates' PT and effective conversation outcomes is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Relationships within ineffective conversations could not be tested due to small cell counts.

In conversations between managers and superiors differences and similarities in the highest level of education did not affect the proportion of reported effective outcomes $\chi^2 (1, n = 305) = 2.176, p > .10, V = .08$ or ineffective outcomes $\chi^2 (1, n = 92) = .108, p > .10, V = .03$. There were no significant relationships within the subsets of highest level of education for upwards conversations.

Table 4.18 shows the frequency counts and significant results for the respondents' highest level of education compared to the level of education differences and similarities and conversation effectiveness.

Where differences in education levels were reported, there were more effective downwards conversations with subordinates ($n=222, 66.9\%$) compared to effective conversations with superiors ($n=177, 58.0\%$). Managers with a university qualification reported more effective outcomes when the other person had a different level of education (C1: $n=165$; C2: $n=113$). More effective conversations with subordinates were reported where both parties held a non-university qualification ($n=71$), compared to conversations where both parties held a university qualification ($n=39$). More effective conversations with superiors were reported where both interactants had a different highest level of education (non-university respondents: $n=64$; university respondents : $n=113$), compared to where both parties had the same reported highest level of education (non-university respondents: $n=57$; university respondents: $n=71$).

More ineffective outcomes were associated with differences rather than similarities in the highest level of education achieved (C1: $n=41$; C2: $n=48$). More managers holding a university level degree reported ineffective outcomes where there were differences in education levels in conversations with a subordinate ($n=28$), or a superior ($n=31$) compared to ineffective

conversations where the respondent did not hold a university level qualification and differences in education were reported (subordinate:n=13; superior:n=17).

Table 4.18 Effect of education differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

Highest level of education N=397		Conversation 1 Downwards				Conversation 2 Upwards				
Outcome	Effective		Ineffective		Total	Effective		Ineffective		Total
	Different	Same	Different	Same		Different	Same	Different	Same	
Non-university expected	85.6	42.4	17.0	10.0	155	70.2	50.8	17.7	16.3	155
Non-university count	57	71	13	14	155	64	57	17	17	155
Within non-university	36.8%	45.8%	8.4%	9.0%	100%	41%	37%	11%	11%	100%
z score	-3.1**	4.4***	-1	1.3		-0.7	0.9	-0.2	0.2	
University expected	136.4	67.6	24.0	14.0	242	106.8	77.2	30.3	27.7	242
University count	165	39	28	10	242	113	71	31	27	242
Within university	68.2%	16.1%	11.6%	4.1%	100%	46.7%	29.3%	12.8%	11.2%	100%
z score	2.4*	-3.5***	0.8	-1.1		0.6	-0.7	0.1	-0.1	
Total	222	110	41	24	397	177	128	48	44	397
% within attribute	55.9%	27.7%	10.3%	6.0%	100.0%	44.6%	32.2%	12.1%	11.1%	100.0%

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

4.8.8 Effect of country of birth differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

Differences and similarities in country of birth between the manager and their subordinate were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 332) = 59.321, p < .001, V = .42$ and ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 65) = 12.263, p \leq .001, V = .43$. This means the relationship between the country of birth and outcomes of conversations with subordinates is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there are strong associations for both effective and ineffective conversation outcomes. Significantly fewer managers born in Australia ($p < .01$) and outside of Australia ($p < .001$) reported effective outcomes when the conversation was with a subordinate who was born outside Australia. Significantly more managers born in Australia ($p < .05$) and outside of Australia ($p < .001$) reported effective conversation outcomes when the subordinate was born in Australia. These results suggest the relationship between effective conversation outcomes with a subordinate and a manager's country of birth are unlikely to have occurred by chance. There were no significant relationships within the subsets of country of birth for ineffective conversations with subordinates.

Differences and similarities in country of birth between the manager and their superior were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 305) = 61.876, p < .001, V = .45$ and ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 92) = 15.454, p < .001, V = .41$. This means the relationship between the country of birth and the outcomes of conversations with superiors is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there are strong associations for effective and ineffective outcomes. The subsets of significance within conversations for superiors were the same as conversations with subordinates. Significantly fewer managers born in Australia ($p < .001$) and outside of Australia ($p < .001$) reported effective outcomes when the conversation was with a subordinate who was born outside Australia. Significantly more managers born in Australia ($p < .05$) and outside of Australia ($p < .001$) reported effective conversation outcomes when the subordinate was born in Australia. These results suggest the relationship between effective conversation outcomes with a superior and a managers' country

of birth is unlikely to have occurred by chance. There were no significant relationships within the subsets of country of birth for ineffective conversations with superiors.

Table 4.19 shows the frequency counts and significance of results for country of birth differences and similarities and conversation effectiveness.

More managers reported effective conversations with superiors when there were differences in the country of birth (C2:n=107) compared to subordinates (C1:n=96). There were more effective conversations when there were similarities in whether a person was born in Australia or outside of Australia for conversations with subordinates (C1:n=236) as compared to conversations with superiors (C2:n=198).

More managers reported ineffective conversations with superiors when there were differences in the country of birth (C2:n=32) compared to subordinates (C1:n=13). There were also more ineffective conversations when there were similarities in whether a person was born in Australia or outside of Australia for conversations with superiors (C2:n=58) compared to subordinates (C1:n=52).

Table 4.19 Effect of country of birth differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

County of Birth=397										
Outcome	Conversation 1 Downwards					Conversation 2 Upwards				
	Effective Different	Same	Ineffective Different	Same	Total	Effective Different	Same	Ineffective Different	Same	Total
Born in Australia expected	83.1	169.9	18.4	33.6	305	63	163	24.0	55.0	305
Born in Australia count	55	198	13	39	305	36	190	18	61	305
Within Born in Australia	18.0%	64.9%	4.3%	12.8%	100.0%	11.8%	62.3%	5.9%	20.0%	100.0%
z score	-3.1**	2.2*	~	~		-3.4***	2.1*	~	~	
Born outside of Australia expected	25.9	53.1	4.6	8.4	92	22.0	57.0	4.0	9.0	92
Born outside of Australia count	54	25	10	3	92	49	30	10	3	92
Within Born outside of Australia	58.7%	27.2%	10.9%	3.3%	100.0%	53.3%	32.6%	10.9%	3.3%	100.0%
z score	5.5***	-3.9***	~	~		5.8***	-3.6***	~	~	
Total	109	223	23	42	397	85	220	28	64	397
% within attribute	24.2%	59.4%	3.3%	13.1%	100%	35.10%	64.90%	37.00%	63.00%	100%

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

~ z score invalid as cells counts <5

4.8.9 Effect of use of English language at home differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

Differences and similarities in the use of English language at home between the manager and their subordinate were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 332) = 28.780, p < .001, V = .29$ and significant for ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 65) = 8.301, p < .01, V = .36$. This means the relationship between the use of English at home and outcomes of conversations with subordinates is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there are moderate associations for both effective and ineffective conversation outcomes. Significantly fewer managers who use a language other than English at home reported effective outcomes when the subordinate used English at home ($p < .001$). Significantly more managers who use a language other than English at home reported effective outcomes when the subordinate also did not use English at home ($p < .05$). These results suggest the relationship between downwards conversations with a subordinate when a manager does not use English at home is unlikely to have occurred by chance. There were no significant relationships within the subsets of use of English at home where the manager spoke English at home or for ineffective conversations with subordinates.

Differences and similarities in use of English language at home between the manager and their superior were highly significant for effective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 305) = 113.932, p < .001, V = .61$ and ineffective outcomes $\chi^2(1, n = 92) = 28.398, p < .001, V = .56$. This means the relationship between the use of English at home and the outcomes of conversations with superiors is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Cramér's V indicates there are very strong associations for effective and ineffective outcomes. Significantly fewer managers who use English at home ($p < .001$) and who did not use English at home ($p < .001$) reported effective outcomes when the superior used English at home. Significantly more managers who use a language other than English at home reported effective outcomes when the superior also did not use English at home ($p < .001$). These results suggest the relationship between effective upwards conversations with a superior and managers' use of English at home is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 4.20 Effect of use of differences and similarities on conversation effectiveness

Use of English at home N=397						Conversation 1 Downwards					Conversation 2 Upwards				
Outcome	Effective		Ineffective		Total	Effective		Ineffective		Total	Effective		Ineffective		Total
	Different	Same	Different	Same		Different	Same	Different	Same		Different	Same	Different	Same	
English Only Expected	68	214	20.4	32.6	335	50.8	207.2	22.6	54.4	335					
English Only Count	53	229	16	37	335	24	234	14	63	335					
Within English Only	15.8%	68.4%	4.8%	11.0%	100.0%	7.2%	69.9%	4.2%	18.8%	100.0%					
z score	-1.8	1.0	~	~		-3.8***	1.9	~	~						
Language other than English expected	12	38	4.6	7.4	62	9.2	37.8	4.4	10.6	62					
Language other than English count	27	23	9	3	62	36	11	13	2	62					
Within language other than English	43.5%	37.1%	14.5%	4.8%	100.0%	58.1%	17.7%	21.0%	3.2%	100.0%					
z score	4.3***	-2.4*	~	~		8.8***	-4.4***	~	~						
Total	80	252	25	40	397	60	245	27	65	397					
% within attribute	20.2%	63.5%	6.3%	10.1%	100%	35.10%	64.90%	37.00%	63.00%	100%					

* $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$

~ z score invalid as cells counts <5

There were no significant relationships within the subsets of ineffective conversations with superiors.

Table 4.20 shows the frequency counts and significance of results for the differences and similarities in the use of English at home and conversation effectiveness.

More managers reported effective conversations with subordinates when there were differences in the use of English at home (C1:n=80) compared to superiors (C2:n=60). There were more effective conversations when there were similarities in the use of English at home for conversations with subordinates (C1:n=252) as compared to conversations with superiors (C2:n=245).

More managers reported ineffective conversations with superiors when there were differences in the use of English at home (C2:n=27) compared to subordinates (C1:n=25). There were also more ineffective conversations when there were similarities in the use of English at home for conversations with superiors (C2:n=65) compared to subordinates (C1:n=40).

4.8.10 Summary of data analysis and results for RQ1

Based on the results presented in the previous subsections there is an association between demographic differences and similarities and face-to-face conversation effectiveness and ineffectiveness. The level of significance and relationships between demographic attributes and outcomes varies between conversations with subordinates and superiors.

A summary of significant results is provided in Table 4.21 and a summary of significant directional results is provided in Table 4.22.

In downwards conversations with subordinates, results of significance were identified in the demographic categories of age, organisational tenure, position tenure, the highest level of education achieved, country of birth and use of English language at home (all categories except for gender).

Table 4.21 Significant results for RQ1

Demographic difference and similarity category	Conversation 1 Downwards				Conversation 2 Upwards			
	Effective (n=332)		Ineffective (n=65)		Effective (n=305)		Ineffective (n=92)	
	χ^2 Value	Sig	χ^2 Value	Sig	χ^2 Value	Sig	χ^2 Value	Sig
Gender					17.889	$\rho < .001$	9.547	$\rho < .05$
Age	13.802	$\rho < .001$	FET	$\rho < .05$	6.224	$\rho < .01$	4.393	$\rho < .05$
Organisational tenure	39.652	$\rho < .001$	13.433	$\rho \leq .001$				
Position tenure	97.041	$\rho < .001$	FET	$\rho < .001$	23.805	$\rho < .001$	21.777	$\rho < .001$
Highest level of education	46.910	$\rho < .001$	4.220	$\rho < .05$				
Country of birth	59.321	$\rho < .001$	12.263	$\rho \leq .001$	61.876	$\rho < .001$	15.454	$\rho < .001$
Use of English at home	28.780	$\rho < .001$	8.301	$\rho < .01$	113.932	$\rho < .001$	28.398	$\rho < .001$

FET = Results based on Fisher's Exact Test

Table 4.22 Summary of significant directional results for RQ1

Outcome	Conversation 1 Downwards				Conversation 2 Upwards			
	Effective		Ineffective		Effective		Ineffective	
	Different	Same	Different	Same	Different	Same	Different	Same
Gender: Males z score					-2.4*			
Gender: Females z score					2.4*			
Age ≤39 years z score		2.5*						
Age 40 years+ z score		-2.3*						
Organisational tenure <3 years z score	-2.3*	5.1***		2.8**				
Organisational tenure >3 years z score		-2.6**						
Position tenure <3 years z score	-4.2***	5.5***			-2.4*	2.5*	-2.3*	2.7**
Position tenure >3 years z score	4.2***	-5.6***			2.4*	-2.5*	2.0*	-2.3*
Non-university degree z score	-3.1**	4.4**						
University degree z score	2.4*	-3.5***						
Born in Australia z score	-3.1**	2.2*			-3.4***	2.1*		
Born outside of Australia z score	5.5***	-3.9***			5.8***	-3.6***		
English only z score					-3.8***			
Language other than English z score	4.3***	-2.4*			8.8***	-4.4***		

* $\rho < .05$ ** $\rho < .01$ *** $\rho < .001$

The strongest association seen in downwards conversations was in the category of position tenure. There were more significant relationships evident in effective downwards conversations where similarities were identified compared to differences.

In contrast for conversations with a superior, results of significance were seen in demographic categories of gender, age, position tenure, country of birth and use of English language at home (all categories except for organisational tenure and the highest level of education achieved). The strongest association seen in upwards conversations was seen in the category examining the use of English at home. There were more positive and negative relationships found where differences between interactants in effective outcomes were identified.

The next section examines research question 2.

4.9 Research question 2 (RQ2)

Research question 2 (RQ2) asked if there is an association between the use of one or more accommodation tactics and effective face-to-face conversation outcomes where demographic differences are evident between the interactants.

4.9.1 Calculating the use of linguistic tactics in effective conversations

The first step in answering RQ2 was to calculate the frequencies for the number of linguistic tactics used in each conversation reporting an effective outcome. To calculate this, the collapsed outcome categories from Table 4.12 provided the basis for determining effective conversations. To calculate the number of linguistic tactics used or not used during a conversation a zero (0) was used to indicate no use of a particular linguistic tactic and one (1) to indicate that a particular linguistic tactic had been used. To ensure that all demographic categories could be examined using a consistent range of linguistic tactics only the range of zero (0) to five (5) were used for analysis within this thesis⁴.

⁴ There were only eight cases where the 'other' tactic category was used in C1 and only one case where the 'other' category was used in C2, so there was no consistent use of the 'other' category across all demographic groups. Consequently the analysis was confined to the use of zero to five linguistic tactics.

Table 4.23 shows the frequencies for the number of linguistic tactics used in effective conversations as identified by each respondent.

There were more linguistic changes identified in effective downwards conversations (C1: n=182, 54.8%) compared to effective upwards conversations (C2: n=102, 33.4%). Fewer linguistic changes were used in effective conversations with superiors (zero changes C2: n=203, 66.6%) compared to effective conversations with subordinates (zero changes C1: n=150, 45.2%).

Table 4.23 Frequencies of linguistic tactics used in effective conversations

Number of linguistic tactics used	Conversation 1 Downwards Respondent/Subordinate	Conversation 2 Upwards Respondent/Superior
0 tactics	150 (45.2%)	203 (66.6%)
1 tactic	54 (16.3%)	27 (8.9%)
2 tactics	48 (14.5%)	34 (11.1%)
3 tactics	41 (12.3%)	16 (5.2%)
4 tactics	17 (5.1%)	12 (3.9%)
5 tactics	22 (6.6%)	13 (4.3%)
Total effective conversations	332 (100%)	305 (100%)

The next step was to determine if the use or non-use of a linguistic tactic predicted the effectiveness of a conversation.

4.9.2 Effect of linguistic tactic use on conversation effectiveness

To examine RQ2 the number of linguistic tactics used or not used and effective conversation outcomes were examined using linear regression. The dependent variable was conversation effectiveness, with the independent variable the number of linguistic tactics used in effective conversations where a demographic difference was observed. Linear regression identified that the use or non-use of linguistic tactics was associated with effective conversation outcomes. For conversation 1: $F(1,331) = 23.014, p < .001, R^2 = .065$, and adjusted $R^2 = -.062$. For conversation 2: $F(1,304) = 6.280, p < .05, R^2 = .020$, and adjusted $R^2 = .017$. As these results were highly significant for C1 and significant for C2 the Durbin-Watson (DW) test for serial correlations between errors in a regression model was evaluated (Field 2013). There was a slightly positive correlation in both conversations (C1:DW=1.873; C2:DW=1.993) and the results were in the acceptable range suggesting that the assumption of independent

errors has been met. In order to test the association between demographic differences and the use or non-use of linguistic tactics, the number of linguistic tactics used in effective conversations was calculated.

4.9.3 Calculating the use of linguistic tactics in effective conversations where there were demographic differences

The number of differences in each demographic category was determined by the data generated in RQ1 (Tables 4.13-4.19). Frequencies were generated to determine where linguistic strategies had been used and an effective outcome was reported. The frequencies are presented in Table 4.24.

There was a greater use of linguistic tactics in effective conversations with subordinates as compared to conversations with superiors. The largest counts evident where linguistic tactics were used were in the category of age (C1:n=197, 68.9%; C2:n=1210, 52.4%), followed by organisational tenure (C1:n=180, 65.7%; C2:n=103, 46.2%). The smallest counts for both conversations were in the use of English at home. While this category had the smallest number of conversations using linguistic tactics in effective conversations, it also accounted for the greatest percentages within an individual demographic category (C1:n=76, 95.0%; C2:n=46, 76.7%).

Table 4.24 Frequencies of linguistic tactic use in effective conversations where there were demographic differences

Demographic category	Conversation 1 Downwards			Conversation 2 Upwards		
	Linguistic tactic used	Linguistic tactic not used	Total effective outcome with demographic difference	Linguistic tactic used	Linguistic tactic not used	Total effective outcome with demographic difference
Gender	63 (65.6%)	33 (34.4%)	96 (100%)	54 (50.5%)	53 (49.5%)	107 (100%)
Age	197 (68.9%)	89 (31.1%)	286 (100%)	120 (52.4%)	109 (47.6%)	229 (100%)
Organisational tenure	180 (65.7%)	94 (34.3%)	274 (100%)	103 (46.2%)	120 (53.8%)	223 (100%)
Position tenure	146 (69.5%)	64 (30.5%)	210 (100%)	88 (55.3%)	71 (44.7%)	159 (100%)
Level of education	158 (71.2%)	64 (28.8%)	222 (100%)	85 (48.0%)	92 (52.0%)	177 (100%)
Country of birth	86 (79.9%)	23(21.1%)	109 (100%)	47 (55.3%)	38 (44.7%)	85 (100%)
Use of English at home	76 (95.0%)	4 (5.0%)	80 (100%)	46 (76.7%)	14 (23.3%)	60 (100%)

4.9.4 Assessing the association between linguistic tactic use, demographic difference and effective conversations

After selecting only the conversations where a demographic difference was reported and a linguistic tactic had been used (Table 4.21), a series of one-way ANOVAs were performed to assess the relationship between the number of linguistic tactics used within a conversation and the level of conversation effectiveness. The dependent variable was the effectiveness of each conversation and the independent variable was the number of linguistic tactics used in a conversation. Effect size was calculated using eta-squared (η^2)⁵.

Table 4.25 presents the ANOVA results testing the association between demographic differences, the use of linguistic tactics and effective conversations.

There were more results of significance in effective downwards conversations with subordinates (five categories) compared to upwards conversations with superiors (one category). The use of linguistic tactics when there were differences in age was significant in both downwards $F(4,141) = 3.501, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$ and upwards conversations $F(4,115) = 2.554, p < .05, \eta^2 = .08$ suggesting these results did not occur by chance.

Significant results in other demographic difference categories in downwards conversations were found in organisational tenure (OT) $F(4,175) = 3.903, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$, position tenure (PT) $F(4,192) = 3.501, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$, highest level of education $F(4,153) = 4.258, p < .01, \eta^2 = .10$ and country of birth $F(4,81) = 2.782, p < .05, \eta^2 = .12$. These results suggest the association between the use of linguistic strategies in effective downwards conversations when demographic differences exist did not occur by chance.

⁵ Eta-squared (η^2) effect sizes were calculated using the formula $\eta^2 = SS_{\text{between}}/SS_{\text{total}}$ and did not rely on the eta-square, and partial eta-square functions in SPSS due to labelling errors in results in some earlier versions of SPSS as identified by authors such as Levine and Hullett (2002).

Table 4.25 Frequencies of linguistic tactic use in effective conversations by demographic category

Demographic category	Conversation 1 Downwards					Conversation 2 Upwards				
	Conversations using tactics	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig of <i>F</i>	η^2	Conversations using tactics	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig of <i>F</i>	η^2
Gender	63	0.400	4	.808	.03	54	1.182	4	0.330	.09
Age	197	3.883	4	.005**	.07	120	2.554	4	0.043*	.08
Organisational Tenure	180	3.903	4	.005**	.08	103	2.038	4	0.095	.08
Position Tenure	146	3.501	4	.009**	.09	88	1.909	4	0.117	.08
Education	158	4.258	4	.003**	.10	85	1.497	4	0.211	.07
Country of Birth	86	2.782	4	.032*	.12	47	2.175	4	0.088	.17
Use of English at home	76	0.627	4	.645	.03	46	0.966	4	0.437	.09

* $\rho < .05$ ** $\rho < .01$

Age was the only result of significance at the $p < .05$ or above in effective conversations with superiors, although there were two results at the $p < .10$ level of significance: organisational tenure (OT) $F(4,98) = 2.038, p < .10, \eta^2 = .08$ and country of birth $F(4,42) = 2.175, p < .10, \eta^2 = .17$. The effect size in country of birth ($\eta^2 = .17$) was the greatest for any category within either conversation.

There were no significant associations evident between the use of linguistic strategies to achieve effective conversation outcomes and differences in age, or use of English language at home for either conversation.

4.9.5 Summary of data analysis and results for RQ2

Based on the results presented in the previous subsections there is an association between use of linguistic tactics in effective conversations when demographic differences are evident except where there are differences in gender and the use of English at home. The level of significance and relationships between linguistic tactic use, demographic differences and effective outcomes varies between conversations with subordinates and superiors.

In downwards conversations with subordinates, results of significance were identified in the demographic categories of age, organisational tenure, position tenure, the highest level of education achieved, and country of birth. The largest effect size seen in downwards conversations was in the category of country of birth.

In contrast for conversations with a superior, results of significance were indicated only in the demographic category of age. The largest effect size seen in upwards conversations was in the category of country of birth which was consistent with downwards conversations.

The next section examines research question 3.

4.10 Research question 3 (RQ3)

Research question 3 (R3) asked if there is an association between the number of linguistic tactics used within a conversation, and the level of conversation effectiveness. To examine RQ3, the number of linguistic tactics used or not used and all conversation outcomes were examined using linear regression. The conversation outcome was the dependent variable and the non-use or extent of use of linguistic tactics was the independent variable.

Linear regression identified that the use or non-use of linguistic tactics was associated with the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of conversation outcomes. For conversation 1: $F(1,396) = 26.725, p < .001, R^2 = .063$, and adjusted $R^2 = -.061$. For conversation 2: $F(1,396) = 26.589, p < .05, R^2 = .063$, and adjusted $R^2 = .061$. The Durbin-Watson test indicated there was a slightly negative correlation in both conversations (C1:DW=2.177; C2:DW=2.087) and the results were in the acceptable range suggesting that the assumption of independent errors had been met. In order to test the association between demographic differences and the use or non-use of linguistic tactics, the number of linguistic tactics used in all conversations was determined.

4.10.1 Calculating the use of linguistic tactics in all conversations

The frequencies for the number of linguistic tactics used in all conversations was calculated using the same process as in RQ2, where a zero (0) was used to indicate no use of a particular linguistic tactic and one (1) to indicate that a particular linguistic tactic had been used during the conversation.

Table 4.26 shows the frequencies for the number of linguistic tactics used in all conversations as identified by each respondent.

There were more linguistic changes identified in downwards conversations (C1: $n=229, 57.7\%$) compared to upwards conversations (C2: $n=154, 38.8\%$). Fewer linguistic changes were recalled being used in conversations with superiors (zero changes C2: $n=243, 61.2\%$) compared to conversations with subordinates (zero changes C1: $n=168, 42.3\%$).

Table 4.26 Frequencies of linguistic tactics used in conversations

Number of linguistic tactics used	Conversation 1	Conversation 2
	Downwards Respondent/Subordinate	Upwards Respondent/Superior
0 tactics	168 (42.3%)	243 (61.2%)
1 tactic	60 (15.1%)	38 (9.6%)
2 tactics	62 (15.6%)	42 (10.6%)
3 tactics	51 (12.8%)	29 (7.3%)
4 tactics	24 (6.0%)	22 (5.5%)
5 tactics	32 (8.1%)	23 (5.8%)
Total conversations	397 (100%)	397 (100%)

4.10.2 Assessing the association between linguistic tactic use and the effectiveness of conversations

To assess whether there was a relationship between the number of linguistic tactics used in an interaction and conversation effectiveness a one-way ANOVA test was performed for downwards and upwards conversations. The dependent variable was the effectiveness of each conversation and the independent variable was the number of linguistic tactics used in a conversation. Effect size was calculated using eta-squared (η^2).

The ANOVAs indicated that the number of linguistic tactics used did relate to the level of conversation effectiveness and results were highly significant for both conversations. For conversation 1: $F(1,395) = 26.725, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$. For conversation 2 : $F(1,395) = 26.589, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$.

A Tukey post-hoc analysis was conducted in conjunction with the ANOVAs. Results of the pairwise comparisons of the number of linguistic tactics used in conversations are presented in Table 4.27.

There were results of significance identified in the post-hoc tests. In downwards conversations, significant results were identified in pairwise comparisons between no reported use of linguistic tactics and cases where three, four or five tactics were used, and where one tactic was used and cases where three, four or five tactics were also used. In upwards conversations there were significant results indicated between no reported use of linguistic tactics and cases where three, four or five tactics were used. There were no cases in either conversation where pairwise comparisons involving the use of two linguistic tactics where any significant results were identified.

Table 4.27 Results for the Tukey tests on the use of linguistic tactics in conversations

Number of linguistic tactics used in a conversation	Conversation 1 Downwards					Conversation 2 Upwards				
	One used	Two used	Three used	Four used	Five used	One used	Two used	Three used	Four used	Five used
None used	-.062	.354	.498*	.696*	.665*	.291	.215	.721*	.921*	.760*
One used		.416	.560*	.758*	.727*		-.076	.430	.629	.469
Two used			.144	.343	.311			.507	.706	.546
Three used				.199	.167				.199	.039
Four used					.031					-.160

* the mean difference is significant at the $p < .05$ level

4.10.3 Summary of data analysis and results for RQ3

Based on the results presented within RQ3, there is an association between use of linguistic tactics and conversation effectiveness which is highly significant.

The next section examines research question 4.

4.11 Research question 4 (RQ4)

Research question 4 (RQ4) asked whether the use of a specific accommodation strategy would make a difference to the proportion of effective conversations where a demographic difference was evident. To examine RQ4, the number of reported uses of linguistic tactics such as changing the tone of voice, the pace of speech, changing the words used, repeating words, or simplifying words were compared to the effective outcomes of each conversation where a demographic difference were identified between interactants.

After selecting conversations where only demographic differences were reported and a linguistic tactic had been used, a series of one-way ANOVAs was performed. The ANOVAs tested for relationships between the type of linguistic tactic used within a conversation as an independent variable and the level of conversation effectiveness as the dependent variable. The dependent variable was the effectiveness of each conversation and the independent variable was the number of times a particular linguistic tactics was used in a conversation. Effect size was calculated using eta-squared (η^2).

The analysis for each linguistic tactic is presented in the following subsections. While the linguistic tactics here are presented in the order shown in the questionnaire provided in Appendix A, they were presented to respondents in a randomised order to reduce the potential for response order bias in results.

4.11.1 Use of tone in effective conversations with demographic differences

Table 4.28 shows the frequencies and one-way ANOVA results for the use of tone in effective conversations where demographic differences were identified. There were more results of

significance in downwards conversations with subordinates (all categories) compared to upwards conversations (three categories). The largest effect size in the use of tone was where there was a difference in the use of English at home between a manager and their subordinate ($\eta^2 = .16$).

Highly significant relationships ($p < .001$) between the use of tone in downwards conversations were identified where there were differences in organisational tenure (used $M=4.35$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.59$, $SD=0.49$), position tenure (used $M=4.31$, $SD=0.47$; not used $M=4.63$, $SD=0.49$), country of birth (used $M=4.28$, $SD=0.46$; not used $M=4.63$, $SD=0.49$) and use of English at home (used $M=4.27$, $SD=0.45$; not used $M=4.68$, $SD=0.47$). Significant results were also found for gender (used $M=4.28$, $SD=0.46$; not used $M=4.52$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$), age (used $M=4.34$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.58$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$) and education (used $M=4.34$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.54$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .01$). These results indicate that the relationship between the use of tone in effective conversations with a subordinate when demographic differences are evident was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In upwards conversations significant results were found at the $p < .05$ level in the categories of age (used $M=4.50$, $SD=0.51$; not used $M=4.61$, $SD=0.49$), position tenure (used $M=4.34$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.58$, $SD=0.50$) and education (used $M=4.58$, $SD=0.50$; not used $M=4.63$, $SD=0.48$). These results indicate that the relationship between the use of tone in effective conversations with a superior when demographic differences are evident was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 4.28 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of a change in tone in effective conversations with demographic differences

Demographic category	Conversation 1 Downwards							Conversation 2 Upwards						
	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2
Gender	96	32	64	4.906	1	.029*	.05	107	20	87	3.678	1	.058	.03
Age	286	94	192	14.906	1	.042*	.05	229	46	183	1.906	1	.036*	.01
Organisational Tenure	274	86	188	13.747	1	.000***	.05	223	41	182	3.162	1	.077	.01
Position Tenure	210	70	140	20.070	1	.000***	.09	159	29	130	5.615	1	.019*	.03
Education	222	73	149	8.167	1	.005**	.04	177	39	138	6.203	1	.014*	.03
Country of birth	109	39	70	15.390	1	.000***	.13	85	17	68	.964	1	.329	.01
English at home	80	30	50	14.920	1	.000***	.16	60	17	43	.130	1	.720	.00

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

4.11.2 Use of a change in pace in effective conversations with demographic differences

Table 4.29 shows the frequencies and one-way ANOVA results for the use of a change in pace in effective conversations where demographic differences were identified.

There were the same number of significance in downwards conversations with subordinates (five categories) and upwards conversations (five categories). Four of the categories were the same (age, organisational tenure, position tenure and education) although the level of significance varied between the conversations. The largest effect size in the use of pace as a linguistic tactic was where there was a difference in highest level of education between a manager and their superior ($\eta^2 = .08$).

Significant relationships were identified in downwards conversations between the use of a change in pace where there were demographic differences evident. Significant relationships were found in the demographic categories of age (used $M=4.40$, $SD=0.49$; not used $M=4.54$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$), organisational tenure (used $M=4.35$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.56$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .01$), position tenure (used $M=4.40$, $SD=0.49$; not used $M=4.57$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$), education (used $M=4.35$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.52$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$) and use of English at home (used $M=4.36$, $SD=0.49$; not used $M=4.64$, $SD=0.49$, $p < .05$). These results indicate that the relationship between the use of a change of pace in effective conversations with a subordinate when demographic differences are evident were unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In upwards conversations there was a highly significant result identified for a change in pace where differences in the highest level of education were evident (used $M=4.28$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.65$, $SD=0.48$, $p < .001$) Significant results were found in the categories of age (used $M=4.43$, $SD=0.50$; not used $M=4.62$, $SD=0.49$, $p < .05$), organisational tenure (used $M=4.42$, $SD=0.50$; not used $M=4.64$, $SD=0.48$, $p < .05$), position tenure (used $M=4.30$, $SD=0.47$; not used $M=4.59$, $SD=0.49$, $p < .01$) and country of birth (used $M=4.29$, $SD=0.47$; not used $M=4.63$, $SD=0.49$, $p < .05$). These results indicate that the relationship between the use of a change of

pace in effective conversations with a superior when demographic differences are evident was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

4.11.3 Use of changed words in effective conversations with demographic differences

Table 4.30 shows the frequencies and one-way ANOVA results for the indication of a change in words in effective conversations where demographic differences were identified. There were more results of significance in downwards conversations with subordinates (six categories) compared to upwards conversations (two categories). The largest effect size where there was a change in the words used as a linguistic tactic was with a difference in highest level of education between a manager and their superior ($\eta^2 = .08$).

Highly significant relationships ($p \leq .001$) between the use of changed words in downwards conversations were identified where there were differences in age (used $M=4.28$, $SD=0.45$; not used $M=4.57$, $SD=0.50$), organisational tenure (used $M=4.27$, $SD=0.45$; not used $M=4.59$, $SD=0.49$), and country of birth (used $M=4.31$, $SD=0.47$; not used $M=4.63$, $SD=0.49$). Significant relationships were also identified in the demographic categories of gender (used $M=4.29$, $SD=0.46$; not used $M=4.51$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$), position tenure (used $M=4.34$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.59$, $SD=0.49$, $p < .01$), and education (used $M=4.30$, $SD=0.46$; not used $M=4.54$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$). These results indicate that the relationship between the use of changed words in effective downwards conversations when differences are evident was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In upwards conversations significant results were found in the categories of position tenure (used $M=4.33$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.58$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .01$) and education (used $M=4.38$, $SD=0.49$; not used $M=4.62$, $SD=0.49$, $p < .05$). These two results indicate the association between the use of changed words in effective upwards conversations when there were differences in position tenure and education was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 4.29 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of a change in pace in effective conversations with demographic differences

Demographic category	Conversation 1 Downwards							Conversation 2 Upwards						
	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2
Gender	96	24	72	.500	1	.481	.05	107	18	89	3.626	1	.060	.03
Age	286	73	213	4.170	1	.042*	.01	229	35	194	4.470	1	.036*	.04
Organisational Tenure	274	68	206	9.277	1	.003**	.03	223	33	190	5.702	1	.018*	.03
Position Tenure	210	55	155	4.637	1	.032*	.02	159	27	132	8.137	1	.005**	.05
Education	222	54	168	4.566	1	.034*	.02	177	32	145	15.633	1	.000***	.08
Country of birth	109	32	77	2.483	1	.118	.02	85	14	71	6.082	1	.016*	.07
English at home	80	33	47	6.171	1	.015*	.07	60	14	46	3.337	1	.073	.05

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 4.30 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of changed words in effective conversations with demographic differences

Demographic category	Conversation 1 Downwards							Conversation 2 Upwards						
	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2
Gender	96	31	65	4.119	1	.045*	.04	107	18	89	.696	1	.406	.01
Age	286	68	218	18.357	1	.000***	.06	229	42	187	1.701	1	.193	.01
Organisational Tenure	274	66	208	21.123	1	.000***	.07	223	36	187	1.212	1	.272	.01
Position Tenure	210	53	157	10.010	1	.002**	.05	159	27	132	5.775	1	.017*	.04
Education	222	57	165	10.241	1	.002**	.04	177	29	148	5.984	1	.015*	.03
Country of birth	109	36	73	11.025	1	.001***	.09	85	12	73	1.452	1	.232	.02
English at home	80	29	51	1.061	1	.306	.01	60	14	46	1.610	1	.210	.03

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

4.11.4 Use of repeated words in effective conversations with demographic differences

Table 4.31 shows the frequencies and one-way ANOVA results for the use of repeated words in effective conversations where demographic differences were identified. There were only results of significance in downwards conversations with subordinates (five categories). The largest effect size for the use of repeated words as a linguistic tactic was with a difference in position tenure between a manager and their subordinate ($\eta^2 = .07$).

Highly significant relationships ($p \leq .001$) between the use of repeated words in downwards conversations were identified where there were differences in age (used $M=4.32$, $SD=0.47$; not used $M=4.57$, $SD=0.50$), organisational tenure (used $M=4.33$, $SD=0.48$; not used $M=4.57$, $SD=0.50$), position tenure (used $M=4.31$, $SD=0.47$; not used $M=4.60$, $SD=0.49$), and education (used $M=4.30$, $SD=0.46$; not used $M=4.54$, $SD=0.50$). A significant relationships was also found in the demographic categories of country of birth (used $M=4.41$, $SD=0.50$; not used $M=4.57$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$). These results indicate that the relationship between the use of repeated words in effective conversations with a subordinate when demographic differences are evident was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

There were no results of significance where repeated words were used in effective conversations with superiors where a demographic difference was evident.

4.11.5 Use of simpler words in effective conversations with demographic differences

Table 4.32 shows the frequencies and one-way ANOVA results for the indication of the use of simpler words in effective conversations where demographic differences were identified. There was only one result of significance in downwards conversations with subordinates in the category of organisational tenure (used $M=4.37$, $SD=0.49$; not used $M=4.55$, $SD=0.50$, $p < .05$). There were no other results of significance in downwards conversations, and no results of significance in any category in upwards conversations. The largest effect size where the use of simpler words as a linguistic tactic in either conversation was $\eta^2 = .02$.

Table 4.31 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of repeated words in effective conversations with demographic differences

Demographic category	Conversation 1 Downwards							Conversation 2 Upwards						
	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2
Gender	96	20	76	3.672	1	.058	.04	107	16	91	.605	1	.439	.01
Age	286	79	207	15.397	1	.000***	.05	229	37	192	.434	1	.510	.00
Organisational Tenure	274	66	208	11.351	1	.001***	.04	223	36	187	1.212	1	.272	.00
Position Tenure	210	55	155	14.600	1	.000***	.07	159	29	130	1.219	1	.271	.01
Education	222	64	158	12.302	1	.001***	.05	177	35	142	2.085	1	.096	.02
Country of birth	109	36	73	5.841	1	.017*	.05	85	17	68	.964	1	.329	.01
English at home	80	31	49	3.954	1	.050*	.05	60	16	44	.001	1	.969	.00

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 4.32 Frequencies, significance and effect of use of used simpler words in effective conversations with demographic differences

Demographic category	Conversation 1 Downwards							Conversation 2 Upwards						
	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2	n=	Used	Not used	F	df	Sig of F	η^2
Gender	96	20	76	1.940	1	.167	.02	107	13	94	.647	1	.423	.01
Age	286	69	217	3.242	1	.073	.01	229	32	197	.111	1	.739	.00
Organisational Tenure	274	60	214	6.505	1	.011*	.02	223	27	196	.378	1	.539	.00
Position Tenure	210	48	162	2.876	1	.091	.01	159	25	134	.051	1	.821	.00
Education	222	60	162	2.933	1	.088	.01	177	24	153	1.741	1	.189	.01
Country of birth	109	33	76	1.845	1	.177	.02	85	9	76	.708	1	.403	.01
English at home	80	34	46	1.659	1	.202	.02	60	13	47	1.050	1	.969	.02

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

4.11.6 Summary for RQ4

Research question 4 (RQ4) found that the use of some specific linguistic tactics did change the proportion of effective conversation outcomes when a demographic difference was evident. There was a greater use and higher level of significance in the reported use of linguistic tactics in effective conversations with subordinates compared to effective conversations with superiors.

Where there were demographic differences reported in the category of organisational tenure there were results of significance across all linguistic tactics in effective conversations with subordinates. Age, position tenure, highest level of education were significant in the same four linguistic categories in downwards conversations (use of tone, change of pace, change of words and repeated words). Difference in country of birth was significant in three linguistic tactics (use of tone, change of words and repeated words), while only two linguistic tactics were significant in gender (use of tone and change of words) and use of English at home (change of tone and change of pace).

In upwards conversations there were two demographic categories (position tenure and highest level of education) where the use of the same three linguistic tactics was significant (use of tone, change of pace and change of words). Age differences were significantly associated with the use of tone and change of pace, while organisational tenure and country of birth were significant in changes of pace. There were no significant results in repeated words or use of simpler words in any demographic difference category, and no significant results for any linguistic tactic in the demographic difference categories of gender and use of English at home.

The next section examines research question 5.

4.12 Research question 5 (RQ5)

Research question 5 (RQ5) asked if managers who reported an effective conversation outcome would not alter a future conversation with the other person (RQ5a) and if managers who reported the conversation was ineffective would alter a future conversations with the other person (RQ5b).

To examine RQ5 the conversation outcomes and the intent to alter a future conversation were examined using linear regression. The conversation outcome was the dependent variable and the intent to alter a future conversation was the independent variable. Linear regression identified that the use or non-use of linguistic tactics was associated with the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of conversation outcomes. For conversation 1: $F(1,396) = 8.639, p < .01, R^2 = .021$, and adjusted $R^2 = -.019$. For conversation 2: $F(1,396) = 33.036, p < .001, R^2 = .077$, and adjusted $R^2 = .075$. The Durbin-Watson test showed there was a slightly negative correlation in both conversations (C1:DW=2.191; C2:DW=2.087) and the results were in the acceptable range suggesting that the assumption of independent errors had been met.

In order to test for relationships between conversation outcomes and the intent to change a future conversation, the collapsed outcome variable created for RQ1 was used to create 2x2 contingency tables to conduct further analysis using chi-square (χ^2) tests. Standardised residuals within subsets are presented and effect sizes are reported using Cramér's V .

4.12.1 Frequency counts for conversation effectiveness versus intentions to alter future conversations

Conversation outcomes and intent to alter future conversations with a subordinate were significant $\chi^2(1, n = 397) = 7.266, p < .01, V = .14$ and highly significant for the intent to alter future conversations with a superior $\chi^2(1, n = 397) = 30.533, p < .001, V = .28$. Both of these results suggest the relationship between the outcomes of conversations and intent to alter future conversations did not occur by chance. Cramér's V indicated there was a mild association between outcomes and future intent in downwards conversations and a moderate association in upwards conversations.

Significantly fewer managers ($p < .05$) than expected reported they would alter a future downwards conversation when the current conversation outcome was ineffective. This was the only result of significance in downwards conversations.

A highly significant result ($p < .001$) was obtained for managers who reported they would alter a future conversation with a superior when the conversation outcome was ineffective. On the

other hand we would normally expect that managers would not alter a future upwards conversation when the current conversation outcome was effective. Accordingly it is not surprising that fewer managers than (**statistically**) expected noted they planned to alter a future conversation with a superior when the earlier conversation had been effective ($p < .05$).

Table 4.33 shows the frequency counts and significance of results associated with effective and ineffective conversation outcomes with the intent to alter, or not alter future interactions for both conversations.

Table 4.33 Association between conversation outcomes and intent to alter future conversations

Outcome	Conversation 1 Downwards			Conversation 2 Upwards		
	Future intent		Total	Future intent		Total
	Not alter	Would alter		Not alter	Would alter	
Effective expected	289.4	42.6	332	266.6	38.4	305
Effective count	296	36	332	282	23	305
Within effective	89.2%	10.8%	100%	92.5%	7.5%	100%
z score	0.4	-1		0.9	-2.5	
Ineffective expected	56.6	8.4	65	80.4	11.6	92
Ineffective count	50	15	65	65	27	92
Within ineffective	76.9%	23.1%	100%	70.7%	29.3%	100%
z score	-0.9	2.3		-1.7	4.5	
Total	346	51	397	347	50	397
% within outcome	87.2%	12.8%	100%	87.4%	12.6%	100%

The greatest number of managers (n=296, 89.2%) indicated that they would not alter a future conversation with a subordinate when the current conversation was effective. The majority of managers (n=282, 92.5%) indicated that they would not alter a future conversation with a superior when they had achieved an effective outcome.

Some managers indicated that they would alter a future conversation with the other person despite reporting an effective outcome. In downwards conversations, slightly over 10 percent of conversations (n=36, 10.8%) would be altered in future despite achieving an effective outcome, although this relationship is not significant.

Of the $n=65$ downwards ineffective conversations, the majority of managers ($n=50$, 76.9%) indicated that they would not alter a future conversation with a subordinate. The relationship between managers who would alter a future conversation with a subordinate when the conversation outcome was ineffective is significant ($p < .05$, z score 2.4). Of the $n=92$ upwards ineffective conversations, the majority of managers ($n=65$, 70.7%) indicated that they would not alter a future conversation with a superior.

4.12.2 Summary for RQ5

There were more conversations where managers reported that they had no intention to alter a future conversation with the other person when the conversation was effective. However, there were some cases where some managers would still alter a future conversation when the outcome of the current conversation was effective.

There were more conversations where managers reported that they had no intention to alter a future conversation with the other person despite reporting that the conversation was ineffective.

4.13 Chapter summary

Chapter 4 reported the results of analysis of data generated to answer the research questions. Significant results were identified, and explored through statistical analysis. The demographic data of the subordinates and superiors, and the use of linguistic tactics were based on the respondent managers' perceptions and recollections. The next chapter, chapter 5, discusses the results in relation to previous empirical and theoretical findings, and their practical implications.

5. DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the discussion of results of the data analysis presented in chapter 4 in relation to the research questions RQ1 – RQ5. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the findings from this study while linking results to relevant literature and theory.

The labelling conventions used in Chapter 4 are continued in this chapter. Therefore case numbers represent a set of data relating to one manager/respondent and conversation labels indicate a conversation with either a subordinate (conversation 1 or C1) or with a superior (conversation 2 or C2)

The simplified terms used in Chapter 4 for clarity and brevity are used again in this chapter. Therefore within the following sections the word 'perceived' has been omitted so where demographic data or demographic differences and similarities are discussed, findings are based on the perceived demographic data reported for the subordinate or supervisor. All notations of conversation refer to the self-reported face-to-face conversation between the interactants in the relevant downwards (with a subordinate) or upwards (with a superior) conversation.

Some sections also include some text-based comments identified in the open-ended responses linked to some of the research questions. Lee and Lings (2008:380) indicate it can be useful to examine some qualitative responses at the end of a quantitative study because they can provide an insight into relevant individual experiences (Bernard 2011). SPSS was used to identify cases where there were comments relevant to a particular finding. Not all respondents provide comments in non-compulsory open-ended questions when given the opportunity to do so (Poncheri et al. 2008) and this was also the case in my study. Moreover, once relevant cases with useable comments are identified it is difficult to select an appropriate methodology to analyse comments as not all cases relevant to the relationship of interest will have data that could be coded for a content analysis. Jackson and Trochim (2002) note these type of responses are open-ended concise comments rather than detailed narratives and are best used to provide supplementary information around quantitative results rather than using another

qualitative strategy such as counting the frequency of particular words. They recommend caution in using content analysis approaches in non-compulsory open-ended questions as interpretations can be skewed when keywords or themes are reported based only on respondents who choose to comment. Consequently, after examining the cases where comments were provided by managers some were selected to provide insight into the experiences of managers relative to relationships of significance.

Sections 5.1 through 5.4 discuss the findings related to research questions RQ1 to RQ5 where important findings are related to relevant literature in management, demography, communication and communication accommodation theory (CAT). Chapter 5 concludes with a summary.

5.1 Research Question 1 (RQ1)

Research question 1 (RQ1) asked

Is there an association between demographic differences or similarities between interactants and face-to-face conversation effectiveness or ineffectiveness?

Results of the chi-square tests performed identified associations between some demographic variables and conversation effectiveness or ineffectiveness, but that the level of significance and associations varied between demographic attributes and outcomes. Levels of significance and associations also varied between conversations with a subordinate or superior.

5.1.1 Significant associations in conversations with subordinates and superiors

The results in RQ1 suggest there were three demographic categories where significant associations were observed between conversation effectiveness and ineffectiveness and the demographic category. Significant associations were observed in position tenure (PT), country of birth, and use of English at home. These associations are discussed in the following sections.

5.1.1.1 Position tenure (PT)

The strong associations identified between differences and similarities in position tenure (PT) between a manager and their subordinate or superior could relate to two issues. For managers with shorter PT, the increased level of effectiveness in conversations with people of the same PT may relate to the similarity of experiences. This explanation is consistent with the one presented by Zenger and Lawrence (1989) who found individuals who joined an organisation at the same time develop a similar understanding and perspectives about work. Another plausible explanation for this links to a CAT based study examining the effects of age-differentiated communication (McCann & Giles 2007). McCann and Giles reported that younger workers favoured their age-ingroup and found communication with older workers (age-outgroup) more problematic. As tenure and age are both time-related measures, it may be that managers with shorter PT favour those with a similar PT compared to a longer PT.

Managers with longer PT appear to be more successful with conversation outcomes which could be due to skills and experience developed during their time in the position. Managers with shorter PT would not have the same amount of previous interaction experiences to draw on particularly where a subordinate or even a superior has held their position for a longer time than themselves. This perspective was also suggested by McCann and Giles (2007) to explain the difficulties younger workers had in communicating with older workers. Experience built over a period of time forms tacit knowledge which Wagner and Sternberg (1985) label as the practical intelligence of knowing how to address real world situations. Practical intelligence is experience based knowledge that is not always the result of formal training (Hedlund et al. 2003) and cannot be predicted by formal intelligence measures such as the intelligence quotient (IQ) (Cianciolo et al. 2006). Instead practical intelligence is developed through insight, experience and reflection (Janson & McQueen 2007).

The studies into practical intelligence and tacit knowledge have not yet investigated any relationships to interpersonal communication competencies or skills, nor do there appear to be studies into the specific effects of position tenure on outcomes such as managerial communication. Previous studies investigating aspects of position tenure have concentrated on

links to financial measures such as remuneration (Brown & Light 1992), top management team performance and financial outcomes (Finkelstein & Hambrick 1990), or CEO's and firm performance (Richard, Wu & Chadwick 2009) rather than managerial communication or interpersonal interactions in the workplace. The lack of interest in position tenure as an influencing factor in managerial communication is surprising, particularly in light of the strong PT effects identified in this thesis which support the observation by Downs and Adrian (2004) that tenure can present some unexpected and interesting results when none were anticipated.

While previous studies focus on different issues in relation to position tenure, some of their findings resonate with some of my findings. Finkelstein and Hambrick (1990) note how increases to length of tenure reduce openness to new ideas while promoting conformity, while Hubbert, Gudykunst and Guerrero (1999) show that the effectiveness of intergroup communication increases over time. These findings could explain why managers with less than three years tenure report less effective conversations with those of longer PT. The newer managers may not have adopted the type and style of communication longer term employees are familiar with, or longer term employees may not be prepared to adapt to new ways. Richard, Wu and Chadwick (2009) reported that CEOs with relatively long tenure ($M=8.46$ years across 579 US banking CEOs) rely more on past experiences and knowledge gained through their length of tenure to choose appropriate strategies for a situation. These results resonate with the practical intelligence explanation for the differences in position tenure related results. Another finding from an age based relational demography study into similarities and differences in supervisor-subordinate dyads indicated that older workers may be considered outdated by younger supervisors (Tsui, Porter & Egan 2002). The same may hold true for position tenure, as a preconceived stereotype about the effectiveness of having a conversation with a subordinate with long PT may influence the perception of effectiveness.

A free text field was provided to respondents to comment on why they had given a particular rating of conversation effectiveness (C1:Q5a, C2:Q22a). Examining responses in these fields for both conversations revealed no comments that appeared to relate to position tenure. Without the opportunity to discuss results with managers to investigate the reasons and ratings, the proposed explanations cannot be confirmed.

5.1.1.2 Country of birth and use of English at home

The strong associations identified between country of birth, use of English at home and effective conversation outcomes were evident in both conversations. Some of the issues associated with these demographic variables appear interrelated which could be the result of investigating face-to-face interactions where interactants use visual as well as auditory clues when they determine demographic groups. Rakić, Steffens and Mummendey (2011) report that visual stimuli are supported with auditory clues such as accents to determine ethnicity, and that individuals use category memory to distinguish or group others into ethnicity based categories based on prior experiences.

It was expected with a study conducted in Australia where the majority of the population speak English as a native language (ENL speakers), that any associations of significance would be related to differences in country of birth and the use of English. While the results did support this view, other results for country birth and use of English at home were not expected. Interestingly, managers born outside of Australia and/or who speak a language other than English at home were more successful than might be expected in achieving effective outcomes in conversations with people born in Australia, and people who speak English at home. This could be explained by people coming to work in Australia from another country expecting to converse with people born in Australia and to speak English at work. It could also be the result of these managers having more experience at grappling with language difference and therefore more patient in situations where they perceive someone else struggling. These possibilities are supported by existing literature about target language acquisition or where an individual builds and constructs a new identity associated with a target language community (Canagarajah 2007).

In contrast to this is the finding that managers born outside Australia and/or not speaking English at home appear to have a similar issue to those born in Australia and/or who did speak English at home. Both groups have difficulty in achieving effective conversation outcomes when the other person speaks a language different to themselves. These results indicate that some of the language related communication issues are not confined to Australian born/English

speaking managers. This could be due to differences in the capacity of each individual to use English as a lingua franca (Syed & Murray 2009), comprehensible English (Gray 2010), or accented English (Rakić, Steffens & Mummendey 2011) or due to the manager continuing to speak using cultural norms which are not understood by the other person (Sweeney & Hua 2010). The free text comments were examined in cases where the conversation was rated as ineffective showed there was a difference in the use of English at home, and also a difference in the country of birth. The following comment provides one insight into why the manager believed they were communicating effectively but could not understand why their message was not understood:

Case 135 [C1] *The staff member thought I was joking with them. I highlighted it was policy that the documentation was to be with them for them to complete said task. The staff member attempted to brush aside our conversation* [Manager Born in Australia, speaks English at home / Subordinate born in Malaysia, does not speak English at home]

The managers' rather bureaucratic language: 'policy', 'documentation', 'said task' suggests they used a level of English which was not comprehensible to the subordinate. As I was unable to contact respondents, the nature of the actual conversation cannot be examined, nor the interlocutor asked about what caused them to react the way they did. This example does support ideas presented by Seidlhofer (2009) that ENL speakers often use language that is difficult to understand, or phrased in a manner that ENL speakers can comprehend but English as a second language (ESL) speakers cannot resulting in miscommunication.

Managers born outside of Australia who do not speak English at home may adapt to the needs of English in the workplace through acculturation where an individual adapts to the host cultural system (Kim 2005). Jian (2012) studied migrants integrating into workplaces in the U.S.A. mid-west, identifying how employees with different countries of origin varied between the relationship developed within the workplace and the extent of acculturation achieved. He further reported that the level of acculturation varied dependent upon the type of work, and the people each migrant was associating with. This perspective is consistent with my findings on differences between downwards and upwards conversations. It is important to note that where

the manager and the subordinate or superior are also born outside of Australia, and speak a language other than English at home both individuals are going through their own acculturation process which could impact on assessments of communication effectiveness. In turn, Australian managers would need to accommodate a variety of backgrounds and languages, with individuals at different stages of acculturation. Some managers born outside Australia and not speaking English at home support this idea when they commented on what they would alter in a subsequent conversation with a superior to try to achieve an effective outcome:

Case 56 [C2] *'be more polite'* [Manager Born in Sri Lanka; speaks Sinhalese at home / Superior born in Australia; speaks English at home]

Case 241 [C2] *'be careful to choose the words I am using'* [Manager Born in Hong Kong; speaks Mandarin at home / Superior born in Australia; speaks English at home]

These managers have commented that an aspect of their approach to the conversation needs to be adjusted to increase the chance of an effective outcome. They are also aware of the types of linguistic tactics they could employ to accommodate differences.

While this study did not attempt to recruit a representative sample and did not indicate what type of subordinate conversations managers should reflect on, it is interesting to note that the 2011 Census identified that 20.4% or 1.57 million Australian households had two or more languages used at home (ABS 2011b). Comparing the manager and superior frequencies presented in Tables 4.8 and 4.9, there were more subordinates in conversation 1 who were perceived to be born outside of Australia (n=96, 24.2%) and a similar number perceived to use a language other than English at home (n=95, 23.9%). The similarity in percentages between my study results and census data could be a consequence of younger skilled migrants joining Australian workplaces (as shown in Figure 1.2). It may also be an outcome of perceptions held by the respondent manager related to subordinates' accented speech.

Accents have been reported to assist with the identification of ethnicity and are a more accurate way of categorising individuals than visual features (Rakić, Steffens & Mummendey 2011), however this can also lead to discrimination and a sense of not belonging when an individual

speaks with a non-standard language (Fuertes et al. 2012). Accents have also been shown to influence the likelihood of accommodating individual differences in vocal characteristics (Willemyns et al. 1997). One reason for accented speech when a person has been born in Australia may be the result of migrant families where a person may comfortably use English at work, yet speak another language at home to converse with other family members (Syed & Murray 2009).

The findings in this demographic area highlight a key workplace issue for Australia where the population is growing through migration rather than birth rates, a situation that is not going to change. Managers have to learn and adapt to effectively interact with subordinates, peers and superiors with a variety of cultural and language backgrounds, English language capabilities and who are at various stages of acculturation. Given current Australian immigration policy and composition of the population, this result is worth further investigation to identify strategies to accommodate differences in languages and cultural backgrounds.

5.1.2 Other associations in conversations with subordinates

Other associations identified in conversations with subordinates that were not evident in conversations with superiors were in the areas of highest level of education, organisational tenure (OT) and age.

5.1.2.1 Highest level of education

Observations in the differences and similarities in the highest level of education saw managers with non-university qualifications achieve effective outcomes when the other person also did not have a university degree. There were also less effective conversations when the other person held a higher level of qualification than the manager. These results may indicate that managers may be less equipped or even less confident in communicating with others perceived to be better educated. Conversely managers holding university qualifications reported having more effective conversations with people holding lower qualifications, while being less successful in conversations with others also holding similar university level qualifications. The association between differences and similarities in education levels may indicate that universities are

preparing people to communicate with subordinates, or those managers holding higher qualifications are more confident in their communication, a key outcome required in Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs (Randolph 2011). However, it could also indicate that managers with a higher level of education than a subordinate may have a feeling of superiority over those with lower qualifications, which could explain why they were less successful when the other person had the same qualification level as themselves. An examination of the free text comment fields did not provide any insight into these results.

5.1.2.2 Organisational tenure (OT)

While the effects of difference in OT were not as strong as for PT, significant associations were identified in conversations with subordinates. Managers with shorter OT were more effective in conversations with people of the same OT, and less effective in conversations with subordinates with longer OT. However, managers with longer OT were also less successful in conversations with subordinates with long OT. Some of these results may be for similar reasons as PT such as the extent of practical experience discussed in 5.1.1.1.

Another reason for this effect could be related to the subordinate themselves. Ineffective outcomes can be result of a subordinates with longer OT being long term “survivors” who lack the motivation to improve, and have not changed with the organisation regardless of any efforts made by the manager during performance or feedback sessions (Longenecker 2010). After examining the free text responses where the conversation with a subordinate was rated as ineffective, and the subordinate had a longer OT the following comments supported the results of Longenecker’s study. Some of the subordinates referred to in this study could be categorised as survivors unwilling to change despite the efforts of managers and based on their comments in the free-text fields. For example:

Case 216 [C1] *one conversation is not going to change years of ingrained attitude*
[Manager OT:More than 15 years / Subordinate OT:6-10 years]

Case 256 [C1] *at no time has she acknowledged being abusive or targeting and has never apologised to any of the people she has bullied or intimidated* [Manager OT:1-3 years / Subordinate OT:6-10 years]

Case 341 [C1] *this person then complained to a higher authority regarding bullying instead of accepting the underperformance notification* [Manager OT:More than 15 years / Subordinate OT:6-10 years]

These comments highlight some of the challenges managers face in conducting conversations with subordinates who have performance issues. O'Leary-Kelly and Newman (2003) suggested that longer tenured employees are more likely to hold incorrect self-perceptions about their own workplace performance and therefore react negatively to any type of criticism, which appears to be the situation in the above cases. Negative outcomes of difficult conversations with subordinates can lead to managers avoiding this type of conversation altogether due to a fear of the consequences or reactions to giving feedback (Jackman & Strober 2003). The insights reported in this demographic category give some credence to their idea, while indicating it is a worthwhile area to explore further.

5.1.3 Other associations in conversations with superiors

The only association identified in conversations with superiors that was not evident in conversations with subordinates was in the area of gender. It should be noted that RQ1 was the only research question where gender had any significant association with conversation outcomes where differences between the manager and their superior were observed.

5.1.3.1 Gender

With the larger number of males in senior positions as compared to females, females need to accommodate gender differences in upwards face-to-face conversations. This could be a conscious action related to face (Ting-Toomey 2005b) where a female protects her own self-esteem in a managerial role while supporting a superior male as part of a professional working relationship. The following comment highlights this, while the respondent indicated they used a more feminine style as an influencing approach in an upwards conversation

Case 27 [C2] *He had been told by the other manager that he was going to take over the project. He was not happy about this. (we) discussed what his options were and what*

would produce the best outcome for him. He was positive as he saw I cared about what his future might be. [Female Manager / Male Superior, effective outcome]

Other efforts by females to accommodate gender differences in upwards face-to-face conversations may be related to their attempts to improve evaluations of their work performance and positively influence their career paths (Sheridan 2007; Willemyns et al. 1997). My results support findings by Namy, Nygaard and Sauerteig (2002) that females accommodated more than males, and that accommodation was greatest towards males, however their study did not test this from a directional perspective. A few of the following comments highlight this perspective where a female manager has sought feedback from a male superior:

Case 54 [C2] *...to ask were they happy or unhappy with the level of work completion. He responded positively.* [Female Manager / Male Superior, effective outcome]

Case 64 [C2] *... to gain feedback on how I had managed the problem. We discussed how I had managed a client, including investigations ordered.* [Female Manager / Male Superior, effective outcome]

Case 357 [C2] *...to report that I just won a major project. He was totally complimentary, and praised me for work well done.* [Female Manager / Male Superior, effective outcome]

Face management and adaptive communication styles are important skills for female managers to learn as the greater number of males holding superior positions compared to females has not varied much over the previous 30 years (Schein 2007). Consequently female managers are more than likely going to encounter a male boss sometime during their career for the foreseeable future so it is interesting to observe that in this study, females achieved positive outcomes in conversations with males in superior workplace positions.

The fewer effective conversations between male managers and a female superior could be associated with sex-role stereotypes. Willemyns, Gallois and Callan's (2009) found that women breaking sex-role stereotypes by using more assertive language in workplace conversations were perceived as dominating and negative. A female manager using this type of language

may result in the manager seeing the conversation as ineffective as the interaction did not meet their expectations of how the other person would speak or conduct themselves. This could partially explain the greater than expected results of ineffective conversations between male managers and female superiors where a female had broken the sex-role stereotypical view held by the male. The following comment lends weight to this suggestion.

Case 253 [C2] *It was about a request for repair work to be undertaken. I tried to explain that the work to be undertaken would take considerably longer than she anticipated as she really has no understanding of what was required to complete the task. Had no idea what I was trying to explain as she is in a role far beyond her expertise. This manager is in a position far beyond her capabilities and has no understanding of what is required to carry out the role.* [Male Manager / Female Superior, ineffective outcome]

Whether the comments above can be solely attributed to sex-role stereotypes, or associated with other contextual factors such as the female superior being in a position that the male manager coveted cannot be clarified with the respondent. This case does highlight the contextual nature of gender-based interactions which Barbuto Jr et al. (2007) note is too often overlooked in studies examining leaders and workers. They call for researchers to consider designing studies to help “understand the differences that may occur either as a result of gender or as a result of workers’ reactions to leaders based on gender” (Barbuto Jr et al. 2007:81). While gender was not the sole focus of this study, the results here support their position that there are likely to be gender effects in some areas of leadership communication, and therefore there is a need to accommodate differences in gender in relationships with superiors.

5.1.4 Summary of research question 1

The associations identified between demographic differences and similarities and conversation outcomes raise some interesting issues in terms of how conversation outcomes are achieved when differences and similarities are evident. The effect of tenure (both position and organisational) on outcomes were surprising, and indicates the potential of tenure to operate as a moderating effect between other demographic factors and outcomes. The issues identified in

relation to use of English highlight some important issues for multinational workplaces and workforces.

The following section discusses research question 2 which looked at whether linguistic tactics were used in effective conversations to accommodate demographic differences.

5.2 Research Question 2 (RQ2)

Research question 2 (RQ2) asked

Is there an association between the use of one or more accommodation tactics and effective face-to-face conversation outcomes when there is a demographic difference between interactants?

As noted in section 4.9.4, a series of one-way ANOVAs were used to examine the data to determine if and where associations were evident between the number of linguistic tactics used in an effective conversation when a demographic difference was identified. Associations were found between some demographic variables and effective conversations, but the level of significance and associations varied between demographic attributes and outcomes and whether the conversation was with a subordinate or superior (Table 4.24).

5.2.1 Significant association in conversations with subordinates and superiors

The results of the analysis suggest that age was the only demographic difference category where significant associations between the use of one or more linguistic tactics and effective were found in both conversations.

5.2.1.1 Age

Age was the only category where a significant association was found in both conversations in RQ2. Age was also the only demographic difference category with any significant result in conversations with superiors. Age was also the demographic difference category where there was the greatest reported use of linguistic tactics in effective conversations (Table 4.23).

While age diversity is becoming more prevalent in workplaces (Avery, McKay & Wilson 2007; Hair Collins, Hair Jr & Rocco 2009), it appears the managers in this sample can achieve

effective outcomes with people of different ages using some form of linguistic tactic. One possible explanation for this is that age is a relatively stable range of variables compared to other categories such as tenure (position and organisational), country of birth and the use of English at home. Taking first language use as a means of comparison, there are over 300 languages spoken in Australia (including indigenous languages), and over 50 percent of migrants who arrived since 2006 speak another language as well as English (ABS 2011b). This example demonstrates how varied language backgrounds can be compared to variations in age, meaning managers may need to learn to accommodate languages in different ways.

Difficulties in accommodating differences in first language use may also explain why the use of English at home category showed no significant associations between the use of linguistic tactics and effective conversation outcomes (Table 4.23). Consequently it appears that managers develop skills in what linguistic tactics work in a particular situation or context for an age group and then apply it to others of a similar age regardless of the direction of the conversation. This explanation resonates with the studies on intergenerational communication where individuals are categorised or grouped into age related cohorts (reviewed in section 2.3.4).

Giles, Ryan and Anas (2008) found there were strong associations between age-based stereotypes and communication variables such as the employment of conversational tactics, and that there are variations between countries on how age-based stereotyped groupings are perceived (Giles et al. 2000). Age stereotypes can result in under or over accommodation. For example: over accommodation could result where a manager has used linguistic tactics with the intention of accommodating an age difference and evaluates the conversation outcome positively while the interactant could review the outcome as ineffective (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005). The respondents in this study may view their use of linguistic tactics to accommodate age related differences as being effective, however if the interactants were interviewed, they might consider the outcome ineffective.

5.2.2 Other associations in conversations with subordinates

Other associations identified in conversations with subordinates that were not evident in conversations with superiors were in the areas of organisational tenure (OT), position tenure, highest level of education and country of birth. The results in these demographic attributes align closely with the attributes identified in RQ1, and consequently some of the reasons that are suggested to explain the results of RQ1 are also relevant for RQ2. These include the influence of practical experience, university level education, and awareness of the impact of differences in the country of birth.

Interestingly there were no associations between the use of one or more linguistic tactics and the categories of gender or use of English at home. This is different from the results of a small study (N=27) by Sweeney and Hua (2010) in the United Kingdom. They analysed negotiation discourses using CAT. They suggest that most of the native English speakers did use linguistic tactics to accommodate language differences when outlining a negotiation strategy with a non-native speaker, but commented that not all of these attempts were successful. However they did not test the non-native speakers in the same way so could not compare approaches by individuals. The variations in results could be due to the location and/or size of the study and the differences in methodologies.

5.2.3 Summary of research question 2

The analysis conducted for research question 2 indicated that the use of one or more linguistic tactics does influence effective conversation outcomes with subordinates but not necessarily with superiors. This highlights the directional nature of linguistic tactic use as an accommodation strategy.

The following section discusses research question 3 which looked at the use of linguistic tactics and overall conversation effectiveness.

5.3 Research Question 3 (RQ3)

Research question 3 (RQ3) asked

Is there an association between the number of accommodation tactics used and overall face-to-face conversation effectiveness or ineffectiveness?

There were highly significant associations between the number of accommodation tactics used or not used and overall conversation effectiveness. The Tukey post-hoc analysis identified six significant results in downwards conversations compared to the three in upwards conversations (Table 4.27). In both C1 and C2 there was a pattern of similar results in the relationships between zero, and three to five tactics with a large number of conversations not reporting the use of any tactic at all (Table 4.25). Effective outcomes were still reported where linguistic tactics were not used indicating that accommodation of demographic differences was achieved by some other strategy or that the manager may have actually used a tactic but not recalled it. Forgas and George (2001) reported that unconscious actions can influence communication interactions, as well as situational factors, emotional factors and mood (affect).

It appears that managers use more linguistic tactics to accommodate demographic differences rather than less. This was particularly evident in the conversations with subordinates where there were a greater number of significant associations. One possible explanation can be linked to the discussion in RQ2 where there were more significant results across a range of demographic categories in effective downwards conversations. It appears managers may become more experienced at using a series of linguistic tactics in conversations with subordinates as there is likely to be range of demographic variation within subordinate groups. Usually managers have more than one employee reporting to them (a one-to-many relationship) so where linguistic tactics are used to accommodate, managers have an opportunity to practise accommodating a range of demographic differences. This may in turn make the use of linguistic tactics in a particular situation more memorable.

In comparison a relationship with a superior is usually one-to-one, so fewer linguistic tactics may be used, or the use of linguistic tactics in that situation has become the norm and therefore less memorable which may have affected results. This perspective is consistent with literature into

upwards influencing tactics used by managers. Cable and Judge (2003) suggested that managers observe their leaders and use their leaders as a model as to what is an effective way of influencing outcomes and identify how the superior prefers to be influenced. It could be that the managers in this study are using linguistic tactics in their interactions, and adopting their leaders' linguistic tactics rather than selecting their own. Consequently their use is not clearly identifiable. In terms of CAT this could be classified as a use of convergence by the manager to maintain the relationship with the superior by adopting their speech patterns. Gallois, O'gay and Giles (2005) explain that convergence strategies are often used when an individual desires the other person's approval. This last interpretation could also explain the use of a variety of tactics in downwards conversations. Because there is more than one target to communicate with, a specific linguistic tactic approach may not work with all subordinates requiring a greater number of tactics to be used dependent on who the manager was conversing with.

5.3.1 Summary of research question 3

RQ3 built upon the perspective that managers use different approaches to accommodation dependent upon the direction of the conversation, and that this in turn affects the level of conversational effectiveness. The use or non-use of linguistic tactics influences the level of effectiveness.

The following section discusses research question 4 which examined the use of specific linguistic tactics in effective conversations.

5.4 Research Question 4 (RQ4)

Research question 4 (RQ4) asked

Where a demographic difference is evident is there an association between the use of a specific accommodation tactic and the proportion of effective face-to-face conversations?

As noted in section 4.11, a series of one-way ANOVAs was used to determine if and where associations were evident between the type of linguistic tactics used in an effective conversation when a demographic difference was identified. The use of a particular linguistic tactic is one way of accommodating demographic differences to achieve effective conversation

outcomes. Associations were found in between some demographic variables and the use of a particular linguistic tactic, but the level of significance and associations varied between each linguistic tactic, demographic attributes and whether the conversation was with a subordinate or superior. Significant results were observed for changes in tone of voice, changes to the pace of speech and change of words used during the conversation for both conversations, while the use of repetition and simpler words were only associated with conversations with subordinates.

5.4.1 Significant associations in conversations with subordinates and superiors

The results of the analysis suggest there were three linguistic categories where significant associations between effective conversations and demographic difference were evident in both conversations. There were changes in tone of voice, in pace of speech and changes of words used during the conversation.

Research into individual aspects of linguistic tactic use as recalled by the respondent is limited. Previous studies tend to focus on a specific context of tactic use or have analysed conversations to identify if and/or which linguistic features or tactics are used within a particular interaction. Consequently associating results with previous studies is challenging although there are results that resonate with previous investigations as discussed in the following sections.

5.4.1.1 Change in the tone of voice used

Changes in the tone of voice were significant in all demographic categories in downwards conversations, and significant where there were differences in age, position tenure and education in upwards conversations (Table 4.28). Changes in tone are one form of paralinguistic code used to accommodate or regulate communication (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005) and associated with the third assumption of CAT discussed in section 2.4.2.3.

The significance of the results for the use of tone in effective conversations is consistent with previous research by Willemyns, Gallois and Callan (2000) who reported that the tone of voice used in a conversation plays a major role in accommodation processes. They had not expected non-verbal behaviours such as the use of tone (both positive tone and negative tone) to emerge so strongly from written descriptions of two interactions with supervisors. They further noted

that respondents could recall the tone their supervisors used in the conversation more than the words spoken to them.

5.4.1.2 Changes in pace of speech

Changes in the pace of speech were significant in the time based categories (age, OT and PT) and education in both C1 and C2 (Table 4.29). Changes in pace were significant where there were differences in the use of English at home in conversations with subordinates, while the differences in the country of birth were significant in conversations with superiors. This was the only linguistic tactic category where there were fairly similar significant results in both conversations.

Changes in the pace of speech are one way of accommodating perceived differences (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005) where an interactant adapts their speech behaviour to improve understanding in conversational interactions (Jones et al. 1999). Speaking more slowly may be considered a way of increasing understanding and therefore effectiveness when accommodating differences. It was interesting that the strongest associations in changes of pace occurred with differences in the use of English at home in conversations with subordinates, and differences in the level of education in conversations with superiors. One reason a manager may slow their pace of speech when conversing with an ESL speaker is to allow the other person time to process the words being used. Hatzidaki, Branigan and Pickering (2011) reported that speakers of more than one language process the second language by relating it to words and grammar in their first language. This is a process that takes time, and if a manager were to continue the conversation when the other person was still processing the previous piece of information, there would be a higher likelihood that the total message would be misunderstood.

5.4.1.3 Changes in the words used

Changes in the words used were significant in every category except for gender in downwards conversations, while only position tenure and education were the only categories with significant results in upwards conversations (Table 4.30). Changes in the use of particular words can

improve accommodation by using words or terms which are more easily understood, or could be the source for non-accommodation by using words or terms that are not understood by the other person. In CAT this is another area of interpretability where familiar terms are used to make the conversation as clear as possible (Willemyns, Gallois & Callan 2000) but as Sweeney and Hua (2010) reported this form of tactic is not consistently used during an interaction thereby affecting the level of accommodation. The question relating to changing words did not ask respondents to indicate whether the words changed related to jargon, terminology, or adapting other words to make the reason for the conversation more easily understood. There are some words that do not translate easily between languages if at all which can mean that communication is not easily understood despite attempts at learning another language (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta 2005). There is also the issue that an extended length of tenure, whether it is position or organisationally related, can breed familiarity with industry or organisational terms. However these terms may require their own form of translation or explanation to ensure understanding.

Complications also arise for people born overseas when English is the first language where Australian colloquialisms are used (Chur-Hansen & Barrett 1996). Reflecting on my own workplace experiences, I have found myself having to explain an Australian colloquialism to bewildered colleagues who were English speakers but born outside Australia. In one example I advised a colleague to “fossick around”. I found myself having to explain that it meant to search for something worthwhile. The word fossick was originally an English term but its use became prominent in the Australian goldfields in the 1840s to where it described a search for gold (Baker 1966), while its use as a verb expanded to encompass an attempt to search, find, or locate (Moore 2004). This example demonstrates the confusion that can arise even between native speakers of English in a workplace when unfamiliar terms are used. This issue can cause greater confusion where English is not the first language, and where some words or terms do not translate into other languages.

5.4.2 Other associations in conversations with subordinates

Other associations identified in conversations with subordinates that were not evident in conversations with superiors were in the areas of repeated words and use of simpler words.

5.4.2.1 Use of repeated words (repetition)

The use of repetition was evident in conversations with subordinates with highly significant associations with the time based demographic categories (age, PT and OT), and significant associations to education and country of birth (Table 4.31). Respondents were not asked why they used word repetition as a linguistic tactic so whether this was used to clarify or reinforce a situation is not clear. The similarity in results to the use of changed words may relate to some of the issues previously discussed.

5.4.2.2 Use of simpler words

There was only one result of significance in the use of simpler words in conversations with subordinates which was associated with differences in OT (Table 4.32). One plausible explanation for this association would relate to the use of jargon. Jargon within organisations includes technical terms, abbreviations and acronyms (McShane & Travaglione 2005). Where jargon is used in a conversation both parties need to understand what the jargon means for the interaction to be effective. Where there are differences in OT, there are likely to be differences in the jargon that is known and/or understood by both parties, which could explain why this was the only result of significance. Managers may have thought that simpler words were required to explain highly technical terms or concepts or alternatively explain jargon in plain language.

5.4.3 Summary of research question 4

There are associations between the use of specific accommodation tactics and the proportion of effective conversations when there are demographic differences. The use of linguistic tactics indicates some form of accommodation is taking place as some form of difference needs to be bridged, or some type of distance needs to be maintained. It does need to be acknowledged in the context of this study that it is not explicitly clear which type of accommodation is taking place, more that some form of accommodation is occurring. Linguistic tactic use is more evident in conversations with subordinates as compared to conversations with superiors reinforcing the perspective that managers differ in the way they accommodate according to the direction of the conversation.

The following section discusses research question 5 and the intent to alter future conversations.

5.5 Research question 5 (RQ5)

Research question 5 (RQ5) asked

When considering how to approach a future conversation with the other person,

- (a) do managers reporting an effective outcome plan not to change their approach?
- (b) do managers reporting an ineffective outcome plan to change their approach?

In RQ5a, the majority of managers indicated that they would not alter a future face-to-face conversation when an effective outcome was achieved, yet some managers reported they would alter a future conversation despite reporting an effective outcome. This was not expected. For both C1 and C2, fewer managers reported that they would alter future conversations when an effective outcome was reported. While the results here were smaller than anticipated, the managers who would alter a future face-to-face conversation after achieving an effective outcome could relate to two issues – face, and/or the use of reflective practice for continuous improvement.

These results could indicate that a small body of managers want to continually improve themselves in order to achieve better outcomes despite the existence of differences. The capacity of a manager to review and evaluate their own actions and seek ways to improve their own performance establishes reflective practice (Day 2000; Gosling & Mintzberg 2003) and levels of self-awareness (Goleman 1998) leading back to the discussion in RQ1 about the impact of practical experience. Teaching managers to reflect on their own performance in addition to develop communication skills may assist managers in accommodating differences. This is an area where training, coaching and development could be very beneficial to improve managerial communication practices (Kochanowski, Seifert & Yukl 2009; McCarthy & Milner 2013), particularly as organisational structures fragment and the availability of performance feedback is not readily available (Kochanowski, Seifert & Yukl 2009). The DARCI survey instrument designed for this study could be used to measure the before and after effect. This

broadens the delivery of communication to being not just about how to interact, but how to self-assess the effectiveness of communication interactions.

The majority of face-to-face workplace conversations are not observed by a third party who can provide objective opinions on effectiveness or outcomes. Perceptions of effectiveness are confined to the interactants, and any external feedback on communication performance is reliant on hearsay or participant perceptions (Madlock 2008; Schnake et al. 1990). Mentoring of others is becoming more common in education delivering benefits for the person being mentored (the mentee) as well as the mentor (Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka 2009), an effect also reported in health and medicine (Murray & Peyrefitte 2007). It is recognised that mentoring and coaching can improve employee performance (Kochanowski, Seifert & Yukl 2009; Longenecker 2010; McCarthy & Milner 2013), and that reflective practice can improve individual performance (McDaniel & DiBella-McCarthy 2012). The growing importance of developing reflective skills in managers is being recognised through the inclusion of reflective practice as an element in the business education curriculum (Inamdar & Roldan 2013; Raber Hedberg 2009). It is further recognised in more modern leadership theories such as authentic leadership where leaders are required to be aware of their own performance and reactions in addition to objectively reviewing other people's performance (Gardner et al. 2011). It appears that the potential benefits of alternative self-feedback mechanisms are presently overlooked in organisations.

More managers than expected reported that they would not alter a future conversation when an ineffective outcome was reported which may be related to other organisational difficulties. Respondents were not asked the reason why there was no intent to alter an ineffective conversation, and this area will be addressed in the next version of the questionnaire. To try to understand why respondents would be reluctant to alter approaches to future conversations, there were two other content fields in the questionnaire with the potential to provide some background. These questions asked why respondents why the outcome was rated as ineffective and whether or not respondents felt that any other issue influenced the outcome of the conversations. Some comments in these fields did provide insight into situations involving communication with subordinates (C1):

Case 8 [C1] *staff member did not get what she wanted and it was an awkward conversation* [differences in OT, country of birth and use of English at home]

Case 91 [C1] *it was a situation that could not be solved straight away, it was beyond my influence* [differences in age, education and use of English at home]

Case 253 [C1] *because it is an ongoing problem that I have addressed on a number of occasions but nothing I seem to say has any effect* [differences in age, gender, OT, PT and highest level of education]

These comments seem to indicate that manager respondents may be unsure of how to address or alter their conversation with these particular subordinates in order to resolve these issues. The reluctance to indicate or commit to alter future conversations may not be because they do not want to alter future conversations, more that they do not know how or what to change to achieve a positive outcome for the subordinate and the organisation. This could also indicate a lack of reflective practice, where the manager interprets their actions (among other areas of behaviour) to analyse effectiveness and consider future approaches to improve performance (McDaniel & DiBella-McCarthy 2012). Another perspective could be that the interactions were initiated to deliver constructive or negative feedback. While the majority of downwards and upwards conversations were initiated to deliver constructive or negative feedback, Longenecker (2010:37) discusses how conversations to address workplace performance issues can be challenging with a “change or go employee” who does not show any signs of being motivated about their work or the organisation. This also links back to the discussion in RQ1 about subordinates influencing the association between differences in OT and conversation effectiveness (section 5.1.2.2). Where a subordinate is unmotivated or disengaged with the organisation, managers would find it difficult to achieve changes in behaviour.

Comments related to upwards communication also illuminated some of the issues that can occur when conversing with a superior (C2):

Case 117 [C2] *this particular person did not take kindly to any sort of constructive advice* [differences in age, OT, PT and country of birth];

Case 300 [C1] *I felt that my opinion didn't matter and he was going to go with what he wanted regardless* [differences in gender, age, education and country of birth];

Case 324 [C2] *in the traditional hierarchy organisation we were in, subordinates did not criticise superiors, notwithstanding the truth or otherwise of the information* [differences in age, OT, PT, education and use of English at home]

These types of comments support empirical evidence provided by Tourish and Robson (2006) that critical upwards feedback is subjected to intense scrutiny, and therefore it is highly likely that the demand for supportive evidence is projected back onto the manager as the message sender. However, as Case 324 [C2] notes, the provision of evidence does not guarantee that constructive criticism will be considered, which could be the underlying reason for classifying a conversation as ineffective. Organisational norms that discourage the delivery of critical upwards feedback could lead to managers being less likely to alter a future conversation where interlocutors interpret the outcomes of their conversations as ineffective.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the major results of the study and related them to relevant literature and theory. Variations were observed in the associations between demographic differences and conversation effectiveness, the use of linguistic tactics to accommodate demographic differences, and differences in the way they were used in conversations with subordinates as compared to superiors. Possibilities for extending the use of the DARCI tool were briefly discussed.

The next chapter summarises the conclusions of the study. Further implications for theory and professional practice are noted. Limitations of the study and future research opportunities are outlined. Final comments are also provided regarding this research project.

6. CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of this investigation into the accommodation of demographic differences in Australian workplace conversations.

Four key findings emerged from this study. First, tenure (both position and organisational) influences the effectiveness of conversations, and is strongly associated with the use of linguistic tactics to achieve effective outcomes. Differences in tenure had the greatest number of associations with accommodation and effective outcomes when reviewing all of the demographic categories investigated. Second, managers have difficulty in achieving effective conversations when there are differences in language backgrounds aside from English. This applied both for managers born in Australia and speaking English at home, and for managers born overseas and speaking a language other than English at home. Third, there are directional variances in how managers accommodate perceived demographic differences, and what demographic differences are accommodated. There is also evidence to suggest that managers alter their use of linguistic tactics between conversations held with subordinates and interactions with superiors. Fourthly, some managers will continue to alter their approach to future conversations despite achieving an effective outcome, suggesting that some managers use reflective practice to continuously improve the level of conversation effectiveness.

This final chapter outlines the theoretical contributions of this study and the implications for professional practice. Limitations of the study, future research opportunities including future uses of the questionnaire are discussed. Some final notes end the chapter and this thesis.

6.1 Theoretical implications of findings

There are theoretical implications of the findings in relation to communication accommodation theory (CAT) and also organisational demography.

6.1.1 Theoretical implications for CAT

This thesis contributes to the theoretical application of CAT in three ways. Firstly, the study examined two face-to-face conversations from the perspective of one individual communicating in different directions. While previous studies have examined directional communication from younger to older, and younger to older members of society and differences between two positions (subordinates and superiors), this study is unique in investigating subordinate/superior communication from the single perspective of a workplace manager. Consequently this study identified that direction of the conversation does impact on what is accommodated (in terms of demographic difference) and how accommodation takes place (in terms of the linguistic tactics used in a conversation). The study identified that a wider range of linguistic techniques is employed in conversations with subordinates, than in conversations with superiors, indicating that managers accommodate in different ways in different directions.

Secondly, the study explored the influence of a range of sociohistorical factors (gender, age, tenure, education, country of birth and use of English at home) with a particular communication event rather than confining the study to a limited range of demographic attributes or a single situation. This was achieved by collecting actual and perceived demographic information about interactants instead of utilising pre-determined sociohistorical constructs to facilitate the examination of a range of variables and their influence on communication events. The results reported in this study indicate that a wider range of demographic attributes than previously thought are associated with accommodation.

Thirdly, this study compared face-to-face conversation outcomes and intents against multiple sociohistorical factors within a single research project. The results of this study suggest that individuals do vary in their intent to alter a future conversation in ways that are not necessarily related to the outcome of the conversation.

Based on these outcomes the first principle of CAT as proposed by Giles et al. (2007) and the third principle of CAT as elaborated on by Gasiorek and Giles (2012), both of which relate to the message initiator (i.e. in this study the manager), could be added to in the following ways:

Speakers will *over time* and up to an optimal level, increasingly accommodate communication patterns *and sociohistorical differences perceived as both relevant to communication and* characteristic of their interactants, *and using previous interactions to inform future interactions*, the more they wish to: signal positive face and empathy, elicit the other's approval, respect, understanding, trust, compliance and cooperation, develop a closer relationship, defuse a potentially volatile situation, or signal common social identities. (Giles et al. 2007:147; italics and blue text indicate proposed additions)

The first principle previously limited accommodation to communication patterns and did not specifically address the influence of perceived sociohistorical differences that may exist between interactants, and neither was the effect of experiential learning and reflection on future interactions incorporated into the principle. The proposed refinement incorporates the results of this study into the first principle. This also prompts consideration of the third principle which relates to the speaker and their approach in a nonaccommodative interaction. Consequently, the third principle, including the amendments proposed by Gasiorek and Giles (2012) could be rewritten as follows:

Speakers will (other interactional motives notwithstanding), increasingly nonaccommodate (e.g., diverge from) the communicative patterns *and sociohistorical differences perceived as both relevant to communication and* characteristic of their interactants, *and using previous interactions to inform future interactions*, the more they wish to signal (or promote): relational dissatisfaction or disaffection with and disrespect for the others' traits, demeanor, actions, or social identities. However, it is recipients' perceptions of these motives—not the speakers' motives per se—that determine recipients' reactions and responses to nonaccommodation. (Gasiorek and Giles 2012:325-6; italics and blue text indicate proposed additions)

The elaborations proposed identify the role of sociohistorical differences on interpersonal interactions in accommodation and nonaccommodation from the speaker's perspective.

6.1.2 Theoretical implications for organisational demography

This study highlights the wide range of similarities and differences that can exist in workplaces and the influence of demographic factors on conversational outcomes. This study demonstrates another way to examine the impact of actual and perceived demographic similarities and differences on organisational phenomena without explicitly asking respondents to rate themselves as being similar or different to others. The results reported in this study

indicate that investigating individual dyadic differences and comparing them to workplace outcomes provides useful insights into workplace interaction phenomena.

6.2 Implications for professional practice

The major implication for professional practice is an awareness of how differences in a variety of language and cultural backgrounds impact on face-to-face conversations in Australian workplaces. While Australian government services have and promote access to interpreter services and provide access to materials in other languages, the same facilities are not necessarily available in workplaces. Doctors in France were shown to use two main strategies to overcome language barriers in conversations with patients (Gasiorek, Van de Poel & Blockmans 2015). Doctors first resorted to seeking the help of others skilled in the other language, or have the patient return at a later time with another person who spoke French better. These strategies could be problematic in a workplace, particularly in a manager-subordinate or manager-superior relationship due, for example the issue involved which may have privacy and confidentiality concerns. Differences in first language usage, and competency in speaking and understanding English present challenges for migrants to Australia and their potential employers, particularly where English is not their first language.

Other implications for professional practice include how differences are perceived within a population, and an indication of whether or not reflective communication practices are taking place within interactions. When reviewing the ineffective communication outcomes, it is apparent that a significant number of managers would not alter their future conversations to achieve effective communication outcomes. This is an area of concern because it indicates that some managers are not troubled about achieving an effective outcome in a future conversation. This could indicate a level of apathy towards achieving effective outcomes, which could be the result of other organisational cultural factors existing in the organisation, conflicts in the interpersonal relationships or individual motivation issues. Another reason could be a lack of interest or support by more senior management, or it could be that the person has not been educated on how to give feedback. Unguided or untrained efforts at feedback could be classified as ineffective, but without proper training, guidance and support, the manager has a

lower likelihood of altering their pattern of behaviour unless given a compelling reason to do so, and the means to achieve it.

One area that could assist in developing interpersonal communication competencies is for managers to be developed to act as coaches, where active listening skills are critical to achieving more effective outcomes (McCarthy & Milner 2013). However, the managerial coaching role as a development, feedback and relationship building mechanism cannot be effectively fulfilled unless the manager regularly communicates and interacts with the subordinate (Longenecker 2010). Managers were willing to report ineffective outcomes and indicated the linguistic tactics and strategies they used to achieve the interaction's intent, however their efforts were not always perceived as successful. This indicates that managers may be aware that their approach to the interaction may need to change, but are not sure of what other communication strategies or approaches to utilise in future interactions. Introducing new perspectives or developing a greater awareness of other approaches that could be used, may lead to more effective conversations.

There may also be lessons to learn from managers from non-English speaking backgrounds who are accommodating language differences. Investigating how they approach interactions with individuals having other language backgrounds may provide some insight into accommodating language differences in the workplace. This type of approach may help break down language and cultural barriers. The development of self-assessment or reflective evaluation of interactions may also further assist the development of accommodative skills and strategies. An assessment of accommodation and non-accommodation practices in increasingly diversified workforces is a promising area of future study. The instrument created as part of this study could provide the means of measuring the before and after effects of implementing such a program of training and personal development.

6.3 Limitations of the study

Research projects have a defined scope in order to make a study practical, beneficial and realistic. As a result there are inherent limitations in what was and was not covered in the study, and in turn this thesis. In addition, there are some methodological constraints that may

have limited the effect sizes observed in the sample used for this study and consequentially influenced the interpretation of findings. These issues are outlined next.

6.3.1 Use of categorical data

The collection of categorical variables limited the extent of statistical tests that could be applied to the data, particularly in the area of regression to test for multiple interaction or moderator effects. Testing for interaction effects – which would have been possible if data with linear scales had been available would have allowed investigation of whether for example, position tenure operates as a moderator facilitating accommodation when other demographic differences are evident. Some of the demographic categories used in this study such as gender, country of birth and use of English at home could not be reclassified into a form of linear scale. Respondents could have been asked about the length of education, however this is not necessarily reflective of the level of education achieved. This could be addressed in a future design to collect some scaled data in the areas of age, position tenure, relationship tenure and organisation tenure, however it would not allow for consistent comparative analysis for demographic attributes that are only categorical in nature

6.3.2 Type of conversation and conversation outcome

The study allowed respondents to determine the type of conversation selected to reflect on, and did not restrict respondents to a particular outcome, for example only to focus on ineffective outcomes. This allowed for comparisons between effective and ineffective conversations and identify associations between outcomes and directional effects. Restricting the reason for the conversation or direction of the conversation may have provided concentrated data, but precluded the broader examination of self-reported managerial workplace conversations. By retaining the broad approach limited the analysis possible on ineffective interactions to gain insight into the reasons some conversations are less successful than others. This alternate design will be considered in future studies.

6.3.3 Reason for using a linguistic tactic

Respondents were asked if they used a particular linguistic tactic, but they were not asked why they had selected each particular linguistic tactic. Consequently it could not be determined what type of accommodation was being used (to converge, maintain or diverge). This also meant that directional effects (for example divergence evident in a downwards direction with convergence evident in an upwards direction) could not be examined. By adding a question for each conversation asking respondents to indicate why they had selected a particular linguistic strategy, the type of accommodation being used during the interaction could be determined.

6.3.4 Source of the study population

The population for the study (N=397) was sourced from a commercial panel and confined to a specific employee group spread across a range of demographic categories such as age and gender. The panel participants are remunerated for completing a number of surveys each year. Results from an individual organisation or within an industry group may produce different results based on the nature of the organisation and the amount of training in the area of communication, and the demographic profile of the organisation itself. Other countries or environments may have different profiles due to immigration history, practices and policies, and national culture while countries with more than one national language may yield changed results.

Using a panel service provider to recruit respondents prevents interaction with respondents as data is de-identified prior to delivery to the researcher which prevents follow up with respondents to clarify incomplete or unclear responses, or explore areas of interest. The use of a panel ensured that a larger number of respondents was reached within specific recruitment criteria in a short space of time. It was considered to be a more prudent approach to use a mix of organisations rather than concentrate efforts within a single organisation as results could have been skewed based on the demographics existing within the organisation.

6.3.5 Data from a single point in time

As with other single questionnaire studies, the survey responses represent the perceptions of participants at a single point in time. If the same study were conducted 12 or 18 months later, members of certain age groups may have aged sufficiently to move into a different demographic categorisation, thereby altering perspectives, incremental experiences and results. As this is a situation that is evident in all age related research, this limitation should be noted, but should not exclude the use of age as a variable.

6.3.6 Generalisability

The scope of the study was focused on managers in Australian workplaces, and therefore the findings cannot necessarily be assumed to apply in other workplaces or countries. As discussed in Chapter 3, there was a conscious decision not to recruit a representative sample of the Australian population of workplace managers, and therefore results cannot be generalised to all Australian organisations, or all positions involving people management responsibilities. Results of this study can be generalised only within the context of this study (Bryman & Bell 2011).

6.3.7 Reliance on perceptions in self-reported data

While perceptual bias may be considered a limitation in this study, the premise of CAT is based on individual perceptions of others, and therefore could also be considered as a key component of study design. While seeking perceived demographic attributes from respondents about their communication interlocutors, the study was reliant on the respondents' perceptions of similarity provided through the self-reports which may or may not reflect the actualities involved (Riordan & Wayne 2008:572). However as it is these perceptions that have an influence on these conversations, it was pertinent to obtain a demographic description of the interlocutor from the person completing the survey based on their recollection of the interaction.

6.3.8 Other factors that may have influenced the conversations

The study did not consider environmental or contextual factors that may have impacted on the conversation outcome such as the location of the conversation, time of day, day of week, and

the current situation existing within the organisation itself such as its culture or stage in the company life cycle. However, the focus of the study was on individual perceptions and individual demographic factors. Any expansion of the study to include environmental and/or other contextual factors would have diverted attention from the objective to examine the accommodation of differences within face-to-face workplace conversations reported. The consideration of environmental and contextual factors had the potential to confound results based on organisational related variables outside the manager's sphere of control.

6.3.9 Lack of message receiver's point of view

The individual responses including an evaluation of the outcome of the conversation were drawn from a one way perspective, without the opinions or evaluations of the subordinate or superior being obtained or compared. Obtaining the message receiver's perspective would have been difficult due to the study design; however the approach used in this study provided an insight into the ways that managers operate. Managers will draw their own conclusions regarding the success or otherwise of actions including conversations, and use subjective assessments to determine their future activities, regardless of the opinions of the interlocutor. While the perspective of the other participant in the conversation would provide a reference point for evaluating the managers' conclusions, and provide a comparative measure of success, it was the perceptions of the manager as a message sender that were of particular interest in this study.

6.3.10 Addressing limitations

Before embarking on further studies, some minor revisions to the questionnaire are recommended to facilitate further statistical and qualitative analysis. Capturing scaled data on the respondent year of birth establishes a means of testing a number of demographic variables using hierarchical regression, which would require only a minor adjustment to the survey design. A further free format box would be added to the future intent question to capture the reason for not altering the communication outcome, where applicable. This was not included in the version used for this study as the significance of responses to this question was not expected. A further question asking respondents why they used a particular linguistic tactic

may give greater insight into the type of accommodation occurring in relation to the demographic difference or similarity. The addition of the overall length of time in a managerial role would facilitate calculations on the impact of differences and allow further exploration of the impact of practical experience on language accommodation where first language differences exist. Once these adjustments are made, further studies using the DARCI questionnaire are intended, adapting the critical incident events relevant to the population of interest.

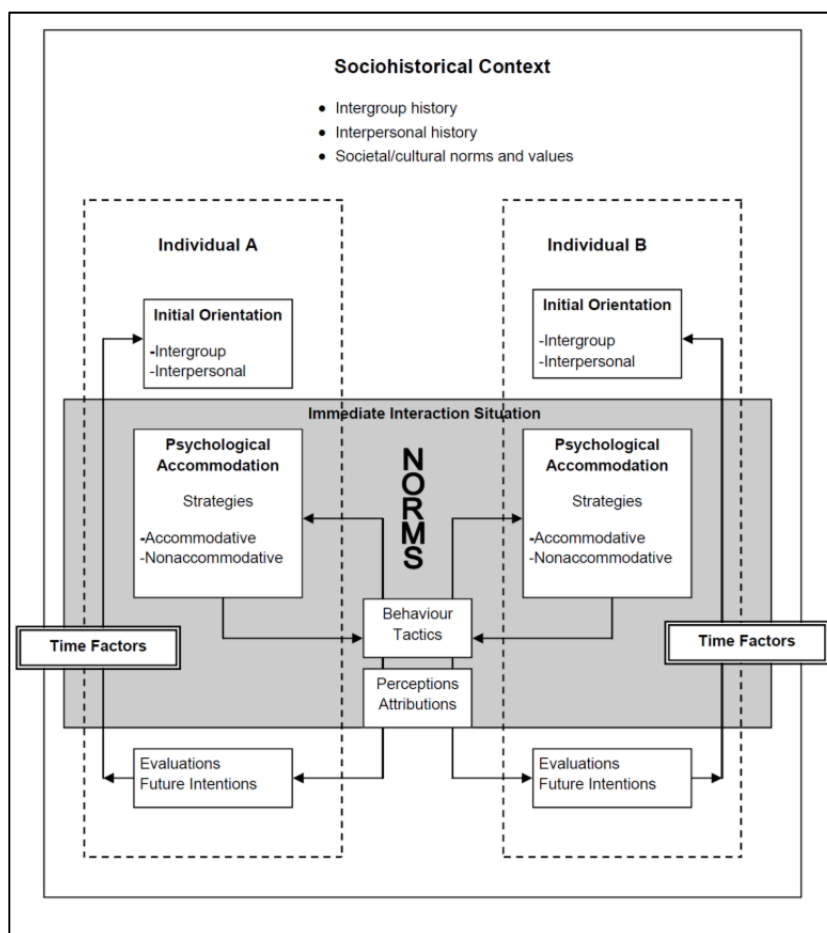
6.4 Future research recommendations

A number of future research opportunities are immediately evident, related to CAT and communication within organisations. It is interesting to note that the results of this thesis are published at a time when there appears to be a growing level of interest in pushing the boundaries in the application of CAT in terms of “method, context and application” in particular gathering data from real-life situations (Pitts & Harwood 2015:90)

One opportunity is to add another layer into the comparison so that downwards, upwards and sideways conversations are compared to examine whether peer conversations yield similar outcomes to those with subordinates and supervisors. Future studies could examine influencing results such as additional factors, potentially the location the communication took place, and the time of day the communication took place. This could be done through limited option questions which could be easily added to the DARCI survey instrument.

Another opportunity to expand the application of CAT would be to compare multiple conversations between the same interactants over a period of time. Jones et al. (1999) demonstrated that accommodation changes within a conversation, consequently accommodation may alter between conversations. For example, a future study could compare two face-to-face conversations (or other interpersonal interactions) and gather information on the time elapsed between conversations to measure differences in perceived effectiveness, the impact of intent on future conversations, and level of reflective practice. A representation of how this could operate in the CAT model is presented in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 **Model of CAT with time factors**



After: Gallois, Ogay & Giles (2005:135)

For example, a manager could indicate a conversation was perceived to be ineffective, and conduct a further conversation a month later reporting the same outcome. However, another manager may alter the following conversation making a conscious effort to reflect on other ways to accommodate differences in order to achieve an effective conversation outcome.

Investigating elapsed time between interactions as compared to within interactions, and what changed between conversations would achieve further insight into accommodation practices and the influence of time factors such as age, experience (OT, PT) and length of the interpersonal relationship (RT). Willemyns et al. (1997:15) identified that ongoing interactions are different from single interactions or experimental scenarios, yet this aspect of interpersonal interactions in CAT has not been actively pursued. A recent special issue of *Language and Communication* (Volume 41, 1, 2015) noted that greater consideration is needed in study design to consider CAT data on a longitudinal basis to track language and accommodation over

a period of time. Testing the extent of changes in accommodation over time may achieve some insights into how people change the way they accommodate, and provide a way to measure success in teaching or coaching managers to accommodate, similar to the changes noted over a four year period in an adolescent population (Van Hofwegen 2015). The influence of time and reflective practice are worthy of further investigation from theoretical and empirical perspectives to determine what and how accommodation changes over time.

Further exploration of face and impression management issues is also recommended. The outcome of the conversation could be limited to ones where an ineffective result is perceived, or restricted to conflict situations where an individual's sense of self may be challenged (Ting-Toomey 2005b). Additional questions could be included to capture perceptions of the interactants' emotions and affect to test for use of dominating facework approaches (Oetzel, Garcia & Ting-Toomey 2008) and their impact on accommodation or non-accommodation during a conversation, or the presence of criticism and blame which also impact on face (Lizzio, Wilson & MacKay 2008).

This study has established some base data to compare across industries and organisations – establishing a form of databank. This would allow the DARCI instrument in its revised form to be used to collect additional data for comparative purposes. Replicating the study within an Australian organisation or across industry sectors would determine if similar results are achieved, or whether other demographic factors have an influence on workplace face-to-face conversation outcomes. Studies in this area could also focus on the impact of language backgrounds and cultures focussed on specific interaction reasons such as the provision of job related feedback. This is a rich area for further exploration to provide further insight into the impact of changing levels of diversity in Australian workforces.

The DARCI could be used to check for consistency within a study using conversational analysis (CA) for example where video recordings of job interviews or other interactions are analysed (Campbell & Roberts 2007) in great detail, or as a cheaper, easier alternative to the very fine-grained CA approach. It could also be used to collect data for triangulation purposes, or to complement communication studies using qualitative interviews with organisational members

such as human resources managers (for example Bambacas & Patrickson 2009) or focus groups examining culturally diverse workgroups (for example Ayoko, Härtel & Callan 2002).

In addition to testing the results in other workplace situations, there are a number of contexts where this study's approach could be used, for example comparing conversations between teachers, students and heads of schools where a lack of awareness of how to interact with students from diverse backgrounds can impact on the quality of education (Terrell & Warren 2013). This is a growing area of interest due to the internationalisation of education where many students undertake studies outside their home country, and often in another language, where students can develop capabilities to deal with diversity in workgroups or environments (Randolph 2011). Other situations impacted by diversity within the population include health related situations, or interpersonal interaction situations such as coach/coachee relationships. Studies comparing upwards and downwards relationships as tested here or even in comparative downwards analysis could determine if directional patterns of accommodation are similar or different. This would also apply comparing how teachers manage diverse student environments, higher degree research interactions or individuals managing various family relationships.

While there are some contexts where the demographic differences would be known rather than perceived, using the DARCI would still bring interesting insights into how individuals interact with others in different directions across a range of demographic variables. Another situational comparison would result from replacing the face-to-face conversation with another communication channel as the critical incident reference point, and/or confining the study to a particular interaction context (for example: communication with an ineffective outcome).

The significant result found here in accommodating or not accommodating a different first language background would be interesting to compare to other countries where there are two dominant or recognised national languages. Replicating the study in Canada would determine if language accommodation is the main effect when English and French are widely spoken and taught. Another comparative study in the United Kingdom, particularly in the London area where there is a high mix of cultural backgrounds and languages identified in schools (Von Ahn

et al. 2010), would determine if the apparent difficulty in accommodating a range of languages, accents, and cultural backgrounds is an effect confined to Australian workplaces.

A promising area of future interest is the area of reflective communication practice, identified in the managers who would change their future interaction despite reporting an effective outcome. There appears to be a rich opportunity in further research in educating managers how to reflect on their own performance not only in workplace conversations, but also in other areas covering roles and responsibilities, improving outcomes for themselves and ultimately their organisation. As organisational structures change, striving for efficiencies and cost savings in fragmented workforces becomes an imperative (Cascio & Aguinis 2008). Some of these efficiencies have resulted in virtual workforces, not tied to a particular time or place, and transient expertise where highly skilled individuals travel between projects. Virtual and transient workforces have a limited opportunity for face-to-face feedback and yet self-development is even more critical to maximising individual performance (Boyce & Zaccaro 2010). This also may be the way to establish feedback environments where the process of individual personal development goes beyond a performance appraisal process, into an ongoing process of growth and development (Erdogan 2002).

The opportunities in this area are exciting. Instead of managers being dependent on feedback from an organisational process which may or may not be effective, the first source of feedback on performance is from the manager themselves. This may assist in the development of individual communication competencies where messages are adapted after considering such aspects as the goal of the interaction, social norms, audience and situational needs (Pitts & Harwood 2015). Some organisational sectors promote the development of self-reflection for example in education (Clegg, Tan & Saeidi 2002) and the health care sector (Fraser & Schwind 2011) where teachers, doctors and nurses are not reliant on feedback from their immediate superiors who may not be available, or able to monitor their performance. Evaluating communication events should form a core part of reflective skill development, and further studies in this area could investigate the establishment and effect of improving managerial reflective practice. It would be more effective to train managers to coach people and evaluate their performance, rather than just give feedback.

6.5 Contributions to theory and knowledge

This study broadened the approach taken by other studies using CAT as the prime theoretical basis by including the examination of multiple demographic factors for sociohistorical evaluation, and gathered information relating to workplace conversations from a directional perspective.

A research framework for examining the effect of multiple demographic facts was based on communication accommodation theory (CAT) via a framework of the intervening process explanation (IPE). This method allowed for the consideration of multiple individual demographic factors rather than pre-defining a specific set of sociohistorical factors when designing a study. It employed the use of the critical incident technique and reflective practice in a move away from scaled responses to fixed statements. This provided a comparative source of data comparing the actions of an individual in a downwards and upwards communication event.

The design of the CAT framework is supported as the findings indicate that the intermediate interaction situation section of the model does encompass manager superior/subordinate face-to-face conversations and has an influence on the evaluation of effectiveness. This was demonstrated by the established level of influence of the reason for the face-to-face conversation on the outcome. However, it was also found that experience in terms of the length of tenure, and an intent to alter future conversations despite reporting an effective outcome also have an influence on face-to-face conversations and potentially influence accommodation of demographic differences.

6.6 Final notes

During the course of the research project, my study has developed, tested and reported on a way of capturing an array of individual demographic differences to test for associations with effectiveness and the use of some form of accommodation in individual workplace face-to-face conversations. In addition, the appropriateness of communication accommodation theory as a flexible and adaptive means of examining communication phenomena was confirmed. The study supported the idea that conversations are dynamic and consequently that demographic

differences influence conversation outcomes and the approach managers use when considering contemplating future conversations with the same person. However through the data analysis it was identified that directionality is a factor in considering which accommodative communication practices are used when demographic differences are evident. It is proposed to follow up this study and examine conversations with individuals in similar positions to see if and how these forms of accommodation are used in peer-to-peer interactions, and whether the directionality effects are neutralised by people being on the same organisational level.

Results indicated that accommodation of demographic differences is occurring, however the use of linguistic tactics could not solely account for effective outcomes. The accommodation of demographic differences may be affected by a moderating factor such as the motivation or reason for a workplace conversation or by another demographic factor such as the length of tenure (position or organisational) which was not tested as part of this study. While respondents may identify the use of linguistic tactics such as altering tone, pace, or words in order to achieve effective communication outcomes it is not apparent if these actions are a conscious deliberate adjustment or an unconscious consequence of practical experience. The strong associations identified between differences in position and organisational tenure add weight to the view that experience does have a relationship with accommodative communication practices although whether this is a mediating or moderating variable remains to be established. Consequently the development of reflective communication practice skills is important so that managers (and other organisational members) are taught to examine their interactions to learn how to better accommodate individual differences.

This study has brought to light some of the hidden issues in face-to-face workplace conversations between managers and their employees, and the other conversations that managers have with their own superiors. Instead of telling or educating managers to actually conduct conversations, teaching them about how to manage themselves is first required. This will educate and develop managers to be confident in their own abilities, especially if organisational processes are there to support them. As far as managers and even their superiors go, it would be better to train them to coach people to evaluate their performance, rather than just give feedback. This would go a long way to assist younger generations such as

gen Y who are said to crave and expect feedback (Glass 2007; Lavoie-Tremblay et al. 2010), yet organisational structures and processes are not necessarily designed to provide this. This presents a further issue with a move to virtual working practices where the day to day interaction, support and feedback mechanisms on a face-to-face basis are not always available (Hambley, O'Neill & Kline 2007; Krebs, Hobman & Bordia 2006; Maruping & Agarwal 2004). As a result it is important to teach and develop reflective self-assessment practices sooner rather than later.

Opportunities exist to establish reflective practice scenarios within the managerial skills portfolio. Despite the time, training, coaching, and development required to implement such a scheme, it is an area that could deliver benefits in the adaptability of workplace communication practices in increasingly diverse workforces. Reflective practice skills have been identified as a key focus area in graduate education (Brown et al. 2013; Inamdar & Roldan 2013), contributing to manager's development of life-long learning practices (Varela, Burke & Michel 2013). Teaching and demonstrating to managers the benefits of reflective practice to self-assess their conversational performance – about what was done well, what could be done better next time, and providing options for how to go about it, may assist in overcoming fear of the consequences of critical work related conversations. In addition, developing skills of adaptability and flexibility may go some way to educate managers in how to handle the unexpected, particularly in terms of varying language, accent and cultural differences – a situation which will only become more complex in countries such as Australia due to the changing population composition and immigration policies.

My study contributes to awareness of the factors that influence the effectiveness and consequences of interpersonal face-to-face workplace conversations initiated by Australian managers. It was never expected to explain all of the complexities of the impact of multiple demographic differences on the effectiveness of managers' face-to-face conversations, but motivated from the position of providing further insight into some of the issues that are evident in 21st century workplaces. The study achieved its aim by providing awareness of the accommodation of perceived and real demographic differences in managerial face-to-face conversations with subordinates and superiors in Australian workplaces.

7. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

Demography and Recalled Communication Instrument (DARCI)

A full copy of the questionnaire including the participant briefing sheet is provided. The coding instructions for compulsory questions skip logic, free format and restricted response sections are included in the version presented.

Participant Information and details about the study

Research Project: Influences on Managerial Communication

Purpose of the Research

We are investigating influences on face-to-face communication by managers in the workplace. Through your survey responses we hope to gain insight into work related conversations.

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What we would like you to do

You will be asked to recall two workplace conversations that you initiated, then provide some background information on the people you spoke with in addition to some information about yourself. For example: Please rate how effective you feel the conversation was? Do you believe that the length of time you have worked together influenced the outcome of the conversation?

Funding and Benefits of the Research

Funding is provided by Sydney Business School, University of Wollongong. Your insights will be used to help understand how and why managers communicate with their superiors and the people who report to them, and the influences of demographics on these conversations.

This research project will result in a thesis that forms part of a Doctor of Business Administration Degree. The information may also be used in later presentations and publications. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. If you wish to withdraw, just close your internet browser and none of your data will enter the study.

Possible Risks or Inconveniences

This survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Withdrawal from the study will not affect any current or future relationship with the University of Wollongong.

Data is only provided to the Researchers once any information that can personally link you to your responses is removed. Data will be held securely within the Sydney Business School while the analysis is completed, then will be transferred to the Research Office of the University of Wollongong.

If you have any questions regarding the research or procedures used during this survey, please contact one of the Researchers above.

Ethics Review and Complaints

This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong and allocated reference: HE12/231. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way in which the research is or has been conducted, you should contact the University of Wollongong Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

To begin the survey click on the button below. Please use the buttons at the bottom of each screen to move through the survey, not the controls in your web browser.

Please remember

- Your views are important to us and your answers will be kept in the strictest confidence.
- Please take your time but do not dwell too long on any one answer.
- None of the responses you give are directly linked to you as an individual.
- Responses are used purely for statistical purposes only.
- Thoughtful answers to this survey are vital to the integrity of the project.

Please click next if you agree to complete this survey.

About your current role in the workplace...

S1 Screening Question1

Do you have employees reporting directly to you?

1. Yes response – continue to next question
2. No response – **exit survey**

S2 Screening Question 2

Have you had people reporting to you for longer than 12 months?

1. Yes response – continue to next question
2. No response – **exit survey**

Screening Question 3

In your position in the workplace do you report to someone else?

1. Yes response – continue to full questionnaire
2. No response – **exit survey**

Screening Question 4

How many people work in your company or organisation?

1. Less than 50 people – **exit survey**
2. More than 50 people – continue to full questionnaire

Screening Question 5 [for gender to populate demographic requirements]

Are you...

1. Male
2. Female

Screening Question 6 [for age to populate demographic requirements]

Which category below indicates your age?

1. Under 18 >> **Terminate**
2. 18-29
2. 30-39
3. 40-49
4. 50 or older

Main Questionnaire

About a workplace conversation with someone reporting directly to you [Conversation 1]

Think back to a face-to-face conversation at work between you and someone who reported directly to you. The conversation should be one that you initiated over the past 6 months.

The conversation should be about a reasonably important issue and also be typical of the kind of communication you generally have with that person.

ASK ALL

Q1 How would you describe the main reason for the conversation. Was it intended as [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Positive Feedback - e.g. to give praise, a compliment, or thanks
2. Task Information - e.g. to provide background about work or changing circumstances
3. Personal Development - e.g. coaching, performance review, development or promotion opportunities
4. Constructive or Negative Feedback - e.g. address a work performance problem, investigate a complaint, refuse a request
5. Other? If Other, please describe the main reason for the conversation. [text box required]

ASK ALL/ Compulsory

Q2 Please briefly describe what you believe prompted you to initiate the conversation.

[text box required]

Display Help Comment [for example, received some customer complaints, progress reports highlighted issues]

ASK ALL/ Compulsory

Q3 Briefly summarise the content of the conversation.

[text box required]

Display Help Comment [for example, we discussed how the person was not meeting the turnaround times for service issues]

ASK ALL/OE/ Compulsory

Q4 How did the person respond to your comments?

[text box required]

Display Help Comment [for example, became very angry about being questioned about the quality of their work, pleased to get some positive feedback]

ASK ALL / Compulsory

Q5 Please rate how effective you feel the conversation was. Was it...

[multiple choice 1 answer only - 5 point Likert scale]

Display Help Comment [for example, did the conversation achieve the outcome you intended?]

1. Totally ineffective
2. Somewhat ineffective
3. Neither ineffective or effective
4. Somewhat effective
5. Totally effective

ASK ALL / Compulsory

Q5a Comment Box: Please provide a few words to describe why you have given that particular rating to the outcome of the conversation [text box required]

ASK ALL

Q6 The next time you had a conversation with this person would you alter how you spoke with them in anyway?

1.

No, I would not alter the way I spoke in the next conversation [logic jump to introductory to Q7]

2. Yes, I would alter the way I spoke [move to comment box]

ASK IF Q6=CODE2 /OE/ Compulsory

Q6b Comment Box: Please provide a few words to describe what you would alter in the next conversation [text box required] **ASK ALL**

Q7 Do you believe that any of the following issues influenced the outcome of the conversation? Tick as many as apply [check box/tick box for yours/other persons. Issues can be randomized.]

	Yours	The other person's
Time working for the company?		
Age?		
Level of education?		
Position held in the company?		
English language ability?		
National/cultural background?		
Topic of the conversation?		
Gender?		
None of the above issues?		

ASK ALL/ Optional

Q7b Please briefly discuss any other issues you believe influenced the outcome

[text box]

[About the person you spoke with] ASK ALL

Q8 The person I spoke with is...[1 answer only]

1. Male

2. Female

ASK ALL

Q9 Which category below do you believe indicates or is your best guess of the age of the person you spoke with? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. 29 or younger
2. 30-39
3. 40-49
4. 50 or older

ASK ALL

Q10 How long do you believe or is your best guess on how long the person has been employed with your current employer?[multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 3 years
3. 4 to 5 years
4. 6 to 10 years
5. 11 to 15 years
6. More than 15 years

ASK ALL

Q11 How long has the person reported directly to you?[multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 3 years
3. 4 to 5 years
4. 6 to 10 years
5. 11 to 15 years
6. More than 15 years

ASK ALL/SR

Q12 What do you believe or is your best guess of the highest level of education the person you spoke with has completed? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. High school or equivalent
2. College VET or TAFE diploma
3. Bachelor Degree
4. Graduate Certificate
5. Masters Degree
5. Doctorate

ASK ALL

Q13 In which country do you believe or is your best guess of the country where the person was born? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Australia
2. England
3. New Zealand
4. Italy
5. Vietnam
6. India
7. **Other** (please specify) [text box required]

ASK ALL randomised statements

Q14 During the face-to-face conversation with this person, were you aware of changing anything about the way you normally speak? For example, did you speak more slowly than normal to make sure you were understood? For each of the following please indicate whether or not you changed that aspect of your speech. Choose as many as apply.

[Issues to be randomized.]

	Yes	No
I changed the tone of my voice		
I changed the pace of my speech		
I changed the words that I used		
I repeated the words that I said		
I used simpler words		

ASK ALL / Optional

Q14b Other (please specify any other change you recall making)

[text box]

ASK ALL/SR

Q15 Do you believe the person speaks a language other than English at home?

[question logic required]

1. No, English only [logic jump to introductory text positioned after Q17]
2. Yes, they may speak a language other than English at home [move to next question]

ASK if Q15=2

Q16 Which language do you believe or is your best guess of the language that the other person most often speaks at home?

[multiple choice can have more than one answer]

1. Italian
2. Greek
3. Cantonese
4. Arabic
5. Mandarin
6. Vietnamese
7. Other (please specify) [text box]

ASK if Q15=2

Q17 If you believe or guess that the person speaks another language other than English at home please answer the following questions

	Very Well	Reasonably Well	Not well at all
In your opinion how well does the other person speak English?			
In your opinion how well does the other person understand spoken English?			

Display to ALL

[Conversation 2] About a workplace conversation with someone you report to

Think back to another face-to-face conversation at work - this time with someone you report to. The conversation should be one that you initiated sometime over the past 6 months.

The conversation should be about a reasonably important issue and also be typical of the kind of communication you generally have with that person.

Q18 How would you describe the main reason for the conversation. Was it intended as...

[multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Positive Feedback - e.g. to share good news, positive reactions, a compliment, or thanks
2. Task Information - e.g. to provide background about work or changing circumstances
3. Personal Development - e.g. for coaching, seeking advice, reviewing performance, development or promotion opportunities
4. Constructive or Negative Feedback - e.g. address a work performance problem, investigate a complaint, discuss staff issues
5. Other? If Other, please describe the main reason for the conversation. [include text box]

Compulsory

Q19 Please describe briefly what you believe prompted you to initiate the conversation. [text box required]

Display Help Comment [for example, received some customer complaints, progress reports highlighted issues]

Q20 Briefly summarise the content of the conversation. [text box required] **Display Help Comment** [for example, we discussed how to manage an employee who was not meeting the turnaround times for service issues]

Compulsory

Q21 How did the person respond to your comments? [text box required]

Display Help Comment [for example, seemed frustrated that an employee was causing issues, pleased to get some positive feedback]

ASK ALL/ Compulsory

Q22 Please rate how effective you feel the conversation was. Was it... [multiple choice 1 answer only]

Display Help Comment [help comment: for example, did the conversation achieve the outcome you intended?

1. Totally ineffective
2. Somewhat ineffective
3. Neither ineffective or effective
4. Somewhat effective
5. Totally effective

ASK ALL/ Compulsory

Q22a Please provide a few words to describe why you have given that particular rating to the outcome of the conversation [text box required]

Q23 The next time you had a conversation with this person would you alter how you spoke with them in anyway?

1. No, I would not alter the way I spoke in the next conversation [logic jump to introductory to Q24]

2. Yes, I would alter the way I spoke [move to comment box]

ASK IF Q23=CODE2 /Optional

Q23b Comment Box: Please provide a few words to describe what you would alter in the next conversation [text box required]

Q24 Do you believe that any of the following issues influenced the outcome of the conversation? Tick as many as apply

[check box/tick box for yours/other persons. Issues can be randomized.]

	Yours	The other person's
Time working for the company?		
Age?		
Level of education?		
Position held in the company?		
English language ability?		
National/cultural background?		
Topic of the conversation?		
Gender?		
None of the above issues?		

Q24b Please briefly discuss any other issues you believe influenced the outcome

[Optional] [text box]

[About the person you spoke with]

Q25 The person I spoke with is...[1 answer only]

1. Male
2. Female

Q26 Which category below do you believe indicates or is your best guess of the age of the person you spoke with? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. 29 or younger
2. 30-39
3. 40-49
4. 50 or older

ASK ALL/ SR'

Q27 How long do you believe or is your best guess on how long the person has been employed with your current employer?[multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 3 years
3. 4 to 5 years
4. 6 to 10 years
5. 11 to 15 years
6. More than 15 years

Q28 How long do you believe or is your best guess of how long the person has held their current position? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 3 years
3. 4 to 5 years
4. 6 to 10 years
5. 11 to 15 years
6. More than 15 years

ASK ALL

Q29 How long have you reported to that person? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 3 years
3. 4 to 5 years
4. 6 to 10 years
5. 11 to 15 years
6. More than 15 years

ASK ALL

Q30 What do you believe or is your best guess of the highest level of education the person you spoke with has completed? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. High school or equivalent
2. College VET or TAFE diploma
3. Bachelor Degree
4. Graduate Certificate
5. Masters Degree
6. Doctorate

ASK ALL

Q31 In which country do you believe or is your best guess of the country where the other person was born? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Australia
2. England
3. New Zealand
4. Italy
5. Vietnam
6. India
7. Other (please specify) [text box required]

ASK ALL/ Grid per row/randomise statements

Q32 During the face-to-face conversation with this person, were you aware of changing anything about the way you normally speak? For example, did you speak more slowly than normal to make sure you were understood? For each of the following please indicate whether or not you changed that aspect of your speech. Choose as many as apply.

[Issues to be randomized.]

	Yes	No
I changed the tone of my voice		
I changed the pace of my speech		
I changed the words that I used		
I repeated the words that I said		
I used simpler words		

ASK ALL/ Optional Q32b Other (please specify any other change you recall making)

[text box]

ASK ALL

Q33 Do you believe the person speaks a language other than English at home? [question logic required]

1. No, English only [logic jump to introductory text positioned after Q35]
2. Yes, they may speak a language other than English at home [move to next question]

ASK if Q33=2

Q34 Which language do you believe or is your best guess of the language that the person most often speaks at home? [multiple choice can have more than one answer]

1. Italian
2. Greek
3. Cantonese
4. Arabic
5. Mandarin
6. Vietnamese
7. Other (please specify) [text box]

ASK if Q33=2

Q35 If you believe or guess the person speaks another language other than English at home please answer the following questions

	Very Well	Reasonably Well	Not well at all
In your opinion how well does the other person speak English?			
In your opinion how well does the other person understand spoken English?			

DISPLAY TO ALL

Finally a few questions about you and your workplace

The following questions seek demographic information about you and your work. Please select the answer that applies to you.

ASK ALL

Q36 How long have you been employed with your current employer?

[multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 3 years
3. 4 to 5 years
4. 6 to 10 years
5. 11 to 15 years
6. More than 15 years

ASK ALL

Q37 How long have you held your current position?[multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 3 years
3. 4 to 5 years
4. 6 to 10 years
5. 11 to 15 years
6. More than 15 years

ASK ALL

Q37b Please indicate what type of business or industry you work in

- 1 Advertising
- 2 Agriculture/Fishing
- 3 Armed Services
- 4 Banking/Financial/Insurance
- 5 Civil Service/Local Government
- 6 Computing/IT/Data Processing
- 7 Communications
- 8 Construction
- 9 Education
- 10 Engineering
- 11 Entertainment/Leisure/Recreation
- 12 Healthcare
- 13 Internet/Web Development
- 14 Legal
- 15 Manufacturing
- 16 Marketing
- 17 Market Research
- 18 Media
- 19 Medical
- 20 Mining/Quarrying
- 21 Pharmaceutical/Chemical
- 22 Printing
- 23 Property/Estate agency
- 24 Public Relations
- 25 Publishing
- 26 Religious/Not-for-profit organisation
- 27 Restaurant/Hotels/Catering
- 28 Retail/Wholesale trade
- 29 Services (other not listed)
- 30 Social Services
- 31 Telecommunications
- 32 Transport
- 33 Travel/Tourism
- 34 Telesales/Telemarketing
- 35 Utilities (Electricity, Gas or Water)
- 36 Consulting
- 37 Other

ASK ALL Q38 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

[multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. High school or equivalent
2. College VET or TAFE diploma
3. Bachelor Degree
4. Graduate Certificate
5. Masters Degree
6. Doctorate

ASK ALL

Q39 In which country were you born? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Australia
2. England
3. New Zealand
4. Italy
5. Vietnam
6. India
7. Other (please specify) [text box required]

ASK ALL

Q40 Do you speak a language other than English at home? [question logic required]

1. No, English only [logic jump to end of questionnaire and thankyou]
2. Yes, a language other than English [move to Q41]

ASK IF Q40=CODE2

Q41 Which language do you most often speak at home? [multiple choice 1 answer only]

1. Italian
2. Greek
3. Cantonese
4. Arabic
5. Mandarin
6. Vietnamese
7. Other (please specify) [text box]

ASK IF Q40

Q42 If you speak another language other than English at home please answer the following questions

	Very Well	Reasonably Well	Not well at all
In your opinion how well do you speak English?			
In your opinion how well do you understand spoken English?			

End questionnaire

Thank you statement for participant.

[END OF SURVEY]

[END OF THESIS]