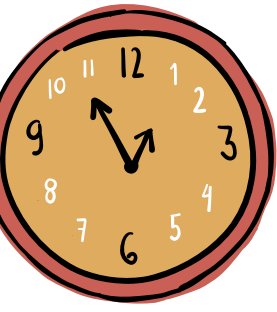


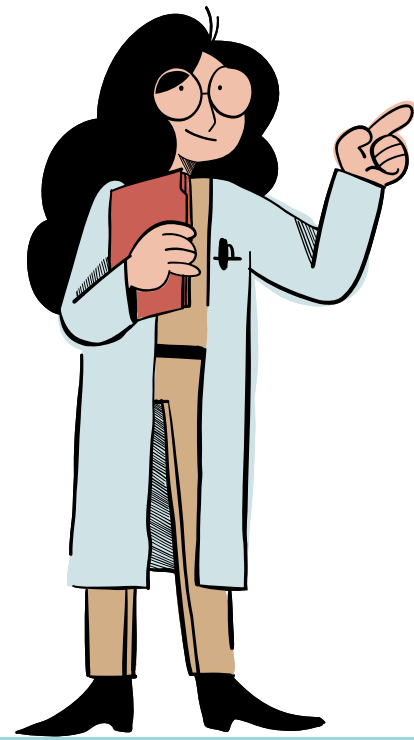
Cross Cultural Understanding



Chapter 9

Intercultural transitions

"From language and culture shock to adaptation"



Andrias Yulianto
Jakarta International University



Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Identify and describe types and dimensions of boundary crossers
2. Describe four patterns of acculturation in immigrants
3. Identify factors that facilitate or hinder acculturation and second language socialization
4. Define transition shock and identify five types
5. Describe the causes and symptoms of language and culture shock
6. Describe the core elements in the integrative communication theory of cross cultural adaptation
7. Discuss the role of language in cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation

"If you reject the food, ignore the customs, fear the religion and avoid the people, you might better stay home."

(James A. Michener 1907–97, quoted in Safir and Safire 1982 as cited in Jackson, 2014)



INTRODUCTION

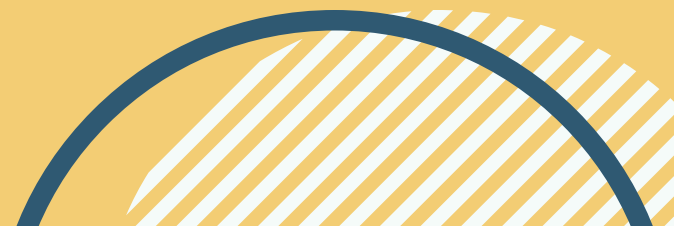
Each year, millions of people cross borders to study, work, perform military duties, represent their government, conduct business, do volunteer work, take part in peace missions or engage in tourism.

(Jakson, 2014)

TYPES AND DIMENSIONS OF BOUNDARY CROSSERS

‘voluntary-involuntary’ and ‘permanent-temporary’.

**(Berry 1990; Sam & Berry 2006; Ward et al.
2001 as cited in Jackson, 2014)**



Voluntary transitions

Voluntary migrants are those who willingly chose to travel abroad: ‘In voluntary cases, one makes contact with another (others), driven by one’s interest in a cultural Other such as travel or the needs of social life and survival such as trade

(Kramsch & Uryu, 2012: 212, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

●●● Things you need to know!

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines **tourism** as ‘a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes’ (<http://media.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary>). In 2011, there were 983 million international tourist arrivals worldwide, with a growth of 4.6 per cent as compared to 940 million in 2010.

(UNWTO, n.d., as cited in Jackson, 2014)

●●● Things you need to know!

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimated that there were more than 3.6 million students being educated at the tertiary level outside their home country in 2010, up from an estimated 1.7 million in 2000. By 2025, nearly eight million students are expected to be educated trans nationally.

(Atlas of Student Mobility, n.d., as cited in Jackson, 2014)

International education refers to ‘the knowledge and skills resulting from conducting a portion of one’s education in another country’ or, more generally, ‘international activity that occurs at any level of education (K-12, undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate).

(Forum on Education Abroad, 2011: 11, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Education abroad denotes ‘education that occurs outside the participant’s home country. Besides study abroad, this term encompasses such international experiences as work, volunteering, non-credit internships, and directed travel, as long as these programmes are driven to a significant degree by learning goals.

(Forum on Education Abroad 2011: 11 as cited in Jackson, 2014)

WHY?

In North America, **study abroad** is considered ‘a subtype of education abroad that results in progress toward an academic degree at a student’s home institution.

(Forum on Education Abroad, 2011: 11, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

A **service-learning** programme is ‘a subtype of field study program in which the pedagogical focus is a placement in an activity that serves the needs of a community’ (Forum on Education Abroad 2011: 15). For example, a group of American university students may participate in a semester-long service learning project in Guatemala, in which they work with the homeless, tutor EFL students, volunteer in an orphanage or assist human rights workers under the supervision of a faculty member.

(Jackson, 2014)

Others migrate to another country to seek a better life (e.g. earn more money, procure more educational, professional and social opportunities for themselves and their families, join family members who have immigrated earlier).

(Jackson, 2014)

Involuntary transitions

'In involuntary cases, intercultural contacts are often driven by rather negative elements such as power struggles between different ethnic or cultural groups (e.g. war) or a powerful group's political, economic, ideological, and cultural imposition and domination of the less powerful Other such as colonization'.

(Kramsch & Uryu, 2012: 212, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Things you need to know!

At the beginning of 2011, there were approximately 10.5 million refugees under the auspices of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees); more than half were in Asia and around 20 per cent in Africa (UNHCR n.d.).

4.8 million Palestinian refugees were also in camps overseen by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), an organization that was established in 1949 to care for displaced Palestinians (UNHCR n.d.).

(Jackson, 2014)



Refugees refers to a person who has been granted protection in a country outside his or her homeland, **an asylum seeker** is seeking protection as a refugee and is waiting for his or her claim to be assessed by a country that has signed the Geneva Convention on Refugees (UNESCO).

(Jackson, 2014)

‘most of them live with the knowledge that “push factors” (rather than “pull factors”) led them to flee their homeland and settle in their new society; and, of course, most have experienced traumatic events, and most have lost their material possessions’.

(Berry et al., 2011: 311, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Temporary

A **sojourn** refers to a period of time spent living in a cultural setting different from one's own. ★

(Forum on Education Abroad, 2011: 15, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Sojourners are individuals who are in the new environment temporarily for a specific purpose such as study, work, business and often for a specific length of time such as several days, months, or years.

(Jackson, 2014)



Temporary



Picture source: Jackson (2014)

Tourists are the most numerous group of sojourners.

Expatriates are individuals who are engaged in employment abroad (e.g. EFL teachers from Australia in Malaysia, American bankers who work for a multinational firm in Tokyo, British surveyors employed in Libya).

(Jackson, 2014)

Permanent

Immigration is not a new phenomenon but the number of people who are leaving their home country to permanently reside in another has never been greater.

(Van Oudenhoven 2006 as cited in Jackson, 2014)

**The
multidimensional
nature of
boundary
crossings**

To understand the process and impact of intercultural transitions, we must consider:

1. The motivation for boundary crossings,
2. The duration of the stay,
3. The nature of the move, and
4. The frequency of crossings.

(Jackson, 2014)

**TRANSITIONING
TO A NEW
CULTURE:
LONG-TERM AND
SHORT-TERM
ADAPTATION**

Long-term adaptation: immigrants and other settlers

1. Variations in attitudes towards linguistic and cultural difference;
2. The quality and degree of contact with people in the host environment;
3. Second language and culture-learning strategies;
4. Differences in the desire or ability of settlers to 'fit into' the new environment;
5. Variations in the attitudes of host nationals towards newcomers.

(Jackson, 2014)



Acculturation and second language socialization

Acculturation ‘changes in a cultural group or individuals as a result of contact with another cultural group’.

(Berry et al., 2011: 464, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Second language socialization refers to the process by which novices in an unfamiliar linguistic and cultural context gain intercultural communicative competence by acquiring linguistic conventions, sociopragmatic norms, cultural scripts and other behaviours that are associated with the new culture.

(Duff, 2010; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Acculturation patterns

Cultural maintenance refers to the effort to sustain elements of one's culture or heritage by preserving core values, traditions, ways of being, etc. especially when faced with pressure to adopt a more dominant culture such as the majority culture.

(Berry, 2006, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Language maintenance refers to 'the preservation of a language or language variety in a context where there is considerable pressure for speakers to shift towards the more prestigious or politically dominant language.

(Swann et al., 2004: 172, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Acculturation Strategies.

Assimilation occurs when individuals do not retain their original cultural identity and link to their heritage/culture; instead, they seek close interaction with the host culture, and adopt the cultural values, norms and traditions of the new society.

Integration occurs when people take steps to maintain their cultural heritage and original cultural identity while developing harmonious relationships with other cultures such as host nationals.

(John Berry, 1974, 1997, 2003, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Acculturation Strategies.

Separation (segregation) refers to the acculturation strategy in which individuals strive to maintain their cultural heritage and avoid participation in the larger society of their new country.

Marginalization refers to the acculturation strategy in which people do not nurture their cultural heritage (and first language) and resist interacting with people in the larger society.

(John Berry, 1974, 1997, 2003, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

**TRANSITIONING
TO A NEW
CULTURE:
LONG-TERM AND
SHORT-TERM
ADAPTATION**

Short-term adaptation: sojourners

Most investigations of short-term sojourners (e.g. international exchange students, expatriates) have focused on the need to quickly adjust to their new environment.



TYPES OF TRANSITION SHOCK

Transition shock is a broad construct, which refers to the state of loss, disorientation and identity confusion that can occur when we enter a new situation, job, relationship or physical location and find ourselves confronted with the strain of adjusting to the unfamiliar such as novel perspectives, different roles.

(J.M. Bennett, 1998, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Several **sub-categories** of transition shock:

Culture shock

Role shock

Language shock

Identity or self shock.

(Jackson, 2014)

Culture shock

Culture shock is ‘a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one’s own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences’.

(Peter Adler, 1975: 13, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Role shock

Role shock is characterized by lack of knowledge and confusion about the norms of behaviour in a new culture such as the social 'rules' of politeness, business etiquette.

(Byrnes 1966 as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Language shock

Language shock refers to the challenge of understanding and communicating in a second language in an unfamiliar environment.

(Smalley 1963 as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Identity or self shock

Identity or self shock refers to ‘the intrusion of inconsistent, conflicting self-images’, which can involve ‘loss of communication competence’, ‘distorted self-reflections in the responses of others’ and ‘the challenge of changing identity bound behaviors’.

(Zaharna 1989: 501 as cited in Jackson, 2014)

Causes of language and culture shock

Unrealistic, romantic expectations

During the flight, the images, or, I should say, my imagination about what England is like and how British people look like, kept lingering in my mind. In my opinion, Britain is quite a traditional, old-fashioned country. People there are all with perfect propriety. Gentlemen and ladies in nice suits and gowns are the most outstanding images that first come to my mind whenever I think of England.

A few weeks later she was much less enthusiastic when she wrote:

I used to think that all English were polite and gentle. Some are gentlemen but a lot are not . . . From reading books, I thought that all the British people are very cultured, going to the theatre and reading literature but I was too naïve. That makes me a little bit disappointed as I expected that the whole country was very cultured . . .

(Jackson, 2014)

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SHOCK



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SHOCK

Causes of language and culture shock

Inadequate preparation

Abrupt change

Lack of familiarity with signs and symbols.

Loss

Sensory overload

Unfamiliar 'ways of being'

Feeling trapped

Ambiguity and uncertainty

Lack of socio-emotional support

Standing out

*Discrimination or perceptions of
discrimination*

Language shock

Language fatigue

Miscommunication

Conflict in values

Change in status or positioning



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SHOCK

Cross-cultural psychologists, counsellors, educators, and other scholars (e.g. Arthur 2004; Bochner 2006; Gebhard 2010; Ward et al. 2001; Winkelmann 1994), as cited in Jackson (2014)

Symptoms of language and culture shock

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A change in sleep patterns2. Frequent mood swings and heightened irritability3. feeling vulnerable, powerless, lost and insecure4. Excessive worrying about one's state of physical or mental health5. Continuous concern about the purity of the water and food6. Unfamiliar body aches and pains and frequent illnesses7. Loss of appetite or overeating8. Feeling sad and lonely even when in the company of other people9. Homesickness10. Utopian, unrealistic views about your home culture and language11. Fear of trying new things, meeting local people or going to unfamiliar places12. Feelings of inadequacy13. Increased consumption of alcohol or drugs | <ol style="list-style-type: none">14. Frequent perceptions of being singled out, overlooked or discriminated against15. Pressing desire to interact with people just like yourself16. Cognitive impairment17. Frequently questioning your decision to go abroad and counting the days until you return home18. Constantly comparing the new environment with your home culture, with the former cast in a negative light19. Hostility towards members of the host culture and frequent 'us' vs. 'them' discourse20. Resentment and lack of desire to interact with people from the host culture21. Loss of identity or confusion about who you are and how you fit into the world22. Refusal to learn/use the host language and interact with host nationals. |
|---|---|



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SHOCK

Adler (1975), Furnham and Bochner (1986), Ward et al. (2001) and other researchers, as cited in Jackson (2014) have identified a range of factors that may account for disparate experiences.

Degree of language and culture shock

Degree of language and culture shock:

Quality of information

Cultural similarity

Linguistic similarity

Communication style similarity

Interpersonal dimensions

Physiological factors

Socio-emotional support

Degree of control

Geopolitical factors

Agency

Duration and spatial factors



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SHOCK

Positive and negative effects of language and culture shock

'In the encounter with another culture the individual gains new experiential knowledge by coming to understand the roots of his or her own ethnocentrism and by gaining new perspectives and outlooks on the nature of culture.. Paradoxically, the more one is capable of experiencing new and different dimensions of human diversity, the more one learns of oneself'.

(Adler, 1975: 22, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

'By getting “culture shocked,” you are challenging yourself, surpassing your comfort zone, and becoming much more aware of your identity and of the world around you. You are building skills, gaining confidence, and forging relationships that surpass your former boundaries. Ultimately, you are learning what it means to be a global citizen'.

(Lantis and DuPlaga, 2010: 60–61, as Jackson, 2014)



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SHOCK

Positive and negative effects of language and culture shock

Culture shock leads to deeper levels of **‘whole person development’** (e.g. emotional intelligence and resourcefulness, interpersonal communication skills, intercultural competence, independence, maturity) and **identity expansion** (e.g. a broadened, more inclusive sense of self, the development of a global outlook)

(Jackson 2012; Kinginger 2009, as cited in Jackson, 2014)



STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK AND ADJUSTMENT

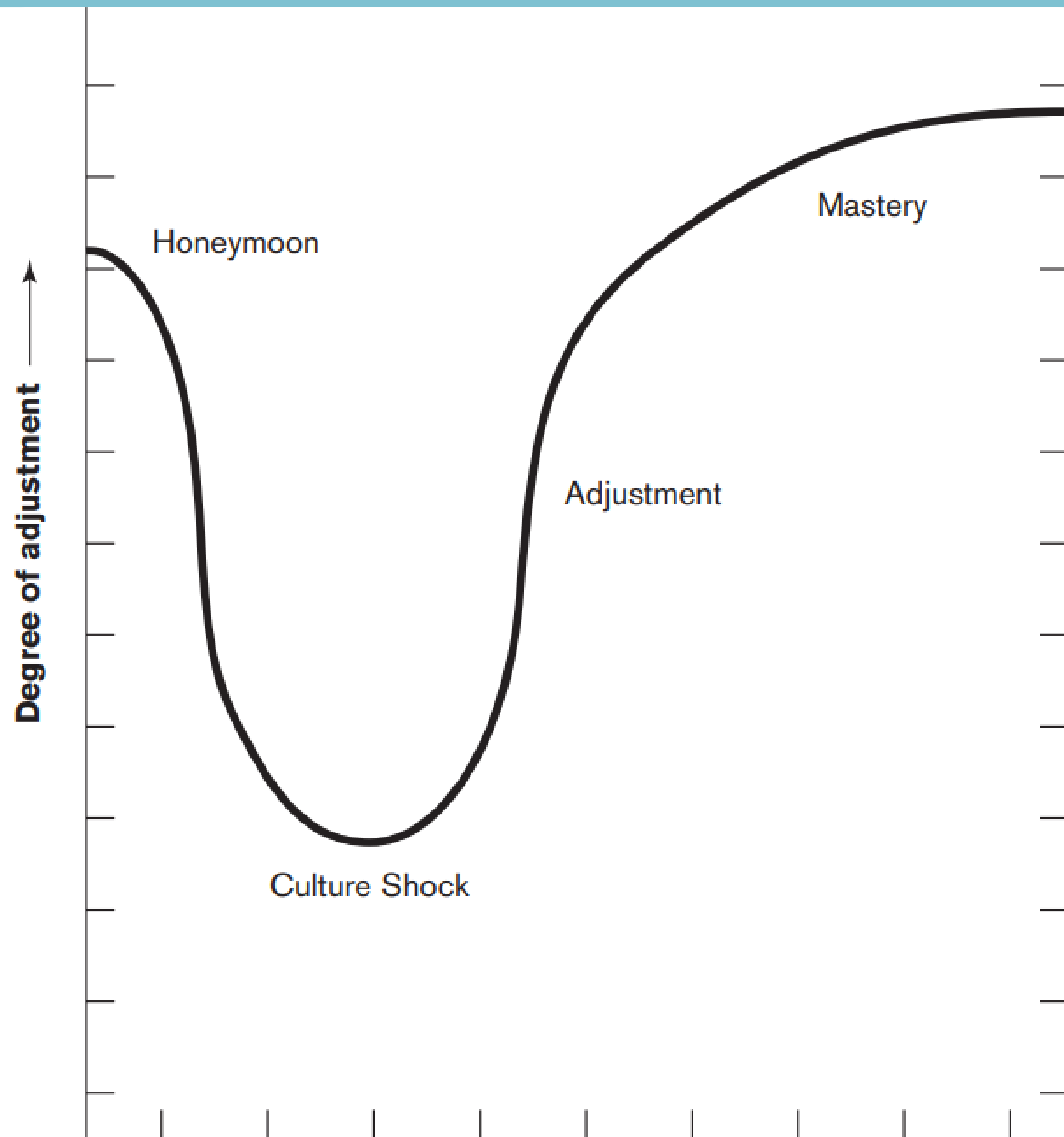
The U-curve adjustment model

The U-shaped model includes four stages:

1. The honeymoon stage (initial euphoria)
2. Culture stress and shock (crisis and frustration)
3. Adjustment (integration or recovery)
4. Mastery (adaptation and acceptance, biculturalism).

(Lysgaard 1955; Oberg 1960, as cited in Jackson, 2014)





The U-curve adjustment mode

(Lysgaard 1955, as cited in Jackson, 2014)

STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK AND ADJUSTMENT

Reentry and the W-curve adjustment model

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) maintain that returnees often experience a similar period of adjustment when they return home, so they extended the U-curve model by adding two stages:

Reentry or reverse culture shock and **resocialization**, the process of readjusting one's attitudes and behaviours to feel at ease in one's 'home environment' after a period away.

(Jackson, 2014)



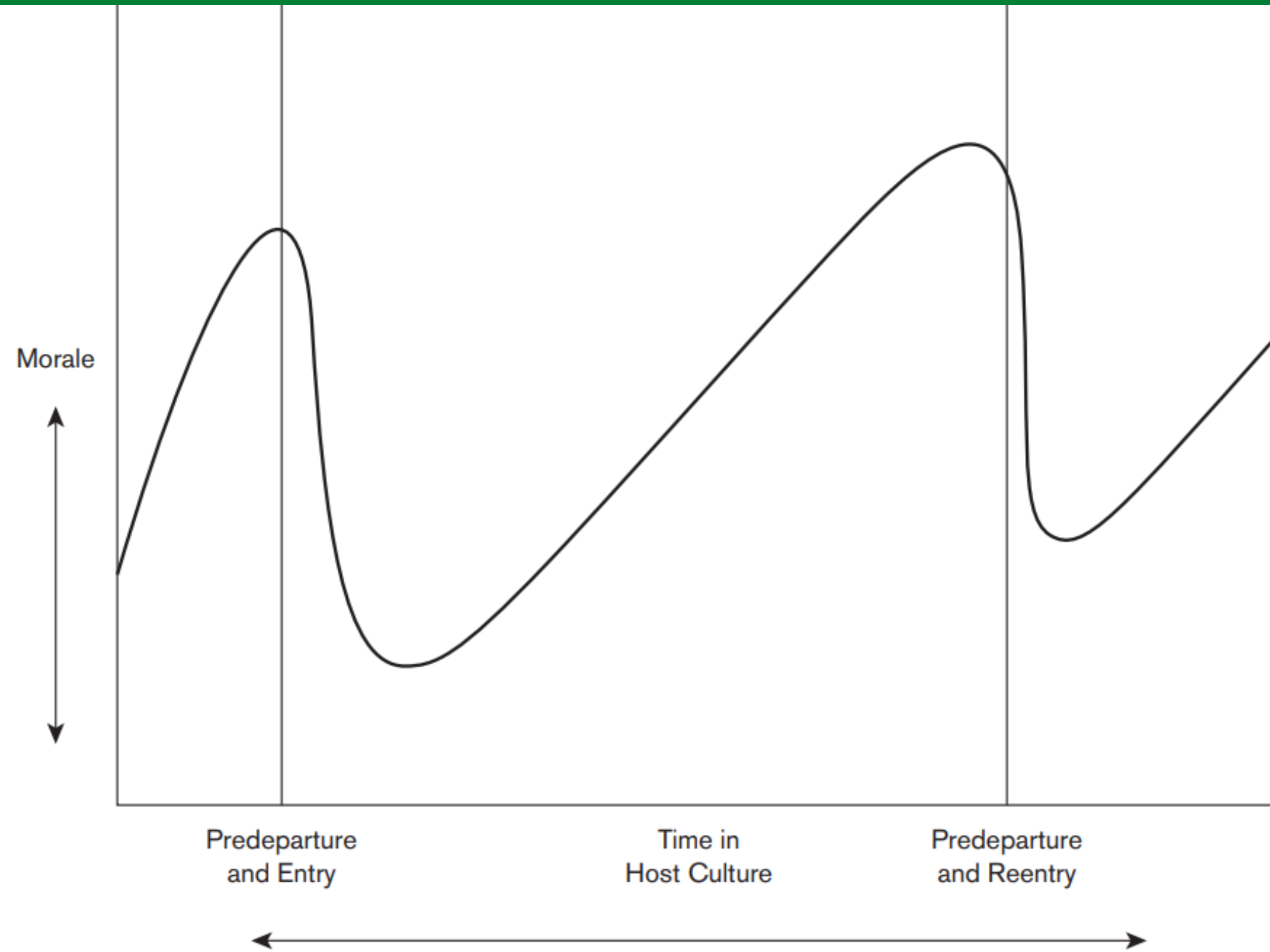


Figure 8.2 The W-curve adjustment model

(Jackson, 2014)

Stages of Culture Shock and Adjustment

The honeymoon phase (initial euphoria)

Hostility phase

Humorous stage

The 'At home' stage

Reentry or Reverse culture shock

Resocialization stage

(Jackson, 2014)



A second language sojourner (n.d) soon after her arrival in the host culture wrote:

Waking up this morning, I could hardly believe I was in England. It was all like a dream, a dream that came true finally . . . I looked around my bedroom and then viewed through the window: the air was still and quiet amidst birds' chatter, everything was clear like a framed picture, with no sign of impurities or pollution which very often surround my living place back home. The colours of my room, the neighbouring houses, the trees and the sky, were plain, fresh and lively. A sense of satisfaction ran through my heart.

(Jackson, 2014)

***The honeymoon
phase (initial
euphoria)***

An international exchange student (n.d) disclosed:

You feel that you are different from the people there – your skin color, your language, and your thoughts. Everyone likes to be with people who are like them. I felt isolated and a bit depressed because they were all familiar with each other and I knew nobody. I had difficulties with communication and felt unwelcome by locals. That was far from my expectation before going on exchange. I was desperate to go home at that time.

(Jackson, 2014)***Hostility phase***

A female sojourner (n.d) in the Netherlands wrote:

I had difficulty communicating with locals in the beginning but after many weeks had passed, I found that they were nice people. It's just that they dared not to speak in English. Also, by then I knew more about their culture and began to like this country. True, I did experience culture shock at the beginning but I learned to overcome it.

(Jackson, 2014)



Humorous stage

A sojourner (n.d) in London wrote:

Midway through the semester, my life took a turn. By then, I'd made more friends, including some English mates, and had even begun to dream in English! I realized I'd developed a sense of belonging to Bloomsbury, my neighborhood. From the Indian restaurant to the corner shop to my residence hall, social bonds began to form. Overcoming adversities with positivity allowed me to see more and discover more, and with the positive energy this generates, others could feel this. Studying abroad is not easy. It is a test of the strength of your character but if you champion it and open yourself up, it can change your life completely.

(Jackson, 2014)

The 'At home' stage

My adjustment on reentry has been more difficult than what I experienced abroad. I'm still not fully readjusted now. The whole living schedule and sleeping times have changed. Before going on exchange I was able to sleep very little and do a lot of things during the day but now I find this living style is very tiring. I wish I was living the comfortable Norwegian lifestyle but if I do, I won't have enough time to get everything done! I don't know how to cope with that. I'm still working on this . . . still adjusting to being back.

(Year-long exchange student, n.d., as cited in Jackson, 2014)

***Reentry or Reverse
culture shock.***

A returnee recounted this process in an interview:

It took me some effort to get used to the local lifestyle again as I'd become accustomed to the way of living in Korea. When I came back home I had to readjust to many things. I had such a wonderful and splendid life in Korea but when I came back, I felt . . . umm . . . It was just . . . so different! I have had to accept it and adapt. You have to try your best to adjust since there's no choice for you! And gradually you feel like you fit in. Now, I am in a better place in my head. I'm doing more things with my friends and I'm happy. I'm also keeping in touch with my friends in Seoul through Facebook..

(Jackson, 2014)

Resocialization stage

Prior to the sojourn

Research your destination. Set realistic goals and expectations. Take a course in intercultural communication. (Make good use of the knowledge and skills you are developing in this course!) Practice your second language. Attend pre-sojourn orientations, when available. Take advantage of online materials.

(Jackson, 2014)



OPTIMIZING INTERCULTURAL TRANSITIONS

In the new environment

Familiarize yourself with the local context.

Be patient! Language and culture shock are natural and adjustment takes time.

Keep in touch with family and friends back home.

Develop a routine and take care of your health.

Take part in any orientation activities arranged by the host university.

Join extracurricular activities and have fun.

Be open to new experiences. Be adventurous!

Take the initiative to develop diverse social networks (e.g. form friendships with host nationals, international students, co-nationals).

Recognize hot button issues (e.g. culture differences that annoy you).

Find a cultural mentor and seek help when needed.

Revisit and revise the goals you set prior to the sojourn.

Enhance your second language skills (e.g. take the initiative to practice the language in informal situations, pay attention to sociopragmatic dimensions).

Recognize the limitations of your linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Limit negative thoughts and refrain from making snap judgments about cultural difference.

Anticipate setbacks and persevere when you experience setbacks.

Develop the habit of self-analysis and critical reflection.

Consult recommended online resources.

OPTIMIZING INTERCULTURAL TRANSITIONS

Prior to returning home

Begin your reentry preparations while abroad. Say meaningful good-byes. Take advantage of online materials that provide advice on reentry. Set goals for your return home.

(Jackson, 2014)

OPTIMIZING INTERCULTURAL TRANSITIONS

Back on home soil

Share your international stories in small doses and demonstrate interest in others (e.g. local happenings, the experiences of your friends and family members).

Participate in reentry debriefings or courses, when available.

Be patient. Refrain from making snap judgments about your home culture (or the host culture).

Avoid 'shoeboxing' your international experience (e.g. join international/second language organizations and study abroad alumni groups, share your experiences with a wider audience, e.g. local school children).

Serve as a buddy for newcomers or volunteer to orientate students who will venture abroad.

Talk with people who understand your transition (e.g. other returning exchange students).

Stay in touch with friends abroad and continue to expand and diversify your social networks (e.g. make friends with incoming international exchange students).

Continue to practice your second language.

Critically reflect on your international/reentry experience.

Consult online resources on reentry.

Make concrete plans for further intercultural/international experience.



**OPTIMIZING
INTERCULTURAL
TRANSITIONS**

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever experienced language and culture shock in a foreign land? Describe your symptoms and coping strategies. Share your experiences with your classmates
2. In small groups, discuss the following situation. Two Taiwanese sojourners of a similar age and background (e.g. same ethnic group, gender, education level, first language, grade point average, proficiency level in French) join a six-week French immersion programme in the South of France. Neither has previous travel experience. At the end of their sojourn, one is delighted with her progress in French and feels at home in the host environment, whereas her classmate laments the fact that she did not have enough opportunity to use the language and believes that she gained little from her stay abroad. What might account for these very different outcomes?
3. Imagine that you will soon join a semester-long international exchange programme in a second language context that you have never visited. What would you do to prepare? What ideas did you learn from this chapter that you think would be most helpful to you? (If you have already participated in an education abroad programme, share your insights and advice.)

References

Jackson, J. (2014). Introducing language and intercultural communication. Routledge.

NOTE

This chapter draws on investigations of the international exchange experiences of university students from Hong Kong and Mainland China who took part in either a semester or year abroad international exchange programme in one of 40 countries. This research was generously supported by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong SAR (Project No. 2110167; RGC Ref No. CUHK444709).