行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫成果報告

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A Study of Culture Shock as Experienced by
Foreigners in Taiwan and Taiwanese Students in North America

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Abstract

Culture shock usually occurs when a person enters or stays in a different country. Such shock may come from semantic misunderstanding of language on both sides, miscomprehension of the behavior of the people in the host country, and different value systems. This study aims to investigate culture shock as experienced by foreigners staying in Taiwan who were teaching at colleges or universities or learning Mandarin Chinese, and by the exchange students from Tamkang University who spent one academic year in North America in their Junior Year Abroad Program. The subjects of the foreigners in Taiwan were randomly selected on the basis of two criteria: availability in different universities in Taiwan and their first lived experience in Taiwan. The subjects from the former exchange students in North America included almost all such students in their 2000-2001 academic year exchange program. Two different questionnaires were administered respectively to the two groups and all subjects were interviewed to report on their experience and cultural perception. Each protocol was assigned a coding number. After all data on the two groups were collected, they were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results show that the foreigner group experienced far more seriously in culture shock than the exchange student group. It is suggested that a person's foreign language ability, knowledge of foreign culture in contact, age, and the length of stay in a foreign country all contribute to reduced culture shock.

Key Words

culture shock   cross-cultural perception   verbal behavior   value systems

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Introduction

There are many names for this age to characterize the mobility of people around the world and the widespread use of computers. First of all, a common word that has been used for several decades is the Age of Information. Another word popular in business and geopolitics is the Age of Globolization. More recently, in the wake of localization, the Age of Glocalization has been coined to combine globoliation and localization at the same time. All these terms refer to the fact that peoples from different countries interact and cultures from different areas are in contact around the world simultaneously. In such a context, English is an international language directly linked to American and British peoples, which inevitably involves cultures inherent in verbal and nonverbal communication.

According to Valdes (1986), language, culture, and thought are intricately linked together and become a dominant core of everyday communication among a particular people in a given society. Language is a means to express thought, perceptions, and the beliefs of a particular community. It also represents power and social identity of that particular people. Culture, on the other hand, as Wardhaugh (1992) defined it, is "socially acquired knowledge, and know-how that a person must possess to get through a task of daily living." In Whorfian view, on the other hand, the linguistic system of a language can shape one's ideas and guide the individual's mental activity. Language is employed to convey thought, values, and social identity. There is no denying that a symbolic representation of a given society that can be exhibited in a language is not necessarily explicit in another culture. Thus, language is culture-bound and culture-specific. Therefore, the meaning of a symbolic representation of culture can vary from culture to culture, and perception of culture can differ from each other in various perspectives.

Cross-cultural understanding is a salient feature in verbal and nonverbal communications between a native language and a foreign language. In reality, a person's identity is a social construct and the product of societal perception (Tang, 1999). A language cannot be divorced from the culture of the people who speak it. For instance, a lexical word in a given culture may have a positive meaning, whereas in another culture it may be a negative one.

Nonverbal cues and semantic meanings are also culture-bound. Some of them are common around the world, but others may also possess cultural differences between a foreign language and a native language. The words we use for whatever concrete objects or metaphoric representations may have multiple meanings. Furthermore, cultural meanings constitute a worldview and are viewed as a blueprint for the way one ought to behave (Bonvillain, 1997). The study of words can be seen through social behavior and cultural meanings in a given culture. In this respect, the meanings of words in a language can influence people's perceptions of their world, and the ways they decode as well as transmit cultural and symbolic meanings and values (Bonvillain, 1997, p. 49). Language, therefore, may be learned by analyzing expressions in their contexts so as to understand what the people of another culture think and convey their messages in everyday communication. In this sense, culture plays an important role in verbal and nonverbal communication in relation to a person's self-identity, cultural perception, and value systems.

Statement of the Problem

Culture is inherent in language. A speaker of his/her native language is its culture bearer. When this person enters and lives in a foreign country and is exposed

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to an alien culture, he/she is perplexed by the language used, either a native language or a foreign language, and by the behavior and value systems prevalent among language users. Psychological and physiological reaction to a new environment results in culture shock.

As defined by Dodd (1995), culture shock is feelings of stress and anxiety that a person experiences during the early period upon entering a new culture. The current study is to identify such feelings of stress and anxiety from foreigners in Taiwan and Taiwanese exchange students in North America. After data have been collected and analyzed, we can better understand foreign subjects in Taiwan and relieve them of negative reactions to culture. On the other hand, we may better prepare students to study in foreign countries in the future and to remove their misunderstanding before their studying abroad.

The Significance of This Study

Specifically, the first part of this study was to investigate, first, how the native speakers of English found their social-cultural identities in Taiwan. Second, during their stay in Taiwan, what their physiological and psychological symptoms were in their adaptation to a new culture. Third, how they self-evaluated their personal views in various aspects of life in an alien culture.

The second part of the study was to investigate how exchange students originally from Taiwan felt when they first arrived in North America in the aspects of homesickness, the ability to work or stay well, withdrawal and avoidance, and how they dealt with problems, attitudes toward the new culture, foods, transportation, shopping and the language problems. We were also interested in whether these students

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experienced a value change on their reentry in the home country in Taiwan, and in what they learned from North American culture.

It is expected that findings from this study can shed light on the nature of culture shock in terms of symptoms, adaptation, and value change as a result of cross-cultural communication and learning. The purpose of the study is, first, to see what or how we can help foreigners in Taiwan to have a better stay in Taiwan; second, to see, before going for their Junior Year Abroad Program in North America, whether our students need orientation about the aim of study, a new culture, and the benefit of their study abroad to make their adventure in foreign countries more fruitful. These findings will definitely be helpful in materials development and course design in teaching English as a foreign language and beneficial to English-speaking teachers from abroad and those learning Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan in their perception of and adaptation to local culture.

Review of the Literature

According to Dodds (1995), culture shock is associated with one's psychological reactions from mild irritability to deep psychological panic and crisis. These reactions are involved in learners' anger, hostility, indecision, frustration, unhappiness, sadness, loneliness, disorientation, homesickness, and physical illness in an alien culture (Brown, 1986, p. 35). Besides, when the learners of a foreign language or foreigners experience the lives of a new culture, they may have temporary physical symptoms such as sleeplessness, stomach upset, slight headache (Dodd, 1995, p. 212). Peter Adler also describes the causes of culture shock as follows:

> Culture shock, then, is thought to be a form of anxiety that results from the loss of commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols of social intercourse. The individual undergoing culture shock reflects his anxiety and nervousness with cultural differences through any number of defense mechanisms: repression, regression, isolation, and rejection.

The psychological reactions can last for a short period or a few months, depending on the learners' or foreigners' cultural adaptations in varying degrees. This is also a phenomenon of culture shock.

Brown (1986, p. 36) points out that culture shock may have four successive stages. The first stage is a honeymoon stage in which everything is fresh and exciting to the new comers. They are also pleased that they enjoy a new place or culture that is full of mystery and exploration. For example, they enjoy friendly people and delicious food in an alien culture.

After this glorifying stage is over, everything is accompanied with insecurity, irritation, anxiety, impatience, and disappointment (p. 214). Culture shock gradually emerges in their lives while those people feel that cultural differences have intruded

into his/her own image of self and security (Brown, 1986, p. 36). The people who cannot get used to the new lives in an alien culture may feel disgusted and helpless about everything around them. This is an awful stage (Dodd, 1995, p. 214). They are struggling and have a hard time in a new culture. In this case, these people may reject a new culture and still maintain their own traditions.

The third stage is recovery stage (Brown, 1986, p. 36). By the same token, Dodd (1995, p. 215) also advocates that the third stage is "everything is okay". Through gradual adaptation, observation, and reflection on the ways people act in a new culture, they try to learn everything around a new culture and get used to the lives of the alien culture. Clearly, their psychological reactions may be lessened and improved.

Finally, the fourth stage is called assimilation or adaptation stage. The foreigners and learners can completely accept a new culture and develop their own confidence in living in a new culture. During this period, depression has entirely disappeared.

When they experience partial acceptance of a new culture at the recovery stage, they are afraid of losing their own cultural identities. The mixture of regret and fear interrupts the acceptance of a new culture. This indicates that the people encounter a feeling of homelessness. They belong neither to their native culture nor to a new culture. This trauma has made these people involved in a dilemma of "double-blinded" border. In this sense, literally they accept everything around them. But, in their minds, they try to convey a message – they don't see and hear a lot around their actual lives in a host country so as to avoid provoking uncomfortable response. In a nutshell, they would like to maintain their own culture and tolerate their social dissatisfaction and cultural bias in a new culture. That is their survival skills in a host country.

In fact, the adaptation process can be applied to moving to a new place or a new

country. Individuals need to develop their survival skills to adapt themselves to a new culture. The cultural adaptation process reveals that everyone has his or her own culture shock in varying degrees while they are living in a new community or new country. Until he or she gets to be familiar with the new culture or the new place, he/she may develop survival skills to tolerate or assimilate the new culture.

The entry stress of a new culture interprets the individuals' satisfaction in varying degrees to accept a new culture. The attitudes and behaviors also vary at an initial stage (glorifying stage), an awful stage (culture shock stage), and an assimilation stage ("everything is okay" stage). The excitement, pleasure, depression, loneliness, and tolerance as well as assimilation are mixed in each stage. The cultural adaptation is a dynamic process. Kim (1988) suggested that adaptation in stress-adaptation-growth model is an accumulation of successive positive and negative experiences.

The individual's growth in a new culture is also dynamic. Though culture shock is a transitional period for those who are entering an alien culture, sometimes individuals' self-identity, ethnocentricity, acculturation motivation, social distance in a group, and communication skills may bring about a side effect such as negative attitudes towards a new culture, uncertainty, and alienation or isolation from the adaptation of a new culture.

Furnham and Bochner (1982, 1986) described their findings in communication difficulty for intercultural communication such as mismatch between their home culture and host culture in social conventions or norms, the management of interpersonal relationships as well as social behaviors, including social distance, and low contact with a target language may lead to communication breakdown and influence personal values and beliefs towards a host culture. Overall, coping strategies of culture shock plays a crucial role in intercultural communication.

Dodd (1995, p. 224) suggested that the first step of cultural adaptation is

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concerned about working through culture shock. He gave us the following suggestions:

(1) Do not become over-reactionary.

(2) Try to meet people in a host country and make intensive contact with the native speakers of a new language.

(3) Try new things, such as foods, shopping, and transportation systems.

(4) Try to reflect and put one's own thoughts together.

(5) Work on your concept that most people who first experience a new place or a new culture may have the same feeling as he/she does while they are facing a culture shock.

(6) Take your time to learn verbal language and body language in a target culture. That will be helpful to your understanding of cultural system.

Obviously, verbal and nonverbal languages of a host country cannot only assist a person in enhancing cross-cultural understanding but also helping him/her survive in a new culture.

Undoubtedly, understanding the culture shock experience may help those who live in a new culture adjust themselves to the new culture and observe everything as well as people in an empathetic way and gain survival skills in a new country. If someone can put himself/herself in an alien culture and undergo the unusual culture shock, his/her own life will become flexible and joyful. Snow (1997) recommended that adopting oneself to living in a host country with ease is important to intercultural communication. Although someone may experience culture fatigue or burnout as part of his/her adaptation process, learning about the host culture and learning to speak a target language can speed up his/her intercultural communication and adaptation. In sum, culture shock in cultural adaptation can be viewed as a developmental crisis. This crisis can be reverted to a valuable opportunity for growth in traveling or studying abroad.

Methodology

Subjects

There were two different groups of samples. One group consisted of 33 foreigners

staying in Taiwan.   Twenty-one of them were male while the other twelve were female.

As to their marital status, three of them were married and all other 30 were single. In

terms of their native countries, eleven came from the U.S.A. and twenty-two came from

other English-speaking countries.

The purposes of their stay in Taiwan were mainly teaching English and studying

Mandarin Chinese.   Twenty-four came for teaching while the other nine people came

for learning the Chinese language in Taiwan. The length of their stay in Taiwan varied

from three months to three and a half years. No matter whether they came for teaching

or learning, they were all interested in Taiwanese culture and would like to experience

their lives in Taiwan.

The other group consisted of 32 exchange students (27 females; 5 males) from

Tamkang University, Taiwan, to study in America and Canada in their Junior Year

Abroad Program. These exchange students studied from nine to ten months in America

or Canada and experienced American or Canadian culture. They came back to Tamkang

University to continue their senior year at the Department of English in June 2001.

Their motivation of going to North America was to take courses in English departments

and to experience North American culture and lives.

Instruments

Two sets of Likert-Scale questionnaires, including four open-ended questions to

find the subjects' opinions beyond those expressed in the questionnaire, were administered. (Please see Appendix I and II). The foreigners' points of view on culture shock were transcribed and reported respectively and selectively. Face-to-Face interviews between the researchers and the subjects were respectively conducted to assure affinity and reliability through personal contact and interaction.

Procedures

The first set of questionnaire was filled out by foreign teachers teaching English in colleges and universities around Taiwan. Another set of questionnaire was given to 32 returned students immediately after they came back to Taiwan to visit their home department.   Ten students filled out the forms after they arrived at Brandon University, Canada, for one month.   However, they provided no important information and as a result these forms were discarded and no arrangements were made for interviewing.

All the subjects were interviewed and taped. The taped materials were then transcribed. Data from one fill-out form and a transcribed interview were counted as a protocol for analysis.

Data Collection

The data were collected, tallied on a percentile scale. The recorded oral interview tapes were transcribed and analyzed.

Results

An analysis of the protocols yielded the results that are shown in tables on a percentile scale. An overview of the outstanding figures of each table reveals characteristics of culture shock as experienced by the subjects in this study. The results are depicted in two categories to facilitate reading for the interested reader. The first category refers to the group of English native speakers in Taiwan whereas the second category refers to the students at Tamkang University returning from the United States or Canada.

A. Foreigners in Taiwan

This part reports the results of the data of the foreigners' social-cultural identities, their psychological symptom, and self-evaluation in various aspects of life in Taiwan.

Table 1   Socio-cultural identities

		SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1.	I struggled with aspects of life in Taiwan, especially with the ecologically environmental issues.	27.3	48.5	9.1	12.1	3.0
2.	I felt upset while I asked my students to speak in my class.	3.0	18.2	21.2	27.3	24.2
3.	I had difficulty in communicating with Taiwanese people in interpersonal skills.	6.1	21.2	24.2	36.4	12.1
4.	I tried to put my personal beliefs & Western culture into an alien culture in my class.	3.0	36.4	21.2	24.2	.9.1
5.	I thought that language was a tool for transmission of culture, values, and philosophy.	30.3	48.5	18.2	3.0	3.0
6.	I felt at odds with the institutional goal	12.1	30.3	33.3	15.2	9.1

	to promote globalization through the exchange of culture and language.					
7.	I could not tolerate different opinions, ideas, and cultures in an alien country.	3.0	15.2	21.2	57.6	3.0
8.	I tried to engage students in discussions of current, meaningful topics, and had them express their personal opinions through public speaking activities.	30.3	42.4	12.1	3.0	6.1
9.	I did not want to learn Chinese here because I would not need it.	6.1	9.1	12.1	18.2	54.5
10.	I enjoyed discussing with my students about the issues of sociopolitical and cultural issues between Western culture and Oriental culture.	24.2	39.4	21.2	3.0	6.1

From Table 1, we can see, that 85.8% of foreigners agreed that they were struggling with aspects of life in Taiwan, especially with the ecological environment issues. Besides, 39.4% also agreed that they tried to put their personal beliefs and Western culture into an alien culture in their classes. In their classroom activities, 72.7% foreigners tried to engage students in discussions of current, meaningful topics, and had them express their personal opinions through public speaking activities. Moreover, they enjoyed discussing with their students or colleagues about the issues of sociopolitical and cultural issues between Western culture and Oriental culture.

Table 2 The results of physical symptoms during the stay in the host country

		SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1.	Overall pace of life	6.1	27.3	39.4	18.2	6.1
2.	Transportation needs	9.1	21.2	24.2	30.3	15.2
3.	Loneliness	0	36.4	18.2	24.2	21.2
4.	Homesickness	6.1	30.3	12.1	30.3	21.2
5.	Stomach upset	3.0	36.4	15.2	18.2	27.3
6.	Sleeplessness	9.1	30.3	21.2	21.2	18.2
7.	Fearfulness	3.0	18.2	21.2	21.2	36.4

8.	Dizziness	0	15.2	18.2	15.2	21.5
9.	Worry/anxiety	3.0	24.2	21.2	27.3	24.2
10.	Depression	0	18.2	27.3	27.3	27.3
11.	Excessive irritability	3.0	12.1	36.4	27.3	21.2
12.	Withdrawal and helplessness	3.0	15.2	21.2	36.4	24.2
13.	Alienation	12.1	27.3	27.3	15.2	18.2
14.	Stress	0.	39.4	27.3	18.2	15.2
15.	Defensive communication	3.0	30.3	24.2	30.3	12.1

From Table 2, we can see that during their stay in Taiwan, 33.4% foreigners felt that the overall pace of life was so fast that they could not get used to it. To interpret the degree of adjustment difficulty they had experienced, it reveals that their physical symptoms such as loneliness (36.4%), stomach upset (39.4%), sleeplessness (39.4%), fear (21.2%), dizziness (15.1%), worry/anxiety (27.2%), irritability (15.1%), depression (11.8%), withdrawal (18.2%), alienation (39.4%), stress (39.4%), and defensive communication (33.3%).

Table 3 The results of self-evaluation for personal views

		SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1.	Being around foreign people makes me comfortable.	12.1	42.4	39.4	3.0	3.0
2.	I like to try new things, including food.	36.4	39.4	15.2	6.1	3.0
3.	I am willing to accept different cultural values.	42.4	39.4	18.2	0	0
4.	I like to contact people in a new culture.	60.6	30.3	9.1	0	0
5.	I am willing to learn a new culture and adapt myself to the life of the host country.	45.5	33.3	18.2	3.0	0
6.	Everything is new and interesting for me in a new culture.	36.4	36.4	27.3	0	0
7.	I know what is right for me may not be right for the other person.	48.5	42.4	9.1	0	0
8.	I don't usually experience frustration at social function.	9.1	51.5	27.3	12.1	0

9.	It is usually wise to trust a foreigner.	3.0	9.1	45.5	30.3	12.1
10.	It would be a better world if English were the only language spoken.	3.0	3.0	12.1	27.3	54.5
11.	I can maintain my ethnic identification and tolerate different cultural bias even though I stay at the host country.	39.4	45.5	6.1	9.1	0
12.	I do believe that cultural pluralism is a trend in the future	27.3	24.2	39.4	9.1	0
13.	I have a positive self-concept in experiencing new things with less stress.	27.3	51.5	18.2	3.0	0
14.	It disturbs me not to know how my actions affect others.	21.2	45.5	24.2	9.1	0
15.	I really dislike it when someone doesn't give straight answers about themselves.	33.3	39.4	21.2	3.0	3.0

In other respect, from Table 3 about personal views we find that 54.5% foreigners

agreed that being around foreign people made them comfortable. Clearly, mental

security in a group was an important factor for everyone who would like to enter an

alien place or culture and also considered as a social identity marker. Meanwhile,

75.8% foreigners also agreed that they would like to try new things, including food, due

to their curiosity. 82.4% of the subjects were willing to accept different cultural values

and 81.8% people could accept a new culture and adapt themselves to the life of the

host country. In personal judgment, 90.9% of these foreigners knew that what is right

for them might not be right for the other person. Even though they stayed at the host

country, Taiwan, 84.9% would like to maintain their ethnic identification and tolerate

different cultural bias.

For the open-ended questions, this part of analysis is based on their oral or written

responses. The majority of people remarked that if they would be able to survive in

another culture, they had to learn to adapt themselves, listen to others' comments, or

even they had to change their habits a bit. Above all, each culture has their positive and negative aspects. What they had learned about living in another culture was to try to look for the better aspects within the culture and be able to adapt to them in a new culture. Surely, there is no doubt that they had to live with the people of other cultures. This affects their personalities, and the way they thought. In their daily lives, they had to learn how to get along with and then tolerate those who behaved differently in different settings. So, the first thing that some people would like to do was to try to learn the local language and try to observe how people act and how people do things. The observations were recorded in their daily journals to record their experiences in a new culture. At the initial stage, they felt deeply about different people, different customs, and different ways of thinking. After a couple of months, the feelings such as depression, loneliness, and some physical symptoms might be reduced due to gradual familiarity with the customs and people of the new culture.

These foreigners also mentioned other aspects of difficulties in living in a new culture. One of them supposed that learning Chinese and trying to adopt Chinese culture was the hardest thing to live with because of different patterns of thinking in the Chinese language. It was natural that misunderstanding or miscommunications took place. He needed to make efforts to overcome problems that were involved in different cultures. So, he thought that misunderstanding was the hardest thing to deal with. Nevertheless, it could be overcome through patience and empathy.

Another interviewee said, "The hardest thing for me to live with in Taiwan is the traffic because I have to wait for a bus for a long time and sometimes it takes me too much time". He mentioned one of his friends living next to the night market. Every day his friends lived with the smell of fermented bean curd. His friend complained to him that the smell made him almost suffocated to death. The foreigner also explained that

verbal misunderstanding and nonverbal misunderstanding existed in their everyday

communication. For example, while he was watching TV, he heard an actor saying, "幹

嘛?". He asked his housemate what it meant. His housemate interpreted the meaning as

"What do you want?" He was perplexed at the meaning and the words were swinging

back and forth in his mind

The above-mentioned subject also talked about an interesting anecdote. Once

when he was teaching English at a school, he had to go to the restroom; unfortunately,

he could not read the sign in Chinese. He went into a women's restroom. The verbal

and nonverbal misunderstanding embarrassed him from time to time when he first came

to Taiwan. He could not read signs written in Chinese characters.

Additionally, jokes can also be interpreted differently according to different

cultures. One foreigner remembered that when he went out for talking with

Taiwanese people, he could not be playful. He implied that when he said something that

was playful but he did not have the intention to tease the person whom they talked to.

However, Chinese people would take the joke seriously. He tried to explain that the

people of his culture had different ways of teasing because they accepted the people as

friends. They surely had a way of teasing their friends, but it was harder when they

used a different language. That is the way of their humor. In contrast, in Chinese culture

a joke used in his home country can be an insult or results in misinterpretations.

When it comes to ecological environment issues, most of the foreigners could not

tolerate air pollution in Taiwan. Whenever they went outside on the street, they could

not get away from dirty air. The recycling in Taiwan was not well managed. They

thought that it was simple to recycle bottles and cans from vending machines and to

make money if they would like to do it. Unluckily, it did not happen in Taiwan. Since

there were many people living in Taiwan, they should understand how to recycle the bottles and cans. As a matter of fact, not many people were doing so. Therefore, the recycling problem and air pollution bothered them.

A Canadian female was even upset about Taiwanese people's attitude toward their jobs. She described a job condition in which workers were the slaves of the company in Taiwan. In her culture, they went to work and set time during which they worked. They did not take work home with them. If the boss asked a worker to do more work, he/she would be paid extra money. They didn't do it for free. She was surprised that Taiwanese people who would do everything whenever the boss asked them to do, regardless of extra pay. All in all, she felt frustrated that the boss did not respect the employees by giving extra work without extra pay. Among the foreigners from Great Britain, U.S.A, and Canada, they also complained about the distance maintained between people. They could not tolerate the close distance in a crowd. In contrast, Taiwanese inhabitants prefer to line up closely. Even if in a crowded place, the residents have little space for social interaction as an in-group marker.

B. Culture Shock On The Part of The Returned Exchange Students

This part reports the results of the data from 32 junior students who lived in America for eight months in 2000-2001.

Table 4

Inability to work or stay well

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
I was able to work well because					
I often felt a slight headache.	3.1	3.1	9.4	34.4	50.0
I often felt an upset stomach.	3.1	3.1	3.1	34.4	56.3
I often felt sleepy.	3.1	12.5	18.8	34.4	31.3

I often felt irritated all day long.	0	3.1	6.3	40.0	50.0

Withdrawal and Avoidance

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1. I often had a feeling of helplessness and withdrawal.	0	6.3	15.6	56.3	21.9
2. I often felt I was cheated.	0	3.1	15.6	28.1	53.1
3. I was afraid of the stare of people.	0	3.1	25.0	46.9	25.0

Lack of ability to deal with small problems

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1. I easily cried for small problems.	0	0	9.4	34.4	56.3
2. I easily cried for frustration.	0	0	18.8	28.1	53.1

Emphasis of the negative side in the new culture or anger toward the new culture

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1. Everything was awful.	0	0	9.4	43.8	46.9
2. People do everything backward here. (They do not the same as I do in my own country)	0	3.1	50.0	37.5	9.4
3. I don't have any friends here.	0	6.3	3.1	31.3	59.4

The contents of questionnaire focused on physical symptoms of culture shock to look into their adjustment to a new culture and their beliefs about new culture. The low percentage of the items such as alienation (21.9%), loneliness (3.1%), stomach upset (3.1%), sleepiness (12.5%), fear (3.1%) accounted for their good adjustment in the host countries, the United States of America and Canada.

Table 5

Glorification of the new culture

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1. Everything was beautiful in the new	15.6	31.3	43.8	9.4	0

culture.					
2. What a wonderful country!	21.9	21.9	50.0	6.3	0
3. People here are so friendly.	18.8	31.3	43.8	6.3	0
4. It's better than back home.	3.1	25.0	46.9	18.8	6.3

Food preference

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1. My anxiety about the new culture had to do with the food. (I do not like food there.)	6.3	37.5	31.3	15.6	9.4
2. I enjoyed the new food.	6.3	15.6	59.4	12.5	6.3
3. I missed the food I had in my hometown.	31.3	46.9	15.6	3.1	3.1

Transportation Needs

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1. I hardly felt like leaving the house because I did not have a car.	3.1	21.9	18.8	43.8	12.5
2. I did not have transportation problems.	15.6	28.1	15.6	31.3	9.4

Shopping Experiences

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1. I did not know what to shop because the price was too high.	6.3	12.5	12.5	46.9	18.8
2. I had difficulty reading labels for shopping.	3.1	6.3	3.1	43.8	43.8

Language Gaps

	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1. I was not comfortable communicating at a social event or in a class.	0	34.4	28.1	31.3	6.3
2. I found myself unable to say what I really felt when talking with people.	6.3	6.3	40.6	40.6	6.3
3. I often felt I had done something wrong.	0	6.3	31.3	37.5	25.0

4. I really dislike it when someone doesn't give straight answers about themselves.	6.3	15.6	43.8	31.3	6.3
5. My interpersonal communication skills seemed to be fairly ineffective.	0	18.8	34.4	43.8	3.1
6. It disturbs me not to know my actions affect others.	0	31.3	28.1	28.1	12.5

Concerning glorification of new culture, 46.9% of our students thought that everything was beautiful and wonderful in their new culture. And, 50.1% of students felt that people in America were very friendly. However, 43.8% students were anxious about food in America. Furthermore, 88.2% of them missed the food in their hometowns. In the aspect of transportation, 43.7% needed cars to commute from one place to another place. Immersed in American culture, 21.9% students disliked that someone did not give straight answers about themselves. Surely, 31.3% students were disturbed by not knowing whether their actions might affect others or not. Apparently, they were over often perplexed about their own behaviors in these host countries due to different cultures.

This part reports students' written responses to the open-ended questions from the questionnaire. After their reentry to their home country, most of the returned students felt that they had known more about American culture, including American ways of thinking. Some of them could not adapt themselves to the lives in Taiwan for a while, because they found Taiwanese people were ruder than American people. In addition, one student said that she had already got used to the new culture in a foreign country. After coming back to Taiwan, she felt that her perception about how local people acted was different and she could not tolerate it for a while. After her reentry for a while, she gradually understood that everything was the same as it was one year ago. Another student supposed that she could adjust herself to two different cultures without any

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difficulty. One student even found that she was more thoughtful and courageous in facing up with the different cultures after her reentry.

As to what they had learned about living in another culture, most of them felt that they have grown up and become more independent than they used to be. At the same time, they learned how to appreciate many things in an alien culture and how to communicate with English native speakers. Furthermore, American people were viewed by some of them as egocentric and individualistic. Most of the exchange students were aware of the fact that American people would like to express their feelings in a direct and straightforward way.   On the contrary, Taiwanese people are prone to expressing their feelings in an indirect way. In their perspectives, that is a big difference between Taiwanese culture and American culture.

On the other hand, the majority of exchange students had the same problem: it was hard for them to get along with their roommates partially because American students had racial discrimination. Once they stroke up their conversation, they had different topics to initiate because they did not know each other's cultures well. As a result, communication breakdown took place. Besides, the American humor was difficult for nonnative speakers to figure out. The exchange students could not grasp the implications behind the American humor. One of the students reported that his American roommate took drugs and brought his girl friend to the dormitory every night. He could not stand his roommate's behavior.

Findings

In this study, the participants have encountered culture shock in varying degrees after entering a new country. To survive in a new culture and increase cultural differences, they have already adapted themselves to their host country and have experienced how to cope with culture shock and get rid of their overt sensitivity in a given culture. There is no denying that the ways people do things in different cultures are different. At first, living in another culture is hard and depressing for those who are traveling or studying or working in an alien culture. What's more, they can be lonely. If they do not learn more about a target language and observe how people act and think in the new culture, they may be alien to the new culture. Homesickness, anxiety, and stress may apparently occur. It is crucial that foreigners needed to understand more about how people live, act, and think in a new culture before they planned to study, work or travel there. If they insisted on setting up a cultural boundary, they would be doomed to undergoing intolerable culture shock in various degrees.

In this study, most foreigners have learned how to deal with different cultures and different ways of thinking, even though they would like to maintain their personal beliefs and Western culture in an alien culture. Obviously, they would like to transmit their own culture, values, and philosophy via language teaching. On the one hand, they would like to glorify their home culture. On the other hand, they tried to maintain their own cultural identity because they were afraid that they might lose their identity in a host country. The rose-colored glasses are framed by a need for security (Dodd, 1995, p.215). Ultimately, they are struggling to reach an equilibrium between the home culture and the new culture.

Although culture shock is a transitional period, it may last for a short period or a couple of months. Surely, the individuals' physical symptoms in a new culture may have improved over time. But, one foreigner reported it took at least one year to adjust herself to the new culture. She could not sleep well and at times was homesick. In this sense, the degree of adjustment in the new culture depends on individuals' tolerance or acceptance of the target culture.

As to coping strategies, some of them had intensive contact with Taiwanese people so as to get through the cultural boundary. Apart from this, they tried to look for positive points within the new culture and become open-minded to tolerate different cultural values and beliefs. Surely, nobody could use his/her own way to correct any other people's perceptions especially from different cultural perspectives.

From the exchange students' perspective, most of them were glorifying a new culture. Everything was fresh and curious to them, except American food. For example, they liked American people that were mostly friendly and they had wonderful experience in studying there. Nevertheless, most of them could not get along with American students well, owing to different cultural bias, values, and beliefs. Whereas, they knew how American people thought. Compared with foreigners in Taiwan, the exchange students in America had less culture shock. Since they were immersed in American culture for 8 to 10 months, their beliefs and values have been changed in a certain degree. They had become independent and developed critical thinking in their reflective reports. Thus, culture shock in this study is not a crisis among our exchange students. It is a developmental stage for individuals undergoing cultural differences. This can turn out to be a valuable opportunity to see through another culture for foreigners and exchange students.

In addition, foreigners as well as exchange students had a common problem in communicating with the people of a host country by means of language or facial expressions and gestures. Both groups had difficulty in understanding implications in a foreign language through the tone in Chinese and through the intonation in English. They were not certain about to convey their own ideas to make them understood. Simultaneously, they learned not only how to tolerate cross-cultural differences, respect new interesting social/personal values, but also how to accept aesthetic values in a host country. Verbal communication and social interaction in a new culture are challenging to foreigners as well as exchange students. Supposing that they would like to survive in a new culture, they would have to learn coping skills and to undergo the stage of culture shock. Otherwise, they might have adverse and negative reaction towards a new culture.

Pedagogical Implications

Our two groups of subjects should be respectively treated in our analysis of data and interpretation of our findings and their competence in the language in each host country was different. Apparently, the native speakers of English in Taiwan were not proficient in Mandarin or Taiwanese used in Taiwan, their adjustment difficulty was more serious and they as a result experienced more serious degrees of culture shock. As usual, as foreigners did not learn Chinese before they came to Taiwan, their knowledge about Taiwan was limited. Therefore, their life experience in Taiwan was naturally like an adventure in the wonderland.

On the contrary, the exchange students in our study had at least eight years of English instruction in English and read about many things in American and Canadian cultures. Somehow, they have been acculturated in a non-English country. Culture shock in a normal sense might have been got rid of in their experience in the home country. In a certain sense, we may use the term of "glocalization" in its cultural connotation.

Conclusion

The number of subjects in this study might not be big enough for us to generalize the concept of culture shock. The study, however, has shown that culture shock has affected foreigners' own cultural values and beliefs while they are living in a host country. The longer they stay in the host country, the better they can be acculturated themselves. The investigation of the participants' views and perceptions of an alien culture may be beneficial to our awareness of our international perspectives and reach a balanced view of two cultures in contact. The coping strategies and cultural awareness will become a core of EFL curriculum. Above all, language cannot be divorced from the culture of people who speak it. Through cross-cultural understanding, cultural competence and acculturation will be enhanced. To be faced with a trend towards globalization in the future, we need to develop cultural awareness and break through cultural boundaries. In this case, cultural teaching is an indispensable component in an EFL classroom. Most importantly, it is appropriate for nonnative speakers to develop positive attitudes towards the host culture so that they can facilitate language acquisition. The degree of empathy and identification with the target culture may also affect L2 acquisition. That is what nonnative speakers need to pay attention to.

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Appendix I

Questionnaire For Foreigners

I. Personal data:

- Sex: (1) male _____ (2) female _____

- Marital status: (1) married _____ (spouse's nationality: _____)

  (2) divorced _____ (3) single _____ (4) the number of children _____

- Nationality: _____

- Age: _____

- Occupation: _____

- Length of stay in the host country: _____ months

- Financial status: (what financial resources?) _____

- The motivation of leaving your home country: _____

II. Social-cultural identities: The following scale asks for your personal view. Circle the answer: (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly disagree

1. I struggled with aspects of life in Taiwan, especially with the

   ecologically environmental issues.   5   4   3   2   1

2. I felt upset while I asked my students to speak in my class.   5   4   3   2   1

3. I had difficulty communicating with Taiwanese people in

   interpersonal skills.   5   4   3   2   1

4. I tried to put my personal beliefs & Western culture into an alien

   culture in my class.   5   4   3   2   1

5. I thought that language was a tool for transmission of culture,

   values, and philosophy.   5   4   3   2   1

6. I felt at odds with the institutional goal to promote internalization

   through the exchange of culture and language.   5   4   3   2   1

7. I could not tolerate different opinions, ideas, and cultures in

   an alien country.   5   4   3   2   1

8. I tried to engage students in discussions of current, meaningful

   topics, and had them express their personal opinions through

   public speaking activities.   5   4   3   2   1

9. I did not want to learn Chinese here because I would not need it. 5   4   3   2   1

10. I enjoyed discussing with my students about the issues of

    sociopolitical and cultural issues between Western culture

and Oriental culture.   5   4   3   2   1

III. Rate the following physical symptoms during your stay in the host country according to the degree of adjustment of difficulty you have experienced. Circle the answer:

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Overall pace of life	5	4	3	2	1
2. Transportation needs	5	4	3	2	1
3. Loneliness	5	4	3	2	1
4. Homesickness	5	4	3	2	1
5. Stomach upset	5	4	3	2	1
6. Sleeplessness	5	4	3	2	1
7. Fearfulness	5	4	3	2	1
8. Dizziness	5	4	3	2	1
9. Worry/anxiety	5	4	3	2	1
10. Depression	5	4	3	2	1
11. Excessive irritability	5	4	3	2	1
12. Withdrawal and helpless	5	4	3	2	1
13. Alienation	5	4	3	2	1
14. Stress	5	4	3	2	1
15. Defensive communication	5	4	3	2	1

IV. Self-evaluation: The following scale asks for your personal view. Circle the answer:

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Being around foreign people makes me comfortable.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I like to try new things, including food.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I am willing to accept different cultural values.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I like to contact with people from a new culture.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I am willing to learn a new culture and adapt myself to the life of the host country.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Everything is new and interesting for me in a new culture.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I know what is right for me may not be right for the other person.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I don't usually experience frustration at social function.	5	4	3	2	1
9. It is usually wise to trust a foreigner.	5	4	3	2	1
10. It would be a better world if English were the only language spoken.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I can maintain my ethnic identification and tolerate different					

	cultural bias even though I stay at the host country.	5	4	3	2	1
	12. I do believe that cultural pluralism is a trend in the future.	5	4	3	2	1
	13. I have a positive self-concept in experiencing new things with less stress.	5	4	3	2	1
	14. It disturbs me not to know how my actions affect others.	5	4	3	2	1
	15. I really dislike it when someone doesn't give straight answers about themselves.	5	4	3	2	1

V. Open-ended Questions:

1) What have you learned about living in another culture?

2) What aspects of living in another culture have you found the hardest to live with?

3) What verbal misunderstandings have occurred to you? And how have you coped with them?

4) What non-verbal misunderstandings have occurred to you? And how have you coped with?

Appendix II

Questionnaire For Exchange Students

I. Personal data:

- Sex: (1) male _____ (2) female _____

- Nationality: _____

- Age: _____

- Occupation: _____

- Length of staying in the host country: _____ months

- Financial status: (what financial resources?) _____

- The motivation of leaving your home country: _____

II. Homesickness: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. I had a strong urge (desire) to return home immediately after

    I arrived; I miss my family and my hometown so much.   5   4   3   2   1

2. I always had a feeling of alienation being foreign.   5   4   3   2   1

3. I felt lonely all the time.   5   4   3   2   1

III. Inability to work or stay well: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. I was unable to work well because

    I often felt a slight headache.   5   4   3   2   1

    I often felt an upset stomach.   5   4   3   2   1

    I often felt sleepy.   5   4   3   2   1

    I often felt irritated all day long.   5   4   3   2   1

IV. Withdrawal and avoidance: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. I often had a feeling of helplessness and withdrawal.   5   4   3   2   1

2. I often felt I was cheated.   5   4   3   2   1

3. I was afraid of the stare of people.   5   4   3   2   1

V. Lack of ability to deal with small problems: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. I easily cried for small problems.   5   4   3   2   1

2. I easily cried for frustration.   5   4   3   2   1

VI. Emphasis of the negative side in the new culture or anger toward the new culture:

Circle the answer (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. Everything was awful.   5   4   3   2   1

2. People do everything backward here. (They do not the same as I do

in my own country)   5   4   3   2   1

3. I don't have any friends here.   5   4   3   2   1

VII. Glorification of the new culture: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. Everything was beautiful in the new culture.   5   4   3   2   1

2. What a wonderful country!   5   4   3   2   1

3. People here are so friendly.   5   4   3   2   1

4. It's better than back home.   5   4   3   2   1

VIII. Food: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. My anxiety about the new culture had to do with the food.

(I do not like food there.)   5   4   3   2   1

2. I enjoyed the new food.   5   4   3   2   1

3. I missed the food I had in my hometown.   5   4   3   2   1

IX. Transportation: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. I hardly felt like leaving the house because I did not have a car.   5   4   3   2   1

2. I did not have transportation problems.   5   4   3   2   1

X. Employment: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

I enjoyed my new job very much.   5   4   3   2   1

XI. Shopping: Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. I did not know what to shop because the price was too high.   5   4   3   2   1

2. I had difficulty reading labels for shopping.   5   4   3   2   1

XII. Language: (Verbal and non-verbal) Circle the answer

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. I was not comfortable communicating at a social event or in a class. 5   4   3   2   1

2. I found myself unable to say what I really felt when talking with

    people.   5   4   3   2   1

3. I often felt I had done something wrong.   5   4   3   2   1

4. I really dislike it when someone doesn't give straight answers

    about themselves.   5   4   3   2   1

5. My interpersonal communication skills seemed to be fairly

    ineffective.   5   4   3   2   1

6. It disturbs me not to know my actions affect others.   5   4   3   2   1

XIII. Open-ended Questions:

1)   Did you experience a value change for your reentry? Please specify in detail.

2)   What have you learned about living in another culture?

3)   What aspects of living in another culture have you found the hardest to live with?

Appendix III

The Distribution of Ages for The Foreigners Interviewed

	Age	Frequency	Percent
Valid	21	3	9.1
	22	1	3.0
	23	2	6.1
	24	3	9.1
	26	4	12.1
	27	4	12.1
	28	1	3.0
	29	3	9.1
	30	2	6.1
	31	3	9.1
	32	3	9.1
	33	1	3.0
	35	2	6.1
	39	1	3.0
	Total	33	100.0