The acculturative strategies and experiences of international students

Lee Hawkes
Queen Mary, University of London
Outline

• Existing theory and research
  • Psychological
  • Sociological
  • Acculturative stressors

• Case study: Queen Mary IFP
  • Language use
  • Sociocultural experiences

• Implications
What is ‘Acculturation’?

1. the process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group.

2. the result of this process.
Psychological theory
Berry’s acculturation model (1997):
Berry’s acculturation model:

Accept Host Culture

Assimilation

Integration

Separation

Marginalisation

Reject Host Culture

Reject Home Culture

Retain Home Culture

(Berry, 1997)
Berry’s acculturation model:

Assimilation

Accept Host Culture

Integration

Reject Host Culture

Separation

Marginalisation

Reject Home Culture

Retain Home Culture

(Berry, 1997)
Berry’s acculturation model:

- **Assimilation**: Accept Host Culture, Retain Home Culture
- **Integration**: Accept Host Culture, Retain Host Culture
- **Separation**: Reject Host Culture, Reject Home Culture
- **Marginalisation**: Reject Host Culture, Retain Home Culture

(Berry, 1997)
Berry’s acculturation model:

- **Assimilation**: Accept Host Culture → Retain Host Culture
- **Integration**: Accept Host Culture
- **Separation**: Reject Host Culture
- **Marginalisation**: Reject Host Culture → Retain Home Culture

(Berry, 1997)
Berry’s acculturation model:

Assimilation

Integration

Marginalisation

“Generally, those pursuing the integration strategy experience less stress, and achieve better adaptations than those pursuing marginalisation.”

(Berry, 2005)

(Berry, 1997)
Berry’s acculturation model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reject Host Culture</td>
<td>Retain Home Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept Host Culture</td>
<td>Reject Host Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign residents in Nepal:

- Integrative: Better psychological well-being
- Assimilative: Better socio-cultural adjustment

(Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999)

(Berry, 1997)
Berry’s acculturation model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant group</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Separation</th>
<th>Marginalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>consensual</td>
<td>culture</td>
<td>contact</td>
<td>conflictual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>problematic</td>
<td>problematic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>culture</td>
<td>consensual</td>
<td>conflictual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>problematic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segregation</td>
<td>contact</td>
<td>conflictual</td>
<td>consensual</td>
<td>culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>problematic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>problematic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td>conflictual</td>
<td>conflictual</td>
<td>conflictual</td>
<td>conflictual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Piontkowski, Rohmann & Florack; 2002)
Sociological/Sociolinguistic theory
“Student perceptions of their experiences have taught us that their interactions with native speakers may be far less intense and frequent than was once assumed…” (Freed, 1998)
On US students in Japan:

“…it appears that those who are able to develop friendships and engage in social networks tend to acquire more vocabulary than those who do not.” (Dewey 2008).
Principle issues in relation to the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence:

- Context of acquisition
- Degree of contact with NSs
- Level of proficiency
- Role of input
- Native speaker sociolinguistic norms
- Individual differences

(Regan, 1998)
UK students’ perceptions of the French (Coleman, 2001):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>Year 1 students (n &gt; 4,618)</th>
<th>Year 4 students (n &gt; 2,184)</th>
<th>Difference between Year 1 and Year 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrogant</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatient</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerant</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good humoured</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acculturative Stressors
Acculturative stressors:

Linguistic
Educational
Sociocultural
Discrimination
Practical

(Smith & Khawaja, 2011)
Acculturative stressors:

- Linguistic
- Educational
- Sociocultural
- Discrimination
- Practical

• Accentuates all other stressors…

(Smith & Khawaja, 2011)
Acculturative stressors:

Linguistic
• Performance lower than expected

Educational
• Different teaching style

Sociocultural
• High parental expectations

Discrimination

Practical

(Smith & Khawaja, 2011)
Acculturative stressors:

- Linguistic
- Educational
- Sociocultural
- Discrimination
- Practical

- Loneliness & isolation
- Difficulty making friends
- Different sociocultural practices
- Fewer support networks

(Smith & Khawaja, 2011)
Acculturative stressors:

- Linguistic
- Educational
- Sociocultural
- Discrimination
- Practical

- Passive social prejudice
- Physical violence

(Smith & Khawaja, 2011)
Acculturative stressors:

Linguistic
Educational
Sociocultural
Discrimination
Practical

‘Cultural distance’ is generally correlative with degree of acculturative stress.

(Church, 1982)

(Smith & Khawaja, 2011)
Coping with acculturative stressors:

Maladaptive strategies

- Depression, anxiety, etc..
- Self-blame
- Denial
- Substance abuse
- Emotional repression
- Somatic disorders
Coping with acculturative stressors:

Maladaptive strategies

The more social support students receive, the less likely it is that acculturative stressors will result in mental health issues.

(Lee, Koeske & Sales; 2004)
Coping with acculturative stressors:

Support Networks

- Co-nationals
- Fellow internationals
- Host country

(Kashima & Loh, 2006)
Coping with acculturative stressors:
Support Networks

- **Co-nationals**
- **Fellow internationals**
- **Host country**

(Ying, 2002)
Why should we care?

• Better for academic literacy (Di Boscio, 2008)
• Happy students = more students (Ryan, 2005)
• Formal and informal learning overlap (Bacon, 2002)
Case Study: Queen Mary IFP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lucy</th>
<th>Kate</th>
<th>Xoe</th>
<th>Tom</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Zak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 18 years old
- IELTS 6.0
- IFP 2011-2012
- Business / Economics
Usage of English and other languages:

- English
- Russian
- Mandarin
- Greek
Usage of English and other languages:

Kate

- English
- Mandarin
Usage of English and other languages:

Lucy

- English
- Mandarin
Usage of English and other languages:

Zak

- English
- Urdu
- Sindhi
Usage of English and other languages:
Usage of English and other languages:

- **English**: Large portion
- **Turkish**: Medium portion
- **Azeri**: Small portion

**Tom**
Usage of English and other languages:

John:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flatmate</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Russia/Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Train</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>Azeri/English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Usage of English and other languages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatmate</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Kazakh</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Azeri</td>
<td>Azeri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Usage of English and other languages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Urdu/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Urdu/Sindhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Sindhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Sindhi/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Sindhi/English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Would you like to speak to more British people?

“I want to know more about English speaking people…but I don’t know how to know them” (Lucy)

“I thought that I will get a lot of English friends, English students, but now I think that it is hard, maybe, like I am doing foundation, that is why…” (Tom)

“I met some people from UK, and I went on party with them, it was a little difficult to understand because they speak too fast” (Xoe)

“…If my English is perfect then I can definitely get used to here and I can get involved with people.” (Kate)

“…I will have English friends, sometimes I will go to the pub Saturdays, but it will happen in time, not now” (John)
Who do you live with?

Lucy (China):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Talk?</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Just friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Just friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Close friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Just friend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“...we just say hello or some basic thing in our kitchen, no other...”
### Who do you live with?

Xoe (Kazakhstan):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Talk?</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Cousin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Good friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Neighbour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I have some international friends but they’re not so close…I think the cultural difference prevent…close relationships”
Who do you live with?

Kate (China):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Talk?</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Very close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Quite close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Quite close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Friendly stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Friendly stranger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“…most of time I just stay home because…here people go pub or clubbing which is totally different from my country”
What’s it like living in London?

“London is like a world which have the small countries in it – that’s why it is a bit different for me” (John)

“I feel here not like it’s a home town, but I don’t feel like a foreigner, or a visitor, or a tourist” (Xoe)

“you should take your ID for every club, and also you can’t buy alcohol or cigarettes if you are under 18, and also you can’t throw something on the street, like cigarette packs…” (Tom)
What do you feel stressed about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lucy</th>
<th>Tom</th>
<th>Kate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to communicate</td>
<td>1. Loneliness</td>
<td>1. Ability to communicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grades</td>
<td>2. Location</td>
<td>2. Academic work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where are they?

Assimilation  Integration

Accept Host Culture

Reject Host Culture

Separation  Marginalisation

Reject Home Culture  Retain Home Culture

(Berry, 1997)
Case Study - Summary

• Expectations of integration
• Little NS contact
• Live in ‘bubbles’ of home culture
• Hope that things will change/improve
UKCISA - Recommendations

- Accommodation
- Mentoring schemes
- Orientation Programmes
- Volunteering
- Student Unions
References:


Questions, comments or suggestions?