

Chapter 5

Culture Shock

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has altered multiple aspects of global society, including education, travel, business, social, politics, and policy. Due to numerous factors, citizens of the world are more likely than ever to experience differing cultures and places. Although globalization has a plethora of benefits, second language learners often face difficulties when traveling or living abroad (Lee, 2007). Cultural shock is a phenomenon that second language learners face when relocated to another culture. This chapter reviews culture, in general, culture shock, in general, and the four stages of culture shock. Additionally, the author presents the following S.H.O.C.K. strategy to lessen the culture shock of second language learners: Study personal perspectives, Honor personal factors, Observe language levels, Cultivate accepting environments, and Knock on the door. The S.H.O.C.K. strategy can be utilized in many contexts, including education, leisure, social, and business.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization refers to the recent tendency for technology, economics, education, business, and culture to become more integrated across the globe (Lee, 2007). Multiple aspects of domestic and international society, including financial, political, policy, social, business, and education, have metamorphosed due to this phenomenon (Heyl, 2014; Mendenhall, 2013; Singh & Papa, 2010). In the United States alone, the number of second language learners “grew by 80% between 1990 and 2010” due to globalization (Pandya, Batalova, & McHugh, 2011, p. 3). This growth accounted for second language learners representing “25.2 million or nine percent, of the United States population over age five” in 2010 (Pandya et al., 2011, p. 1). Globalization is beneficial to the global economy as well as broadening the cultural mindset of individuals (Lee, 2007).

Globalization, specifically the development of technology and connectivity, has generated an exponential rise in international employment and travel (UNESCO, 2016). Each day, 500,000 airline passengers, 1.4 billion e-mail messages, and \$1.5 trillion cross borders. Due to the ease of transportation

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and communication via technology, the number of individuals working and traveling internationally has grown exponentially (UNESCO, 2016).

In addition to affecting global business and travel aspects, globalization has also transformed higher education (Lee, 2007). The number of students, including “both genders, young and old, Western and non-Western cultures, newly arrived as well as returning” (McLeod, 2008, p. 1), studying internationally continues to increase (OECD, 2014). Four years ago, there were 4.5 million international students studying worldwide, which is an increase of over 50 percent since 2005 (OECD, 2014). The United States, United Kingdom, China, France, and Germany hosted 52 percent of the international students (Chow & Institute of International Education, 2015). The continued increase in higher education international students is due to the continued efforts of academic institutions to attract a diverse student population (Altbach & Knight, 2010; Chow & Institute of International Education, 2015; Lee & Rice, 2007; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) who “desire to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to achieve success in academic, personal, and/or professional arenas” (McLeod, 2008, p. 1).

Furthermore, K-12 classrooms worldwide are encountering the effects of globalization (Petsod, Wang, & McGarvey, 2006). The cultural fabric of K-12 educational systems is becoming more diverse as a result of globalization. In the United States, “[t]he number of school-age children (ages 5-17) who spoke a language other than English at home rose from 4.7 to 11.2 million between 1980 and 2009” (Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frohlich, Kemp, & Tahamet, 2011, p. 30). Keigher (2009) reported that 67% of United States public schools have a minimum of one second language learner. K-12 classrooms and educational systems across the globe are confronting this phenomenon as well (Petsod et al., 2006). Globalization has transformed educational systems, including higher education and K-12, travels, and business facets worldwide (Lee, 2007).

Accompanying the economic boost created by second language learners in a country (Altbach & Knight, 2010; Lee, 2007; Lee & Rice, 2007; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004), further benefits of second language learners are the existence of broader perceptions and perspectives, which can aide in achieving an educational institution’s or company’s goals (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Lee, 2007; Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). Intellectual capital, international goodwill, diplomatic relations, international awareness, and multiculturalism are also benefits of second language learners interacting with the host culture (Lee, 2007). Although globalization has a plethora of benefits, second language learners often face difficulties when traveling extensively or living abroad (Lee, 2007). In addition to leaving their homeland, second language learners also face the challenge of adjusting to a new culture and environment. Culture shock is a phenomenon that second language learners experience when transported to a new culture (Senerchia, 2015).

The objective of this chapter is to provide the following S.H.O.C.K. strategy that will lessen culture shock of second language learners:

- Study perspective,
- Honor personal factors,
- Observe language level,
- Cultivate accepting environment,
- Knock on the door.

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