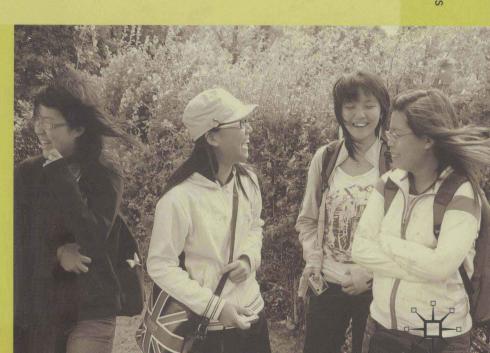# intercultural
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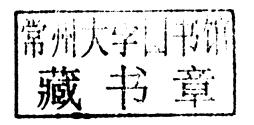
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Intercultural Journeys

From Study to Residence Abroad

Jane Jackson
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

palgrave
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Preface

Introduction

With the advent of accelerating globalization, cultural sensitivity and proficiency in more than one language are assuming higher levels of importance in higher education. Universities around the world are grappling with the question: How can they prepare their graduates for today's complex, interconnected world? In response, many institutions are developing study abroad programs to offer their students the opportunity to experience another culture and language firsthand. Many assume that this will automatically lead to enhanced intercultural understanding and greater proficiency in the host language. But is this the case?

What does it mean to be an "intercultural speaker" or "mediator" and how can one develop a deeper level of intercultural awareness and sensitivity? Why do some individuals return from study abroad with a broader, more intercultural, global identity while others reject the host environment and cling more tightly to their homeland and localized identity? Why do some enhance their second language (L2) proficiency while others do not? What can account for these different developmental trajectories?

These are some of the questions I have been asking myself in the last decade or so. Before I began researching study abroad in 2000, I would hear tales of Hong Kong exchange students who returned home with negative images of the host culture and a seemingly higher level of ethnocentricism. By contrast, others would beam with excitement when recounting their sojourn experiences and newfound love of travel. With enhanced self-confidence, these individuals would seek out opportunities to interact across cultures and use their L2 both at home and abroad. The contrast was startling.

Intercultural Journeys: From Study to Residence Abroad focuses on the actual experiences of advanced L2 students who traveled from their home environment to a foreign land as part of a faculty-led, short-term study abroad program.[1] This book explores the linkage between intercultural awareness and sensitivity, language development, and identity reconstruction in young adult L2 learners.

Overview of the book

The book comprises eight chapters. In Chapters 1 and 2, my aim is to provide theoretical background to my investigation of the language and cultural development of advanced L2 students. The remaining chapters focus on case studies of selected participants; their stories have implications for international education both at home and abroad.

In Chapter 1 I discuss the impact of globalization on institutions of higher education and the spread of English as an international language. Internationalization policies have led to increased opportunities for intercultural contact on home campuses and the proliferation of a great variety of study abroad programs. I explain how these developments have elevated the importance of intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity in both domestic and global contexts. Since short-term study abroad programs, in particular, have increased dramatically in recent years, it is important to understand what actually happens on programs of this nature. Can they propel participants to a higher level of intercultural sensitivity and L2 proficiency? What elements cultivate a more open, ethnorelative mindset? What factors appear to facilitate the development of intercultural communicative competence? Interculturality? Global citizenship?

In Chapter 2 I explore theoretical perspectives of interculturalists, L2 educators, and identity theorists in an effort to explain the complex connection between language, culture, and identity. I delve into the constructs of "interculturality" and "intercultural speaker" (e.g., Alred and Byram, 2002; Alred, Byram, and Fleming, 2003; Byram, 2003, 2008; P. M. Ryan, 2003, 2006) and link them to the notions of intercultural communicative competence (e.g., Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2007), intercultural sensitivity (Bennett and Bennett, 2004a; Bhawuk and Brislin, 1992), and sociopragmatic awareness (Rose and Kasper, 2001). I discuss several models of intercultural (communicative/communication/global) competence, including Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, Chen and Starosta's (2008) model of intercultural communication competence, Deardorff's (2004) process model of intercultural competence, Hunter's (2004) model of global competence, and Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in conjunction with poststructuralist notions of identity (re)construction (e.g., Block, 2007; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000). I then review recent studies that investigate the development of intercultural sensitivity/interculturality in study abroad students.

Chapter 3 outlines my investigation of the language, identity, and intercultural expansion of Hong Kong university students who took part in a short-term study abroad program in England. After explaining the home institution's internationalization policy, I describe the aims and components of the Special English Stream (SES), including unique presojourn, sojourn, and postsojourn elements. I then explain how I carried out my ethnographic investigation of the 2005 cohort, which made use of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a psychometric instrument which measures intercultural sensitivity as conceptualized in the DMIS (Hammer and Bennett, 2002; Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003). After providing the profile of the full group, I explain why I decided to focus on four of the participants in this book. The selected young people, all of whom had an advanced proficiency in English, experienced different trajectories. Their stories offer insight into internal and external factors that may lead to differing outcomes. Why did some more fully embrace interculturality? Why did some develop more socio-pragmatic awareness, intercultural communicative competence, and a global identity? What can we learn from their journeys?

Chapters 4 to 6 examine the developmental trajectories of the four case participants: Nora, Mimi, Lana, and Jade (pseudonyms). In Chapter 4, I compare and contrast their presojourn language ability and usage, self-identity, and (inter)cultural sensitivity. Throughout, I link their oral and written narratives and my field notes with their IDI scores (on entry into the SES and after the intensive presojourn preparation).

In Chapters 5 and 6 I focus on the young women's sojourn and reentry experiences. During their five-week stay in England, we see how they respond to the new environment and increased contact across cultures in English. In the process, we become familiar with each woman's level of self-awareness and reaction to cultural difference. After returning to Hong Kong, they offer further insight into the impact of the sojourn on their self-identity and language and (inter)cultural development. Chapter 5 focuses on Nora and Mimi, who began their journeys with the lowest levels of intercultural sensitivity among the four case participants. Chapter 6 explores the trajectories of Lana and Jade, who acquired higher levels of intercultural competence.

In Chapter 7 I summarize the key findings of my study and revisit the theoretical constructs and models that were discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. In particular, I challenge the rather naïve linkage between L2 development and intercultural sensitivity put forward by Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (2003). I also discuss the potential impact of inflated

perceptions of intercultural sensitivity, a phenomenon that I observed in my participants.

Chapter 8 links theory with praxis. It focuses on the practical implications of my findings for the development of intercultural communicative competence and ethnorelativism in L2 students and others who cross cultures, both at home and abroad. In particular, I suggest ways to improve practices in the design, delivery, and evaluation of intercultural communication/L2 courses and study abroad programs for language learners. I emphasize the merits of experiential learning and systematic, critical reflection to promote interculturality and intercultural communicative competence in L2 speakers.

Each year that I investigate the learning of study abroad students, I learn more. While this book cannot resolve all issues related to interculturality, it does raise awareness of multiple factors that can result in different developmental pathways to intercultural communicative competence. I hope it will stimulate further interest and research and, ultimately, bring about enhanced international education for L2 students around the globe.

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1
Globalization, Internationalization, and Study Abroad

Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between globalization and the internationalization of higher education. I begin by defining what is meant by globalization, hybridity, and glocalization before discussing the rise of English as a global language and the emergence of global, hybrid identities. I then raise awareness about the multiple, complex effects of globalization on higher education policies and practice. I explore the wide range of internationalization strategies that institutions are employing to meet these growing challenges – both on home campuses and abroad. I explain how this has led to the proliferation of diverse study abroad programs and the spread of English as an international language of education in many parts of the world.

Intensification of globalization

Globalization is not new. The exchange of ideas, goods, and people has long been a feature of human history; however, what is different today is the dramatic increase in the speed and volume of this contact due to advances in information and communication technologies. The world is experiencing an unprecedented intensification of economic, cultural, political, and social interconnectedness (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton 1999). This trend is the subject of passionate debate as scholars put forward different conceptualizations and conflicting understandings of its consequences.

For Scholte (2000: 16), globalization entails "a process of removing government-imposed restrictions on movements between countries in order to create an 'open', 'borderless' world economy." Along the same

lines, Rogers and Hart (2002: 12), characterize this phenomenon as "the degree to which the same set of economic rules applies everywhere in an increasingly interdependent world." Knight and de Wit (1997: 6) offer a broader conceptualization, defining globalization as "the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, [and] ideas ... across borders," while Appadurai (1990) simply depicts it as "a dense and fluid network of global flows." What binds many of these definitions together is the notion of "interconnectedness" and the compression of time and space.

For this book, I am adopting Inda and Rosaldo's (2006: 9) portrayal of globalization. Acknowledging the cultural dimension of this movement, these social scientists characterize it as "spatial-temporal processes, operating on a global scale that rapidly cut across national boundaries, drawing more and more of the world into webs of interconnection, integrating and stretching cultures and communities across space and time, and compressing our spatial and temporal horizons." This definition aptly captures the growing interdependence of societies and cultures that is giving rise to both challenges and opportunities, as Stephen Ryan (2006: 26) explains: "Globalization can be viewed as either an opportunity to be embraced, allowing people to break free from the stifling restrictions of nationality and tradition, or it can be construed as a threat, removing the security of familiar local networks and imposing an unwanted external uniformity." Whatever one's conception, positive or negative, globalization remains "the most powerful force shaping the world in the present and foreseeable future" (Lindahl, 2006: 8).

Glocalization, localization, and hybridity

In today's interdependent world, globalization is now intrinsically linked to localization, as Dissanayake (2006: 556) explains: "One of the defining features of the modern world is the increasingly complex and multifaceted interaction of localism and globalism. Clearly, this process has been going on for centuries, but its velocity has risen dramatically during the past half century." Owing to this "intensification of worldwide social relations," Giddens (1990: 64) maintains that "local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa." In effect, globalization has led to profound changes in the economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions of communities on all continents. Underscoring the pervasive complexity of this process, McGrew (1992: 65) argues that "patterns of human interaction, interconnectedness and awareness are reconstituting the world as a single social space"; this is bringing about globalism – "subjectively

internalized changes" in the way we view our everyday life (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000).

Some fear this "compression of the world" (Robertson, 1992), is leading to "standardization across cultures" and "greater levels of sameness" (McCabe, 2001: 140). For critics, this implies "the hegemony of the capitalist system" and "the domination of the rich nations over the poor" (Olson, Green, and Hill, 2006: vi). Hence, while many herald the acceleration of globalization, others condemn it as a modern form of colonialism (McCabe, 2001; Scharito and Webb, 2003).

Though negative connotations may summon fears of cultural homogenization, this is not an inevitable outcome. Knight and de Wit (1997: 6) insist that "globalization affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, traditions, culture, and priorities." This localized response can lead to cultural hybridity, a phenomenon which Rowe and Schelling (1991: 231) define as "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices." Through this dynamic, global process, diverse "cultural forms and practices intermingle and traverse across social boundaries" (Lam, 2006: 217) and are gradually combined into what Nederveen Pieterse (1994) refers to as a "global mélange" of cultures. For Kraidy (2005: 148), hybridity is the "cultural logic" of globalization, ensuring that "traces of other cultures exist in every culture." This process of glocalization is a byproduct of intercultural contact and communication and is forever changing cultural landscapes around the world. New practices continually emerge due to "a communicative confrontation between specific cultural forms of differently structured societies" (Baraldi, 2006: 54). What ensues is a dynamic, hybrid environment, providing further evidence that the impact of globalization is "neither fixed nor certain" (Dixon, 2006: 320).

World Englishes – the spread of a global language(s)

The reach of globalization extends well beyond the realm of trade, tourism, and commerce; it infiltrates the cultural fabric of societies and alters linguistic codes. Canagarajah (2005: 195–6) observes that globalizing forces have made "the borders of the nation state porous and reinserted the importance of the English language for all communities." Stephen Ryan (2006: 28) further argues that "globalization could not happen without its own language, and that language is unquestionably English."

The dominance of English on the world stage has never been greater: "English is not only a language of wider communication in the modern

world, it is far more than that – it is, in a singularly powerful sense, *the* 'global language' of commerce, trade, culture, and research in the contemporary world" (Reagan and Schreffler, 2005: 116). With the emergence of the "knowledge society" or "knowledge economy", English has become the de facto lingua franca for scientific communication, business negotiations, diplomacy, academic conferences, and international education in many nations on all continents. In transforming English language learning and use into commodities for a global marketplace, the linguistic and cultural capital of English (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991) has evolved and grown exponentially in recent decades. As Lam (2006: 228) observes, "glocalized spaces of cultural and economic exchange are redefining the forms of cultural capital – embodied ways of knowing and reasoning, schemes of perception and appreciation (Bourdieu, 1986) – that some young people are developing."

The response to the spread of English is not uniform, however. In some quarters the language is considered a homogenizing, Western vehicle of power and privilege and is met with resistance and suspicion. In other regions, instead of rejecting English outright, local cultures are fashioning their own, hybrid form of the language (Kachru and Smith, 2008). Drawing on Pennycook's (2000) notion of postcolonial performativity, Lin and Martin (2005: 5) maintain that English today is "neither a Western monolithic entity nor necessarily an imposed reality"; in their view, "local peoples are capable of penetrating English with their own intentions and social styles." Consequently, the rise and dominance of the language internationally has not led to the adoption of a single form (e.g., British English). Globalization has brought about "a new society, in which English is shared among many groups of non-native speakers rather than dominated by the British or Americans" (Warschauer, 2000: 512) or what Kachru (1985) refers to as "the inner circle."[1] In many parts of the world, including Asia, there is a growing belief that "the English language belongs to all those who use it," as McConnell (2000: 145) explains:

> Many Asians insist that English belongs to all its speakers. They reject the idea that the standard varieties such as British, American, Canadian, or Australian are the only correct models. In their opinion, English must reflect the reality of their world. In this way, English fits into the pattern of multilingual societies like Singapore or the Philippines. These New Englishes are helping Asians to forget the unpleasant associations of English as the language of colonial oppression and cultural imperialism.

With increasing intercultural contact, new hybrid codes are continuing to emerge, reflecting local influences and character as well as the dominance of global forces. Kachru, Kachru, and Nelson (2006: xvii) draw our attention to "the expanding fusions and hybridizations of linguistic forms and the unprecedented variations in global functions of world Englishes." These scholars explain that "the colonial and post-colonial eras opened challenging new doors for contacts with a great variety of distinct linguistic structures and cultures associated with Asian, African, and Native American languages" (ibid.: xvii). In Singapore and India, for example, nativized, colloquial versions of English have emerged, providing new forms of insider identity. Accordingly, non-native bilingual speakers of English may now seek to be recognized as "competent, authoritative users of their own variety as opposed to imperfect or deficient speakers of British or American standard English" (Ferguson, 2008: 146). This "decentring" of the native speaker has profound implications for the learning and teaching of English in non-English-speaking countries, a development that is explored further in this chapter.

Englishization and code usage

The spread of English has greatly influenced linguistic behavior in many parts of the globe. For example, we are witnessing an increase in both code-switching[2] and code-mixing[3] among bilingual or emerging bilingual speakers in localities where English and other language(s) are used (Coulmas, 2005; Myers-Scotton, 2006; Swann, Deumert, Lillis, and Mesthrie, 2004; Trudgill, 2003). Further, as noted by McArthur (1998), English has become the most widely used language in the world for both code-mixing and code-switching styles of communication.

Kachru (2005), for example, observes that many South Asians routinely mix English with their mother tongue in both oral and written discourse (e.g., in informal conversations, newspapers). This practice may be motivated by multiple factors (e.g., sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, literary, situational, pragmatic/instrumental, identity). "It is not necessarily for lack of competency that speakers switch from one language to another, and the choices they make are not fortuitous. Rather, just like socially motivated choices of varieties of one language, choices across language boundaries are imbued with social meaning" (Coulmas, 2005: 109). Kachru (2005: 114) agrees, adding that "the social value attached to the knowledge of English" in many situations may be even more important than instrumental motives.

When English is deemed "an indicator of status, modernization, mobility and 'outward-looking' attitude," South Asians (and other L2 speakers) may seek to enhance their social positioning by incorporating this international language into their discourse (Kachru, 2005: 114). Code-mixing then functions as "an index of social identity" (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 406) and prestige. In Hong Kong and Nigeria, for example, the desire for an elevated social status can motivate educated elites to use a mixture of English and the vernacular. Further, Trudgill (2003: 23) posits that code-mixing may serve as a strategy to project a dual identity: "that of a modern, sophisticated, educated person *and* that of a loyal, local patriot."

Interestingly, sociolinguists have discovered differences in the way that "non-English-speaking" communities and individuals respond to the mixing of the vernacular with English. Some are very receptive while others strongly resist this trend, especially in certain domains (e.g., at home). Consequently, both linguistic and social restrictions may influence code choices and attitudes (Coulmas, 2005; Myers-Scotton, 2006). In some social contexts or situations, for instance, speakers may switch less frequently to English or even shun code-mixing completely to maintain in-group ties and avoid being outgrouped. Conversely, "[s]peakers may attempt to use codes to renegotiate and perhaps resist the established identities, group loyalties, and power relations" (Canagarajah, 1999: 73). The relationship between code choice, identity, and culture is dynamic, complex, and context-dependent.

English as an international language (EIL)

Globalization necessitates a re-examination of long-held beliefs about language, language teaching, and learning, as well as language attitudes and motivation. With the trend toward world Englishes and a shift in ownership of the language, we are now witnessing the displacement of "native speaker" norms in the formal instruction of English in many non-English-speaking communities. Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) has traditionally focused on native-speaker models of a particular variety of the language (e.g., British or American English)[4] but this is gradually being replaced by the teaching of English as an international language[5] (EIL) (Alptekin, 2002; Brown, 2006; McKay, 2002, 2004; McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008).

From Stephen Ryan's (2006: 24) perspective, "a language functioning on the global scale of present-day English alters our sense of ownership

of the language; the distinctions between the learner and the user become blurred, and this in turn obscures the boundaries between the learner of a language and any target language community." This displacement of the native speaker is bringing about significant changes in the ways in which non-native speakers perceive the language and themselves, as Lamb (2004: 5) explains: "In the minds of learners, English may not be associated with particular geographical or cultural communities but with a spreading international culture incorporating (inter alia) business, technological innovation, consumer values, democracy, world travel, and the multifarious icons of fashion, sport and music."

Yashima (2009), for example, discovered that Japanese university students associate English with "the world around Japan" rather than a particular English-speaking country; this "international posture" can serve as a motivating force to learn the language. Since it is now common for nonnative speakers to communicate in English with other nonnative speakers who have a different first language (L1), EIL learners may prefer to speak a localized variety of English rather than a "native-speaker, standard" form of the language (e.g., Received Pronunciation). This phenomenon is evident in a growing number of postcolonial contexts (e.g., Singapore, Ghana, Hong Kong, Liberia, Indonesia). "[A]s English loses its association with particular Anglophone cultures and is instead identified with the powerful forces of globalization," Lamb (2004: 3) observes that "individuals may aspire towards a 'bicultural' identity which incorporates an English-speaking globally involved version of themselves in addition to their local L1-speaking self." It is to this notion of identity reconstruction that I now turn.

New global, hybrid identities

Globalization is now recognized as a significant impetus for change in ways of conceptualizing the world and one's place in it. As Kim (2008: 36) explains, due to this "web of interdependence," individuals are developing "an outlook on humanity that is not locked in a provincial interest of one's ascribed group membership, but one in which the individual sees himself or herself to be a part of a larger whole that includes other groups, as well." Stephen Ryan (2006: 31) further argues that, due to global forces, "an analysis of linguistic and cultural identity that is solely dependent on notions of nationality or ethnicity surely belongs in another era." Rizvi, Engel, Nandyala, Rutkowski, and