

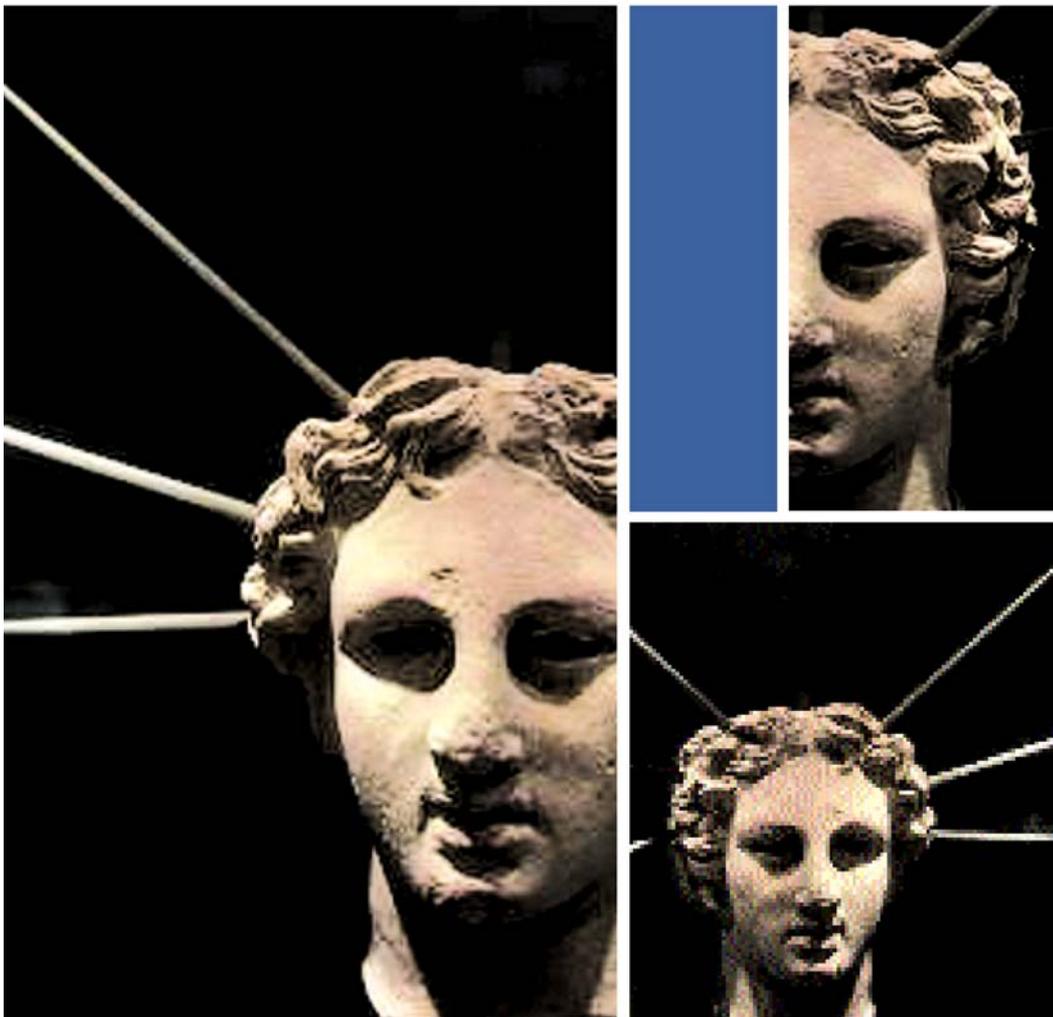
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Global Orientation and Sociolinguistic Accommodation as Factors in Cultural Assimilation

Gregory R. Guy and Karen V. Beaman

Introduction

Encounters with the “Other” – including strangers, foreigners, and speakers of other languages – are an ancient feature of the social and psychological reality of human beings and an ancient topic for humanistic research. But the march of time and technology has greatly accelerated the rate at which we have such experiences. The set of social, commercial, and communicative phenomena that is subsumed under the term globalization constitutes a qualitative change in the human environment; there now exists a growing population of people who live, work, converse, and interact in multiple cultures, countries, continents, and communicative contexts. They travel internationally, live outside their home countries for extended periods, speak more than one language, and function within multiple cultural settings. Of course, such experiences vary tremendously from individual to individual, in terms of duration, intensity, the countries and languages involved, and so on. This entails varying levels of acculturation, accommodation, and assimilation.

This paper investigates the social and psychological aspects of such experiences, specifically the question of how speakers' attitudes towards the intercultural experience relate to their linguistic accommodation and cultural assimilation. We combine international business and academic linguistic perspectives to explore the relationship of mindset and linguistic accommodation. We examine the mutually predictive value of the development of linguistic fluency and various social factors and investigate the implications of these factors in the assessment of the richness and effectiveness of the individual's international experience. Individual orientations are investigated in terms of Sullivan's (2002) global mindset model. Using this framework, we seek to account for degrees of cultural assimilation, and hence success, in the international setting, along multiple continua.

Background

We begin by expanding on the term “globalization,” looking at different types of outcomes and at what elements of an individual's personality, beliefs, and practices – their global orientation – can be associated with success, satisfaction, linguistic accommodation, and cultural assimilation in an international environment. We also provide a brief overview of the considerable literature on global mindsets, linguistic accommodation, and cultural assimilation.

Globalization

Even a cursory examination of current media makes it clear that globalization constitutes an accelerating trend in world affairs. Globalization is reflected in increasing economic integration with the growth in international trade, the geographic expansion of enterprises, and the international mobility of workers. In an ongoing survey of best practices in transnational organizations, nearly every company surveyed reported that, over the last two years, while their number of employees had decreased, their geographic presence had increased (Beaman, Fay, Guy & Walker, in progress). In the sociocultural sphere, one encounters globalizing trends in culture, film, music, etc. Simultaneously, the vigorous growth of the Internet ignores national borders, bringing people from far-flung parts of the world in close contact. Increased internationalization is visible at the physical level as well, in terms of growth in international population movements (refugees, tourism, and labour mobility); likewise, the dark side of human globalization is evident in the rapid international spread of diseases like SARS and AIDS.

Outcomes

Our globalization focus is on the outcomes of international work experiences. We studied people who have travelled abroad to live and work for an extended period of time (i.e., more than six months) as expatriates rather than as permanent migrants or as temporary business travellers. We wanted to investigate what elements of an individual's personality, beliefs and practices are associated with different kinds of outcomes in an international experience: greater or lesser success, satisfaction, frustration, etc.

Several studies have stressed the importance of flexibility and accommodation in assimilating to a new culture or environment (Caligiuri 2000, Hoffman 2001, Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2003). Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989), in their seminal work on the "transnational" organization, suggest that success is dependent on an individual's ability to balance multiple perspectives, manage complexity, and build commitment through a highly networked, widely dispersed global organization. In the words of Moore (2003), "When [you are] working on global teams or in other countries, the ability to think outside your own culture and see an issue through the eyes of another is critical to success."

Global Mindsets

A central concept in our approach to these issues is that individuals' reactions to an international experience are formulated through their worldview, a set of beliefs and orientations that we refer to as their "mindset." It is a basic aspect of human individuation that each individual sees the world from his or her personal perspective. It is from this perspective that we perceive and interpret the things happening around us. Peter Senge (1990) defines mindset as those "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or ... images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action." It is our hypothesis that individuals' ability to accommodate in a foreign community is associated with their "global mindset" – their predisposition toward a particular way of approaching an international experience.

To operationalize this hypothesis requires an approach to categorizing the broad range of individual mindsets. Numerous studies describe different "mental

models,” “orientations,” “cognitive maps,” “frames of reference,” and so on, and a variety of attempts have been made to classify individuals into a workable number of distinct perspectives. An influential early approach was developed by Perlmutter (1969) whose typology defined three basic “mental models:” ethnocentrism, polycentrism and geocentrism. In essence, an “ethnocentric” orientation bases attitudinal evaluations on the home country as the single point of reference, to the point of assuming national superiority. A “polycentric” orientation entails accommodation or assimilation with the contact culture – the attitude reflected in the aphorism “when in Rome, do as the Romans.” A “geocentric” orientation downplays the extent of national/cultural diversity and the valorization of particular national characteristics, assuming, instead, a universal set of values that govern human interaction.

Sullivan (2002) builds on Perlmutter’s three-way typology, relating mindset to outcomes. He claims that an individual’s global mindset is directly related to his or her effectiveness and success depending on the nature of the job. In Sullivan’s view, ethnocentric individuals tend to excel in environments that call for significant standardization of methodology or technology or that require a strong sense of purpose and an ability to lead others in a single uniform approach. In contrast, polycentric individuals thrive in situations that require considerable flexibility and sensitivity to local conditions, bridging differences, playing the role of empathetic facilitator. Geocentric individuals are those who think of individual countries and cultures as part of the “global community” and focus on “finding commonalities...[and] spread[ing] universal ideas and juggl[ing] the requirements of diverse places” (Kanter 1995). These “citizens of the world” seek innovations and learning opportunities wherever they may originate. In summary, for Sullivan there is no single “best” mindset for working internationally; rather, different mindsets are appropriate for different tasks. In fact, the “best” global teams are built by mixing complementary mindsets, because an eclectic group of mindsets is at lower risk of failure due to poor fit between the job and the mindset.

The Sullivan/Perlmutter trichotomy seems to us to reflect an analytical minimum of distinctly different strategies towards the experience of the “Other” (see Figure 1): the “ethnocentric” strategy is self-affirming, asserting the values and practices of the home culture; the “polycentric” strategy is assimilationist, accommodating to and valorizing the new culture; and, the “geocentric” strategy is integrationist, seeking to incorporate diverse cultural experiences into a “universal” viewpoint. Given the diversity of experiences that individuals have with intercultural contact, we view individual mindsets not as discrete categories in a typology, but rather as points on a continuum of “globalness”. In fact, individuals may vary along several mindset continua based on a variety of factors. It is within this theoretical framework that we trace the associations between global mindset and various measures of sociocultural assimilation, linguistic accommodation, and outcomes with international work experiences.

Linguistic Accommodation

One of the most salient features of an international experience is contact with another language. Lack of knowledge of the host country language is often seen as a major hurdle for any expatriate activity, while learning the language is often interpreted as the key transformative component of cultural assimilation. Crucially, linguistic accommodation is essentially linked to social integration; in an

international setting this implies that greater success at learning the host country language should be associated with more internationalist mindsets and more positive outcomes.

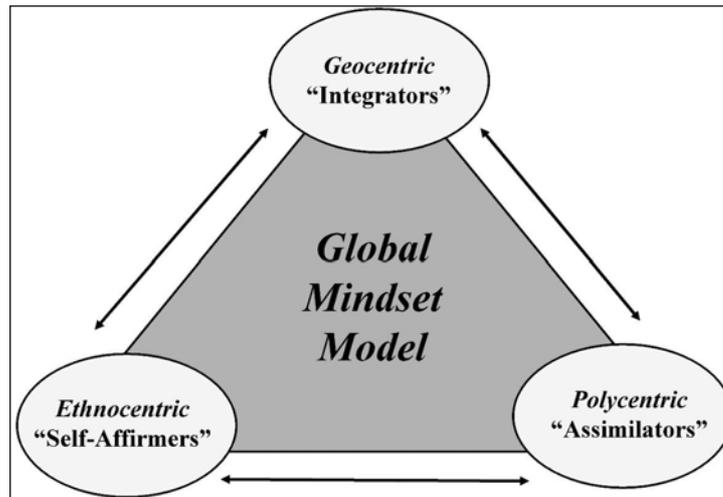


Figure 1
Global Mindset Model. Source: Sullivan (2002), Perlmutter (1969).

Linguistic accommodation is a fundamental aspect of human language use, shaping language acquisition, the sociolinguistic organization of language, and indeed the very genesis of languages and dialects. First language acquisition is driven by an accommodation principle: roughly speaking, the overriding task of children learning language is to accommodate their production to what they hear. Adult acquisition of second languages or dialects is governed by the same principle, although it may be less successful because of interference from a first language. And accommodation is a factor in language change. The development of dialects and languages grows out of a similar principle: groups of speakers who regularly speak to each other engage in mutual accommodation. To the extent that different groups of speakers are not engaged in frequent linguistic interchange with each other, over time they will accommodate off in different directions producing different local dialects, and eventually different descendent languages. Synchronically, the same process is visible in sociolinguistic diversification. To the extent that speakers participate in networks that are segregated by class or ethnicity, they will accommodate within such groups, developing and maintaining distinct linguistic varieties, such as African-American Vernacular English.

In the adult population, accommodation is visible in another more immediate way, in the short-term adjustments that people make in their usage according to their audience of listeners. This is a constant process that speakers engage in, often unconsciously, and is much studied in sociolinguistic research. Bell's theory of "audience design" (1984) attributes most variability in speech style to the speaker's relationship to targeted audiences. In bilingual populations, there are numerous studies of code-switching indicating linguistic accommodation across languages, and Bortoni-Ricardo's research in Brasilia (1985) demonstrates that increased social integration in a novel dialect setting is strongly associated with usage of the target dialect features.

The overall picture is that linguistic accommodation and social integration are mutually predictive. Membership in a community implies some level of linguistic assimilation, while the maintenance of linguistic differences is associated with non-integration. For speakers in an international setting, these principles presumably govern all of their language contact experiences: in the short term, they will be accommodating to their audiences, and in the long term, their acquisition of the host country language will reflect their integration into the local community.

Cultural Assimilation

Work on cultural assimilation appeals to both mindset and linguistic accommodation as factors in the development of cultural integration. Kedia & Perez (2002) suggest that individual mental models continually evolve due to changes in the environment and as new information is aggregated and assimilated. Laroche et al. (1997) have identified four common dimensions of the acculturation process: host language fluency and usage, frequency and depth of host society interactions, culturally linked habits and customs, and host media utilization and preference. Bennett (1993) proposes a comprehensive developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, positing a continuum of increasing fluency in an individual’s ability to deal with cross-cultural issues and assimilate to a foreign environment (see Figure 2). Bennett’s model postulates that individuals construct “a reality that is increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference” as they move from ethnocentric postures towards the more ethnorelative positions of acceptance and eventually integration of the intercultural experience.

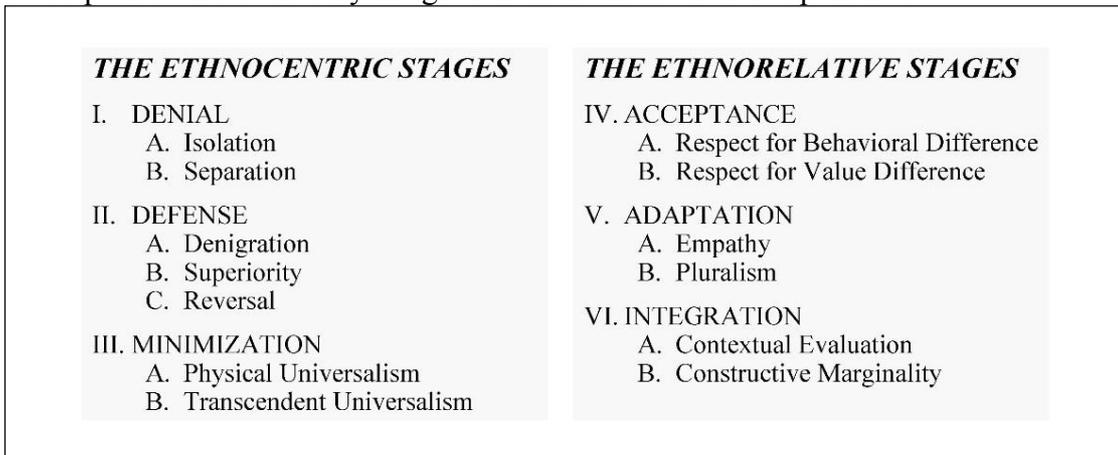


Figure 2
 Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. Source: Bennett (1993)

Methods

To investigate the relationships among mindset, linguistic accommodation, cultural assimilation, and the quality of the international experience, we undertook a study to examine individuals who had worked abroad in a variety of capacities. As this is clearly a multifaceted issue, we did not expect to uncover one single factor that would explain success or other outcomes; nevertheless, we hope to identify some broad tendencies and basic factors that contribute to an individual's reactions to the international experience.

Questionnaire

We composed a questionnaire in two parts – a survey of the individuals' international work experience and a personality test to assess the individual's aptitude for work in a foreign environment. The survey consisted of 123 questions covering the following areas:

- basic demographic information about the respondent (e.g., age, nationality),
- information about the respondent's employer (e.g., type of enterprise, number of countries operated in),
- information about the respondent's international assignment (e.g., destination country, length of stay),
- global orientation (e.g., importance of building local relationships and learning the local language versus maintaining home country connections),
- attitudinal predisposition (e.g., importance of family accompanying, importance of having spousal support for the assignment),
- language competency and linguistic accommodation (e.g., languages spoken and levels of fluency, language improvement during the assignment),
- cultural integration and social assimilation with the local country (e.g., socializing with locals), and
- quality of the experience (e.g., individual evaluation of the experience and other measures of outcome such as receiving a promotion upon return).

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of a personality test to assess individuals' intercultural adaptability and hence probability of success in an international environment. Of the many available approaches to personality assessment, we relied on Hoffman's Cultural Adaptability Inventory (HCAI), developed based on Hoffman's experience as a clinical psychologist working with expatriates in the United States. The HCAI comprises four subscales: Intercultural Liking, Risk-taking, Amiability, and Extroversion/Introversion. A subject's scores on these subscales are totalled to generate a composite measure that serves as a general predictor of suitability for international work. While the surveys clearly consist of self-report data, the level of work involved in the alternative was beyond our current resources. Even with this caveat, the data show several highly significant patterns and, so we believe the findings are compelling enough to be taken seriously.

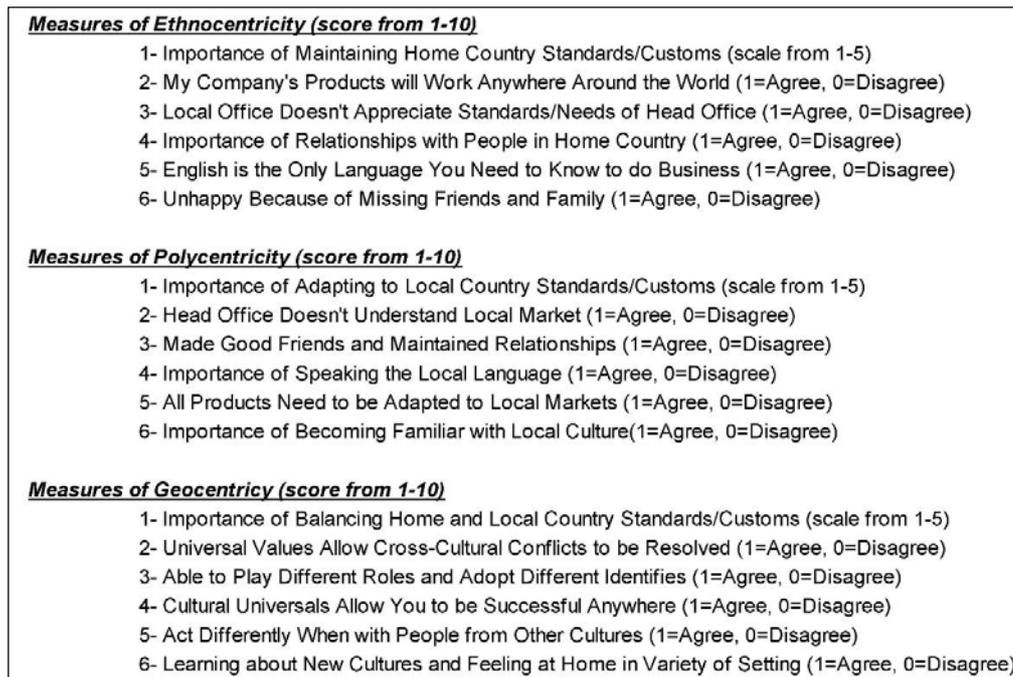


Figure 4
Global Orientation Measure. *Source: Guy & Beaman (2003)*

Language Measure

We developed a *Linguistic Accommodation Score (LAS)* to ascertain our subjects' level of language acquisition based on questions such as language improvement during the assignment, steps taken to improve language ability, etc. (see Figure 5).

Cultural Aptitude Measure

To measure cultural aptitude, we used the HCAI and its four subscales, measuring the traits that Hoffman found to be associated with adaptability in an international setting (see Figure 6).

Success Measure

To understand the key determinants responsible for "success" in a foreign environment, we developed a Composite Success Scale (CSS) based on questions such as whether the individual's assignment was extended, whether they received a promotion or salary increase upon return, etc. (see Figure 7).

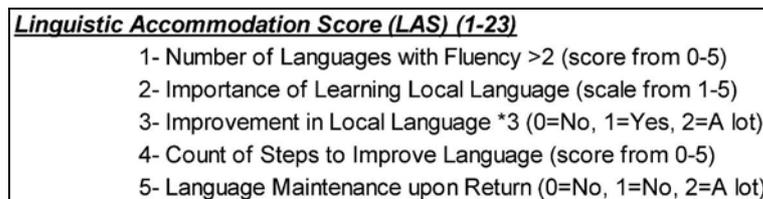


Figure 5
Language Measure. *Source: Guy & Beaman (2003).*

Hoffman Cultural Adaptability Inventory (HCAI) (+96)
1- Intercultural Liking (12 questions on a scale from 1-5)
2- Risk-Taking (12 questions on a scale from 1-5)
3- Amiability (12 questions on a scale from 1-5)
4- Extroversion (12 questions on a scale from 1-5)

Figure 6
Cultural Aptitude Measure. *Source: Guy & Beaman (2003)*

Composite Success Score (CSS) (1-11)
1- Assignment Extended (0=No, 1=Yes, 2=More than once)
2- Recognition: Promotion (0=No, 1=Yes)
3- Recognition: Salary Increase (0=No, 1=Yes)
4- Superior Success Rating (scale from 1-5)
5- Desire to Return (0=No, 1=Maybe, 2=Yes)

Figure 7
Success Measure. *Source: Guy & Beaman (2003)*

Results

The process of adaptation to the global setting is clearly a complex one influenced by many factors, and hence the analysis of the results is necessarily complex as well, involving a many-to-many comparison of answers. We present here a subset of the overall results, focusing on the ones most relevant to our main concerns and relying primarily on our composite measures as predictors. All reported results are significant at the .05 level unless otherwise indicated.

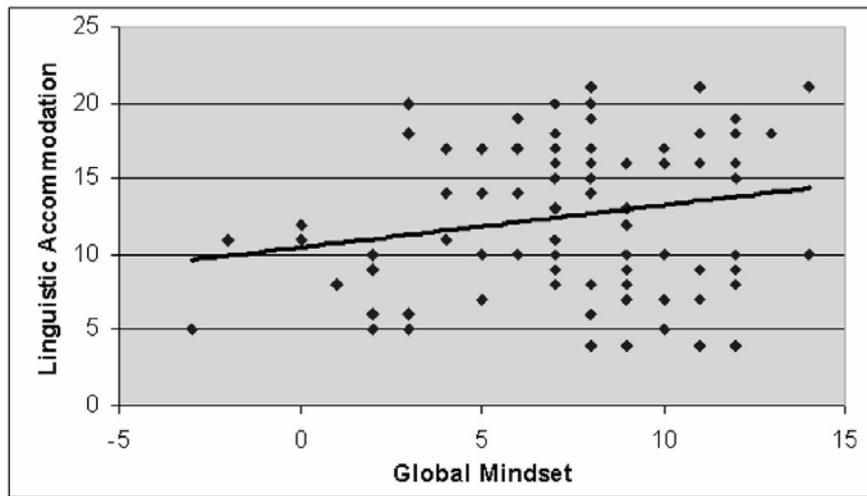
Global Orientation

First, we examine how the composite scores we have constructed to evaluate global orientation relate to subjects' other characteristics, beginning with the Global Mindset Scores (GMS) (see Figure 8). GMS scores are positively correlated with several language-related items: our composite linguistic accommodation score and two of its subcomponents – language improvement and number of languages spoken. (In fact, when we separated our subjects into three groups according to their GMS, they showed a steady rise in the number of languages spoken: those with low scores spoke a median of two languages, mid-level scores a median of three, and those with high GMS a median of four languages.) In general, these results confirm the hypothesis that more globally oriented individuals are more successful at language acquisition and linguistic accommodation. Figure 9 graphically depicts this trend in which global mindset score and linguistic accommodation increase together.

	Global Mindset Score			
	Ethno	Poly	Geo	GMS
Linguistic Accommodation	-0.142	0.167	0.077	0.202
Number of Languages Spoken	-0.166	0.117	0.035	0.191
Language Improvement	-0.190	0.062	0.054	0.204
Language Retention	0.053	0.309	0.055	0.072
Enjoyable	-0.148	0.138	-0.023	0.160
Frustrating	0.080	0.102	0.329	0.087
Rewarding	-0.109	0.059	0.130	0.161
Educational	-0.083	0.254	0.230	0.235
Total Internatl Experience	-0.126	0.113	-0.239	0.110
Assignment Duration	-0.026	0.206	-0.086	0.110
Assignment Extension	-0.120	0.044	0.049	0.137
Time Since Completion	-0.347	0.160	0.069	0.373
Satisfaction	-0.171	0.064	-0.067	0.143
Motivation	0.008	-0.023	-0.070	-0.040
Success	0.097	-0.086	0.173	-0.043

$r = .171 - .241: p < .05; r = .242 - .266: p < .01; r > .267: p < .005$

Figure 8
Global Mindset Coefficients of Correlation. Source: Guy & Beaman (2003). Note: Non-significant correlations are greyed out.



$r = .202: p < .05$

Figure 9
Linguistic Accommodation and Global Mindset. Source: Guy & Beaman (2003)

In addition, we find that global mindset scores correlate with subjects’ perceiving the assignment abroad as educational. There are also some suggestive correlations, not quite significant, with other positive perceptions of the international experience, specifically scales of “enjoyable” and “rewarding.” Broadly speaking, this confirms the basic concept that a more global orientation is associated with finding cross-cultural experiences attractive. Finally, higher global mindset scores are strongly associated with time since return from the international assignment, which we discuss further below.

Mindset Subscales

As we have noted, overall GMS is based on three independent subscales for ethnocentricity, polycentricity, and geocentricity (cf. Figure 8). Geocentricity is the one subscale that correlates positively with our composite success scale: high geocentricity is associated with a more successful international experience. In terms of how subjects evaluate their international assignments, geocentricity is positively associated with finding the experience frustrating, but also with finding it educational. If geocentricity is, as we surmise, associated with a global orientation, these results become intelligible. Geocentric subjects attach a positive value to international experiences in the country of their assignment, even as they are evidently frustrated by the local absence of “globalness.” Finally, high geocentricity scores are associated, somewhat surprisingly, with shorter stays abroad. We interpret this as indicating that geocentrics are indeed “cosmopolitans,” in Sullivan’s words, not necessarily staying long periods in one place, but being prepared to visit many. These aspects of greater educational value, shorter stays, and higher levels of frustration can be seen as indicative of the geocentric’s search for those elusive cultural universals.

The polycentricity subscale is associated with a different spectrum of results. High scores on this scale are, like geocentricity, associated with finding the experience educational, but polycentric individuals also tend to stay longer in the overseas assignment and are more likely to retain the language longer after leaving. We interpret these results as reflecting the polycentrics’ more focused reaction to the international experience: they tend to assimilate better to the country where they are working, and hence are more inclined to stay longer and maintain their language better. They acquire, in effect, a bi-national orientation, as compared to the geocentric subjects who assume a more universal or global orientation.

On the ethnocentricity subscale, our subjects’ scores are negatively correlated with satisfaction and language improvement; in other words, the more ethnocentric a person is, the less satisfied they are with their international experiences and the worse they do on language acquisition while abroad.

Time

The strongest correlation shown by the ethnocentricity subscale is a negative one with time since returning from abroad: most interestingly, the longer subjects have been back home, the less ethnocentric they become. This is the inverse of the finding noted above, that higher global mindset scores are negatively correlated with time since return from the international experience. We see these results as consistent with one of the components of global mindset: the process of assimilation and integration. During the initial contact with the new culture, a person’s ethnocentricity may actually rise, due to the “Otherness” of the experience (in other words, “culture shock”). After returning from an assignment, individuals tend, over time, to integrate their international experiences into their general worldview, hence their ethnocentricity score declines while their other scores move up towards a more internationalist orientation. These findings are consistent with Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which, as we have noted, postulates initially ethnocentric reactions to intercultural experiences, followed by declining ethnocentrism and increasing ethnorelativism as the individual integrates the cross-cultural experience into their overall mindset.

Linguistic Accommodation

One of the basic hypotheses of our study is that greater linguistic accommodation to a new environment is associated with superior social integration in the local country and with a more globally oriented mindset. To further investigate the linguistic outcome of the international experience, we divided our respondents into subgroups according to how much their language skills improved while abroad (see Figure 10).

Thirty-nine of our subjects indicate that their skills in the local language improved a lot, while 26 had some improvement, and the remainder either had none or went to a country where they already spoke the language, like Americans going to England or French nationals working in Brussels. The subjects who improved the most score higher on all our composite scales: they are higher on GMS and HCAI. In our attitude questions about what they see as essential to a successful overseas experience, they attach greater importance to learning the local language and to sending children to local schools. They found the international experience somewhat more enjoyable, but also more frustrating. However, their level of satisfaction with the experience is no higher than the others, and they are no more likely to be successful in their assignment, as measured by our composite success scale, than subjects who did not acquire a local language. This may reflect on how we defined success: a substantial portion of our success scale assesses the employer's response to the employee's performance abroad.

Language Improvement	N	%
A lot	39	43%
Somewhat	26	29%
No	6	7%
Not Applicable	20	22%
Total	91	

Language Improvement	Some or	
	A lot	None
Formal Language Classes	41%	16%
Self-Instruction Programs	49%	12%
Listening to TV/Radio	79%	31%
Socializing with Locals	92%	43%

Language Improvement	Some or	
	A lot	None
Global Mindset Score	8.3	6.7
Hoffman Cultural Aptitude	33.1	29.1
Hoffman Risk-Taking	8.7	7.6
Hoffman Extroversion	2.2	1.6
Local Language Importance	4.7	4.1
Children to Local Schools	3.6	2.9
Assignment Enjoyable	4.6	4.3
Assignment Frustrating	2.7	2.1
Assignment Successful	4.2	4.3
Assignment Satisfaction	4.5	4.4
Assignment Duration	3.1	2.9
Assignment Extension	0.9	0.6
Language Maintained	1.1	0.5

Figure 10
Language Improvement. *Source: Guy & Beaman (2003)*

Nevertheless, they tend to stay abroad a little longer and are slightly more likely to have their overseas assignment extended, which suggests that somebody was happy with their performance. After returning from the international assignment, they are more than twice as likely to maintain the language skills acquired abroad.

What is it that these people do to improve their language skills? They are more than twice as likely to take formal language classes and to listen to local TV or radio, and four times more likely to use self-instructional language programs. All but three of the subjects report socializing in the local language with local country nationals, whereas less than half of those with lesser language improvement took this step. Perhaps most significantly, almost all of those in the top group took several steps to improve their language ability: they report a median value of three such activities apiece, as compared to only one for the rest of the subjects.

Attitudinally, they are somewhat higher on Hoffman's Risk-Taking scale, but only slightly more extroverted.

Collectively, these results suggest that greater linguistic assimilation is associated with a globally oriented mindset, higher cultural adaptability, positive attitudes towards integration, and enjoyment of the international experience. Superior language improvement is achieved principally by means of a high level of effort to achieve social integration in the local setting.

Cultural Adaptability

As we have noted, HCAI is intended to assess personality traits that are predictors of cultural adaptability, and hence, aptitude for international work experience. Indeed, we find a broad range of significant correlations with our results on three of the HCAI scales (see Figure 11).

	Hoffm an Cultural Adaptability Inventory				HCAI ¹
	ICL	Risk	Ami	Extro	
Linguistic Accommodation	0.218	0.159	0.026	-0.008	0.203
Number of Languages Spoken	0.259	0.129	-0.056	-0.210	0.171
Language Improvement	0.134	0.114	0.160	0.077	0.197
Language Retention	0.059	0.171	-0.053	-0.068	0.073
Enjoyable	0.201	0.119	0.250	0.018	0.283
Frustrating	0.114	0.137	-0.074	0.050	0.082
Rewarding	0.143	0.463	0.069	-0.006	0.315
Educational	0.284	0.287	0.211	0.113	0.371
Total Internatl Experience	0.294	0.222	0.119	0.112	0.320
Assignment Duration	0.219	0.283	0.141	0.081	0.283
Assignment Extension	0.053	0.190	0.068	0.043	0.147
Time Since Completion	0.097	0.002	0.074	-0.037	0.088
Satisfaction	0.200	0.111	0.136	-0.073	0.224
Motivation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Success	-0.074	0.230	0.038	0.181	0.084

r = .171 - .241: p < .05; r = .242 - .266: p < .01; r > .267: p < .005 ¹ HCAI Composite without Extroversion Score

Figure 11
 Cultural Adaptability Coefficients of Correlation. Source: Guy & Beaman (2003).
 Note: Non-significant correlations are greyed out.

Intercultural Liking (ICL) is positively correlated with subjects' satisfaction with their international experience and with finding the experience enjoyable and educational. It is also strongly associated with a subject's total amount of international experience, longer assignment duration, and number of languages spoken. Risk-Taking is highly associated with finding the international assignment rewarding and educational, with longer assignment duration, and with greater success at language maintenance after returning. Amiability is associated with finding the assignment educational and enjoyable.

The HCAI Extroversion subscale, however, does not correlate significantly with most of our scales that indicate superior adaptability or propensity for integration, and in fact shows a negative correlation with GMS. Instead, Extroversion is associated with two significant negative correlations that may imply lack of integration with the host country culture: more extroverted individuals speak fewer languages and are less interested in doing another assignment abroad. Therefore,

instead of using the HCAI composite score (which combines all four subscales), we decided to use a composite score composed of the three significant HCAI scales (without the Extroversion score); this value appears to be a better predictor for most of the topics investigated in our study.

The composite HCAI-without-Extroversion score correlates significantly with many of the factors investigated in this study (cf. Fig. 11). It correlates with satisfaction, with our composite linguistic accommodation scale, with language improvement while abroad, and with the number of languages spoken. It shows particularly strong correlations ($p < .005$) with subjects finding the international assignment enjoyable, rewarding, and educational, with a longer assignment duration, and with total amount of international experience. (The full HCAI composite score including extroversion shows weaker or insignificant correlations on every one of these points.)

Cultural Adaptability and Global Mindset

Finally, a strong correlation emerges with HCAI (minus extroversion) and GMS (see Figure 12). There are also significant correlations with GMS subscales: a strong positive one with polycentricity, and a negative correlation with ethnocentricity.

HCAI endeavours to assess an individual's prospective adaptability in an intercultural setting by measuring certain personality traits that are relatively durable, possibly intrinsic, features of the subject's identity; GMS, on the other hand, is intended to assess mindsets and orientations, which are a product of experience and relatively more mutable. This difference between them is strikingly confirmed by our results on the scale of time since completion of the international assignment. As we have noted, ethnocentricity declines and GMS increases with the length of time since the assignment abroad. However, HCAI shows no significant correlations whatsoever with this measure. This suggests that HCAI does indeed assess relatively stable features of personality, whereas GMS is a conjunction of assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs that can evolve in light of an individual's experiences.

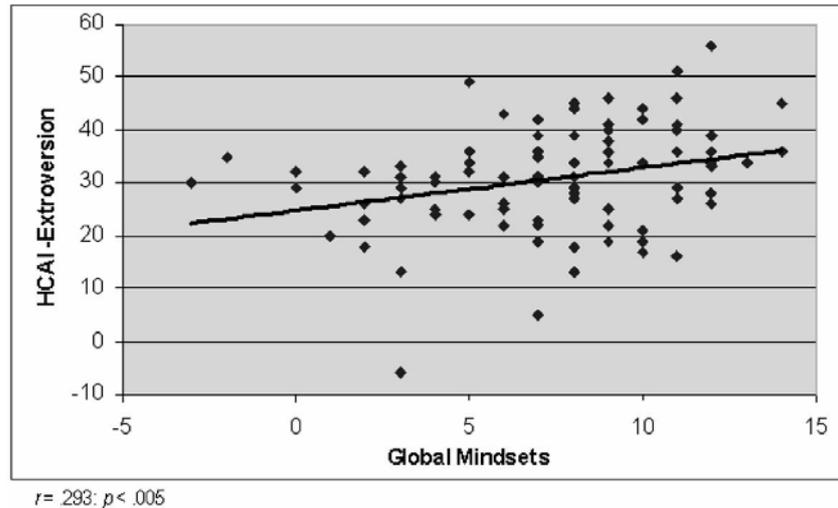


Figure 12
Cultural Adaptability and Global Mindset. *Source: Guy & Beaman (2003)*

HCAI and GMS are therefore conceptually independent, and the fact that they inter-correlate in significant ways is mutually confirming; taken together, they are triangulating on the factors that facilitate an individual's participation in an international work experience. Still, our data do not demonstrate an important role for extroversion in this complex. We suggest that this finding may reflect one aspect of international work that may be a routine part of the experience for most individuals: isolation. Without prior knowledge of or personal ties to a new locale, the average expatriate will lack friendships, personal networks, and accustomed venues for social activity. Hence they may well spend a lot of time alone, at least initially. A pronounced extrovert would certainly find this unsatisfying. However, a pronounced introvert might also be at a disadvantage in an international setting, because, as we have seen, cultural and linguistic adaptation requires social contact. The subjects in our sample tend toward the middle of the HCAI introversion/extroversion scale, which may indicate a useful balance for individuals who will undoubtedly experience both isolation and social exposure in an international setting.

Success

Lastly, we look at our composite measure of success. In Figure 13 we see that success is strongly correlated with satisfaction: not surprisingly, successful individuals are generally more satisfied. But success is not clearly predicted by any of our major assessment measures. We interpret this to mean that success is impacted by a multitude of factors, including mindset, personality, and motivation, but also by the nature of the job, the individual's preparation for it, the support obtained from the individual's family, employer, and co-workers, as well as many other circumstances. In future research, we intend to pursue a multifactorial analysis to further explore the web of dependencies affecting success in an international setting.

Global Mindset				
0.293	Hoffman (w/o Extroversion)			
0.202	0.203	Linguistic Accommodation		
-0.040	NA	0.110	Motivation	
-0.043	0.084	-0.008	0.319	Success
0.143	0.224	0.075	0.116	0.182 Satisfaction

$r = .171 - .241: p < .05; r = .242 - .266: p < .01; r > .267: p < .005$

Figure 13
Coefficients of Correlation on Major Scales. *Source: Guy & Beaman (2003)*

Conclusions

One of the subjects in our study illustrated his experience of the Otherness of international work with a story of a time that he was offered frozen whale blubber to eat. He declined the offer, explaining his decision with the comment “Sorry, I don't go that native.” This is perhaps the central issue for someone who is attempting to live and work in another culture: to what extent will I 'go native', adopting the practices of the new community, and thereby constructing and assuming an altered identity? Or if I will not, how do I function in this community?

In the international setting, subjects are faced with a variety of experiences and demands, some of them conflicting, most of them mutually influencing. They pursue different strategies in reconciling these demands and in constructing a viable identity. They might be said to encounter globalization as a “post-modern” experience: they are brought face-to-face with multiple 'readings' of the text of life, they confront the hidden hegemony of culture and accepted practice, they experience the deconstruction of their own identities.

Clearly, an individual's reactions to international experiences are affected by a complex network of factors. There is no single determinant of success or happiness working abroad and no unique test that can be applied to predict how people will perform in an expatriate role. Rather, there are multiple factors, some of which have been identified here. These experiences have multiple meanings, and the various strands of interpretation acquire much of their significance through the interaction and interpenetration of the various dimensions.

The conjunction of attitudes and orientations called global mindset is one important factor influencing an individual's performance and reactions in an international setting. Another major factor is linguistic accommodation: to thoroughly penetrate another community requires some degree of linguistic assimilation and achieving this enhances the quality of the international experience.

Finally, the fact that some of our global mindset scores vary according to the recency or remoteness of the international experience points to an important conclusion: mindsets are malleable! Individuals evidently continue to integrate their experiences into their background orientations throughout their lives; hence ethnocentricity declines and overall global orientation increases as the international experience is incorporated into a person's mindset.

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