



LUND UNIVERSITY

Understanding Misunderstandings

*International Students' Intercultural Communication in Lund
University Culture*

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Abstract

Understanding Misunderstandings – International Students' Intercultural Communication in Lund University Culture

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This thesis uses a qualitative, cultural-analytical approach to explore the cultural integration of international students at a Swedish University, focusing on behavioural communication. Misunderstandings in daily social interactions can have a negative impact on international students' personal experience, causing frustration and potentially impacting well-being. Being a rather elusive part of intercultural communication, underlying rules of conduct are rarely addressed in advice for integration offered by hosting institutions.

Using Lund University and its environment as an example, this study uncovers unexpected misunderstandings in intercultural communication.

Especially the international students' perspective is highlighted, using mainly semi-structured interviews, as well as auto-ethnographical and observational methods. Throughout the paper, the following research questions are in focus: What issues related to behavioural communication do international students at Lund University experience? How can these be understood in relation to cultural context? How could cultural integration be facilitated?

To inform the empirical material, theories of social interaction, namely Erving Goffman's idea of interaction ritual and Edward T. Hall's research on intercultural communication are applied, relating behavioural communication to a cultural context.

Addressing the need for more cultural empathy, the paper discusses practical steps that could facilitate the interaction with foreign cultural behaviour. Results suggest that the development of cross-cultural competence using training tools like the Lewis-model, paired with constant application to own experiences could facilitate the process of cultural integration for international students. This entails that a university can take an active approach towards the issues illuminated in this thesis.

Keywords: *Intercultural Communication, International Students, Cultural Integration, Qualitative Analysis, Cross-Cultural Competence, Lewis-Model*

Abstrakt (Swedish)

Denna Uppsats använder en kvalitativ, kulturanalytisk ingång med syfte att undersöka den kulturella integrationen av internationella studenter på ett svenskt universitet, med fokus på kommunikationsbeteende. Missförstånd i dagligt socialt samspel kan ha en negativ påverkan på internationella studenters personliga upplevelser, framkalla frustration och möjligtvis påverka välbefinnande. Då djupare beteenderegler är en ganska omedveten del av interkulturell kommunikation, tar värdinstitutioner sällan hänsyn till dessa när det gäller integrationsstöd.

Med Lunds Universitet och dess direkta omvärld som exempel avslöjar denna forskning oväntade missförstånd inom interkulturell kommunikation.

Den internationella studentens perspektiv är framhävt, med hjälp av främst semi-strukturerade intervjuer, så som auto-etnografiska och observerande metoder. I uppsatsen ligger fokus på följande forskningsfrågor: Vilka problem i relation till kommunikationsbeteende upplever internationella studenter? Hur kan dessa förstås och relateras till sin kulturella kontext? Hur kan man underlätta kulturell integration?

För att stödja det empiriska materialet lyfts teorier inom social interaktion. Framförallt kommer Erving Goffmans idéer om *interaction ritual* och Edward T. Halls forskning kring interkulturell Kommunikation att användas för att relatera kommunikationsbeteende till kulturell kontext.

Genom att uppmärksamma behovet av mer kulturell empati diskuterar uppsatsen praktiska steg som skulle kunna bidra att främja interaktionen med främmande kulturellt beteende. Resultaten antyder att ett skapande av kors-kulturell kompetens, med hjälp av träningskoncept som Lewis-modellen, tillsammans med en ständig applikation av egna erfarenheter, kan underlätta processen av kulturell integration för internationella studenter. Detta betyder även att ett universitet skulle kunna ta en aktiv position gentemot aspekterna som tas upp i denna uppsats.

Nyckelord: *Interkulturell Kommunikation, Internationella Studenter, Kulturell Integration, Kvalitativ Analys, Kors-Kulturell Kompetens, Lewis-Model*

Abstract (German)

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht mithilfe eines qualitativen, kulturanalytischen Ansatzes die kulturelle Integration internationaler Studenten an einer schwedischen Universität mit einem Fokus auf Kommunikationsverhalten. Missverständnisse im täglichen sozialen Umgang können negative Folgen für die persönliche Erfahrung der internationalen Studenten haben, Frustration verursachen und möglicherweise das Wohlergehen beeinflussen.

Als eher unterbewusster Teil der interkulturellen Kommunikation werden Verhaltensnormen bei Integrationsberatung durch die Gastgeberinstitution selten berücksichtigt.

Mit Lunds Universität und dessen Umfeld als Beispiel legt diese Untersuchung die unerwarteten Missverständnisse der interkulturellen Kommunikation dar. Die Perspektive der internationalen Studenten wird mithilfe von semi-strukturierten Interviews sowie auto-ethnographischen und observativen Methoden besonders hervorgehoben. Im Verlaufe der Arbeit stehen folgende Fragen im Vordergrund: Welche Probleme im Zusammenhang mit kommunikativem Verhalten erfahren internationale Studenten an der Universität Lund? Wie können diese in Relation zu kulturellem Kontext verstanden werden? Wie kann die kulturelle Integration erleichtert werden?

Das empirische Material wird angeregt durch Theorien der Sozialen Interaktion, als da wären Erving Goffman's Ideen zum *Interaktions Ritual* und Edward T. Hall's Forschung zu interkultureller Kommunikation, um Kommunikationsverhalten mit kulturellem Kontext in Verbindung zu setzen.

Auf den Bedarf erhöhter kultureller Empathie abzielend diskutiert die Arbeit praktische Schritte, die den Umgang mit fremdem kulturellem Verhalten erleichtern. Ergebnisse deuten an, dass die Generierung von Cross-kultureller Kompetenz mithilfe von Trainings Instrumenten wie dem Lewis-Modell und gepaart mit ständiger Anwendung auf eigene Erlebnisse den Prozess der kulturellen Integration für internationale Studenten erleichtern kann. Dies bedeutet, dass eine Universität eine aktive Herangehensweise an die Probleme, die in dieser Untersuchung beleuchtet werden, nutzen kann.

Keywords: *Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Internationale Studenten, Kulturelle Integration, Qualitative Analyse, Cross-Cultural Competence, Lewis-Model*

Abstracto (Spanish)

Esta tesis utiliza un enfoque cualitativo y analítico-cultural para explorar la integración cultural de estudiantes internacionales en la Universidad Sueca, concentrándose en la comunicación no verbal.

Malentendidos durante interacciones sociales diarias pueden tener un impacto negativo en la experiencia personal de estudiantes internacionales, causando frustración y potencialmente impactando su bienestar. Ya que son un aspecto relativamente elusivo de la comunicación intercultural, las reglas subyacentes de conducta son rara vez abordadas al dar consejos de integración.

Usando a Lund University y su entorno como ejemplo, este estudio deja al descubierto malentendidos inesperados en comunicaciones interculturales.

En especial, esta tesis destaca la perspectiva de los estudiantes internacionales, utilizando entrevistas semi-estructuradas y métodos auto-etnográficos y observacionales. A lo largo de este escrito se hace énfasis en las siguientes preguntas de investigación: ¿Qué problemas relacionados a la comunicación no verbal enfrentan los estudiantes internacionales en Lund University? ¿Cómo pueden ser entendidos estos problemas en relación al contexto cultural? ¿Cómo se podría facilitar la integración cultural?

Para respaldar el material empírico, teorías de interacción social, en particular la idea de interacción ritual de Erving Goffman y los estudios sobre comunicación intercultural de Edward T. Hall, son aplicadas en esta tesis, relacionando la comunicación no verbal a un contexto cultural.

Abordando la necesidad/importancia de más empatía cultural, este escrito discute medidas prácticas que podrían facilitar la interacción con comportamientos culturales foráneos.

Resultados sugieren que la creación de competencia intercultural usando conjuntamente herramientas de entrenamiento como el modelo Lewis y experiencias personales podría facilitar el proceso de integración cultural para los estudiantes internacionales. Esto implica que las universidades han de tomar una posición activa al hacer frente a las cuestiones iluminadas en esta tesis.

Palabras clave: *Comunicación intercultural, Estudiantes Internacionales, Integración Cultural, análisis cualitativo, Competencia Intercultural, Modelo Lewis*

Abstrakt (Slovakian)

Táto diplomová práca uplatňuje kvalitatívny, kultúrno-analytický prístup k výskumu kultúrnej integrácie medzinárodných študentov na švédskej univerzite, so zameraním na behaviorálnu komunikáciu. Nedorozumenia v každodenných sociálnych interakciách môžu mať negatívny dopad na osobné skúsenosti medzinárodných študentov, spôsobujú frustráciu a potenciálne môžu mať i dopad na zdravie. Keďže základné pravidlá správania sa sú vcelku nepolapiteľnou súčasťou medzikultúrnej komunikácie, len veľmi zriedka sú súčasťou poradenstva pre integráciu. Na príklade Univerzity v Lunde a jej prostredia, táto práca odhaľuje niekoľko neočakávaných nedorozumení v medzikultúrnej komunikácii. Obzvlášť je perspektíva medzinárodných študentov zdôraznená najmä pomocou metódy pološtruktúrovaných rozhovorov, autoetnografie a pozorovania. Diplomová práca sa sústreďuje na zodpovedanie otázok: Aké problémy súvisiace s behaviorálnou komunikáciou zaznamenávajú medzinárodní študenti na Univerzite v Lunde? Ako je následne možné rozumieť týmto problémom v súvislosti s kultúrnym kontextom? Ako by bolo možné uľahčiť kultúrnu integráciu? Na obohatenie empirického materiálu sú použité teórie sociálnej interakcie, a to konkrétne koncepcia Ervinga Goffmana, týkajúca sa rituálu vzájomného pôsobenia (interaction ritual) a výskum Edwarda T. Halla o medzikultúrnej komunikácii, ktoré uvádzajú behaviorálnu komunikáciu do kultúrneho kontextu. Pri riešení zvyšujúcej sa potreby väčšej kultúrnej empatie sa v práci diskutuje aj o praktických krokoch, ktoré by mohli uľahčiť interakciu so zahraničným kultúrnym správaním. Výsledky naznačujú, že vytvorenie medzikultúrnej kompetencie (Cross-cultural Competence) pomocou vzdelávacích nástrojov, ako je Lewisov model, spojených s neustálym uplatňovaním vlastných skúseností, by mohlo uľahčiť proces kultúrnej integrácie pre zahraničných študentov. Toto taktiež znamená, že Univerzita môže zaujať aktívny prístup k problematike osvetlenej v tejto práci.

Kľúčové slová: Medzikultúrna Komunikácia, Medzinárodní študenti, Kultúrna Integrácia, Kvalitatívna Analýza, Medzikultúrna Kompetencia (Cross-Cultural Competence), Lewisov-Model

摘要(Chinese)

~~本研究采用质的方法从文化融合的角度探讨一个瑞典大学国际学生的文化融合行为交流进行研究。~~

在日常的社会交流中产生的误解，可能会对留学生的个人经历造成负面的影响。这些负面的影响引起的挫败感可能影响学生的身心健康。

跨文化交流比较难捕捉，在文化融合上潜在的行为规则更是稀少。

以隆德大学和环境为例，本研究挖掘出跨文化交流中的一些意想不到的误解。

本研究采用半结构化的采访，自传式民族志以及观察的方法，把国际学生的视角突出。下列的研究为题作为主线贯穿整篇文章：隆德大学的国际学生在行为交流上遇到什么困难？这些问题在文化的层面上怎么理解？怎么促进文化融合？

~~实证研究，此外还应用社会学理论如戈曼的互动理论和爱德华·霍尔对跨文化交际的研究，将行为交流联系在文化环境中。~~

对更多文化认同的需求，本文讨论了实际的操作以促进外来文化行为的跨文化交流。

结果显示运用 Lewis 模式和我们长期的自身经验可以创造出跨文化交际能力，以此促进国际学生的文化融合的步伐。这也表明一所大学可以采取积极的行动应对这篇研究中所反映的问题。

关键字：跨文化交流，国际学生，文化融合，质性研究，跨文化交际能力，Lewis 模式

บทคัดย่อ (Thai)

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการปรับตัวและบูรณาการทางวัฒนธรรม (cultural integration) ของนักเรียนนานาชาติในประเทศสวีเดน โดยมุ่งเน้นศึกษาการสื่อสารเชิงพฤติกรรม (behavioral communication) เกี่ยวกับ “หลักปฏิบัติ” (rules of conduct) ในเชิงวัฒนธรรม ซึ่งมักไม่เป็นที่กล่าวถึงในการศึกษาด้านการสื่อสารข้ามวัฒนธรรมและการให้คำแนะนำในการปรับตัวข้ามวัฒนธรรม

การศึกษานี้มีที่มาจากความสังเกตว่าความเข้าใจผิดเกี่ยวกับวัฒนธรรมที่เกิดขึ้นในชีวิตประจำวันอาจทำให้เกิดความเครียดจนส่งผลต่อสุขภาพและประสบการณ์โดยรวมของนักศึกษาได้

รูปแบบการศึกษาเป็นการวิเคราะห์ทางวัฒนธรรม (cultural analysis) โดยใช้เครื่องมือการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ได้แก่ การสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง (semi-structure interview) การสังเกตการณ์ และ auto-ethnography กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักเรียนนานาชาติที่กำลังศึกษาในมหาวิทยาลัยลุนด์ ประเด็นหลักในการวิจัยได้แก่ 1) ประสบการณ์ปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการสื่อสารเชิงพฤติกรรมของนักศึกษา 2)

การทำความเข้าใจปัญหาด้วยบริบทเชิงวัฒนธรรม และ 3) วิธีแก้ปัญหาบูรณาการด้านวัฒนธรรม ทฤษฎีด้านการปฏิสัมพันธ์ทางสังคมที่นำมาใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ได้แก่ แนวคิดด้านการปฏิสัมพันธ์ในพิธีกรรม (interaction ritual) ของเอิร์ฟริง กอฟฟ์แมน และแนวคิดเกี่ยวกับการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของโรเบิร์ต ที. ฮอลล์ วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ชี้ให้เห็นความสำคัญของการเห็นอกเห็นใจและตระหนักถึงความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรม (cultural empathy)

ด้วยการเล่าถึงประสบการณ์เกี่ยวกับอุปสรรคในการทำความเข้าใจด้านวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษา

และนำเสนอแนวทางปฏิบัติสำหรับการปรับตัวข้ามวัฒนธรรม ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า

การปรับใช้เครื่องมือด้านวัฒนธรรม เช่น โมเดลการสื่อสารข้ามวัฒนธรรมของลูวิส (The Lewis Cross Cultural Communication Model) ร่วมกับการเรียนรู้จากประสบการณ์ส่วนตัว สามารถช่วยสร้างสมรรถนะข้ามวัฒนธรรม (Cross-cultural Competence)

และช่วยให้นักเรียนนานาชาติปรับตัวและเกิดบูรณาการด้านวัฒนธรรมอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้นได้

โดยมหาวิทยาลัยต่าง ๆ

สามารถนำผลการศึกษาไปใช้ในทางปฏิบัติเพื่อช่วยเหลือและสนับสนุนนักเรียนนานาชาติในการปรับตัวและบูรณาการด้านวัฒนธรรมต่อไป

Keywords: *การสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม, นักเรียนนานาชาติ, บูรณาการทางวัฒนธรรม, วิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ, สมรรถนะข้ามวัฒนธรรม, Lewis-Model*

Автореферат (Russian)

В данной дипломной работе используются качественный, культурно-аналитический подход к изучению культурной интеграции иностранных студентов в Шведском университете. Особое внимание уделяется поведению студентов при общении в многокультурных группах. Недопонимание во время процесса взаимного проникновения культур различных социальных групп может оказывать негативное влияние на личный опыт иностранных студентов, вызывая разочарование и потенциально влияя на самочувствие. Будучи довольно неуловимой частью межкультурного общения, основные правила поведения в многокультурных группах редко рассматриваются в руководствах по интеграции. В качестве основного примера в данной работе используется многокультурная атмосфера в Лундском университете. Проведенное исследование выявляет неожиданные результаты в сфере межкультурной коммуникации и недопонимания в многокультурных группах. Особое внимание в работе уделяется мнению международных студентов. В качестве методов преимущественно используются слабоструктурированные интервью, а также автоэтнографические методы и метод наблюдений. На протяжении всей работы в центре внимания находятся следующие исследовательские вопросы: Какие проблемы, связанные с поведенческой коммуникацией, имеют международные студенты в Лундском университете? Как данные проблемы могут быть проанализированы в привязке к культурному контексту? Какие методы могут облегчить культурную интеграцию? Для обработки эмпирического материала применяются теории социального взаимодействия, а именно идея Эрвина Гоффмана о ритуале интеракции и исследования Эдварда Т. Холла о межкультурной коммуникации, связывающие поведенческую коммуникацию с культурным контекстом. Решая вопрос о необходимости большей межкультурной эмпатии, данная работа предлагает практические шаги, которые могли бы способствовать взаимодействию с иностранным культурным поведением. Полученные результаты показывают, что приобретение межкультурной компетенции с использованием таких инструментов как модель Льюиса, в сочетании с постоянным использованием собственного опыта может способствовать процессу культурной интеграции иностранных студентов. В конечном счете, результаты подразумевают, что университет может активно подходить к решению вопросов, освещенных в данной дипломной работе.

Ключевые слова: *межкультурная коммуникация, международные студенты, культурная интеграция, качественный анализ, межкультурная компетенция, модель Льюиса*

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Studying in Lund has been one of the best decisions of my life, and this thesis as well as this term have brought my time here to an appropriate end; full of memories, emotions, life lessons and a lot of ups and downs. I am grateful for every situation or person that had a part in this.

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Lund, 2017-05-30

Silja Wendt

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Introduction

"We are expected to be different. But we are also expected to respect and accept the other people as they are. As we may, without doing violence to our own personalities, learn to communicate with them by observing the unwritten patterns they are accustomed to."

— *Hall & Whyte, 1960*

Background

Sitting on a balcony inside the Lund University humanities building (LUX) on a Friday afternoon, I was able to look through a window and into a classroom. A group of students was having an "Introduction to Scandinavian Culture and Society," as evidenced by the first PowerPoint slide. Some of the students spoke French when entering the classroom, while others spoke non-native English. Based on this and their appearance, they seemed to be international students. A second PowerPoint slide said "children's literature." The whole situation posed a number of questions: what were they going to learn? Would it bring Scandinavian culture closer to them? Create an understanding? Would they be able to use what they learn? Did they find it interesting at all? What would they learn about Swedish values from Pippi Longstocking?ⁱ

The international exchange of students is a prevalent topic, with student mobility rates rising significantly in recent years, doubling from 2,1 million in 2001 to 4,1 million in 2016 globally (UNESCO & Project Atlas, 2016, see Appendix A). According to UNESCO research, the countries with the highest number of international students worldwide are the US and UK, who respectively received approximately 1 million and 500.000 students from abroad in 2016. In absolute numbers, most international students come from China or India, with a general tendency of Asian countries to send students to Europe or the US. International students in Sweden make up 8.2% of the total students enrolled in higher education. With approximately 3300 international students in 2013, this percentage is even higher at Lund University as more than 10% of the students are coming from more than 100 different countries (Persson, 2014). They clearly make up a significant subgroup of the Lund University Culture.

Lund University Culture is signified in the context of this study by the socio-cultural niche in which a person who attends or works at Lund University lives and the status that this entails. This includes all contextual aspects such as legal circumstances, living situations, transportation, the academic system, the possibilities social life offers, the impact of the

geographical situation—being close to Malmö and Copenhagen, and finally the contact with other people, native and non-native.

Every international-oriented educational institution should make it a priority to consider the growing diversity on campus and the implied needs this carries. This counts especially for long term degree-seeking students, which constitute 70% of international students at Lund University (Ripmeester, 2017). The issue gains further importance as Lund University makes a point of its highly international profile.



Figure 1: Extract from Lund University's website

What are the practical or elusive issues that the existence of many international students entails? What are the consequences that arise and must be dealt with? One of these is to welcome, manage and eventually integrate students into the cultural context of the institution they are visiting. Being the most prominent contact and stakeholder, the host institution must take a part in it.

Cultural integration is in this context the ability to orientate oneself in a new living situation and to perceive oneself as belonging. This includes both knowing and following the constitutional laws and rules of a society, as well as knowing and, subconsciously or not, following the tacit rules and social behaviour that determine human activity within these written frames. When moving to a new place with a culture different to that in which a person has grown up, cultural integration is only possible after one undergoes a process of learning both the obvious and the tacit rules of the new society. Thus, the specificities of the new culture become a part of the individual habits and therefore tacit knowledge (Stier, 2009). This process can be impaired by one's cultural background, which the theory section will clarify. Cultural integration can be achieved to different degrees, to reach a degree that

enables foreign students to fully function within a social network is desirable in this context. (Oberg, 1954)

To gain a better understanding of the position of an international student, it is worth examining the actual term “international student” - What does it mean to be an *international* student? Linguistically, *inter* stems from Latin and means “between” (‘Inter- | Define Inter- at Dictionary.com’). Would this mean that these students are caught between two homes? It at least suggests the idea of not having a stable identity, not knowing where one belongs. Or, as *international* means “of, relating to, or affecting two or more nations” (‘International | Definition of International by Merriam-Webster’), are they relating to and known in more than one place? Moving to a new place, most people experience the first definition of feeling rootless, but the aim of a study abroad experience should be the second stage, the relationship to two places, paired with a stable identity. From my own experience, being an international student here in Lund often means to not belong here personally, instead to only belong because of one’s studies, an occurrence that is often expressed by Swedes with the word “bytis.” Though not actually negatively connotated, this term seems slightly forgiving, as it implies that someone may have issues communicating and behaving according to the tacit cultural rules of conduct.

Motivation

Even though all international students who come to Lund speak English and have their studies as their main focus of life in Lund, many are still confronted with a form of culture-shock that can cause frustrations which impair their daily lives, especially when left to deal with this culture shock alone (Oberg, 1954). Thus, it is crucial to actively and consciously integrate the students into the socio-cultural context of their study location. Not only the *hardware* of student mobility, such as numbers and academic degrees, but the *software*, the impact on personal lives and general cultural diversity, needs to be taken into account (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

In order to introduce the abstract notion of cultural integration of international students, I will focus on behavioural communication. Although verbal and nonverbal communication signals are not always separable and words cannot be fully disregarded, the focus here is on behaviour while communicating, thus, nonverbally expressed clues and their interpretation. Nonverbal communication forms can be gestures, mimics, spatial positioning

and temporal behaviour that in turn express expectations, hierarchical values or relationship levels (Stier, 2009).

Clearly, speaking the same language, or giving the same denotation to ideas or objects, greatly enables more fluid communication, and is achievable through for example language courses. However, just speaking another language will not change one's cultural communicative behaviour. Due to its subconscious nature and as it is only partly related to knowing language, cultural communicative behaviour needs to be actively put into focus or experienced oneself in order to be able to recognize its impact. Further complicating the matter, we need to consider that individuals usually take their own culture for granted (Hall & Whyte, 1963). This issue is stated very accurately by an ethnographer on TedTalk who says that "people do not know what they are doing and why" (Isaacs, 2013), entailing that they do not expect misunderstandings about what they are doing. Applied to my case this means that being confronted with foreign behavioural communication can irritate international students significantly.

Coming from Germany and having been an international student for five years now, my personal interest in this topic is due to the realization that the moments that I am happy and proud to live in Lund often occur during small subconscious and unplanned interactions with others. These are moments that do not need explaining but still tell me, that I am a symbiotic part of a greater system, that I am acknowledged and understood as such. These moments can come in the form of spontaneous small talk with an acquaintance or the cashier at the ICA (grocery store). It can be running into a friend at the gym, or the feeling I have when I come back to Lund after a weekend at home in Germany; when I find my bike at the train station and take the fastest way along the pretty little houses and over the cobblestones, because I know where to go and where to check for pedestrians or cars. I feel a sense of belonging in such moments, not only because by now I know many people, rather because the interactions seem effortless and comfortable to me. On the other hand, I can also experience moments of irritation. For example, every time I forget to put my coins in the machine they use at the grocery store, instead of handing it directly to the cashier. For some reason this minor incident reminds me of not being from here, and makes me more uncomfortable than it should, urging me to say something in Swedish, in order to put me back in the "I belong here"-group.

Taking a cultural analytical perspective, my study focuses on the mundane and often invisible phenomena, as my experience has shown that it is those that make or break the level

of cultural integration as perceived by the individual. My research is evolving around personal perceptions and emphasises the student perspective, it can therefore give a unique insight into the field of international student hosting and help to develop a successful cultural management strategy for Lund University.

Aim

Against this backdrop, the aim of this thesis is to understand the cultural integration of international students at Lund University from a cultural-analytical perspective, focusing on intercultural communication and suggesting ways how host institutions could facilitate the integration process. To achieve this, I will address the following questions: What issues related to behavioural communication do international students experience? How can these be understood in relation to their cultural context? How could cultural integration be facilitated?

Structure

To facilitate a greater understanding, I will first contextualize the topic by examining relevant previous research on intercultural encounters, as well as theoretical concepts of social interaction, followed by reflections that will illuminate the research process. Merging the findings with analytical thoughts, the experiences gathered in the interviews will be put into an academic context by relating them to their cultural frames, thus showing culture's role in uncomfortable situations. Thereafter, different behavioural communication will be discussed by exploring the process of forming an understanding around them, utilizing the established theoretical framework. The discussion will answer the “so what” question by assessing feasible steps to facilitate the students’ cultural integration. My results will be able to speak for a more active approach towards the cultural integration of international students. After suggesting feasible steps of implementing the results, both at Lund University and beyond, I will summarize my insights in a concluding section.

Previous Research

To contextualize the study, this section will give a short overview of relevant research on the topics of intercultural communication and international students, and such that combine these two. This will be followed by some evaluative thoughts on these discursive developments.

Culture and Intercultural Communication

In this study, *culture* is considered any kind of grouping established by individuals having certain kinds of shared values or habits that create a sense of belonging together, either in their own or in others' perception (Stier, 2009), thus it can be classified as a group that is sharing a way of living (Williams cited in Stier, 2009). It is an important point to remember that a culture is not necessarily equal with a nation, even if regarding a nation as a culture can be useful in certain circumstances, as I will take up later.

Ethnologist Orvar Löfgren emphasizes that the concept of culture is shaped not only by ambiguity but also by potential (Preface in Hastrup, 2010). It is therefore important to choose a stance on how *culture* as a term is used to make a distinction between groups. For my research perspective, the relevant factors are that a culture is formed by a distinctive manner of behavioural communication and shared social codes.

The forming of cultures relates to the inherent human need to map their environment and position themselves in it in order to be able to navigate in it (Hastrup, 2010). As my initial example with the coin machine hints at, belonging to a distinctive group gives the individual identity as well as mental and often even physical security. However, establishing an In-group inherently means defining certain people as out. A person who comes to a new culture and has trouble communicating can be perceived as *out* more than *in* (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Using cross cultural training as a consulting tool has been made popular by researchers such as Hofstede (Hofstede et al., 2010) and the *itim international institute*, as well as the cultural behaviour model by cultural-anthropologist Richard Lewis, explained in *When Cultures Collide* (2006). These applied methods of working with intercultural communication issues are targeted towards the business sector, which is even mirrored in the surrounding literature; many other academically acknowledged publications focus on organizational and national culture as well (Hofstede et al., 2010; Meyer, 2014). These are useful for me as I can orientate the research on them, though it is important to keep in mind that issues pertaining to business life might not always translate to student life. For example, the Lewis-model and its cross-cultural perspective utilize symbolic interaction to enhance pre-knowledge. Aspects of behavioural communication, such as speaking a lot versus speaking very little or letting emotions influence one's manner of speech or not, are combined into profiles (Lewis, 2006). These are developed through theory, experience, and data collection. With the profiles' help, understanding between international businesses about their different values and rules of conduct is created, and communication facilitated.

To clarify, in this study the prefix “inter-” is used to describe situations where messages are sent between individuals of different cultures (Ristić, 2013). Thus, intercultural communication involves direct communication, while *cross-cultural* communication involves the more reflective comparison of direct communication (Gudykunst & Mody, 2002, p.vii; Ristić, 2013). In this study both perspectives are applied.

Written in 1963, Lundstedt’s article on issues of cross-cultural research provides some initial analytical ideas as to how sojourners experience and handle culture shock (Lundstedt, 1963): The process of going through the stages of honeymoon, rejection, regression and adjustment (Oberg, 1954). Culture shock is, however, not seen as a problem, but instead as a part of the integration process, a stance that this study will uphold. Lundstedt consequently points towards a need for research of this process, that seemingly hasn’t been answered sufficiently. Kim (2015) for example advocates the holistic idea, that every individual can actively work for a successful interaction, which will enhance intercultural communication competence, and thus make the process of cultural amalgamation, integrating without losing the own culture, smoother. These two articles, although written 50 years apart, agree in their underlying idea that cultural adjustment can and should be facilitated. They exemplify the development of research discourse going from the idea of culture shock and overcoming it, towards the more practical and universal idea of creating global communication competence to be ready to deal with the confrontation with foreign cultures. The present text will contribute to the answer of this apparently long-existent issue with a focus on student life, agreeing with the point that cross-cultural training can be effective (Kim, 2015).

Finally, the use of cultural empathy is a pro-active way of dealing with intercultural misunderstanding and to gain this competence is suggested (Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Stier, 2009). This study will develop this approach in the latter part, investigating the role of empathy and how to enhance it.

International Students

The growing number of internationals in academic institutions has not gone unnoticed by educational institutions, given the number of articles in news websites such as the *Chronicle of Higher Institution* (Fischer, 2014), or *World Education News & Reviews* (Schulmann & Choudaha, 2014). Articles range from topics related to Brexit and the future of students in the UK, to problems retaining students that come to the US (Coley, Coley, & Lynch-Holmes, 2016). Clearly, the management of student mobility is a current topic in the

era of globalization and is acknowledged as a trend that must be managed. Improvement of this management is attractive for more than just the humanistic intentions at which this study aims; it has economic motivations as well (The Guardian', n.d.). Overall, it seems as if there is more to find on the matter in those specific subject-relevant journals or in popular digital literature, like the "Five irks and quirks for a Czech in Sweden" (Chlumska, 2017), than there is in applied scientific research. Their context and references need to be engaged if one is to use them as a solid research foundation, however, they work well in spreading the issue of cultural integration of students. I would like to contribute by taking the in popular media present issue into a more academic discussion.

Combining the Fields

Besides exploring issues of international students and cultural behaviour and its communicational consequences separately, there have been some publications, both recent and decades prior, taking a combined approach. Yet, very often the cultural aspects of teaching are discussed (Ryan, 2013; Zhang, Xia, Fan, & Zhu, 2016), focusing on study skills and academic achievement rather than issues of social integration. The limited research in this specific matter is unexpected, considering that Brein and David emphasized intercultural communication as a crucial factor in the process of integration nearly 50 years ago (1971). However, they already point out that successful integration is a complex matter, involving factors such as concerns of practicability (Lewthwaite, 1996), the idea of cross-cultural competence (Miranda, 2015; Presbitero, 2016), and the issue of pre-knowledge turning into prejudices (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002), which will be discussed further in the analytical sections.

International Students in Lund

Recently, former MACA student Hong Nhung Duongova uncovered some of the cultural differences that matter for international students in Lund in her Master thesis, a work that could be used to develop the focus for the present thesis. This work also confirms the general need for improvement in this specific area; the cultural context and integration of international students in Lund (Duongova, 2016).

As seen in Duongova (2016) and in reports by Lund University's *International Desk* (Persson, 2014; Ripmeester, 2017) research is being undertaken specifically on student integration in Lund, which this study will contribute to. The student barometer survey shows

that, although most respondents say they feel welcomed and supported when coming to Lund as an international student, there are areas that show need for improvement. These include the possibility to get to know Swedish students and to be socially integrated, as well as the issue of a communicative gap between supportive institutions and students in need (Ripmeester, 2017). Another source addressing the issue is the student newspaper *Lundagård* ('Lundagard.net').

My Study's Contribution

As this literature overview shows, a strength in this field of study is the acknowledgement of the management of international students' cultural integration as an issue that needs tending to. Moreover, the well-developed research and methods concerning intercultural communication within the business sector are a good foundation that can be drawn on. It is also important that the practical implications of a better cultural integration are advertised to a broad audience, which the articles in popular digital newspapers suggest (e.g. *thelocal.se*). Obviously, the matter is getting more and more globalized and awareness of it is rising, indicated by the sharing of knowledge and the spreading of consulting and training as implementation tool.

However, as much as there is reporting on teaching cross-cultural competence in business, there is little to find applied to a university environment. Most research does not take an applied approach, aiming instead towards creating a broader knowledge base rather than a practical use. Often, it focuses on directing international students, neglecting the performative aspects of integration and socio-cultural interaction, the active part on the students' side. This overlaps with the tendency of focusing foremost on students' education and academic achievement, as well as economic advantages, instead of considering their capability to successfully interact and therefore feel comfortable. To contribute with a focus on the student centred, personal experience of cultural integration of daily life is thus even more relevant.

My study builds on the aforementioned research, taking the intersection of international students' integration and intercultural differences of communication behaviour as a point of departure. While the ideas of practicability, cross-cultural competence, and prejudices will be discussed further, it will address the gap of applied research that becomes visible by taking steps from generating knowledge towards applying it.

Theoretical Framework

Social Interaction

This chapter presents the theoretical ideas that will be engaged and relates them to the study's context.

It will focus on the influence of cultural background and cognitive frames on intercultural communication, which is a topic of frequent discussion in both social and cultural sciences, with many theories based on the ideas of anthropologist Edward T. Hall (Hall & Whyte, 1963), and sociologist Erving Goffman (1967). Their input can help to understand the underlying system of a conversation in terms of behavioural actions. Other influential theories have been published by Gudykunst and Mody (2002), and Bennet (1998 in Hastrup, 2010), who are focusing on the creation of intercultural sensitivity and knowledge, an approach I will follow as well. The area of social interaction is researched thoroughly from different angles and therein engages with ideas from the fields of anthropology, sociology and cultural studies fitting the interdisciplinary approach of cultural analysis.

Culture, language and communication are closely related, but communication is more than words; 80-90% of information is communicated by other means (Hall & Hall, 1990), it can therefore be said that though one can be silent, one “cannot not communicate” (Watzlawick, Beavin, Jackson, 1969, p. 53). I will thus regard communication in terms of *social interaction* and will therefore not concentrate on words, but rather take a holistic approach, considering foremost the dyadic exchange of signs and their interpretation in an interaction, in conference with the focus of this study on non-verbal communication behaviour.

Hence, the most vital role in this study belongs to the concept of *symbolic interactionism*. Symbolic interactionism is a term coined by Herbert Blumer, which boils down to the idea that “human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them“ (Blumer, 1986, p. 2). These *things* can take the form of behavioural signs with underlying meaning or *connotations* (Saussure cited in Chandler, n.d.). The ideas of social and symbolic interaction function as the “puzzle’s frame” as they allow us to understand the empirical narratives about interactional situations, and cognitive effects of behavioural communication having different meanings, as often in intercultural interactions (Hall & Whyte, 1963).

Edward T. Hall’s work was significant in establishing the paradigm of intercultural communication (Rogers, Hart & Miike 2004). Even though he relates often to business in his

examples, his concepts and ideas are rather universal and therefore serve for the purpose of looking at studying internationally as well. Hall and Hall treat nonverbal communication behaviour, or cultural cues, as a substantial part of social interaction (Hall & Hall, 1990).

Embodiment

The cognitive cultural frames that people grow up with are embodied in their behavioural communication, how they position themselves or how they look at others (Goffman, 1967). This obviously becomes very visible in everyday situations, and can lead to misunderstandings when the connection between embodied action and referred meaning, the connotations, are not the same.

The differences in behavioural communication between cultures can be led back to differing cognitive frames based on shared values and priorities within one group that are not necessarily shared with other groups (Hastrup, 2010). The words and gestures someone is sending represent underlying ideas and opinions. They can be described as the public-relations-department of a person. Shortly put and in the words by Edward T. Hall; communication is culture, and how people communicate shows their culture (Hall, 1959, p. 186 in Rogers et al., 2004). A good visualization of this is the *Iceberg model*, which shows values and attitudes as subconscious whereas behaviour, as tip of the iceberg, is visible.

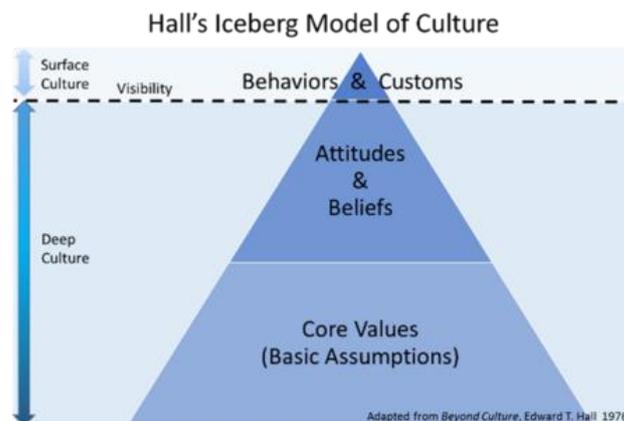


Figure 2 Underlying values are influencing visible behaviour (adapted from Hall, 1976)

The meaning of the displayed behaviour in a specific moment and manner can only be fully understood when the receiver of the sent sign, the perceiver of this behavioural aspect, is aware of the cognitive context behind the appearance, as “the communicational pattern of a given society is part of its total culture pattern and can only be understood in that context” (Hall & Whyte, 1963). This context is the system that one has internalized throughout

growing up, the certain priorities and values called culture, that influence and determine the form that the behaviour takes (Stier, 2009).

Interacting is thus a matter of reading and interpreting signs. If not done “correctly” the consequences can be misunderstandings, possibly including offence or misinterpretation (Hall & Whyte, 1963) or discredit and loss of face, the impairment of one’s social impression (Goffman, 1967). In *Interaction Ritual* (1967) Goffman describes rules of conduct and performativity as steering factors of an interaction. These concepts can enhance the understanding of behaviour in intercultural social interaction further.

Rules of Conduct

Growing up, one is going through a socialization process, in which surrounding behaviour is learned through repetition and structured by “expectations and obligations” (Goffman, 1967, p. 49), similar to what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defines as “habitus:” an individual’s specific living-environment and conventions in moving within it (1977). When in a culture similar rules on how to interact are developed these become inherent in the body of its members (Goffman, 1967). Goffman is calling these “underlying principles that organize events” *rules of conduct*, which are culturally constituted and depending on context (cited in Brickell, 2005, p. 30). Those mostly unspoken rules influence the behavioural communication habits that are common within a culture (Hall & Whyte, 1963), and they are thus embodied, as mentioned above.

What makes things difficult is that one’s own cultural habits, even the behavioural communication, are often taken for granted. Meaning that is established as a rule of conduct often does not need to be explained to the members of its referential culture, which also accounts for the meaning of certain communication manners. People very often are so used to their behaviour that their actions are taken subconsciously (Hall & Whyte, 1963). The way many Swedes stand very far from each other when the bus comes is not something they plan to do and then carefully follow the rules. Rather, they are so used to the way they do things, that they do not question them, especially not when everyone around is doing the same thing. This has the effect that values and explanations causing behaviour are often lost from sight. I am making this point because it is this tacit knowledge, that often shows the differences between different cultures on the second view, that has a big impact on people’s behavioural communication (Hall & Whyte, 1963). Whereas these differences are often overlooked and hard to pinpoint, this study spotlights them.

Performativity

Goffman states, relating embodiment to the performance thought, that one always acts within a certain context, that influences the actions of the self (Goffman cited in Brickell, 2005). In his understanding, everyone is playing a role in their everyday interactions in which they try to maintain a positive social value in the eye of the interacting counterpart (Goffman, 1967).

If everyone then performs the internalized rules of conduct that gain positive social value in the own cultural context, conforming to its expectations and obligations, clearly, when interacting with someone from a different social or cultural circle, clashes are likely. Therefore, in every encounter, the "constitution of regulatory notions and their effects", which is defined as performativity by Goffman, must be negotiated (Goffman cited in Brickell, 2005 p. 28). Going one step further, performativity is consequently the establishment of rules while they are being acted out, in opposition to a performance which is an enactment of a pre-established rule (Brickell, 2005).

Intercultural Communication

This understanding of performativity can be found in intercultural communication: When two counterparts are performing their rules of conduct in order to establish a harmonic interaction and good impression (Goffman, 1967), and one or both realize a disruption - an embarrassment and loss of face - these rules have to be *re*-negotiated, assessed, made clear to both parts and then adapted so that an amalgamation of communicational behaviour arises.

This can also be tied into the issue of integration: Taking a post-humanist position within the performativity discourse, Karen Barad advocates the idea that everything becomes or is defined only in relation to other things. Applied to the situation of an international student coming to a new culture, positioning oneself within a new culture is crucially related to interaction with the parties involved (Barad, 2003). A person is embedded in the socio-cultural environment like in a big network, and a functioning connection to the things in one's surroundings are essential to find an integrated position.

Summing up, when merging Goffman's interaction ritual (1967) and Hall and Whyte's ideas on intercultural communication (1963), one can say that if two cognitive frames that are being confronted with each other are not the same, signs might be interpreted differently than what they are intended to mean, and misunderstanding on both sides can occur.

Clearly, to handle an intercultural interaction properly, even when speaking the same language, we need a consensus on the nonverbal signs and their meaning as well. We need at least an understanding of differences in those, which is why one should get to know the culture and its habits of the interactional counterpart.

I will adopt these thoughts on the intersection of culture and communication to illuminate the empirical material. They enable one to see how rules of conduct, in which cultural and social values as for example politeness and individuality are embedded, are reproduced. The point of the theoretical framework presented here is not its inherent truth, rather, it is its capability of entangling an actual problem. Having established the ideas of symbolic interaction, the application of which will help to understand the personal experiences of intercultural communication at Lund University, I will move on to present the research phase.

Methodology

Research

It was my work placements during the fall of 2016 that inspired me to research this topic. One took place in the tourism sector of Malmö, exploring locals' integration in the cities hospitality, and one with *Richard Lewis Communications*, an intercultural communication consultancy in England. It was in the latter that I encountered the concept of the Lewis-model as a tool to teach cross-cultural competence. In both cases, the contact with people of different backgrounds and cultures and realizing their distinction in expectations, needs, and behaviour when interacting with others, fascinated me. It initiated the interest to explore this phenomenon in my personal environment, being a student in a foreign country.

I therefore conducted a qualitative ethnographic study, exploring students' experiences with intercultural communication by hermeneutically interpreting their stories about daily life. This chapter will describe and reflect on the design of the study, the process of research, and my position in it.

The field for this research project is defined by the context of studying at Lund University as a cultural niche, as described earlier. Fieldwork was primarily conducted throughout January and February 2017, including background research, individual interviews and a focus group, as well as the gathering of notes from my own experiences as international student.

The foundation of the empirical material consists of qualitative interviews conducted with five international students from different cultures as well as a focus group with four of these students. At the point of the interviews, they were all studying a Master programme within the humanities at Lund University, and they had all been in Lund for at least six months. Some of them had visited Sweden before moving here, as tourist or exchange student. To get an impression on how they see their own behavioural communication habits, they filled out a short evaluation before the interview (see Appendix B). The following presentation of the informants is given to make it easier to follow the argumentative line when referring to them in the text. The profiles have been created based on the interviews, the researcher's personal experience and the results of the short behaviour tests.

Student informants:

Andrea, 24, from Texas with roots in Mexico has lived in Lund for one and a half years now, and had not lived in Europe before this. Her strongest communicative traits are emotional and often excessive talking. She does not avoid conflicts; in fact, she is confrontational in many situations.

Wang, 30, from China has lived in Lund for one and a half years, but was here as an exchange student before that. Her strongest communicative traits are talking with a low voice and being polite, waiting for other people to finish speaking.

Dima, 21, from the European south-east part of Russia, has lived in Lund for six months now, but has been to Sweden for holidays before. His strongest communicative traits are openness, politeness and a calm rationality.

Martina, 23, from Slovakia has lived in Lund for one and a half years. She has been here as an exchange student before that. Her strongest communicative traits are agitation, being impulsive and speaking her mind.

Sandee, 29, from Thailand has lived in Lund for one and a half years. She has visited northern Europe before. Her strongest communicative traits are dry humour, being careful with opinions and never interrupting.

The informants' names were changed in order to keep some anonymity. I am aware that due to the nature of this study, the informants' personality is becoming obvious, making recognition, at least within the sphere of the MACA15 course, very easy (Davies, 2002, p.53).

However, changing the names will make this recognition significantly harder for anyone outside this circle. Participants were asked for a name that would mirror their cultural background in a similar way as their real name. Both profiles and names were presented to the informants for consent before publishing.

Interviews were even conducted with two institutions attached to Lund University, which have significant contact with international students. One interview was performed with a coordinator of the International Desk (Int. Desk), the main point of contact for international students in Lund, the other one with two counsellors working for the Student Health Centre (SHC), both specifically working with internationals. A third interview was done with a professor, Gerda, from the department of cultural sciences at Lund University. She is adding a host perspective and thus triangulating the research further. Moreover, I visited the general information meeting for international students and observed a cross-cultural training session for business employees.

The Interviews – Performing Intercultural Communication

As previous literature suggests it, integrated in the research objective is the question of whether the fact that the interviewed students grew up in very different regions of the world results in them showing differences in their behavioural communication habits (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Lewis, 2006). They might therefore come across different communicational issues of cultural integration. Of course, this does not mean that their nationality will be the only thing influencing their behavioural communication. It is just one of different factors of cultural upbringing, and as it was easy to determine, I chose it as one qualification for my informants. Another reason was that I experienced them as being different in their behaviour. Clearly, even aspects such as socio-economic background, geographic situations, and the ideologies of their education greatly impact a person's cultural values and therefore behaviour, but are all intertwined with the region they come from. The choice of informants produced a diversity in perspective, and their personal experiences gathered through this method indicate common areas of problems concerning the acculturation into Lund University Culture, as well as possible explanations why.

The interviews were of a semi-structured type, which allowed the interviewees to develop their own streams of thoughts and narratives, but kept the direction of the topics in the researcher's hands (Davies, 2002). The duration of interviews was approximately one hour, set in a semi-formal but familiar context; a small group room at school. The atmosphere

was eased by having beverages, engaging in small talk and sitting next to each other, to lessen the hierarchy between interviewer and interviewee. Moreover, the topic and research aim were explained at the start, making the actual conversation a joint exploration (Davies, 2002).

During both fieldwork and the sorting process, focus was put on situations of direct communication, including social interaction in public places, typical classroom incidents and group conversations. The influence of all these social structures on the experience of the individual student are used as evidence for my case (Booth, Colomb, Williams, 2008). The questions throughout interviews were designed in a way that they would trigger memories and narratives, mostly relating to daily life activities and inter-cultural interaction. For example, “What kind of behaviour do you miss from home?”, or “Have you ever felt rude or that people were rude to you, without knowing why?”.

In the focus group, I could observe participants’ behaviour on a meta-level when talking to each other. The distinction between the different cultural behaviours and how they perceive certain interactions differently showed, as I could directly let them compare their perception of certain issues.

The Aspect of Language

English seemed the appropriate, and in some cases, was the only common language to conduct the interviews in. Some meaning is always lost in translation (Bucholtz, 2000), and I tried to mitigate this by using the seemingly best suited language in the various interviews. Therefore, the professor interview was in German and the health counsellor interview in Swedish, and useful data was later translated by me.

It is important to consider that the language in which interviews are conducted plays a role (Welch & Piekkari, 2006). The informants are answering with a certain filter on their perspective and possible restrictions. Thus, they might be less well-versed in the way they can express their experiences and perceptions in English, in contrast to the one interviewee whose mother-tongue is American English. However, on the other hand, the language that they experience Lund in is mostly English, and as I am aiming to explore their behavioural communication in this foreign culture the use of English should not negatively influence results.

Part of the Performance

Regarding the more theoretical approach on interviews, Davies shares some interesting thoughts as to how the statements given in an interview of any form are related to

the social reality they describe. According to the ideas of Bashkar's critical realism, they are neither purely representational nor only interactive (Davies, 2002), but a combination of both. An interviewee bases his statement on his perception - unless he is intentionally lying - of reality, on what he experienced, but the way he puts it, maybe even his point of view, are produced by the interaction with the interviewer and the situational context. There is both representation and interactive production in an interview; decisions are taken in the field, in the moment – the process is performative (Davies, 2002).ⁱⁱ

Thus, the collection of ethnographic field data, for example through an interview, is always playing by the rules of performativity (Barad, 2003). The ephemeral interaction, the performance of an interview impacts the production of knowledge, determined and created by the experience and knowledge of both parties. What is produced in between is the empirical material, the new knowledge, the social reality paired with the research purpose.

How do qualitative interviews then give information about a wider cultural group than the interviewee self? They do so only with the help of interpretation and projection; the analysis is not informing about the individual, but about practices the individual does, which can be projected onto a bigger group, thus informants function as representatives.

Reflexivity

Making use of the interdisciplinary freedom and the conjunction of methods that Applied Cultural Analysis offers, gives a thickness to qualitative research results and can be considered an asset.

A common fault in many scientific fields is the researchers' tendency to look at matters from an overlooking point of view and to believe in objectivity, rather than positioning themselves within the field. Instead of taking to one side, I consider myself to be in a hybrid position, following a point made by Davies (2008). I am both the self and the other in my research, which comes with a high responsibility of using both theoretical concepts and analytical procedures to validate my analysis.

The crucial nature of the latter is something MACA has made me internalize: I, as the researcher, am part of the system or the culture that I am studying (Ingold, 2004), as well as being an outsider looking at the members of this culture, therefore applying a constantly shifting position within the topic. This performative thought illuminates the influential position of the researcher, which forms a limitation as well as strength.

Qualitative fieldwork often produces a lot of data, that can be used in ways sometimes not anticipated. However, these can become significant in the process of interpreting the empirical material in relation to the research aim, resulting in a greater intensity of knowledge than for example statistical surveys can (Pink & Morgan, 2013). The repeated engagement with the mass of material on the researcher's part makes it possible to understand data anew and on different levels.

Generating knowledge

The interview conversations were facilitated with the evaluative tests as the primary instrument. Doing them made the students re-structure and reflect on how they behave and potentially made it easier to recall situations and reflections on those during the following interview. As a researcher, I had to be aware that this turns the material clearly into a "constructed meta-narrative" (Davies, 2002, p. 226), which informants confirmed by stating they would relate answers to how they act here in the Lund environment, not how they act back home.

On the other hand, ethnography gives the chance to explore the practical and nonrepresentational of everyday life as well, the parts that are acted out subconsciously. Qualitative interviews offer ways to reveal details, which I tried to integrate in the questions by asking for favourite places or greeting rituals, and other things usually not reflected on. This is a crucial point regarding the research methods of this work; by applying qualitative research tools such as semi-structured questions, narratives evolve that have the potential of showing more than what is verbally being expressed, because they "powerfully place the ethnographer in this location and allow[s] the reader imaginatively to experience it" (Davies, 2002, p. 226). Thus, incorporating this type of data enhances the immersion and recognition of the audience, adding to this study's' significance.

My Position and Bias

My hybrid-position expresses itself in various aspects. Foremost, even though the thesis means a short-term intense engagement with the field, I have had a long-term involvement with the topic through personal experiences, both in private life and in work placements.

My own experiences

My context of being an international student studying international students forced me to oscillate constantly between the perspective of a complete participant, being an international student myself, and, to a certain degree, an objective researcher.

I can use the first position by applying an auto-ethnographic approach; as the interviewees' stories are reminding me of my own experiences, I can relate and compare their stories to my own. This is a form of ethnographic tool that makes my memories useful for analysis, performing an "ultimate participant observation" on myself (Davies, 2002, p. 186). Also, the restrictions that a narrative re-production of reality entails, as Kusenbach illustrates (2003) are reduced by the fact that I have a very good idea how the actual situation took place, I do not have to rely only on my imagination. In some cases, I was even present when the students experienced situations that involved misunderstandings due to cultural behaviour differences, because I have spent time with them privately. Using these situations as data is a kind of natural go – along, and being a first-hand spectator enabled me to observe some pre-reflexive knowledge (Kusenbach, 2003).

Thus, my ethnographic method is conditioned by an informed reflexivity, meaning that being aware of my own position makes it an asset rather than a bias, and connects the subjective stories to social reality (Davies, 2002). Of course, my context and experiences determine the ethnographic knowledge that is produced, but one cannot disregard the influence of the researcher in any research, applied auto-ethnography just does it to a different degree (Davies, 2002).

My Relationship to Informants

The advantage of having a personal relation of varying degree to the students and the professor was used to inform the social knowledge produced in the interviews (Davies, 2002).

I had a better ability to judge if questions were too pressing or not, an advantage considering ethical issues. Also, I could expand the research outside the interview occasion and mix methods, for example do a form of participant observation with interviewees. Not to forget that personal contact makes it possible to come back to participants and ask further questions. I made use of all these aspects at some point, such as designing follow up questions and observing participants' behaviour after the interview.

Moreover, knowing the informants makes references to shared knowledge possible and avoids extensive explanation, which produces a better flow of conversation. Anyway, the

personal relationship to most informants was restricted to the classroom or similarly public spaces, keeping a personal bias and shared tacit knowledge in balance. Moreover, informants and I could look at the issue from a reflective point of view. Having a temporal distance to the intense phase of integration delimited the risk of conversation becoming too emotional.

No concern with being a research subject arose among participants, rather elation that their input could be helpful. With ethical concerns in mind, I made sure that my informants knew how valuable their contribution was, that the material would be handled with great care, and that they consented with the way they are presented in the text.

Limitations

In addition to the strengths of concentrating on qualitative ethnography, there were also certain limitations, on both a practical and abstract level.

With the intention of securing the feasibility of this thesis the profile of informants was limited to a handful of Master level students from different countries, studying at Lund University in the faculty of humanities. The same counts for the neglect of topics such as language, gender and psychological health. Although a crucial topic, seeing struggles with cultural integration as issues of psychological health would impair the idea of spreading cross-cultural competence to everyone, it will therefore not be discussed further. Also, as research in this area has been done, academic success will not be specified too much in the present text.

Further, I would like to hereby acknowledge that there is similar research being done on the formation of cognitive schemata in cross-cultural psychology, as this thesis applies in a cultural-analytical manner. Although this intersection shows the interdisciplinary aspect of behaviour research, and might be touched upon, it is mostly excluded from this text.

Moving into the analysis, the upcoming two sections will be orientated on the leading research questions – the examination of intercultural communication and the discussion of possible explanations for and suggestion of practical steps for facilitation.

Findings and Analysis

Intercultural Communication in Lund University Culture

When taking a closer look on the communicational issues that international students experience, it is important to keep in mind that they live in a culture specific to the student

environment in Lund; it is not equivalent to Swedish culture and people. Starting out with a description of Lund as a host city and a summary of the interview results will establish a context for the analysis.

The Student Perspective

The culture that students are living in when studying at Lund University is described by informants as calm and welcoming, as a “small Lund society” (Martina). It is perceived as a community that caters to a variety of people, where students and locals live alongside each other and meet in the libraries, the gym or at special events. In contrast to the informants’ expectations, the campus is not strictly enclosed from the rest of the town. Even activities and engagements for social life offered by the municipality seem to be taking the students into consideration, according to informants, which shows for example in many shops having student discounts (Focus group).

At the general information meeting for newly arrived international students in spring 2017, the main message being conveyed was characterized by a “we are here if you need us” attitude. Support and information in various areas was offered, such as practical knowledge about police and fire security. Services such as counselling or spare time activities were presented, but need to be actively sought out if students want to take part in them or use them. As mentioned in the student barometer as well as by the health counsellors, there seems to be a gap between the help offered and those that would need it (SHC, Persson, 2014; Ripmeester, 2017).

This gap could have various reasons. To actively ask for help requires the acceptance by the individual of “needing help”. A person who is very much focused on self-independence, will most likely do not feel inclined to contact a support centre, even if it would be of great help;

I think I am quite stubborn, so I try to figure out stuff by myself, especially if I know that it is going to be easy....but if it is like bigger things that I think I should be able to do, like the phone bill, you know like I did ask for help. But first I was like "I AM GONNA FIGURE IT OUT! (Andrea)

Besides indicating self-independence as contributing factor of feeling integrated, this statement shows that, clearly, very often students as well as hosts either do not approach actively or they do not see the need for support, the accessibility is tricky through language

barriers (Sandee), or they do not want “help” (SHC). So, what are the issues international students might need support with?

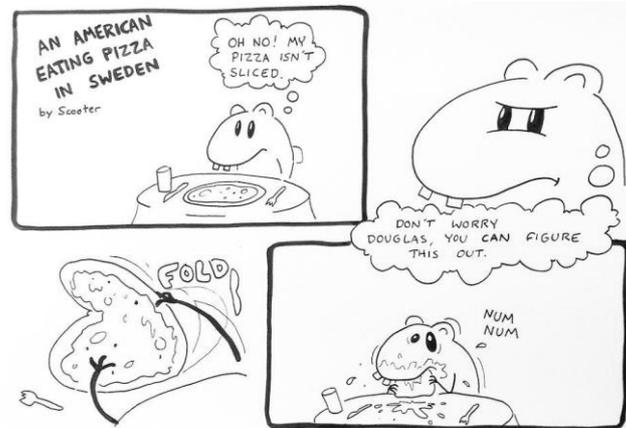


Figure 3: An example of an unexpected difficulty - *Pizza in Sweden*, © 2015, Scooter Michaels

The following section will present examples of interactional situations that are perceived as strange or misunderstood, and the resulting consequences for international students. At the same time, it will be examined if the students perceive the points of friction that are pointed out differently, and how these differences can be related to the idea of symbolic interaction and rules of conduct.

The analysis of significant situations starts out with greeting habits and conversation rules, moves from public behaviour via scheduling to hierarchy, and merges into the academic environment.

Greetings

“Everyone in Lund is hugging each other when they meet” (Wang)

Informants called it a “Swedish paradox”, and I have experienced it myself; the first time people meet each other they shake hands and present themselves. Then, despite Swedes being generally perceived as distanced (Focus group), from the second time on, the norm in Lund is to give each other a friendly hug, disregarding gender or occasion. This can lead to confusion in several ways, creating comic situations where people's' bodies are approaching each other differently, ending up in a kind of “Kung Fu” move (Wang and Andrea). The conventions around hugging are perceived differently; whereas according to Wang, in China one shakes hands, and even best friends do not really hug each other, in Russia and Slovakia they apparently hug even more than in Lund; “In Slovakia everyone hugs each other, when

you leave and come,...but in Sweden many times I experience that people just didn't know how to approach themselves" (Martina). Martina added that she sometimes felt like she was invading a person's space by hugging them, so she stopped doing that: "I was like 'yeah thank you, I had a nice time', and then I hugged everyone, and they were like 'what are you doing?' kind of like 'let me be'.

There seems to be very strong yet also differing subconscious perceptions of what is appropriate and what is not, which can lead to uncertainty about the level of relationship the greeting expresses. For example, to be hugged by someone might convey an attraction to an Asian participant that is not intended. Wang mentioned that the first time she met her (now) boyfriend, a Swede, and he hugged her, she felt specially treated and that she was very surprised when he hugged other girls as well (Wang). These stories show how the way of behaving in one culture is never absolute, but is depending on the perspective, the cultural framing that one grew up with (Lewis, 2006).

Andrea relates hugging to touching and compares her habits from America with those experienced in Lund as following:

[It is an] inverse relationship to personal space and intimacy... they don't want to sit next to each other on the bus, but I have so many Swedish friends like when we have little get together, they like cuddle up...And I don't mind sitting next to someone [a stranger] and the legs are touching, I mean I am never gonna see you again, but the second a friend touches me I am like 'STOP IT'. (Andrea)

Even here, symbolic interaction comes into play, as physical contact seems to have different rules, depending on culture and context.

"Sometimes it doesn't even mean anything" (Focus group)

Something else that is very common in Lund University Culture is people greeting each other with "How are you?" when meeting up or running into each other. Informants found it hard to interpret this question correctly. For some it felt nearly imposing because they took it at face value and started to seriously reflect on their wellbeing (Wang). Others found it to be meaningless, for example Andrea, who said she would act back on its emptiness with dry humour, as she is used to at home, which in turn seemed to confuse people. Sandee told, that "in Thailand you only say 'how are you?' to the people that you know. Like your friends who you are close to." Here in Lund, as she and the other informants discovered and agreed

on “it just means hi” (Sandee), a connotation they had to realize by trial and error, which shows that to know a culture’s literal language is not sufficient.

Both presented greeting rituals are hidden differences, being mundane daily life interactions that are generally not expected to be a difficulty, but can clearly create confusion.

Conversations

“I don’t join the conversation, because that is rude” (Sandee)

This quote exemplifies the differing ideas about when it is appropriate to add one’s opinion to a conversation and when not. It has a big role in a classroom environment, but can be applied to social conversations as well. The perception of what is polite and what is friendly when entering a conversation here in Lund seems to be an issue mostly for Wang and Sandee. Some cultures regard it as open and friendly if someone joins a conversation, others as disruptive and impolite. Sandee puts a finger on the issue when she says that,

[In Thailand] it is considered quite rude if you listen to people talk and joining the conversation without being invited, but here it is completely different, you should be engaged in a conversation even if it is not directed to you. (Sandee)

Agreeing, Wang admits that her attitude of not interrupting means that she often does not have the space to say what she would like to say, which ends up in people thinking she does not have an opinion (Wang). Although she only acts according to how she has been raised, about which she says:

Also, my parents told me, be a good listener, don’t be very abrupt, and to say something maybe is not good. So, for example in class I might just not say too much and be polite, and sometimes I thought ‘I want to express myself’ I think you know, what the Western people value is ‘You have your own opinion’ also in Lund. (Wang)

Clearly, her cognitive frame of interrupting and stating your own opinion, engraved in her mind, all through education and upbringing (Stier, 2009), is different than the one common in Lund, which explains why she comes across as quiet.

“We are trained to not say something straightaway” (Wang)

I studied a lot about Western culture, so I know they are more direct and express their feelings... that’s one thing I noticed ... they sometimes really speak their feelings or

anything they dislike, just to my face, and I was like ‘WHAT’S THIS?’ kind of had a culture shock without time to accept it. (Wang)

This is how Wang experienced directness and emotional openness in Lund University Culture. When her Swedish boyfriend was in China, he experienced the other side of the matter: It led to a lot of confusion when people would say yes, even if they obviously, judging by their face, did not want to do what he just asked them (Wang). Martina agrees that in Lund one is more free to say what one thinks, whereas in Slovakia one should not deviate from the commonly accepted opinion, but Andrea and Dima did not have concerns with directness.

In contrast, Andrea shared how she always talks too loudly when in public places and that people often shush her:

So, I miss the ability to just like, go off in a conversation ... and I miss being able to talk fast, ... because people are always like, ‘Oh you talk really fast and you talk really loud!’ ... I definitely miss that, like, communication style....I feel like...I am not suppressing parts of my personality, but I do really have to kind of like tone them down...yeah, and assume some more kind of like Swedish characteristics, like ‘You have to be quiet in public’ [laughing]. And whenever I go home it is this weird transition when Laura, my best friend, would be like ‘Andrea you are so quiet’ and then by like, day three there, I’m just like ‘Whhaoh GUESS WHAT HAPPENED!!!’ (Andrea)

In short, she can be startled by the in her eyes emotionless way Swedish people talk, and in turn, her style can be frowned upon in Lund University Culture and clearly contrasts Wang’s communication style.

In connection to openness and the level of emotions shown in a conversation is the idea of losing face. “We feel like, do not let people feel uncomfortable” (Wang), is a very important rule in many Asian countries. In fact, it even has a name; “Mianzi” (Meyer, 2014), and stands in stark contrast to directness, such as the teaching style of Gerda, who engages students to be open. As speaking up in front of a class poses a potential threat of losing face to an Asian person, it is bound to trigger uncomfortable situations, so for example Chinese students might avoid it, which shows how behavioural communication is intertwined with cultural values.

In China reading the underlying message in a conversation is a social skill, and is made possible by the habit of knowing one's counterpart's context well (Meyer, 2014). Wang says it works so far that she "can already read what they [Chinese friends] are going to talk about". To avoid a loss of face, many Asian cultures make use of this concept of "reading the air", which is what Wang is describing here:

Because in a conversation with the Chinese I can really read what they are going to talk about, and even from their languages, so the body language I can see behind, what kind of person is it...and it is very easy FOR ME, to handle this conversation, but when I was here [in Lund]. I felt very nervous, being around these Western students and sometimes I focused too much on myself, like, oh do I, express correctly? do I speak right? and then I cannot really handle to read this person and what we are going to talk about. (Wang)

From a semiotic perspective, reading the air is putting a lot more weight on the connotation than the sent sign, the literal word. When being robbed off the ability of using one's' contextual knowledge, to understand what is meant can be hard for a person used to this skill.

Public behaviour

"You have to be quiet in public" (Andrea)

There were several aspects coming up in the interviews relating to public behaviour. Often mentioned was personal space, the influence and meaning of which has been researched thoroughly (Hall & Hall, 1990). Studies have even tried to pinpoint a comfortable conversation distance around 50-80 cm in Latin America, whereas it is 1.2 m in Nordic countries (Lewis, 2005, p. 22). Both Andrea and Martina talked about experiences in which they were met with a "oh oh, go away"-attitude, because, as they realized after, they stood too close to someone in a queue. Andrea describes closer;

I get the same kind of like weird dichotomy with like personal space with a lot of people from Europe, it is like very huggy, very touchy feely, if you know each other. But if you don't know each other, completely stand offish. Eh...but people from like Asia, or people from the US, like North America, like Sandee and I, one of our

classmates who is from Thailand, like, we don't hug each other because neither of us comes from this culture that is overly affectionate. (Andrea)

The conclusion Andrea is drawing from her observations of the unspoken rules of personal space and the amount of verbal interaction is that “maybe our [American] intimacy is more oral, and Swedes' is more physical”. This translates to the cultural differences regarding which meaning underlies which behavioural sign, as well as how meaning is expressed (Hall & Hall, 1990).

Wang says that people stick to the rules of queuing or red lights in Lund, even if the situation does not demand it. Contrastingly, in her culture she experiences more adaptation to the situation. If there is a person in a really urgent rush, s/he will be let on the bus before those who are not. This would be complicated in Lund, as it would need a lot more public verbal communication than people are used to, which hints at the complexity of cultural codes of conduct.

Another classic example that proved itself to be true in the informants' stories is the unspoken rule that one does not sit next to a stranger on a bus in Sweden, unless there is no choice. This is a strange behaviour in the eyes of the informants from Russia, America, Slovakia, and China, who seem not to see the uncomfortableness of sitting close to someone strange. Martina sees public interaction like this;

For instance, on the buses, when something is going on, that someone is like, rude, yelling, laughing or something no one ever says anything! So people are quiet and ehh, in Slovakia there is always at least one person who says like ‘stop what are you doing’, or ‘this is wrong’ or just ‘be more quiet’ or, yeah, so it’s like, you don't know that people around you even exist, you just have to avoid them when you are walking on the street, but you never keep eye contact or anything...and at home, we yeah, look around each other, look AT each other more and just communicate like, eye to eye contact. And that’s what I miss here! (Martina)

Clearly, even just talking, or not talking, to people on the street is something that is dictated by unspoken rules, and Dima agrees: “In Lund, you generally do not speak to a stranger, in Russia we complain and speak very emotional, here it is hard because Swedes do not like it that much”. This is even true for the commonly perceived as quiet Chinese people,

who “do talk to strangers, but only about casual, non-personal topics” (Wang). Interestingly, they keep their personal distance through the topic they speak about.

Tying in to the topic of personal space, many would assume that how one walks on the street is natural, but this is in fact organised by rules of conduct as well (Goffman, 1967). In Wang’s experience, in Lund one has to be considerate of other people and cannot just stop in front of someone: “If I don’t know you, I walk my way, in Sweden, and that is very strange”. In contrast, in China and Russia people stumble into each other (Wang, Dima): “Especially in Beijing, that’s a crowded place, you’re always, you know, pushed by others, on the subways, we do not bother to try to give personal space, anything.” (Wang)

Looking at these observations, it makes sense that Martina found it hard to learn how to bike, as people in Lund University Culture in her observation, do not seem to pay attention to each other, with no noticeable eye contact or greeting (Martina). Having a closer look though, shows that people do take care. As Wang says, they are aware of each other, and for example do not just stop in front of someone. Still, a necessity to actively interact with each other is not seen, which means expectations like Martina’s of stark interaction are not met and create insecurity.

Time as Structure

“Let’s have Fika like two Tuesdays from now” (Andrea)

Moving on to another misunderstanding, a common opinion among the informants is that Swedes are very busy and that they do not like to deviate from their daily routines, for example meal times. There was an amusing incident, in which we asked a fellow Swedish classmate to come to the gym with us at 12.15 pm and he had an almost physical reaction, taking a step back and slightly raising his hands with the words “But I have to eat lunch at 12!”.

Other findings on scheduling are that people in Lund try to be punctual. Even if they do come late, it is not a big problem, whereas one can easily get locked out of the classroom when that happens in Russia (Dima). Rather than being so authoritarian, being punctual in Lund University Culture seems to be connected to respect and politeness. If there is a good reason for being late, it will be excused easily. Both Dima and Wang are used to stricter rules from home and perceive coming late as an insult, which could also be connected to a higher power distances in both China and Russia (Lewis, 2006). I could observe this in them being

overly apologetic when coming even slightly later to an event that did not even require coming in time.

Regarding scheduling, it is interesting to see what Martina and Andrea had to adjust to. The spontaneous going out for a beer that Martina misses from back home is uncommon in Lund University Culture:

That's what you do in Slovakia.... that's what I miss a lot that you don't go out for a beer and you sit with your friends in a bar and you talk about life. Here it is more like, after class you have five minutes before everyone leaves for home and then you can talk a bit, about your concerns, but [at home] it's like yeah, before school, after school you just go to sit in a bar and then you grab like a coke or a beer and some snacks and then you talk for hours. (Martina)

In the US making plans is a lot more informal too;

I never ever in my life had a daily planner until I moved here, 'cause there was no need for it, it was like "Laura, I feel like Jenni noodle [restaurant chain], let's go" and we would just like pop in the car and meet. (Andrea)

In Lund University Culture, there is a lot more planning involved, and if one does not consider that, one could be ending up home alone like Martina once did, because no one has planned something with oneself:

Yeah it was very hard, because I never schedule anything, I was so surprised when I came here and ended up a couple of days just without doing anything because there was a lot at school and for students, but I wanted to meet people and they were like 'no I don't have time now, let's do it another day', and then I had my whole afternoon like, 'oh what am I going to do?' (Martina)

Hierarchy

"In the end I just didn't call anyone [by their name]" (Wang)

This quote describes Wang having a hard time to call teachers or her boyfriend's parents and even grandmother by their first name, making it hard for her to communicate comfortably. Even Andrea describes her reaction on being told that people usually call their teachers by their first name as; "I am totally gonna ignore this", but that going with the

majority turned out to be easier, involving less discomfort. By now, she calls and refers to her teachers with their first name all the time. This example shows, that just telling a cultural norm to someone is not going to culturally adapt that person, but that they instead need their own experience to do it, a point that will be developed on further later. Dima was taken aback by this habit in the beginning too, and says only if he would know a teacher for a long time would he talk in an informal manner in Russia.

Calling teachers by their first name is strongly connected to the idea of hierarchy. As Sandee says the relationship at Lund University is a lot more even than in Thailand and judging by the reactions of the other informants, it is probably more horizontal than in most cultures (Lewis, 2006). Connecting the issue of punctuality and hierarchy, Wang talked about how the hierarchy becomes visible depending on who arrives late to a meeting. The later one arrives, the higher the status. Of course, coming late to a lecture or meeting as a student is unthinkable with this perspective, even less that the professor makes tea for students (Sandee).

In the following reflection by Wang, the Swedes' attitude is hinting at the blindness for the rules of conduct of one's own culture;

I don't know, I would not think that they would care about it...and honestly, I do not think they would bother if I call her first name or not...They don't really think about it, they didn't think that's a big thing, just leave it. (Wang)

Academic Environment

“If they say you should but actually it means you have to!” (Dima)

Issues pertaining daily life do include common situations in the academic environment. The issues created by a very low power distance (Hofstede et al., 2010) between student and teacher in Lund University Culture become especially evident in the academic aspect. Informants described their study environment as well structured and collaborative, especially in opposition to the university cultures in Asia and the US, which are much more competitive and strict (Andrea, Sandee). On the teacher student relationship Wang shares;

That's also very interesting in our class, it's the same, I noticed that here the professors or the teachers, they are so ... considerate to give you space, for students to speak. And in Chinese universities; 'ah my teacher is a god', everything he told me, I write everything, like this is important for my exam! like 'oh yeah, so true'. (Wang)

This high value of hierarchy can be connected to a sense of security and care which is expressed by strictness in the academic environment (C. Lewis, seminar, 2017). The following story by Wang about her Swedish boyfriend Emils' experience of teachers in Taiwan exemplifies this:

The teacher found one little, little mistake, a graphic or a formula they didn't use right and Emil said; what the teacher said, he completely...destroy him: 'How can you do this, you're so stupid!! and this is not even right, can you see this??' And Emil just thought, 'what's going on...?' 'But he noticed that the Asian people, they would just take it and think...And I told him: 'You know I think that is a kind of expression to care about you...If the teacher or the boss is giving you more criticize, it means 'I care about you' If they just ignore you and your existence, they [the students] will feel so bad.' (Wang)

This story is also a great example for cultural relativism (Hastrup, 2010), as it shows that even when behaviour is different, it is not better or worse, one just needs to have the right perspective to understand why the behavioural communication is different (Hall & Whyte, 1963).

Even though to a certain extent the "culture of care" at Lund University might seem relaxed for the international students, it can also become confusing, as Andrea says, she is "frustrated that they are not direct with me, so then I feel like that leaves all this room for ambiguity, and just a lot of confusion and then that leads to, like, ineffectiveness. (Andrea). Very similar thoughts are coming from Wang, which show that behaviour that is valued high in one culture, can be seen as inappropriate or distressing in others:

Sometimes, I miss this very harsh, teacher or professor who would just say 'how stupid you are, you can't do this' ...and my professors are just always like, 'and maybe, I think, I suppose this is a good way to put it in that way' and I think, oh maybe he is not serious, and then he is like, 'rewrite it again' and 'rewrite it again'. And I am like, 'ok, just say it clearly!' (Wang)

Even in the survey on international students in Lund from 2016 giving feedback on performance is defined as an issue (Ripmeester, 2017), which has been a topic of cultural influence in Meyer as well, though in a business context (Meyer, 2015).

The problem is the ambiguity in what teachers say, “false politeness” as Dima calls it. This term, ascribed with a negative connotation, demonstrates how Dima is not sure how to deal with the encountered communication, the politeness that turns into criticism, as it is not conferring to his expectations. From his perspective, “if you say you *should* then it means you *should*, that’s how we do it in Russia. I still can’t get rid of this feeling.”. He, while the other informants shared similar stories, had had the experience that when his supervisor gave him comments on an essay and said he “should think about doing this”, and after thinking Dima decided not to do it, he got a bad grade. Further, this story is interesting as it shows how the ambiguity is perceived by Dima, but not intended by the teacher. The parties seem to have different connotations of what “should” in this context means, and without awareness of this difference, they will not come to an agreement.

Interestingly, even though Scandinavian cultures are said to be more direct than Asian cultures, this doesn’t seem to count for the academic environment: Wang found that in class related issues, Asians and Americans are a lot stricter and apparently even more direct than the Swedish system that is dominant at Lund University, which she expressed with saying she sometimes misses a harsh, clear direction from a teacher (Wang). Another explanation for this paradox could be that in Sweden a consensus is very highly valued. Research shows that Sweden has strong characteristics of low hierarchy, conflict-avoidance and individualism (Lewis, 2006), which fits to the observations the students made in their academic environment at Lund.

E – Mails

“I feel like being too formal is impolite” (Sandee)

Another direct, even though digital, form of communication that international students use, often in an academic context, is e-mailing, and even here cultural specific rules and their deviation are revealed. Writing e-mails in Lund University Culture seems to be rather informal and very practical, per informants and my own experience.

Many times, it happens to me that when I talk to someone via e-mail, the Swedish person responding me never says, or not never, but after the first e-mail, they never say like, ‘dear Martina’ or ‘best wishes’ but only ‘ok’. So, like very non-formal language...so I kind of was shocked, at the beginning, like why do I get this e-mail from my professor? That is not how we communicate in Slovakia via e-mail! We

write long e-mails and stuff so...that's what I felt was a bit rude...but I got used to it! (Martina)

Sandee says that 'even in e-mails, like, in Thailand it has to be really formal, but here I feel like being too formal is impolite...'. Again, it becomes clear how insecurity and confusion are triggered by differing norms and rules of conduct.

Comparing Cultures

When asked directly about differences in cultural behaviour, Martina gave an interesting account, that shows her strong distinctions between people based on the way they interact with her:

I can see it because I work in service, so I get to see a lot of people and I talk to a lot of people....not maybe Swedish people, but in a sense, people from Europe, generally, would be like, grumpy and more like, 'hmm, it's so dark in here', and 'give me answer for this and then I leave'. You know so it more like very impersonal...And then there are people from ...well, ok I said Europe, but let's take Spain or Italy or some kind of warmer states, and I don't know, Brazil and these kinds of people, they always come and they are so cheered up, they're so chatty and they use their body language a lot, and eh spend a lot of time with me talking about whatever, so they are more like, communicative in a sense, they always get a lot of friends, like whoever I know from these countries they have a very big circle of friends, and the Asians I got to know are usually mostly hanging out with themselves and in close circles. (Martina)

Summing up, a general impression from the interviews is the confirmation of the topic's relevance, as all informants had strong opinions and stories to tell about incidents that caused confusion or insecurity without an obvious reason. As assumed, there is a reoccurrence in the situations that tend to cause misunderstandings, but the perception of the behavioural communication varies depending on the students' cultural context. They find certain things that are common habits in Lund University Culture confusing and frustrating, and others so self-evident that they do not even think about them. The varying opinions on the presented interactions give an idea on the impact of different cognitive frameworks.

Consequences

Compiling the data shows that all the students stated to have felt alienated, confused or uncomfortable at some point. These reactions are main consequences of not being culturally integrated, and tie back to the idea of wanting to be self-independent and have a sense of belonging (Stier, 2009). Without the identity of a group, a lot of insecurity is developed;

I feel like I am always doing something wrong ... maybe that's why I don't talk to the person at the till, because I am like: If I open my mouth, I am gonna say something wrong, or I am gonna do something wrong. (Andrea)

For the health centre counsellors, typical consequences of adjusting problems are isolation and loneliness, or lower self-esteem because of lower grades. Many students have a hard time to make social contacts, for example as they are not used to the frequent partying culture or other forms and codes of socialisation. Informants seemed to regard themselves as lacking social skills, drawing on statements like "I do not think I can find a real Swedish friend" (Wang).

The "lack of real friends" (Dima), seems to be one of the most apparent issues and a consequence of dysfunctional communication, as all the informants mentioned it. This could be connected to language issues because it takes so much longer to get to know each other if one does not speak the same language (Andrea). Martina finds it "hard to separate who is actually your friend and who is just acquaintance" and when talking about making friends with typical Swedish people, Andrea says "there is a kind of fatal incompatibility issue".

Naturally, it is hard to find a social network if it is "really hard to talk to Swedish people if you don't have Swedish friends, and it is also hard to get to know more people when you are out, because it is hard to reach Swedes" (Martina), and a strong reason to support students in this. Another consequence that can arise from the frustration and confusion stemming from issues of cultural integration is exemplified in this experience:

My mother has always..., said 'I think Sweden will be good for you... in kind of toning down some of your rougher personality traits', but when I did go home for Christmas she said 'Well, I wanted them to tone down or soften, but I didn't want them to go away'. And I think for a while I lost a lot of that, and ever since it has been this negotiation of, ok, how do I not alienate people here, but also not alienate myself, or compromise myself. (Andrea, Focus group)

Pinpointing this story's moral, Wang cautions that one "[doesn't] have to make this awareness change who you are".

All these symptoms and reactions can indicate an impact on the student's' overall wellbeing. Not only will it impair their academic achievement, disregarding the cultural and social adjustment will make students feel excluded in their life outside academia, they will experience situations of misunderstandings that can trigger serious stress (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993). They will not feel at home, and might even develop depression or build a general negative attitude towards the host country and its people (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002).

Silent Understandings

Of course, the issues of behavioural communication are magnified due to the objective of this investigation. To give the whole topic of typical situations some balance, I will give a short account on things that seem to be working out just fine between the different cultural behaviour types. One of them is the American way of speaking the own opinion in class, which is very welcome in my experience and that Wang sees too. Sandee from Thailand says she feels fine in public, as she is used to rare small talk and a general distance. Regarding the issue of queuing her reaction is; "We do queues. Why do people talk about that?" She does not regard this behaviour as important in an acculturative perspective, as she is used to it, even in the aspect of "talking to strangers... We actually don't do that in Thailand, but Thai people have a perception that Westerners talk to strangers, but I asked Emma this and she said 'Swedish people don't do that' yeah..." (Sandee). Dima from Russia even says he likes the way people give each other space on the street, and says he feels a little like a Swede in Russia anyway.

Obviously, as there are certain interactions that raise problems, there are others that do not show a difference between cultures. Still, having no idea which aspects of one's own culture will clash and which not, as these things are hard to pinpoint from a subjective perspective, makes a preparation for cultural integration hard, though even more important.

One of the services students in Lund can approach to get support is the Student Health Centre, whose representatives expressed their wish to pro-actively build up counselling in cultural awareness considering that 20% or more of the students coming to the student health-centre are international (SHC).

In Contact with the International Students

Counting on the advantages of having an outsider view but deep insight into potential issues, the information gathered in the interview with the Student Health Centre composed a summarizing picture of cultural integration issues in Lund:

In general, problems that students appear to have are related to the cultural adjustment, meaning that these students often do not know what is expected from them.

Even here, the Swedish way of being quite reserved in public or when getting to know people, makes it hard or more time intensive to come into actual social contact. Further, the international students do not have the same means to find help in the Swedish social system, so they need help there too. Then, many students also need to get used to working in a group or talking in front of people, besides negotiating the relationship to the teacher or the counsellor, which can have a different hierarchy proportion, as shown above (SHC).

The interview with the student health centre proved the need for a better cultural integration of international students and pro-active support in that direction. Clearly, the students' and the counsellors' perceptions are reinforcing each other, supporting the assumption that there are patterns in the misunderstandings, which is making it easier to target them.

Today, according to the informants at the Student Health Centre and the International Desk, the need for counselling and personal support is met with mentor groups, fairs, lectures and open offices. They already do lectures about differing communication styles, especially targeted to group work, as many student have "very different manners of handling a group working situation" (SHC).

An often-mentioned step to help with the cultural integration is to force the students to interact by conjoining domestic and international students in the same corridor, which is done partly in Lund (Int. Desk and Gerda). As Dima tells, he could ask his corridor mates about anything he did not understand and "if you are just cooking something in the kitchen you can like, someone enters and you have a talk and then you continue drinking tea or coffee" (Dima). Such personal contact enhances the social context, which is the key aspect to achieve an In-group feeling for the students (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). As the health counsellors say; "It is about cracking those social codes".

The overlooking organisational positions do not necessarily know about the small daily struggles, as the interview with the employee at the International Desk showed. They do anticipate and support them, for example by organising the international mentor groups, but to

find out the underlying, invisible issues one should talk to the students themselves, or people in direct contact with them. Hence, the focus for the analysis will draw mainly on the student interviews. Still, the International Desk is orientated towards a better social contact for international students; “It is not that easy to get into contact with the Swedes. That is of course something that we are trying to work on” (Int. Desk).

As these summaries show, the students and the host-institutions share many perceptions on points of friction due to behavioural communication factors. Clearly, there are misunderstandings present that impair the students’ everyday life interactions, and negatively influence their feeling of belonging. Certain institutions are aware of this, but the issue does not have enough attention to conform with the university’s mission of having a highly international environment.

The Host Perspective

Gerda is from Germany, and has been a professor at Lund University for years, working regularly with international students in subjects of cultural sciences. The interview took a closer look on how she experiences and handles the differences of cultures in the classroom.

During the interview, she reflected extensively on her background. Her opinions about the students clearly show this background, and her values and priorities, which she expects from her students as well. For example, critical thinking and airing opinions clash with the behavioural codes some of the students are used to. About a situation of a group of Spanish students plagiarising, she said “And I mean, they just didn’t get what the point was, they did not see the boundary...but this I, yes, I learned this once and since then I explain it more explicitly” (Gerda). She did not want to punish this mistake, because she saw that it was not on purpose, and in the future, she adjusted her instructions. Thus, she used her awareness to try and understand the students’ point of view, an example of cultural empathy.

In her experience and opinion Americans, and even Russians, are “very responsive” and “taking up space in the class discussion” (Gerda). This is something I could observe in our class as well and Andrea confirms, stating that she gets really animated and dramatic when being together with her American friends. Asian and specifically Chinese students, less so Japanese and Korean students, Gerda describes as shy and reserved. They seem to not dare to think or say anything critical about what she says, but obediently read and follow

instructions, as, according to Gerda, the “typical shy Chinese girl” would. Although a topic for another study, this hint towards gendered stereotypes is interesting.

The professor does not experience Chinese students as very participatory during classes, but as very attached afterwards, as they still e-mail her, to get a letter of recommendation or let her know where they study now. This confirms the tendency to focus on long-term relationships (Hall & Hall, 1990, Lewis, 2006), and is in line with what Wang says about professional relations with people of higher rank back home: “if you hang out with colleagues, and there is a very strong hierarchy and if you can read the boss, for example, then you might, before others, get...maybe closer... (a promotion?) yeah!”

“Finns,” the professor says, “I experience as very difficult, because they do not talk, and [laughs] yes, really are very sparing with words and very reserved. For me, on the border of unintelligibility.” In contrast, she is more comfortable with French and Italian people, as they are “more like my German temperament and therefore much more familiar and positive,...because we also have the same frame of reference” (Gerda).

The aforementioned group work forms both a difficulty (SHC) as well as a useful tool; As professor, Gerda uses the diversity of students to get the best outcome, by putting them into culturally mixed groups, which also enhances their personal contact with each other. This has for example helped Sandee get to know her class and have a sense of belonging to it. (Sandee and Gerda).

Clearly, cultural diversity in a class is hard to manage, and a teacher’s style is very much based on own ideals and cultural upbringing. Therefore, at least during just a term and with not too many weekly encounters, it is hard to give every student the right treatment that can give each one the best conditions to learn and contribute in his own style. For this, teachers could benefit from gaining insight in the students’ behavioural communication and cultural context.

Tracking the Misunderstandings

Cultural differences evolve through borders, language, climate and history. They are “cartographic results of a long time of differing experiences and shifting contexts” (Hastrup, 2010, p. 120), and are, if internalized in an individual, mostly subconscious (Hall & Whyte, 1963 and Goffman, 1967). Due to these differences in cultural cognitive frames, and the rules of conduct learned when growing up, misunderstandings between cultures arise. If these are not consciously communicated, misperceptions can grow:

I heard it a lot, and I heard it pretty much as soon as I moved here during orientation week, like ‘oh Americans are so fake because they ask how they are and they don’t care...’ And I am like, ‘Swedes are so fake because they stand 2 m away from each other queueing for the bus, but you meet someone for 2 seconds and then you automatically hug them the next time you see them?’ (Andrea)

This statement shows a lack of both mutual cultural empathy, the understanding of another person’s perspective (Stephan & Finlay, 1999) and exchange of cultural values.

Both counsellors agree on this, as they experience the situation that other cultures have different explanations for psychological problems and their treatment, as well as different perceptions of counselling. More time is needed for the international students, because they cannot always see the consequences of their advice first, which means one needs to understand the students’ way of thinking first. Moreover, they agree that the communicational problems are due to differing cognitive frames. “Just to have a little more competence in this and understand why, why they express themselves a certain way, or why they act like this in a group situation, just to know that helps a lot.” (SHC).

Hunting for Marshmallows

To reinforce the importance and usefulness of awareness and empathy, another narrative from the interviews can be helpful. When talking about her least favourite place to be in Lund University Culture, Andrea named the grocery store, and told the following story:

I know that when I go to the grocery store I would be like [growling] "WHERE IS EVERYTHING?!?!?"...So, it is just gonna be one of those like, me texting you [the author] being like "Where are the Marshmallows?" Because ..I kind of figured out the scheme that they have, but I am always trying to apply like "my" grocery scheme, so like, I know where the baking aisle is, and that is where the Marshmallows would be, and so I went up and down the baking aisle a couple of times, looking for marshmallows until I was just like, where would they be? and then finally I was like "maybe they are in the candy?" but to me, Marshmallows aren’t candy, so I was just like, ok, this is ill placed...so, it makes me uncomfortable because I never will be able to...navigate, jah...like...never. (Andrea)

There are two interesting points that this story helps to exemplify: On the theoretical level, it visualizes the way one applies the own prototype of communicational styles onto another culture. Sometimes they are very different and understanding problems are realized immediately. Then again, the styles might seem similar and one will think communication will be no problem, as Andrea thought, “I kind of figured out the scheme” and assumed she knew what she could find where, but then it turned out, there are more subtle differences.

Fish cannot see Water

On a more applied level, Andreas reaction and perception towards doing something so mundane as grocery shopping shows how things that are taken for granted by the in-group, or, in this study's' context, the host culture, can turn into a great concern that complicates daily life. This phenomenon re-occurs in the material, for example when Martina has nothing to do because no one has time, and she simply did not expect that everyone would plan things in advance. The same counts for Vlad who takes advice from his teacher literally. These findings confirm once more that the need for empathy is not seen, unless awareness for cultural differences is raised first. Based on the empirical material and the finding that intercultural problems can be elusive, but at the same time pose daily life struggles, the need for a conscious approach is evident.

Discussing Steps towards Cultural Integration

If Lund University wants to integrate international students properly, how can the elusive, inherent barriers that cultural background is posing on behavioural communication be approached? As suggested in various literature, though at times with varying terms, one feasible possibility would be the development of cross-cultural competence, the understanding of cultural differences, mentioned in the previous research.ⁱⁱⁱ This chapter will discuss how this can be accomplished.

The Cognitive Level: Thinking Cross-Culture

After bringing attention to the issue of misunderstanding in intercultural communication, it is necessary to understand—and for that purpose to categorize—behavioural communication in order to be able to navigate it (Lewis, 2006, p. 29). Such an understanding requires the application of certain frames of comparison, for example, the

importance of hierarchy, speaking habits, poly- or monochronic acting, or collectivistic versus individualistic thinking, each of which are dimensions used by Meyer (2015), Hall and Whyte (1963), and Lewis (2006). In this section I will investigate how communication can be categorized in a pragmatic way, oriented on the empirical material.

Understanding through Patterns and Categories

On a broad level, we can assume that some underlying values do not differ between cultures. Some could even be called global or human values. For example, the need for survival, security and positive social contact (Maslow, 1943). Rather, the differences between cultures lies in how some of these are strived after.

As seen in the material, the generalization of talking about groups of people with the label of nationality is widely spread and acknowledged. When mentioning, for example, “America,” the informant can assume that I have a connotation in my head that will help me to make sense of what is going to be said about Americans. If nothing else, general labels make both communication and world navigation easier. Still, while generalizing is practical, it is important to criticise or at least reflect on our generalizations: When taken literally, generalizations can be dangerous, as they lead one to assume things without evidence. However, in most contexts, labels of categorization are not meant to be taken literally. The perspective that is taken in this study can be explained as followed: A clarification must be made as to what a person means in saying, for example, “In Russia we do...”. Very likely “in Russia” refers to the experience that a person who grew up in Russia had when living in the region called Russia, observing the people he/she had contact with and filtering this through the subjective perception. In everyday life, this is often self-explaining and a globally spread communicational code. The connotation of what “Russia” means is gathered from the context (Hall & Hall, 1990).

Clearly, even though it is an arbitrary process, to be able to describe something, one needs to label and categorize it, even people or in this case behaviour. Categorizations work, like theories, in order to explain something to someone, they do not claim to be inherently true. Moreover, just because a person belongs to one category, it does not mean that they cannot belong to others as well. In accordance with the purpose of the current research, this thesis incorporates general boxes with labels to categorize behavioural communication. Metaphorically, however, the locks are left open.

Shaping Culture

At the same time, even though generalizations are a helpful starting point, when describing a group of people, or a culture, one must keep in mind that stating “they are generally polite”, does not mean that *every* person from this group is *always* polite. A balance must be found between generalisations and individualism. Culture and personality are always intertwined, so there must be space for subjectivity and individuality within a culture (Hastrup, 2010). Moreover, this entails that a person can change one’s perception and habits (Stier, 2009). Individual experiences and encounters with different cultures throughout a person’s life change what is seen as social norm (Stier, 2009), so that every person develops a unique personality and attitude towards others. In the same way, on a broader spectrum, a culture and its habits can change. Consequently, not all behavioural communication is due to the region or culture one grows up in, it can be adjusted. Therefore, I argue that one can predict behavioural communication based on culture, but that individual habits must always be considered, thus pre-knowledge adapted carefully, when dealing with a foreign counterpart. Every individual is a little bit like a micro-culture, with own rules of conduct.

Similarly, when belonging to a cultural group, one is influenced by it, but could never be considered an absolute representation, due to the dynamic nature of cultural representations (Hastrup, 2010). The performance of cultural rules of conduct, like greeting or addressing each other, not only reproduces culture, it also combines codes to new ones, and therefore produces (Goffman, 1967). This is the performativity inherent in culture, which is always there, but never graspable, as it is changing all the time and is influenced by an uncountable number of interrelations (Barad, 2003). While making the definition of culture hard, the performativity of culture has the advantage that every individual can have an impact. An impact to the point that certain cultural changes can be actively influenced, as, for example, the conscious management of a growing number of international students at Lund University can work towards harmonic diversity.

Behavioural Communication as Categorization in Lund University Culture

Taking these reflections on categorizations and the shaping of culture into consideration, how can behavioural communication be organized in an authentic but helpful manner? To find this out, I will now examine how culturally dependent communication profiles surfaced in the empirical material.

In the interview with Gerda, the professor in cultural sciences, who has a good comparative overview when being confronted with a class of different cultures, it becomes clear that she is using labels of nationality, but to describe the different cultural groups, she uses factors of behavioural communication:

As mentioned, she perceives Americans, and even Russians as “very responsive” and “taking up space in the class discussion” (Gerda). She does not understand the quietness of Finns, but feels more comfortable with French and Italian people, as she says, due to a similar “temperament” and “frame of reference”. These findings show that she does not determine if she gets along with students based on their nationality, but depending on how they communicate with her as a professor. In addition, she categorizes students according to how responsive and critically minded they are, individual traits that she values.

The interviewed students had more of an insider view, which supplied more personal and hidden insights, and stronger emotional reactions. Furthermore, information indicating how they distinguish between cultures on the base of behavioural communication signs could be found here as well.

Martina seemed to have a functioning communication with the cultural group of Australians and therefore felt comfortable spending time with them. Stating that she likes the “tidy and organized” Germans is clearly ordering her preferences after how people behave in relation to her and her values, which is essential for effective communication (Hall & Whyte, 1963). This is paired with her stories of polychronic and spontaneous handling of tasks back home, and the high amount of talking and interaction in public or shops, which, according to her experience, is not valued in Sweden.

In contrast, Andrea is foremost concerned with the issue of personal space, and the “weird dichotomy” she finds herself confronted with, because Europeans are “huggy, [and] very touchy feely, if you know each other. But if you don't know each other, completely stand offish.” Even though she sees Europe as one category, she differs between the perception of personal space that she bases this assumption on, which means she categorizes after behavioural communication, only uses the labels of nationality. Another comparison using behaviour as point of reference is mentioned by Dima who is using the amount of talking to describe culture, when he says that he is more Swedish than Russian in the aspect of talking, as he is not very talkative.

To go on, I want to focus on the fact that a clear distinction is made between “Asian” and “Western” communicative culture, by several informants. Wang said, she studied

Western culture and knew people here are direct and express their feelings, and Sandee referred to this distinction as well. There clearly is an established and commonly acknowledged contrast. But does Western versus Asian suffice to explain differing interactional behaviour? Rather, it is the handling of hierarchy, the communicational rules of student and professor interaction that are the crucial distinction here. This example emphasizes how important it is to keep the point of perspective in mind: To someone from China, Swedes might be direct, to me they are just right and to more than one of my American acquaintances, they are incredibly restrained.

The interesting fact that Wang and Sandee clearly were raised with the category “Western” in mind, and had pre-knowledge about what this means gets illuminated by their actual experience of living in Lund. As Sandee mentions, her perception of people talking to each other in public was wrong, at least regarding Lund University Culture, as she found out by asking a Swedish classmate. The level of a category has to be adjusted to the contextual need. For simply talking about it or going on a holiday through Europe, “direct and express their feelings” might suffice to avoid alienation. This is a different story when one is going to live and spend daily life with and among a specific culture, as Wang and Sandee realized.

Clearly, when judging who they feel comfortable with or how they perceive differences in communication, the informants are categorizing after how people behave, and are not comfortable when the behavioural communication is very different to their own, or very unexpected. The terms of nationality are mentioned a lot, yet, they seemingly are used to connect the unknown and diffuse parts of interaction to something known and easy to handle. Overall, the distinctions between people that surface in the presented material can be summarized in talkative versus word sparingly, direct versus polite, organized versus spontaneous, and hierarchical versus consensus oriented.

As these patterns have the same focus and contain some of its dimensions, I utilize the aforementioned Lewis – model, which was developed by Richard Lewis and is mostly used in international communication consulting, for further discussion (Lewis, 2006). It fits to the schemes which the informants are applying when talking about differences in behavioural communication in most aspects. Combining aspects of behavioural communication categorized into being either linear-, multi-, or re- active, the Lewis-model and its cross-cultural perspective utilize symbolic interaction to establish a pre-knowledge (Lewis, 2006).

LINEAR-ACTIVE	MULTI-ACTIVE	REACTIVE
Talks half the time	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Does one thing at a time	Does several things at once	Reacts to partner's action
Plans ahead step by step	Plans grand outline only	Looks at general principles
Poite but direct	Emotional	Poite, indirect
Partly conceals feelings	Displays feelings	Conceals feelings
Confronts with logic	Confronts emotionally	Never confronts
Dislikes losing face	Has good excuses	Must not lose face
Rarely interrupts	Often interrupts	Doesn't interrupt
Job-oriented	People-oriented	Very people-oriented
Uses mainly facts	Feelings before facts	Statements are promises
Truth before diplomacy	Flexible truth	Diplomacy over truth
Sometimes impatient	Impatient	Patient
Limited body language	Unlimited body language	Subtle body language
Respects officialdom	Seeks out key person	Uses connections
Separates the social and professional	Interweaves the social and professional	Connects the social and professional

Figure 4 The basic categorizations of behavioural communication (Lewis)

That a similar categorization is empirically suggested, is an argument for the model's usefulness to apply to the context of Lund University Culture. The informants categorize automatically, which is a human way of dealing with the plurality of life, but the level of categorization that gives the specific situation or topic justice can vary. The fieldwork results have supported the feasibility of using behavioural communication in order to establish a better understanding of intercultural communication for international students. Applied to the study of cultural integration of international students, the communicational conventions of the region and culture one grew up in appear to be a good compromise. Knowing about them can give practical advice, but does not generalize too much. Thus, the conclusion that cultural behaviour types can, and in this context, need to, be categorized is drawn and used as a point of entrance for the further analysis.

Prejudice versus Empathy

Once a categorization is established, it needs to be paired with pre-knowledge. However, pre-knowledge needs to be handled with care. Just like a kitchen knife, pre-knowledge can be used in two ways: to prepare or to hurt. It can turn into prejudice and fear, or it can turn into understanding and empathy.

According to Spencer Rodgers and McGovern, it is the barriers in intercultural communication that produce prejudice through emotional reaction and frustrating failure experience (2002). Their study paints a picture of the negative consequences that can occur, if intercultural encounters aren't managed adequately, calling for a careful approach and more awareness. Therefore, to fully understand someone's behavioural signs in an intercultural encounter, it is beneficial if not necessary to understand the "other's" as well as one's own culture, the rules of conduct at work, and the differences between those. This ability to

imagine to “be in someone else’s shoes” is called empathy and can be applied to communication behaviour just like any other behaviour (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). For instance, Gerda was showing awareness and empathy of the differences internalized in cognitive frames, when adjusting her instructions to the students understanding of plagiarism.

Knowing something about someone can be a useful resource. As every student from my academic environment knows, it is important to use resources, but to not plagiarise what one read. Drawing on the picture of a traveller, the ur-type of someone meeting new cultures, Stier suggests what he calls the conscious traveller. As such, pre-knowledge as a resource is handled with openness, curiosity, and understanding and the confrontation with other cultures is used to “integrate new impulses in the own frame of references” (Stier, 2009, p. 150), it is not taken at face value. The consciousness implicates the capability to change perspectives and to reflect on one’s own cultural context as well as that of others, relating to the idea of empathy.

Balancing Adjustment and Identity

Likewise, it is important to look at oneself as well as others in terms of personality. The students’ reflections on their identity highlight a very important point that can trigger self-consciousness, which is the insight that you “don’t have to make this awareness change who you are” (Wang). One should not get out there to be like other people, but to understand them and oneself, and avoid unnecessary conflicts. Trying too hard or questioning the own internalized behavioural communication would not end well either; as Andreas story of visiting home and feeling like her personality was changed, showed.

Hence, at the same time as awareness and empathy can create understanding for the other point of view, and help to adjust to how people interact in the new culture, they should also let the individual see the value in their own way of doing things (Hall & Whyte, 1963). It is therefore important to stick to a culture relative and unbiased discussion, when, for example, conducting cultural training events. Indeed, in any support that is given to international students as well as hosts in contact with them.

The Practical Level: Living Cross-Culture

The entrance that cross-cultural training is taking builds on the premise that such empathy as described above can be developed and trained (Hall & Whyte, 1963). This chapter will examine in greater detail how knowledge developed before transitioning to a new cultural

environment can be used in practice to facilitate the cultural integration of international students.

Taking the informants' statements as a starting point, the idea of cross-cultural competence will be investigated. Within this frame, the Lewis-model as a practical tool will be discussed. The aim in dealing with the aforementioned and discussed misunderstandings and communicational problems is not to erase them, but to make them easier to understand and less stressful.

To Clash or to Cooperate

The question remains, what practical tools can help to harmonize communication? Lewthwaite's (1996) investigations on international students is moving towards practical suggestions. Amongst these are an ongoing counselling for international students and support by people with cross-cultural competence, which has been attempted in many universities but in different ways and with different purposes (Coley et al., 2016). One crucial aspect is the delegation of responsibility and the option of cultural training towards adequate people, those who are in management or teaching positions around the international students (Coley et al., 2016; Fischer, 2014). However, one needs to be careful when trying to teach something from the top, —as some institutions do and a cross-cultural training would, too— especially in such subjective topics as culture. Yet, studies as the present one can be regarded as justifying a cross-cultural training-based approach. At least on the premise that it is paired with and based on empirical bottom-up material. The finding that not only the Student Health Centre and the experiences of other institutions, but even the students suggested more activities that support the learning of these differences is advocating for the approach of a cross-cultural training in order to raise awareness and understanding.

The repeated recommendation of engaging in an interest indicates that an activity, or even group work at school, makes socializing easier, as there is an immediate purpose at hand, for example solving a task, winning a game or preparing food together (Sandee, Dima). The students' tactics are mostly targeting the issue of social contact, but as Martina said, more information on how to engage socially is needed. Concerning how to attain this knowledge, the Student Health Centre in particular shared some concrete visions on how they want to prevent international students from feeling lost and lonely, and to facilitate their integration. The ulterior motive here is to use cultural training as “targeted showing and directive telling”

(Gerda), which however only really turns into showing when individuals take the insights of the training with them into their own life.

Creating Cross Cultural Competence

The intention behind this research is to find a way that dissolves the perceived media transparency of culture, the way we take cultural habits for granted and do not expect differences when interacting with others. With other words, a way that makes people aware of cultural differences, and that facilitates their handling and explains different behavioural types. Therefore, I want to investigate the term *cross-cultural competence*. It is defined as being aware of those differing cognitive frames, to expect their appearance, and not draw assumptions from behaviour that seems inexplicable at first (Lewis, 2006). It entails being reflective of the own frame of reference and its stance in relation to others' ways of thinking, and to act accordingly in intercultural encounters (Hall & Whyte, 1963). The use of cross-cultural competence has the potential to greatly influence the acculturation process, and is followed in Miranda et al. (2015), who wants to bring together students by enhancing their, as it is called here, global competency and even Presbitero (2016) states that this could moderate the effects of culture shock on international students regarding psychological and socio-cultural factors. Thus, both are taking up ideas in congruence with the focus of this thesis.

This idea of developing cross-cultural competence is not at all bound to national cultures, it interweaves through everyone's daily life. Encountering it in the latest trending Norwegian teenager TV-Series *Skam* is therefore not at all surprising. The character Sana gives a summary as general as it is applicable on the matter: "You cannot judge someone's action without even asking why one did it" (Andem, 2016).

Cultural Training

Besides forming the base of the analytical research phase, the new knowledge created in an interview (Davies, 2002) can have direct impact on the perception of social reality and the behaviour of both parties, as it seemed to be the case for one of my participants: After having talked about how people talk and interrupt or not talk and not interrupt, and how that can have cultural causes, the participant from China seemed to have more confidence to speak up and make everyone listen to her in class discussion. This was a natural participant observation, where I was in the field itself that I am studying. It supports the point that already talking about

and reflecting on the issue of inter-cultural communication is a step towards the development of cultural awareness and empathy.

The idea of a cultural training refers to a workshop or seminar, that explains some of the common mistakes between cultures, working with visuals and stories, and integrating the stories and opinions of participants in order to trigger cultural reflective thought. Even just reflecting can enhance intercultural understanding to a certain degree. Surprising stories and flexible as well as knowledgeable trainers can make such workshops entertaining. Especially in small groups, the direct questioning and sharing of stories is possible, enabling every participant to get the most urgent things from his/her' perspective on the table.

Such a training can show in which points behaviour between international students might differ, using examples such as those in the analysis, but at the same time give an overarching scheme that can be adapted to everyone's living circumstances. Of course, a theory or model is always only helpful in combination with what one wants to achieve. For this study, behaviour types and to know about them is helpful to integrate the international students, because communication helps to position oneself in relation to others. Having a position and therefore an identity makes the student feel integrated and secure, like a part of a net. The consequence is a contribution to overall wellbeing, which again enhances the best overall outcome for the study abroad stay. The fact that the student survey on international students by the International Desk suggested to "integrate multicultural skills training into [the] curriculum" (Ripmeester, 2017, see Appendix C), supports the cultural training idea.

It is however, important to consider that cross-cultural competence cannot be taught in a pragmatic way. Just to know about different cultures is not enough, to experience and train is better. To achieve this in a short time frame through close and personal encounters, for example group work (Sandee) or methods such as role plays, seems beneficial. Even the application of concrete models and concepts as teaching material is useful, because these are catering to the human need of categorizing our environment, in order to navigate in and act upon it (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The enhancement of cross-cultural competence will offer the tools to understand people from different cultures, but not offer knowledge about every culture. It will not be able to tell how to treat every individual from a certain culture. It can however, make foreign behaviour comprehensible through empathy.

The Lewis-Model as a Practical Tool

To facilitate cultural integration in terms of communication and personal interaction, the *Lewis-model* can be utilized to deepen cross-cultural competence. Combined with background knowledge about values and actions, and drawing on the empirical research it is based on, it can help to make one aware of the existence of differences between cultures, and how one can deal with particular differences in specific situations. Although designed for giving communication advice to business professionals who are working internationally, it is possible to apply the model to misunderstandings in the context of international students. They have to deal with similar cultural issues as we have seen in previous sections. This section aims to define its potential and suggest necessary modifications, as well as to discuss the practical implementation of cultural training.

Even though the model and concept employ stereotypes, these are not supposed to be used as prejudices. It is important to be reflective and flexible in one's attitude towards a new culture. Both Stier and Richard Lewis caution to use what one knows about a culture already, to not see these as solid rules but rather as orientation lines and possible explanation for inexplicable events (Stier, 2009; Lewis, 2006) based on empathy.

Moreover, when talking about the cultural codes of conduct that a person follows according to the Lewis model, these are not necessarily describing a person's personality, but tendencies of collective value. For example, instead of saying "this person is rude and doesn't respect the teacher", it would describe the person as being used to a horizontal level of hierarchy. This approach to cross-cultural training therefore undermines stereotypical labels, rather than enforcing them.

Although the categories and types of communication behaviours can be disputed, the model in its current form has shown to be effective, foremost in a business context (Lewis, 2006). I could observe and experience the insights it offers both to myself and to various other participants during my internship, my studies and when observing cultural- training sessions.

One of the most apparent advantages of the Lewis- model, with its three types of behavioural communication, is that it is easily understandable. One closer look at the triangle is enough to figure out the basic system (see figure 5).

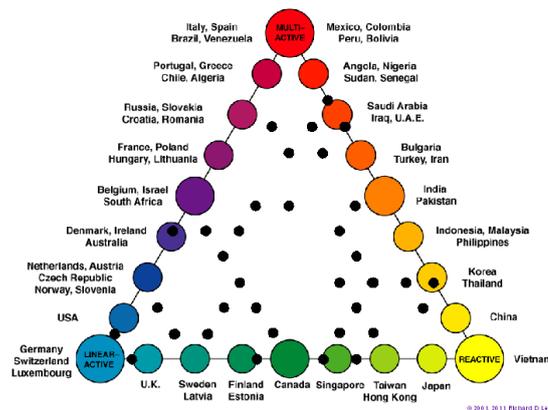


Figure 5 The Lewis-Model with cultures ordered according to their Communication Behaviour Profile © Richard Le

In addition, the dimensions used to categorize the behaviour are so general, that they can be applied to any interactive situation or group of people. The model is not bound by nationality. Moreover, it creates cognitive empathy (Stephan & Finlay, 1999) because it concretely describes forms of interactive behaviour, for example interrupting or not interrupting, and therefore enables people to reflect easily on their own behaviour in relation to others.

When applying it to a student environment, the point is not to find the “right” category to put fellow international students in. Neither, from an institutional perspective, is it to split up the students and treat each group differently. The point is that both sides, individuals from the hosting as well as the foreign culture actively think about and reflect upon the fact that the “other” might have a very different perspective on the cultural codes of conduct that shape their everyday life, and what these could be. The model and its accompanying training sessions are a way of actively engaging people in cross-cultural training, working with their specific and immediate environment. Therefore, the linear-, multi- and re-active behaviour categories in figure 3 can help institutions to define how international students can be integrated in a way appropriate to their culture and can even teach pre-knowledge about certain cultures, based on a general cross-cultural awareness. For example, the lectures at the Student Health Centre could be developed into something even more applicable when giving the students an actual tool, like the Lewis-model, to be able to fall back onto in daily life.

From a critical point of view, it is important to ask what would have to be changed to make the Lewis-model better suited to an international student environment:

Whereas applying the model in the business sector has the advantage of a clear line between the personal and the professional spheres, using the model in a student environment

is a more complex matter. Being a student is very much a lifestyle, intertwining social and professional sites in a different way. Therefore, examples and research on cultural behaviour are harder to limit. As Stephan and Finlay emphasize, when mediating empathy, it is important to know the audience and their socio-cultural context (1999). Whereas most of international or intergroup communication in business takes place in a meeting-room or similar space, international students are dealing with intercultural issues day in day out, in close relationship to all other aspects of their lives. This calls for an adjustment of the training and model, for example, through the expansion of daily life areas into discussions.

Dimensions such as the perception of time, personal space and hierarchy are neatly applicable but making friends and informal greeting habits, for example, play a much more significant role in a student's life than the Lewis-model gives them credit for. In this regard, the model should be applied and discussed in a more complex way, engaging probably more areas than when applied to business cases. It is, for example, possible to divide a student's environment into various frames of daily life: Social contacts, within the classroom, in public space, the basic chores of daily life, et cetera.

The basic categories concerning how one can behave in an interaction should be slightly revised as well, as some of them are too targeted towards a business interaction. Moreover, of course the stories and case studies that are used in the cultural training and the book *When Cultures Collide* (Lewis, 2006) could advantageously be adapted to a student's everyday circumstances. Furthermore, the fact that international students deal with intercultural issues not on one front, but on many, should be considered. They must deal with the host culture, the new academic culture, and the culturally diverse profiles of fellow international students.

Combining Teaching and Application

At the same time, motivated by the material, it seems reasonable to work with two different dimensions to improve cultural integration: On the one hand, integration needs to consider time and the importance of the process, which includes learning by mistake and the possibility to apply pre-knowledge. The other dimension should concern the quality of the horizontal points of contact, how students meet and engage with others, which needs to be qualitatively positive and personal (Lopez & Bui, 2014). Moreover, it needs to advocate cultural relativism, not ranking one way to do things over another (Hastrup, 2010).

As established, the development of empathy is crucial in intercultural encounters, but mediating empathy is not an easy task. It is not possible to teach, however, one can facilitate its development with certain cultural training, as shown above.

Even though the process of integration can be facilitated, it cannot be significantly shortened. Pre-knowledge about a specific culture and a cross-cultural competence can support and make the process easier, but they only work in combination with personal experiences that are made over time. A student needs to accumulate experiences that question his/her own codes of conduct, while being observant and open minded when going abroad, to reveal cross-cultural differences. Pairing this with cross-cultural training gives the advantage that the student can apply and adjust knowledge from it to his/her real life, therefore drawing the for his unique position most important points out of the training sessions. This is also why it would be most beneficial to do such training sessions not only before, but also in the study abroad location and several times throughout the stays, as the Student Health Centre already indicated (Hall & Whyte, 1963).

Even though models like the Lewis-model are a generalisation, the practical use of such a categorization is convincing and can give students and hosts relevant foundations of pre-knowledge about each other. The point is not if the explanation that the trainer or the model is giving is true, the aim is that it is practically helping the interaction to function to both parties' satisfaction.

Creating empathy and mutual understanding with cross-cultural training can result in more harmonic communication between cultures and individuals from different cultures and therefore a better cultural integration. There is an apparent need to facilitate the integration process, to enable students and other stakeholders to increase awareness and empathy, while at the same time cultivating the rough road to finding the students space in the new culture as a valuable learning process.

The Bigger Picture

Applicability in Lund University Culture

“This feels like my home. I know every street; I know people in the city (Lund) and I got used to the life here” (Martina). This is how integration sounds; this is how it should feel to be an international student just as much as it should as a domestic one. International students in Lund, should be supported in finding this sense of belonging, in order to get the

best outcome of their experience of studying abroad, and this study is showing a way to reach this.

Drawing on the situations and interactions that participants reported to be easily misunderstood or confusing, this study developed a conceptual framework on where the need for improvement is and how this could be implemented. As shown in the analysis, the combination of a concrete training and ongoing application onto real life seems to be most feasible.

As this case is dealing with the environment of Lund as a student city in specific, the findings can be used and developed further by institutions like the International Desk, the Student Health Centre, Student Nations in Lund, administration offices and staff at Lund University and any local organisations dealing with international students. This could be, for example, in the form of seminars and lectures on this matter or a handbook targeting cross cultural differences and specific cultures. This should even be spread among international students themselves, maybe even in forms of a culture-café or cross-cultural-blog.

In a bigger picture, understanding intercultural communication in the qualitative analytical way this study does, results in; an improved personal experience for the international students, as an increased communication competence helps to ease out the culture shock; a better cultural integration and therefore higher student retention and improved conditions for academic success; closer social contacts and eventually generally better international relations between people from different cultures and countries.

An integrative attitude through understanding and empathy, establishing an overall amalgamation rather than assimilating the international students will teach them and all other stakeholders a tolerance for diversity and the ability to work with it. At the same time, Lund University as an institution will establish good reputations and relations.

The nature of this study increases in significance because it is focused on researching the *software* of student life, the invisible and seemingly mundane issues, instead of the *hardware*, who is graduating and how successfully (Hofstede et al., 2010). The latter can give better statistical results but less specific indications on how to improve numbers.

As the international students' mobility rate is rising, and business constantly becomes more globalized, qualitative research into better cultural integration and interaction of tomorrow's workforce will answer a growing need. Students are the sector of the future, so improving cultural integration and spreading cross-cultural competence in university environments is about building the base for a cultural- relative future, considering time and

experience as important factors. Overall, this study's findings can help to make the diversity at Lund University an asset rather than a challenge.

From Micro to Macro

Even though my study deals with students at Lund University specifically, the findings can be translated to other university environments with a strong international character, as the underlying cultural clashes that will become visible are not specific for Lund University Culture. To make the whole international stay a positive learning experience will even make the future establishment of international relations easier, a factor interesting out of a global economic perspective as well.

On top of that, the findings are educational for anyone communicating with people from other cultures than their own on a daily basis. The inclusion of a variety of cultures mirrored in the interview participants offers the possibility for more people to recognize themselves and thus start to reflect on their own culture specific behaviour in comparison to others. At the same time, using qualitative data and personal narratives entails the practicality that whoever reads the content of this study, can hopefully use it as a navigating tool to make intercultural interaction easier and spread cultural awareness and competence.

Thinking bigger, Intercultural encounters are undoubtedly a matter of massive importance, not only for Europe but in the whole world, tendency rising, and creating cross-cultural awareness in even just a little corner of the world is a step in the right direction for humanity.

Conclusion

International students encounter a variety of exciting but also confusing unwritten rules of culture when moving to the environment at Lund University, one of them being the way people interact. As behavioural communication is a rather subconscious and therefore often elusive activity, it rarely gets targeted in practical advice to students themselves but also institutions in contact with them, even more seldom with cultural specific advice.

The aim of my thesis was to analyse and understand how international students experience the process of cultural integration, focusing on behavioural communication. By using Lund University as a case study and interviewing students with different cultural backgrounds, I wanted to find out in which context of direct social interaction they feel

comfortable, where misunderstandings appear, and how these can be explained in relation to their cultural context. Thus, insight was given into the elusive acts of intercultural communication that a cultural integration entails and the presumption, that underlying, small interactions in daily life can pose unexpected complications was confirmed. Highlighted as complicated were especially the social actions of greeting, public behaviour and personal space, hierarchy in terms of addressing each other and directives given in an academic environment, whereas lack of social contacts formed a main consequence for all of them.

Depending on their cultural background, the student experience situations differently. This was argued to be rooted in differing values and connotations that are internalized in a person's' subconscious behaviour and not expected to be acted out differently. The findings were supported by the application of cultural-theoretical literature around intercultural encounters and symbolic interaction (Hall & Whyte, 1963; Goffman, 1967).

Based on the findings that cultural integration needs self-awareness and understanding of differences, considerate of the cultural contexts of both host country and international students, it is concluded that the facilitation of cultural integration can be reached through a culturally sensitive management. In the discussion, the feasibility of orientating cross-cultural pre-knowledge on culturally conditioned behavioural types, which can for example be described with the help of the Lewis-model, was assessed.

Through understanding and respecting the foreign culture in its similarities as well as differences to one's own culture, a cultural cognitive empathy can be developed. Not only will this "make the unintelligible understandable" (Stephan & Finlay, 1999, p.737), it will also greatly improve a person's self-knowledge and compassion, beneficial even for the situation of re-integrating into their home culture and generally dealing with people of a different mind-set throughout their whole life, no matter the national culture. Thus, the impact of culture-shock and reverse-culture shock (Presbitero, 2016), can be turned into a beneficial learning experience rather than a trauma.

Resuming these insights, this study suggests cross-cultural training as a tool that could improve the cross-cultural competence in staff, students and extracurricular institutions to manage and meet international students appropriately and facilitate the cultural integration of international students into Lund University Culture.

With this thesis, I want to call for a strategical use of knowledge about one's own and others' ways of life. Not to use it to judge each other, rather to be able to adjust the own

perspective in order to make encounters more enjoyable. As shown in the analysis, this can be done using the steps of awareness, understanding, and empathy.

I am convinced that knowing a person's cultural context can help in deciphering the meaning behind the sign they are sending, because I have experienced it myself numerous times. Once, I loudly talked to a classmate about having lunch together after class, and I expected everyone who was inclined to join us. However, after having done an interview with Sandee, I knew that in Thai culture one does not join or feel included in a conversation that is not explicitly directed to one. As Sandee says "there is a notion [in Thailand] that you shouldn't be paying attention to other peoples' business when they are talking". I also learned that socializing over a shared meal is very popular in her culture, from both Sandee and the Halls (1990). Consequently, I knew Sandee would probably like to join for lunch, and that I would have to directly ask her. Therefore, I remembered to ask "Sandee, are you going to join us for lunch?" and she happily said yes. This example is showing how categories and maybe stereotypical pre-knowledge can help to predict the reaction one's counterpart will have on something that is said or done. They also help to act strategically in order to achieve an intended consequence, which in this case was me wanting Sandee to join us for lunch. Clearly, the awareness and acceptance of cultural diversity was beneficial.

Some perspectives and aspects related to the topic of intercultural communication and international students had to fall short in this study, due to time and space limitations, and to keep the content on a comprehensive level. I want to point out and suggest some of them as relevant and contributing ideas for further research in this area.

Even though this study did not have the empirical data or objective frame to engage in this issue, gender can be a determining factor in communication, and is often closely tied to the perception and treatment of both men and women. The differences regarding this issue in different cultures would be a very relevant perspective and add to the complexity of the study's findings.

Also, as indicated in the material, the issue of a language barrier that can impact intercultural communication negatively is clearly a crucial factor. Even though examples of this surfaced in the data collection, I will not develop further on this. It is too big a topic to be given justice here, but poses a very promising suggestion for further research, such as investigating how language and cultural behaviour are intertwined and influence the experience of integration by international students.

Moreover, it would be useful to explore the practical conditions more thoroughly, the spaces in which and with whom organized cross-cultural trainings for groups in Lund University Culture can be realized.

Coming back to the observation of the classroom in the beginning of this thesis; Getting to know Pippi Longstocking might actually enlighten the one or the other on the values of loyalty and individuality. My point is, however, independent of what this particular course might do, in general one can now say that it is possible and feasible to discuss cultural differences in a classroom setting. Especially students who have experienced misunderstandings would be supported by it in their reflections about cultural differences and could apply insights wherever they are going, no matter if to school or to the next grocery store.

Endnotes

ⁱ Pippi Longstocking is the young heroine of one of the most famous books of Swedish children's literature, written by Astrid Lindgren and published in 1945 (Metcalf, 2002).

ⁱⁱ This paragraph is adapted from a previous paper written for the MACA programme in march 2016; "The travel of Meaning through Media - Reflections on Ethnographic Methods" by Silja Wendt.

ⁱⁱⁱ The idea of cross-cultural competence also appears with other terms like global competency, cultural intelligence, and intercultural sensitivity.

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Interviews

All interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed by the author (Silja Wendt):

International Desk (Int. Desk), one representative, 23rd of January 2017, Lund.

Student Health Centre (SHC), two representatives, 24th of January 2017, Lund.

Wang, Student, 26th of January 2017, Lund.

Martina, Student, 26th of January 2017, Lund.

Andrea, Student, 26th of January and 7th of February 2017, Lund.

Dima, Student, 27th of January 2017, Lund.

Sandee, Student, 14th of February 2017, Lund.

Gerda, Professor, 17th of February, 2017, Lund.

Focus Group with Wang, Andrea, Sandee, and Dima, 17th of February 2017, Lund.

Images

Figure 1:

Screenshot from Lund University's Website *International Cooperation*, retrieved from <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/about/international-cooperation>,

Figure 2:

The Iceberg-model: Underlying values are influencing visible behaviour (adapted from *Beyond Culture*, Edward T. Hall, 1976) – retrieved from <https://sigrid Davis.wordpress.com/2015/11/05/maori-as-priority-learners/>

Figure 3:

An unexpected difficulty - *Pizza in Sweden* © 2015, Scooter Michaels (Student Newspaper Lundagård, retrieved from Online paper: <http://lundagard.net/2015/03/17/pizza-in-sweden/>

Figure 4:

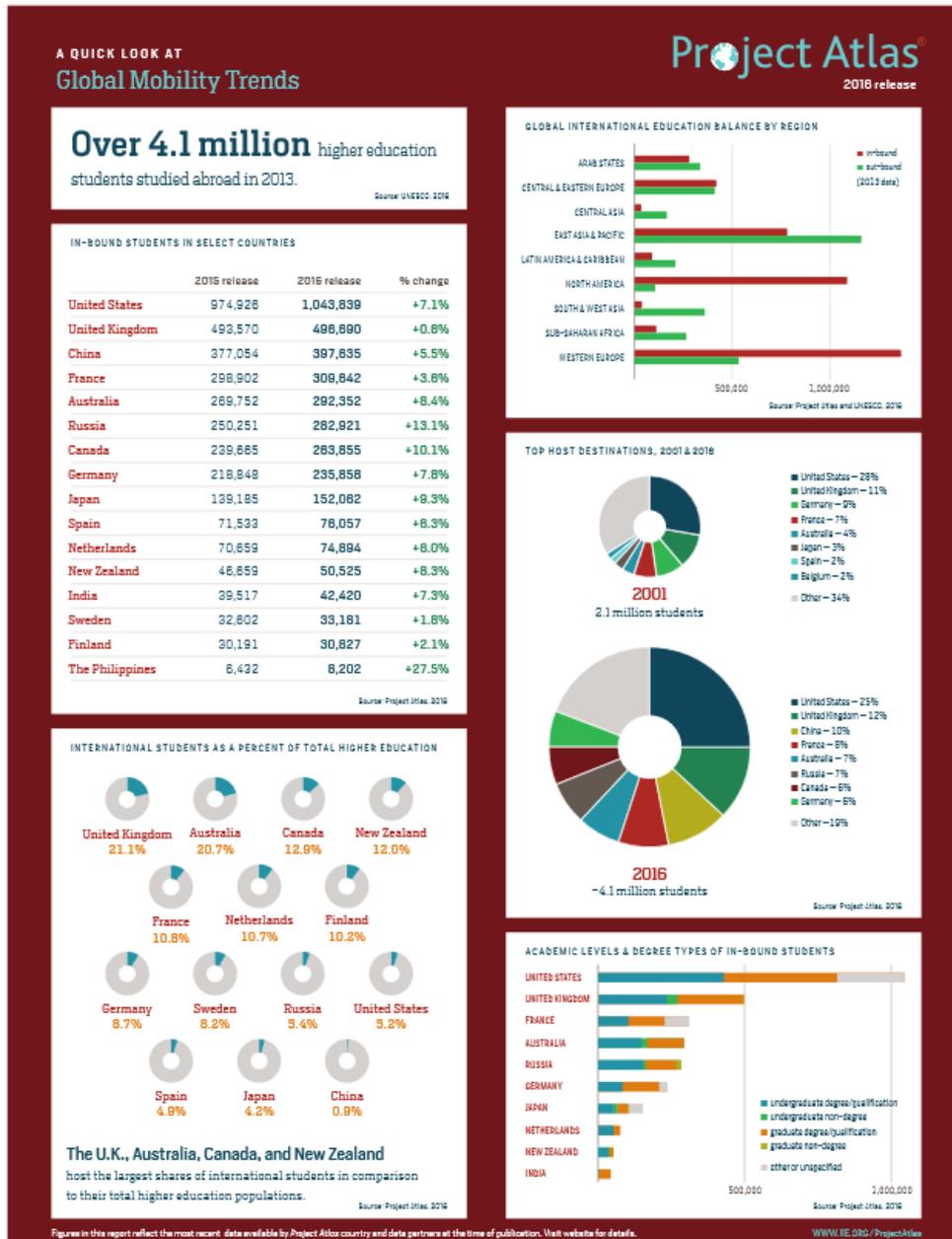
The basic categorizations of behavioural communication, © Richard D. Lewis, retrieved from <https://www.crossculture.com/latest-news/the-lewis-model-dimensions-of-behaviour/>

Figure 5:

The Lewis-Model with cultures ordered according to their Communication Behaviour Profile, © 2001,2011 Richard D. Lewis. Retrieved from <https://www.crossculture.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/6a00e5512cb0e4883301901c351f9f970b-800wi1.jpg>

Appendix

A. Statistics on global mobility trends among students (UNESCO & Project Atlas, 2016)



B. The Evaluation Tests

The self-evaluation test that was done right before the individual interviews with the international students initiated reflective thought about the own behavioural communication. Its results always depend on the context the informant is thinking of, anyway, it fulfilled the function of triggering memories that can function as insightful narratives in the thereafter following interview. Thus, my results are more of an inspiration and point of departure to talk about, than representative.

The version I used is adapted from the short version that *Richard Lewis Communications* used for consulting in international business initially. These have now been substituted by a thorough online assessment.

This is an example of one test done by an informant:

Communicational Behaviour Profile

In a conversation, I usually

Talk most of the time	Talk half of the time	Listen most of the time
Have limited body language	Have subtle body language	Have unlimited body language
Am Emotional	Am polite but direct	Polite and indirect
Conceal feelings	Partly conceal feelings	Display feelings
Don't interrupt	Rarely interrupt	Often interrupt
Stick to facts	Put feelings before facts	Think statements are promises

When there is a task to be fulfilled I

Look at general principles	Plan ahead step by step	Plan the grand outline only
Am very people-oriented	Am people oriented	Am task-oriented
Am Sometimes impatient	Am impatient	Am patient
Use connections	Respect official channels	Seek out key persons
React to partners actions	Do several things at once	Do one thing at a time

In general, I

Separate studies and social things	Mix studies and social things	Connect the social with studies
Think truth is flexible	Put diplomacy before truth	Put truth before diplomacy
Confront emotionally	Never confront	Confront logically
Dislike losing face	Must not lose face	Have good excuses/explanations

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C. Student Barometer Report (Ripmeester, 2016), accessed through the Lund University International Desk

Conclusion & Recommendations ISB 2016

LUND UNIVERSITY

- **High score on recommendation, which has increased over time**
- **Institution reputation, specific course title and cost of study are 3 main drivers of study choice**
- **Alumni play a role in the choice process – but worthwhile to explore further**
- **The arrival experience would be enhanced if setting up a bank account was more smooth and this issue has deteriorated over time too**
- **The main progress for satisfaction in the learning area could come from more focus on employability (the next step after graduation!) and a closer link between education and the world of work – *Employability is key for recommendation (and future student recruitment), provide tools and (alumni) networks to strengthen position.***
- **Make sure feedback system is clear for internationals – *Provide more transparency in this area.***
- **Manage expectations around the cost of living**
- **Integration between Swedish and international students remains an issue – *Maybe more attention for (employability) benefits of an international classroom could solve this? Aim for Swedish students and show importance of ‘working in an international team’ as key employability skill. Integrate multicultural skills training into curriculum.***



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