Toward A Sojourner's
Model of Post-Secondary Learning

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Abstract

This paper will introduce the sojourner's model of Post-Secondary learning (SMOPL). This new model illustrates the integrative and overlapping structures of culture shock and participatory action research into a single conceptual framework. The aim of SMOPL was two-fold; first, to help the visiting international student (i.e., sojourner) to cope with the common problem of debilitating academic performance. The second aim of the SMOPL was to provide more general application for personal change and improved performance in new academic setting.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to introduce and discuss the SMOPL (the Sojourner's Model Of Post-secondary Learning). A "model" properly represents a human experience when its assumptions can provide empirical research and expert opinion for its context, rationale, and legitimacy. Accordingly, three assumptions for a sojourner model of post-secondary learning (SMOPL) are presented first.

Assumptions

There are three assumptions in support of the Sojourner Model of Post-Secondary Learning (SMOPL, pronounced "smoh-pull"). The first assumption is that the sojourner model of post-secondary learning (SMOPL) describes primarily sojourners attending a post-secondary institution experiencing culture shock. A "sojourner" is defined as a foreign language student on an extended study visa in a new country. "Culture shock" is defined as a feeling of disorientation that occurs in some foreign language speaking adult males (and females?) attending a post-secondary institutions over a 1-year time period.

The second assumption is that the SMOPL assumes that the English language limitation of the sojourner (not all sojourners) is affecting his/her academic performance at the post-secondary institution. Not all sojourners' insufficient second language speaking and writing skills. The assumptions described in the first and the second assumptions may apply to sojourners in elementary and secondary learning institutions as well, though this is untested.

The third assumption is that the SMOPL is timely. One of the most important considerations for planning a new model is its timeliness. Is this the right time for this particular model? Is the field overloaded with new models, or is there a reported need for alternative ways of conceptualizing things- a new model? At the present time, there is a need for a descriptive framework of expert opinion and research-based principles from which to invent or select instructional methods to serve sojourners attending post-secondary learning institutions.

Principles

There are three principles of the SMOPL. The first principle is that the application of the model enhances the sojourner's cultural awareness. Cultural awareness can be considered as a stage in which the sojourner starts recognizing the differences and the similarities between his/her culture and the new cultural context.

Becoming aware of the similarities and the differences between two different cultures leads the sojourner to be critical. This is the second principle of the SMOPL. Being critical brings continuous questions about the value system, which either belongs to the sojourner's culture or the academia. Answering these questions is what we call meaning-making practices in accordance with Giddens (1991). As long as the sojourner makes sense of the new cultural context, s/he continues to adapt to the academia.

The third principle of the SMOPL is that the sojourner's adaptation to the North American academia results in change. The value system of the sojourner does not remain the same. Through cultural interaction with academia, she/he restructures a new value system.

The fourth principle is that the sojourner's cultural experience has iterative. By "iterative" we mean that anyone, who has ever experienced culture shock once, can experience it second or third time. Three principles explained so far occur repeatedly. The black part of the spiral in Figure 1 breaks from its course as soon as the problem occurs. At this point, the sojourner loses the so-called honeymoon stage and became aware of his/her situation. This brings the first new cycle (gray in Figure 1) in which the sojourner's beliefs (values) are criticized, reassessed and changed. If the change doesn't suffice for the success, as in our study, the need for ensuing change arises. Therefore, the second new cycle (two-lined in Figure 1) represents a new plan. The steps of act, observe and reflect follows this new plan.

Figure 1 shows the graphical representation of the SMOPL. The model is a composite of two previous models: Adler's (1975) 5-stage theory of culture shock and Kolb's (1984) spiral model of participatory action research. *Culture shock* is the term that describes a feeling of discomfort resulting from immersion in a new culture (Loh, 2003; Adler, 1975). "Participatory action research" is the term given to a self-reflective process of improving education by changing it and learning from the consequences of changes (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992). David Kolb with Roger Fry (1974) created their model out of four elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts and testing in new situations. They used the term cycle to refer to the sequence of those four elements. They argued that the learning cycle can begin at any one of the four points and it should really be approached as a continuous spiral. This approach formed the basis of current participatory action research. Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) furthered Kolb's (1984) view by some key principles. Action research is *participatory*: it is research through which people work towards the improvement of their own practices. Action research develops through *the self-reflective spiral*: a spiral of cycles that follow the steps of planning, acting (implementing plans), observing (systematically), reflecting and then replanning, further implementation, observation and reflecting. In each cycle, these steps are carried out more carefully, more systematically, and more vigorously than the sojourner usually does in everyday life (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). As shown in Figure 1, the participatory action research spiral is comprised of three cycles and four steps in each
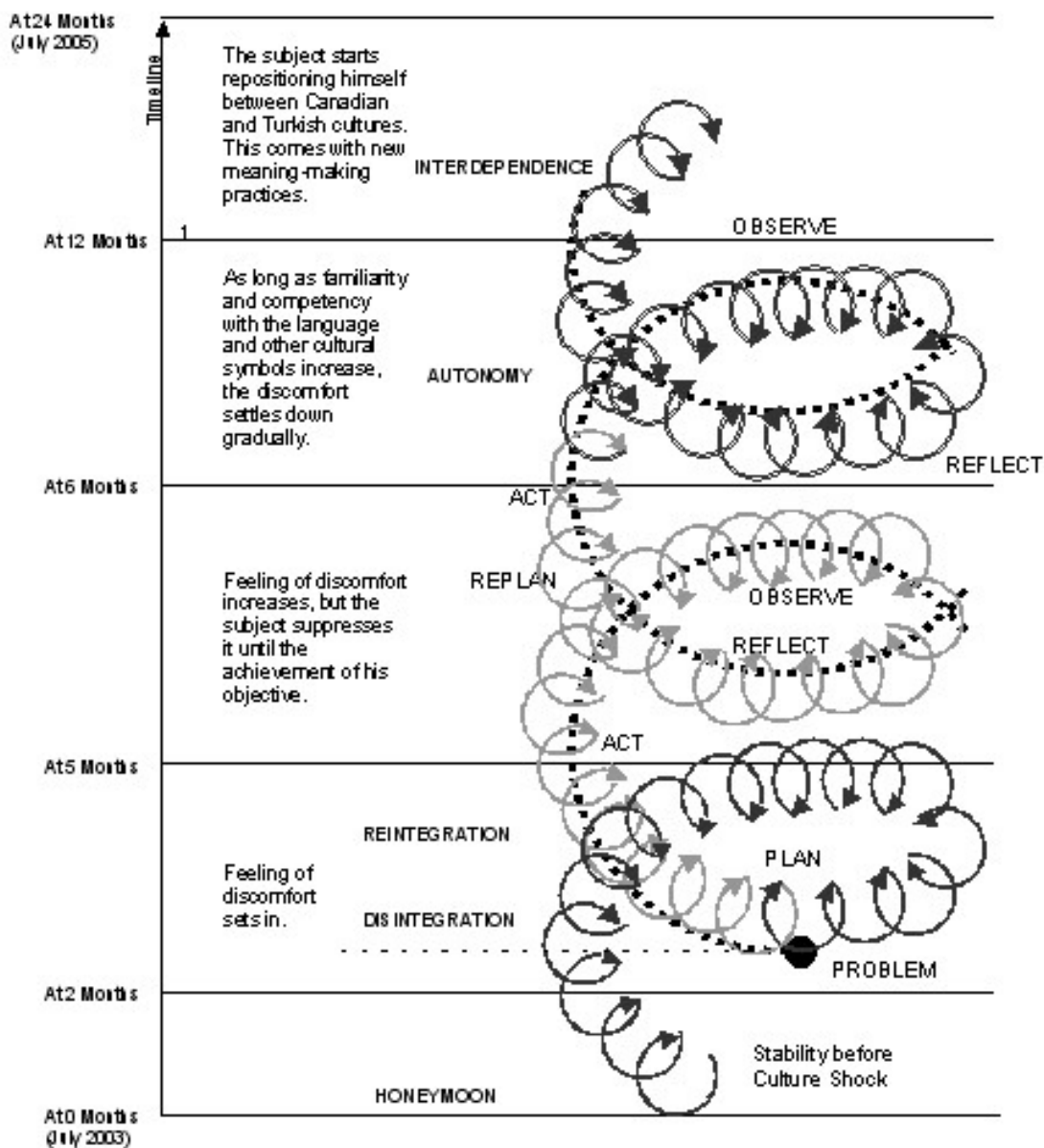
At 24 Months (July 2005)

The subject starts repositioning himself between Canadian and Turkish cultures. This comes with new meaning-making practices.

INTERDEPENDENCE

OBSERVE

At 12 Months — 1

As long as familiarity and competency with the language and other cultural symbols increase, the discomfort settles down gradually.

AUTONOMY

REFLECT

At 6 Months

ACT

REPLAN

OBSERVE

Feeling of discomfort increases, but the subject suppresses it until the achievement of his objective.

REFLECT

ACT

At 5 Months

REINTEGRATION

PLAN

Feeling of discomfort sets in.

DISINTEGRATION

PROBLEM

At 2 Months

Stability before Culture Shock

HONEYMOON

At 0 Months (July 2003)

Timeline

Figure 1. The Sojourner's Model of Post-secondary Learning (SMOPL)

cycle. The term *sojourner,* who travels from one culture to another for educational purposes (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001), was used instead of the term *international student* because *international student* is a term used by the academic or government institutions to describe student fee structure and/or student visa status. On the other hand, *sojourner* is a term that encapsulates traveling across cultures, immersing in a new culture and retaining the value systems of both home culture and other culture(s). As shown in Figure 1, Adler's (1975) five-stage model of culture shock draws the preliminary timeline of the SMOPL. The stages are the honeymoon stage, the disintegration stage, the reintegration stage, autonomy stage and the interdependence stage. The first stage of initial contact, or the "honeymoon stage," is where the

newly arrived individual experiences the curiosity and excitement of a tourist. The second stage involves "disintegration" from the familiar cultural signs from back home. The individual blames himself/herself for the personal inadequacy toward the new culture. The third stage involves "reintegration" of the new cultural signs and increased ability to function in the new culture. At this stage, the sojourner doesn't blame himself but the new culture, because it is the new culture that caused all the difficulties. As long as the sojourner increases his/her ability in the new culture, s/he tends to criticize the new culture in terms its inadequacy. The fourth stage, autonomy, is the continuation of the reintegration but in a balanced way. The sojourner starts to see the good sides as well as the bad sides of the new culture. The last stage according to Adler (1975) is the interdependence that the sojourner reaches biculturality. He feels himself comfortable in both cultures.

At the beginning of an academic year, the sojourner might believe that the cause of the problem, which is debilitating academic performance in communicative ability in English, is not an incompetency in English, but an unrecognized capacity of the sojourner to communicate in English by the professors. S/he might be following a learning cycle, which matches with the *single-loop learning* as described by Argyris and Schon (1974). As they suggest, if someone is concentrating on their *action (action strategy)* and limiting the change only on their *action strategy*, then it is *single- loop learning*. On the other hand, if a person, while concentrating on his/her actions, extend the change up to their *values (or governing values)*, this would constitute *double-loop learning*. So, after facing unsatisfactory results, either with oral performance in class discussions or with term papers, the sojourner might employ some changes. If these changes don't include primary interventions specifically intended for the North American academia, it becomes hard to adapt to the new cultural context and to gain intellectual improvement. For instance, paper writing is not a common practice in many educational institutions outside North America. Besides, English is writer responsible. That means, the reader wants to know where the paper is going (Knutson, 2005). If the sojourner doesn't have enough training and experience on paper writing, but s/he presumes of herself/himself to be a skillful writer, then the changes may be at the surface level. If the written expression of the sojourner isn't clear and concise for any reader, but the sojourner believes the profundity of his/her writing, then the changes in case of low grades may not include the primary interventions. At this point, academic writing shows the sojourner to what degree s/he can write clearly and concisely beyond his/her presumptions. If not, the grades make the level of the academic writing competency clearer. It may be after the low grades or failure to pass that the sojourner experiences a breakdown. This makes the sojourner change not only the *action strategy* but also his/her *governing values*. A new set of values toward communicative ability in English brings a new learning cycle to follow as it's called *double loop learning*. At the end, what the sojourner believes/espouses and what s/he does becomes the same.

Statement of the Problem

A common problem addressed in this paper is that visiting international students (i.e., sojourners) experience debilitating academic performance, particularly, oral and written competency in English language. At the present time, there is a need for a descriptive framework of expert opinion and research-based principles from which to invent or select instructional methods to serve sojourners attending post-secondary learning institutions. The SMOPL has the theoretical foundation but is as yet untested. The purpose of the next section is to put the SMOPL into an educational context. A preliminary study was conducted to explore the sojourner's experience over time.

METHOD

Participant

The participant is a sojourner, that is to say, an international, returning graduate student and the first author of this paper. His country of origin is Turkey and the first language of the subject is Turkish.

Context of the Study

The context of the study is an interdisciplinary Masters program at a university in Eastern Canada. This program is an interdisciplinary teaching and research program housed in one of the faculties in the university. Students from any discipline could enroll in this program. It is a two-year full-time program. Cultural unfamiliarity is the primary determinant of this study, which primarily includes the difference in the medium of communication. The sojourner's first language is Turkish. Although he made his undergraduate studies on English as a second language teaching, seven years of absence from English- speaking environment debilitated his English competency. Second, it is unfamiliar for the sojourner to be a student again after seven years. In other words, reading and writing within the context of a graduate study are new to the sojourner. Third, the ways of conduct in Canadian academia makes the context unfamiliar for the sojourner. For instance, it is usually possible to see a professor either within the office hours or not in this Masters program. In Turkey, it is harder to see a professor and to discuss an issue privately with him/her. In contrast, the context of Masters program in this Canadian university encourages creativity and criticism that the sojourner was not familiar with from his former academic experience.

Design of the Study

The design of the study is participatory action research because this type of research is a form of 'self-reflective inquiry' by participant(s), undertaken in order to improve understanding of their practices, to adjust to changing situations or to cope with their problems (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Problems are not considered as 'pathologies' in participatory action research; rather they are stimuli that evoke awareness, critique and change. This view coincides with the current literature on culture shock that considers it as an educational model (Pedersen, 1995). Participatory action research is different from everyday actions and interventions; it is more systematic and collaborative in collecting evidence on which to base rigorous self or group reflection (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992). These reflections are about two parallel sets of learning: the sojourner's learnings about the practices he is studying and his learnings about the process (the practice) of studying them. Therefore, it is a scientific method among many, but it is "not the scientific method" applied to learning as Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) stress. Finally, participatory action research starts at a small scale, but gradually widens its scope so that others affected by the same/similar problem can be involved within the research. This allows the researchers to give a reasoned justification of their rationale and educational outcome.

Data collection and analysis were completed by an *ex post facto* approach that allowed collecting data in a naturally occurring event such as culture shock in which a more rigorous experimental approach was impossible. In the context of educational research*, ex post facto* means 'after the fact' or 'retrospectively' and refers to the studies carried out after the events,

which are subject to investigation, have already happened. Second, by a retrospective analysis, the researcher can use the gist of the data that forms the epitome, not the bulk of it. According to Parlett and Hamilton (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), the process is akin to funneling from the wide to the narrow. Third, the retrospective data processing enables the participant-as-observer to move toward observer-as-participant throughout time. This move strives to balance involvement with detachment, closeness with distance, familiarity with unfamiliarity.

Data is gathered and processed from the term papers in terms of documents; from the journal notes in terms of accounts; personal observations; from the casual chatting with the director of the program in terms of semi-structured or unstructured interviews; from the written opinions of the participant's tutor, and other examiners in terms of documents.

Data Collection

Three types of data were collected. The first type was retrieved documents, which consisted of grades, written opinions of professors, course notes and journal notes. The second type was personal observations. The third type was interviews, which consisted of semi-structured and/or unstructured interviews with colleagues, director of the program, and the participant's tutor during the time of the study.

Procedure

The procedure was participatory in this study. In accordance with the theoretical foundation of the participatory action research, the participant was both the practitioner and the researcher, which meant improving participant's academic performance was the main determinant of the procedure. Consequently, data emerged without a specific plan only through the practices of the participant; either a specific objective was put forward due to a possible constraining effect on the process. However, four basic steps of participatory action research that of planning, acting, observing, reflecting (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000) were adopted as the basis. Data was collected *ex post facto*. The timeline that emerged from the participant's experience was as follows:

1) Emergent data was collected.

2) Identification, evaluation and formulation of the problem was done. The interpretation of the problem is done loosely so it can lead toward an innovative intervention.

3) Discussions with the interested parties –the program director, participant's tutor, and fellow students – were done.

4) Decision for a proper plan was made. The plan was implemented afterwards.

5) Data collection was done for reflecting and further planning.

6) Interpretation of the data and description of the educational context from which tentative assumptions, principles and generalizations were made under the term "SMOPL".

RESULTS

Data was gathered and processed from the term papers in terms of documents; from the journal notes in terms of accounts; personal observations; from the casual chattings with the Director of the program in terms of semi-structured and/or unstructured interviews; from the written opinions of the participant's tutor, and other examiners in terms of documents.

Honeymoon Stage

This stage happened between 9th of July 2003 and September 2003, which passed without problem. Between these dates, there wasn't any cultural unfamiliarity due to the new context. The sojourner was thrilled by the novelty and excitement of being in a new culture as a detached tourist. The term, detached, refers to his sense of temporariness. The sojourner felt as if he would return back to Turkey after some time. He enjoyed new places and new experiences.

First Cycle

As shown Figure 1, the first cycle, being illustrated in black, represents the sojourner's ongoing meaning-making practices before coming to the Canadian university. Until the end of this cycle, the sojourner doesn't have any feeling of displacement. He continues his meaning-making practices not as a sojourner but as a tourist. He feels that his sole purpose is to enjoy the new environment: the city and the people. The sojourner doesn't recognize any cultural unfamiliarity that bothers him. Rather, everything that is unfamiliar to him is waiting to be discovered. According to Argyris and Schon's (1974) approach, this can be considered as an example of single loop learning. In fact there hadn't been cultural awareness, which is the first principle of SMOPL. The sojourner doesn't recognize much cultural differences that can cause him to criticize his value system. Rather, he discovers similarities more than he expected. Some communication problems occur in everyday life, however, these problems don't cause any discomfort.

Disintegration Stage and the first occurrence of the Problem

This stage overlapped with the first occurrence of the problem and with the beginning of the second cycle (At 2 months in Figure 1). The problem was the debilitating academic performance, particularly, oral and written incompetency in English language. It first occurred in terms of oral incompetency in class discussions. In terms of Argyris and Schon (1974), this was the start of the second loop. The sojourner couldn't manage the problem with some changes in his action strategy. Moreover, the problem cried out for an intervention that would change the value system of the sojourner. During the *honeymoon stage* there wasn't any problem. The sojourner was content about this, because he expected some problems during the first months in a new culture. On the contrary, culture wasn't a big issue. At this *disintegration stage*, the sojourner experienced *culture shock* that he hadn't experienced before. He encountered another new culture, which had strict rules and conditions. This new cultural environment was the academia. During the *disintegration stage*, the sojourner realized huge differences between the everyday culture and the academia. These differences became gradually more pronounced and bolder, and intimidated the sojourner. First, the sojourner concluded that his background

wasn't adequate for the Masters program. Although the program was interdisciplinary, open to everyone from various disciplines, the sojourner had been away from academic life for seven years. It could even be said at the time that the sojourner had no background compared to new graduates.   All these factors disintegrated him from the class and increased his oral incompetency in English language. The sojourner presumed his English wasn't at the graduate level. Especially, when he looked at the fellow students in the program – their first language was English – his conviction became firmer. This led him to allow the native English speakers to "dominate". The sense of inadequacy isolated him not only from academic life but also from the everyday life.   He was blaming himself for the things that were going wrong; in fact, everything started going wrong. There were two choices in front of him: to leave or not leave the program. He thought he couldn't survive in the program unless he makes a plan from scratch. This was both the beginning of the participatory action research from a practitioner stance and the first step of the second cycle: PLAN, as seen in Figure 1.

Second Cycle

The second cycle was the beginning of the participatory action research, which included an intervention. This cycle was represented in gray in Figure 1. This second cycle was important as the sojourner, for the first time, abandoned his previous assumptions about his debilitating academic performance. A new cycle meant a new value system toward the problem. Different from the first cycle in Figure 1, the second cycle included four basic steps of participatory action research. During the first cycle, the sojourner was concentrating on his everyday actions and applying the change only to the action strategy. In other words, his value system wasn't subject to criticism: he was absolutely right about the cause of his debilitating performance. After the breakdown, which was the end of the first cycle, he started blaming himself for the cause of his problem. Until the second cycle, the first cycle used to be a closed loop. The smaller spiral was subject to the change (action strategy) but not the big cycle (value system). Then, it was the unsustainable problem that broke this loop.   Until the intervention, it can be said of an intermediate state, which was overwhelmed by uncertainty and self-blame.

Plan: The intervention started with a plan. The sojourner's plan was to warm up his heart toward the program by class participation. He decided to contribute to the class discussions as possible as he could. On the other hand, to prevent any possible intimidation, the sojourner determined not to speak too much. 'Fewer sentences, fewer mistakes' became his strategy.

Act: He acted on this plan. He prepared his comments or his questions down to every word beforehand and repeated it in his mind. When he had his turn, he uttered them out.

Observe: According to the sojourner's observations, the plan worked well. The sojourner was pleasant with his participation in the class discussions. This resulted in his connection with the program and the classmates. He felt more confident with himself then. The director of the program, who was present at all the classes as a listener if not as a lecturer, wanted the sojourner to express more.   The director's argument was that if the sojourner should've explained his ideas more, it would bring clarity to the expression on the contrary of the aphorismic style that used to employ.   The director further expressed that he wanted to understand and know the sojourner more.

Reflect: Although this critique made sense, the sojourner didn't like the idea of speaking too much. What he believed at that time was more expression may have caused more errors and

made him embarrassed in the class. He didn't want to take the slightest risk of intimidation because he believed he was emotionally more sensitive at the time. So, he didn't stop participating in the same way: less words more turns. Only if he felt happy with his expression, did he speak with more sentences. The second cycle overlapped with the *reintegration stage*, which was the stage of recovery.

Reintegration Stage and the Second Occurrence of the Problem

According to Pedersen (1995), at the reintegration stage, the self-blame turns into blaming others for any discomfort. At the *reintegration stage*, the sojourner believed that director of the program, in fact, was not in need of any further explanation for clarity, but he was constantly examining the sojourner's knowledge. The sojourner considered the director as an examiner during all the classes. At the *reintegration stage*, the sojourner concluded that any critique on the clarity issue was due to the inadequacy of professors but not him.

So far, it's been said that the problem was the debilitating academic performance in oral communicative ability in English. The second occurrence of the problem, which was before the third cycle, was in terms of written incompetency. During the 2003-2004 academic year, the sojourner required to take two courses: one, HUMN 6000 (Speaking and Writing I); two, HUMN 6011 (Readings in History II). Before the term papers were due, the sojourner decided to choose a topic focused on Turkey. He thought that this would've given him a more comfortable and easy way of writing. Afterwards, he found himself in the theoretical domain of sociology in which he didn't have any background. He determined to read on social theory, nationalism and nation state and relate this knowledge to a particular social movement in Turkey. The theoretical foundation of the topic was too wide for the sojourner and the sojourner didn't have enough time both to grasp the knowledge and to apply it to his topic. His dissatisfaction with his essays resulted in an unsuccessful oral examination. Although the sojourner passed with one of his essays, he was required to rewrite the other essay. From HUMN 6000 (Speaking and Writing I) he received 80. During Christmas holiday, he'd written 6011 (Readings in History II), which was a disaster not only for the sojourner but also for his family. He was able to submit the written essay at the beginning of the winter semester. The sojourner received 75 from that essay but he was satisfied with the outcome.

Third Cycle

The third cycle is the two-lined cycle in Figure 1. The third cycle overlapped with the two stages of Adler's (1975) *culture shock* model: *autonomy* and *interdependence*. There is an iterative nature of participatory action research. The practitioner continues to change the plan in terms of a new problem until the objective is achieved.

Replan: So far, the sojourner concluded that what he believed about his debilitating academic performance was not true. First, the program director's comments were true. The director wrote: you need to work on some problems in grammar and sentence structure, as well as the organization of your ideas (comments on the 6011 short paper, 2003 Fall Semester). The sojourner had thought that he already knew English grammar and sentence structure but he didn't. Second, his improvement in oral competency didn't lead him to improvement in academic writing at the same scale. The sojourner learned the terms: clarity, preciseness and conciseness. He needed a new plan to approach the writing problem. In his autobiography, the sojourner talks about the problem:

Since Turkish was my first language, I used to think in Turkish. When I tried to do the same in English, I was losing the flow (track) of thinking on a particular subject in English (when it came to the daily usage of language, there was no problem). English was really a new "realm" —and to some degree, still is— that I couldn't know every "remote corner", although I think otherwise in speaking. Why? Because, although there seems a linear fashion (logic) in speaking, it does not distract me on the continuity of the speech, since I can use body language (mimics, gestures, signs, and even silence to support and sometimes to substitute my speech: speaking as a skill allows ruptures that make my mind take a "breath". In writing as a skill, I am obliged to keep on going only within the confines of some signs, and within the confines of some certain rules that were associated with those signs. Worse than that, I was supposed to open the issues in the papers, the issues related to the theories of the Post-Structuralist French thinkers. The ground of comprehension was so slippery, it caused me to lose the track of the subject matter, or even to get lost in! (Yusuf Baydal, Program Journal, 2004.)

At the end of his search, the sojourner rediscovered himself. He decided to write about his Canadian experience. The sojourner took two courses in the winter semester. They were HUMN 6001 (Speaking and Writing II) and HUMN 6021 (Readings in Western Literature II). The topic of the former course was "structure, desire, death) and the latter was "utopia". The sojourner thought to use his Turkish-English experience as the content of the first course essay and his Turkey-Canada as the content of the "utopia" course. He spoke to his tutor, who was the Director at the time; he encouraged him to do so.

Act: He acted on the new plan. He sketched new notes on his diary focusing on his Canadian experience.

Yes, I am in Canada. A new country, a new social setting, a new language and life style… It is not that much difficult to get used to the climate and the environment. The smell of the soil is the same everywhere although the ones lying under it are different; the rain is the same and the wind, wherever you go. (Yusuf Baydal, Personal Diary, 2003).

The sojourner discussed ways that could facilitate the implementation of the plan with his colleague, who was a senior fellow student in the same program at the time. English was also his second language. He experienced similar things in academic writing.

The Colleague: I had the same problem when I was in the first year. First of all, let's presume that there is thinking in Turkish as well as thinking in English. If I put aside all the theories on bilingualism, I feel it just right here (pointing to his head). I was born into Spanish as you were born into Turkish. This, I think, forms the very basis of our linguistic competence. When it comes to writing, we need that competency, as well as in speaking. With these two skills, you conceive something, bear something out that needs a more active participation of the mind.

Yusuf: So you mean, 'play within the field which you feel comfortable and productive…

The Colleague: Exactly… (Interview notes with the Colleague, 2004)

The interview with the colleague involved "judicious mixture" of the participant (sojourner) observation and casual chatting, supplemented by note- taking. He first wrote in Turkish, in which he felt more comfortable and then translated into English.

> I adhered to the advice of a fellow graduate student in the program, "first write in Turkish, then translate the written material into English." It worked! At least it brought out a hopeful start. But…simply I was "talking" about myself. However in relation to the content of the courses, the outcome was almost a diary of a big "baby" born into English in comparison to the heavy issues of Deconstructionism. (Yusuf Baydal, Program Journal, 2004.)

The sojourner used "himself" as the source of a personal narrative. What did he and his family feel about Canada as a new country to live in? How did he feel about the change in terms of culture, specifically, language? How did an imaginary Turkey come to existence? Those core questions formed two term papers.

Observe: The intervention worked. The sojourner, at least, found a way to write without any problem. He was writing easily and whenever he felt a difficulty, he was switching to his native language, Turkish.

Reflect: When he reflected on his writing, the papers didn't have any link to the course content, which would cause him to be irrelevant. After having couple of meetings with his tutor, the sojourner decided to use footnotes to link the course content to the body text.

He would be able to incorporate the course content, which was difficult to comprehend for him, in this way. This way of writing also facilitated his comprehension of the theories having been treated during the classes. So, he not only prepared the term papers but also prepared himself for the oral examination of the papers. His oral examination went well. He was in full comprehension of what he'd written because every bit of the theory had a match in his personal life. The grades went up. He had 85 for the HUMN 6001 (Speaking and Writing II) course and 84 for the HUMN 6021 (Readings in Western Literature II) course.

Autonomy

This stage started at 6 months. The third cycle or the second intervention showed its impact on the sojourner's well being. Familiarity and competency with English increased and the discomfort started settling down. The academia and academic writing seemed less hostile. The sojourner learned how to empower his voice. He gained understanding of the rules of academic life; he became more self-assured and skillful in adapting to that culture. He was more proactive, functional and independent; he perceived himself as insider in some situations. He became more social with the fellow students and the professors as well. This transition from the disintegration stage to the autonomy stage was so smooth but it should be stated that high grades made a sudden impact on the transition.

Interdependence

This stage started 12 months and continued afterwards. A bicultural identity was conceived; there has been a sense of belonging to the academia. Before this and the autonomy stage, the sojourner concluded that academia was more conservative than he'd assumed. During the interdependence stage, he longer felt negatively affected by this. He internalized some parts of

the North American academia.   He sometimes felt regression to a former stage: from interdependence to autonomy or from autonomy to reintegration.   A failure at the school, discomfort at home or even a long period of bad weather could cause the regression but the effect was not dramatic as it'd been before.   The effect didn't last long either.   After the sojourner emotionally settled down, he started feeling himself in between daily life and the academic life.   One of the instructors who also examined the sojourner in the oral exam in which the sojourner had failed and was required to rewrite his essay made a written comment about this change.   The comment was at the end of one of the sojourner's latest papers: Interesting material, I think you've come a long way since your earlier papers (the instructor's, written comments for the term paper, 2005).

DISCUSSION

The term of culture shock was first introduced by Oberg (1960) to describe the anxiety resulting from not knowing what to do in a new culture.   Others have applied Oberg's framework more broadly to include "culture fatigue" (Guthrie, 1975), "language shock" (Smalley, 1963), "role shock" (Byrnes, 1966), and "pervasive ambiguity" (Ball-Rokeach, 1973).   Each of these early definitions has emphasized the reactive aspect of culture shock, as can be a part of specific pathology.   According to Pedersen (1995) more recent explanations, however, have presented culture shock as an "educational model," describing the adjustment period as a state of growth and development. Ward, Bochner, Furnham (2001), for example, describe culture shock in terms of cultural interactions that diversify both sides of the interaction.   While sojourners acquire a new language and a new culture, they also contribute to the host culture by their native way of life.   This is what the word "diffusion" literally means in anthropology: the dissemination of elements of culture to another region or people.   Peter Adler (1975) has specified the process and developed a 5-stage theory of culture shock based on work by Oberg and others.   This approach describes culture shock in more neutral rather than negative terms as a 5-stage educational and developmental process with positive as well as negative consequences.

Recent literature explains culture shock as an "educational model," describing the adjustment period as a state of growth and development.   Indeed, the evolution of the culture shock models yielded to such a concept.   In the SMOPL, the new cultural environment that caused the culture shock was presented as the academia.   Apart from other approaches, the study suggests that, although the change in the physical setting, the climate has some effects on the sojourner, it is specifically the academia that causes the shock.   Although culture shock can be a gain instead of a loss, but such a model requires a solid methodology.   What we mean by the term "solid methodology" is the way that any sojourner can easily understand and employ: first, to see what possible consequences of cultural interactions wait for him or her; second, to become ready for any adverse effects; third, and most importantly is to turn these adverse effects into advantages for personal growth and development.   There are various stage models of culture shock.   This paper agrees with Pedersen (1995):   culture shock is so subjective, the experience of culture shock is hard to convey in rows of numbers or even statistically significant general tendencies of "most" people.   Moreover, culture shock is a personal experience.   It does not affect all people in the same way or even the same person in the same way when it reoccurs. Thus, there can be a methodology, which favors subjectivity and empowers the voice of every sojourner.   Such a methodology can transform the concept of culture shock into a practical and reliable educational model.   Besides, a model based on the combination of both the stage theory of culture shock and the model of intervention and improvement can make any sojourner

an active agent of the process. The SMOPL doesn't suggest a particular intervention or solution in respect to each individual's uniqueness. Rather, this study generalizes the approach to the problem. Participatory action research was employed as the methodology, which fits well in the aforementioned objective.   Participatory action research promotes reflective practice for personal change and improvement. Besides, its route follows an iterative nature. In other words, the reflective practitioner follows the four steps again and again until s/he achieves the change. On this route, a reflective practitioner alters his or her beliefs and values, if necessary. So, s/he doesn't adhere to a value system but rather takes a desired change as a reference. For the last, participatory action research gave to the model a flexible nature that any sojourner could utilize in regards of the uniqueness of every experience. That's why we called it the Sojourner's Model of Post-secondary Learning.

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