



Chinese international students' acculturation: a longitudinal study focusing Chinese PGT students in Scotland

(A continued research after UKCGE Annual Conference 2022)

Xuande Wu, The University of Edinburgh

Kunyang Qu, Independent research





The research questions

1. How does the acculturation process evolve over the course of a year for Chinese postgraduate (PGT) students studying abroad?
2. What are the key factors that facilitate the acculturation process for Chinese PGT students studying abroad?
3. What are the primary challenges encountered by Chinese PGT students in the process of acculturating to a foreign academic and cultural environment?

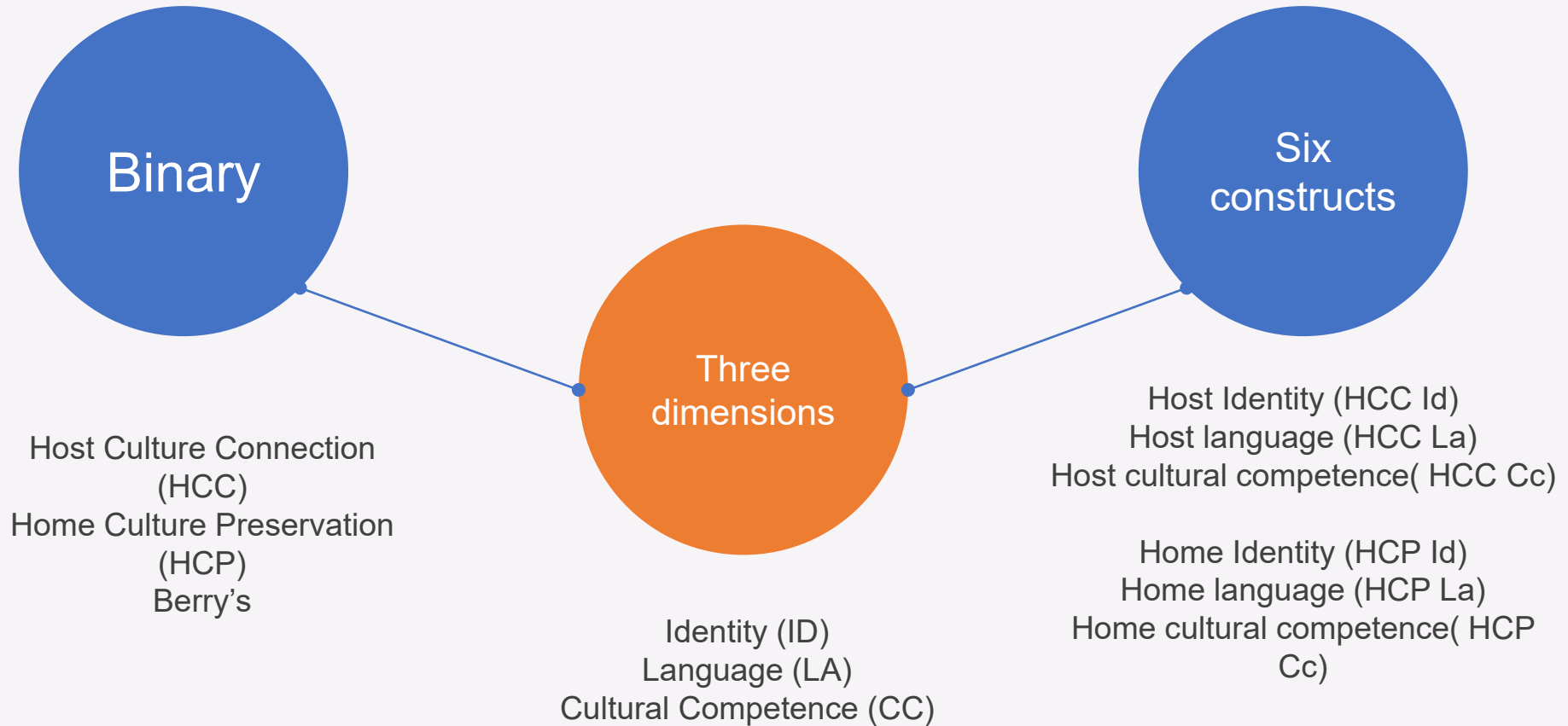


Methods and participants

- A longitudinal study
- Four stages: just arrival, four months, eight months, and 12 months
- Four times data collection and analysis
- Mixed methods
- 166 participants: Chinese PGT students in Scotland



The 2-3-6 acculturation model





The instruments

For collecting quantitative data: Acculturation Scale for Chinese International Students, the second version (ASCIS:V2)

6 Level Likert scale, 22 items, 2-3-6 model based

Two subscales: Host culture connection (HCC) & Home Culture Preservation (HCP), Three dimensions: Identity, language, cultural competence.

Six constructs validated by structured equation modeling through AMOS

For collecting qualitative data: Questions for Chinese International Students Acculturation (QCISA)

12 interview questions based on 2-3-6 model

Bidirectional, Three dimensions, Six parts

Piloted to 10 participants and revised based on the feedbacks



Reliability test of ASCIS:v2

Reliability test for ASCIS (home & host) in four stages					
Variables	Stages				Items
	Just arrival	4 months	8 months	12 months	
	Cronbach's Alpha				
Host identity	0.863	0.834	0.867	0.875	4
Host language	0.848	0.857	0.858	0.899	4
Host cultural knowledge	0.857	0.833	0.848	0.866	3
Host culture connection	0.845	0.840	0.837	0.854	11
Home Identity	0.850	0.843	0.850	0.841	4
Home language	0.804	0.754	0.800	0.845	4
Home cultural knowledge	0.810	0.800	0.818	0.836	3
Home culture preservation	0.798	0.769	0.806	0.836	11



Validity test of ASCIS:v2 through SEM

Acculturation model fit test (based on ASCIS)

Indices	References		Stages			
	Good fit	Acceptable fit	Just arrival	Four months	Eight months	12 months
CMIN/DF	1-3	3-5	1.880	1.618	1.734	1.921
RMSEA	< 0.05	< 0.08	.073	.061	.067	.070
IFI	> 0.95	> 0.9	.904	.926	.922	.916
TLI	> 0.95	> 0.9	.902	.919	.915	.908
CFI	> 0.95	> 0.9	.902	.924	.920	.915



The ANOVA (repeated measures) analysis and findings

1. To identify the impact of length of stay

- Analysis through Mauchly's Test of Sphericity and Multivariate Tests
- **A significant multivariate effect of the length of stay (stages) on all the six constructs**
supported by Indices: Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root ($P < 0.05$)

2. To determine the changings among the six constructs

- Analysis through Pairwise Comparisons
- A significant rising tendency of HCC constructs (Id, La, Cc)
- A significant decreasing tendency of HCP constructs (Id, La, Cc)
supported by Sig. ($P < 0.05$) for all pairs compared



The significant impact of length of stay (stages)

Rising HCC dimensions



1. Rising HCC Constructs:

- Accepting Scottish identity.
- Improving English abilities.
- Learning host cultural knowledge and acquiring cultural abilities.

2. HCC Identity:

- Rising, but at a slower rate.
- Embracing a new cultural identity poses challenges.

3. HCC Language and Competence:

- Demonstrating rapid growth.
- Behavioral changes hold greater significance than cognitive changes.

4. Stabilizing Trends:

- The rising trends are stabilizing over time.
- A potential upper limit for integrating the host culture



The significant impact of length of stay (stages)

Slowly declining HCP dimensions

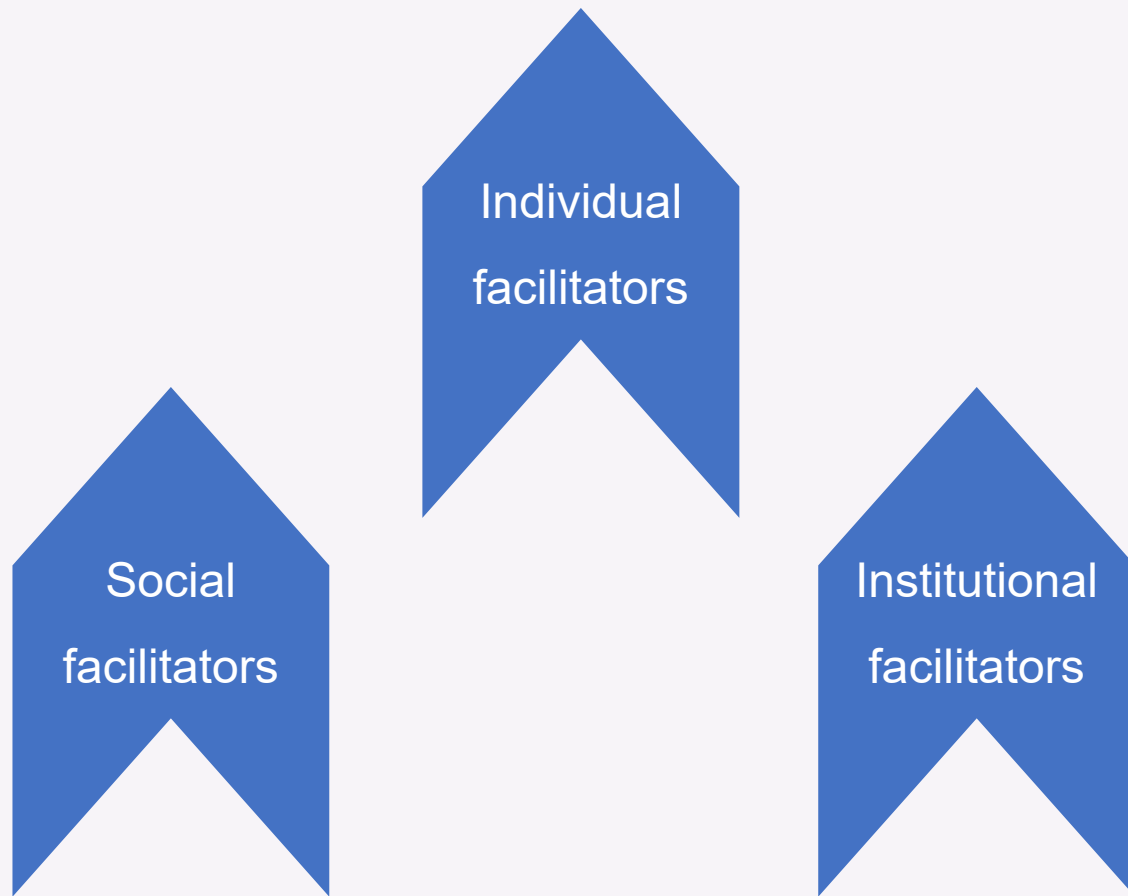


- **All HCP constructs are decreasing**
 - Losing Chinese identity
 - Losing Chinese language abilities
 - Losing Chinese cultural knowledge and acquiring cultural abilities
- **HCP Id and La are losing at a slow rate**
 - Losing the original identity is harder than embracing a new one
 - The same goes to losing the mother tone
- **HCC Cc is losing at a fast rate**
 - Home cultural knowledge is not as closely tied with the original identity as the mother tone
- **All decreasing trend of HCP construct are slow stabilizing**
 - A possible lower limit for losing host culture



Acculturative facilitators

A rocket

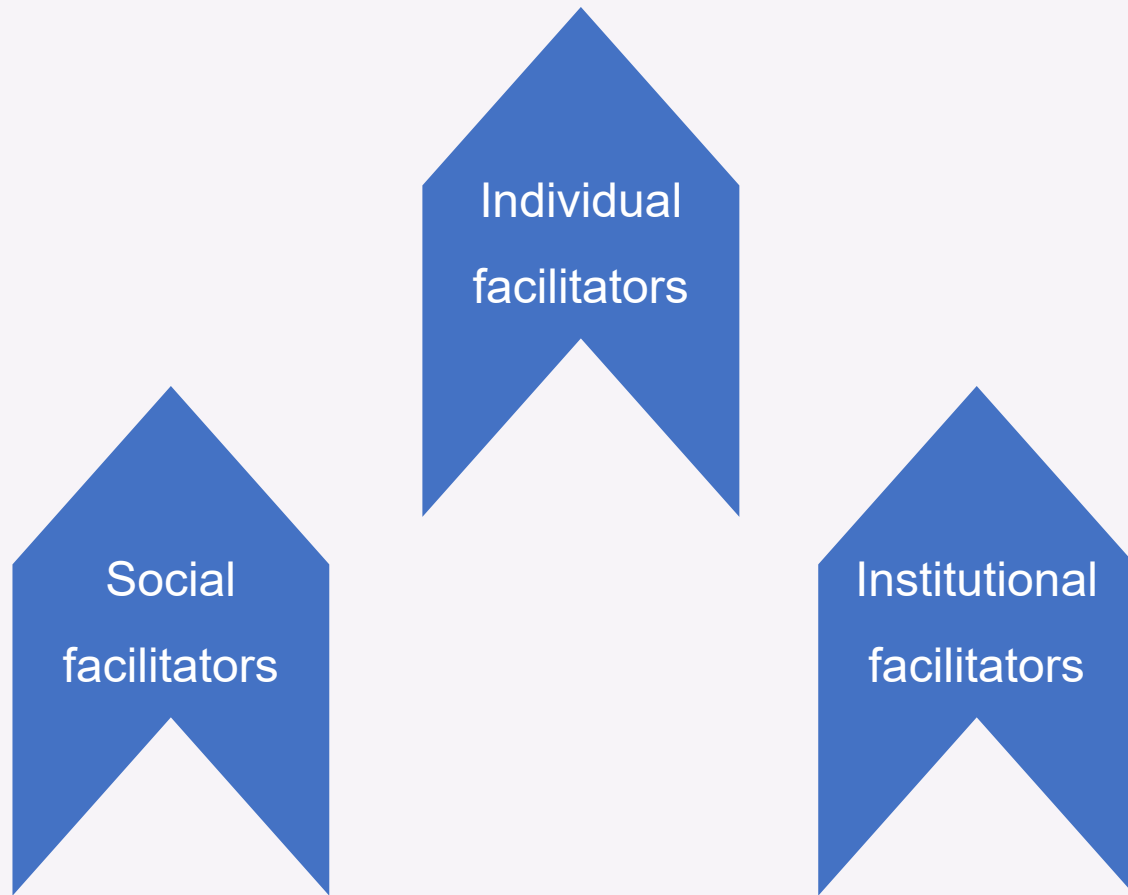


- **Individual facilitators as the most important one**
- Strong personalities, confidence and adjustment abilities
- Core power to overcome challenges
- Decide the effect of other facilitators
- Persistent throughout all stages



Acculturative facilitators

A rocket

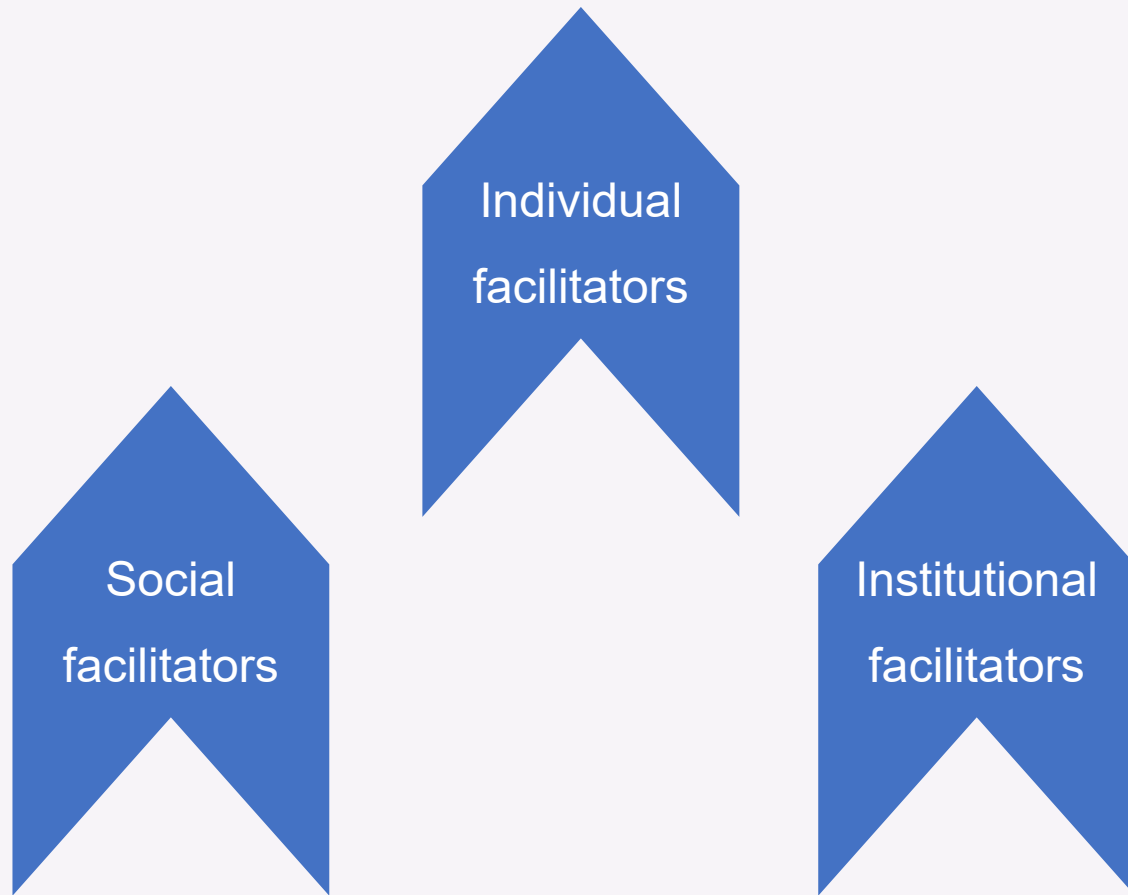


- **Social facilitators create a positive macro environment**
- local people's positive attitudes, friendly policies, safe and fair society
- Reducing negative impacts from social challenges
- Encouraging more exploring and mutual understanding
- Cultivating sense of safety



Acculturative facilitators

A rocket

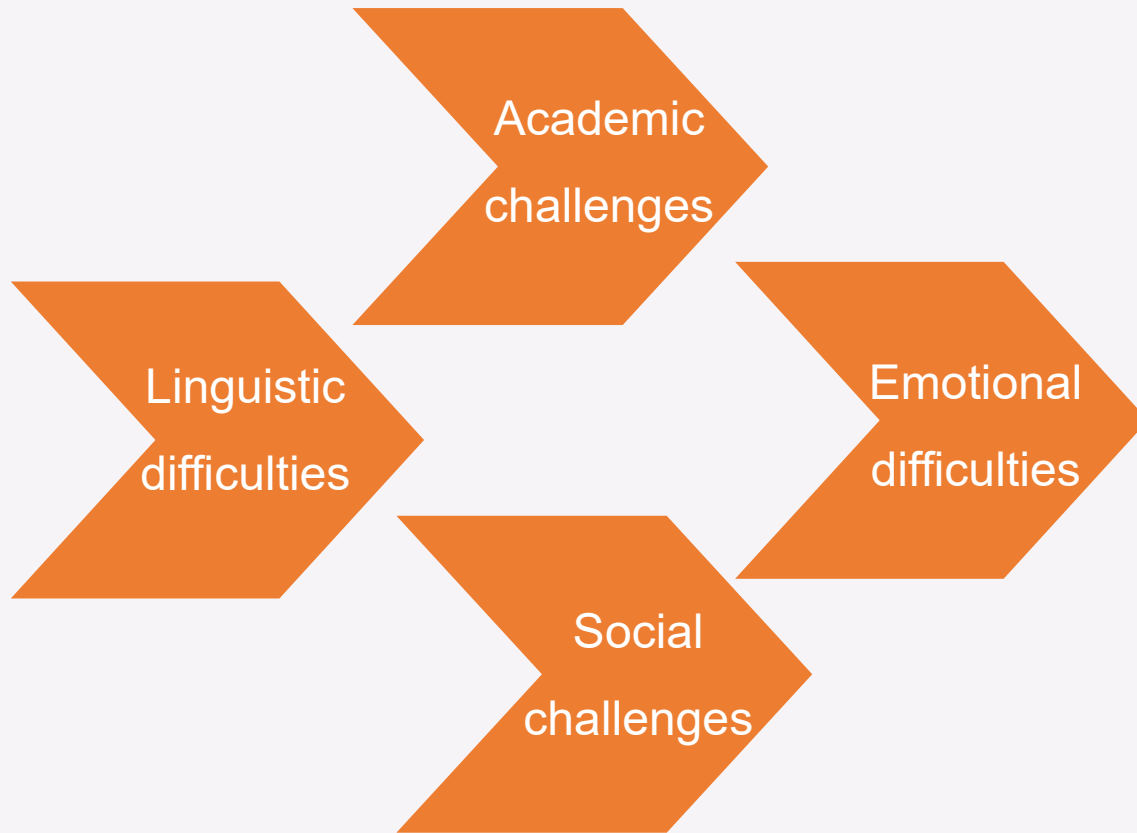


- **Institutional facilitators provide a beneficial context**
- Multiculturalism, Teacher's help, Supportive system (e.g. the Buddy system)
- Reducing negative impact of emotional and academic challenges
- Cultivating proud, confidence and sense of belongingness
- Encouraging direct contact with the host community
- **These facilitators work together as a system**



Acculturative challenges

A chain

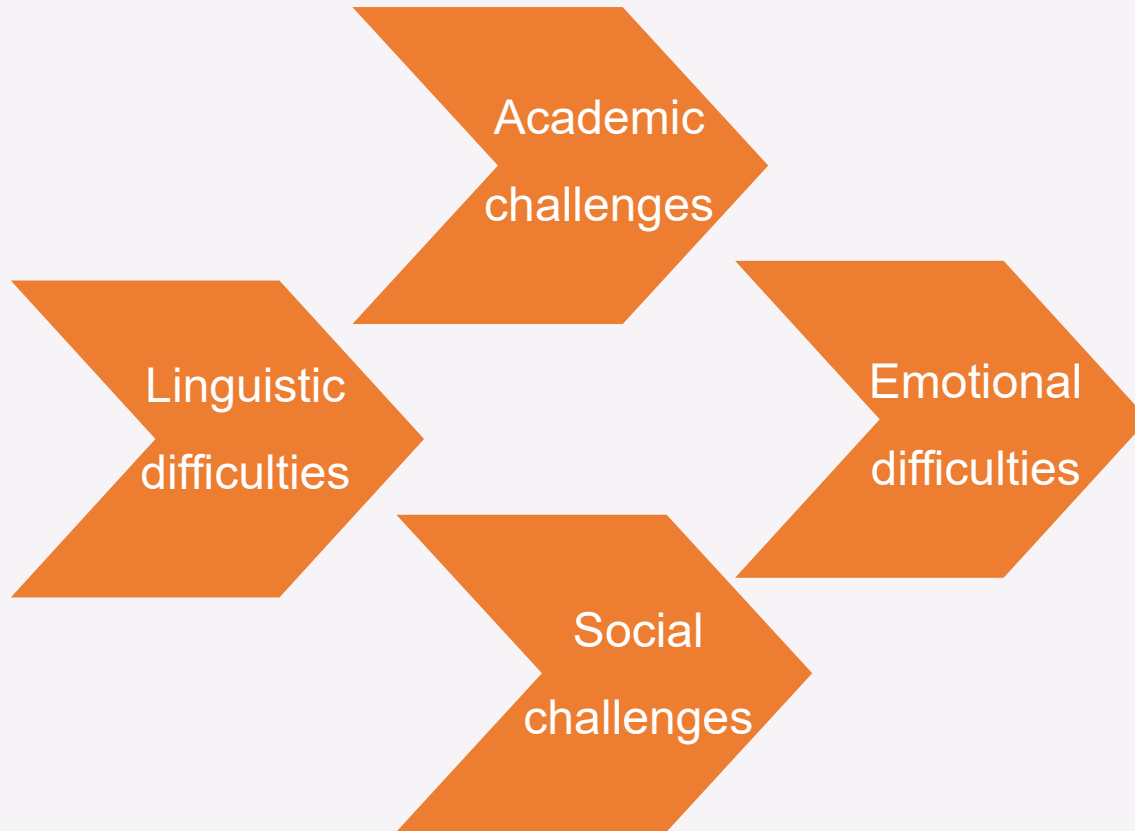


- **Linguistic challenges as the source**
- **Low LSRW abilities**
- Leading to most of academic and social challenges
- Prevailing in all the stages
- Hard to prevent
- Noticeable in any occasions
- Detrimental to confidence and sense of belonging.



Acculturative challenges

A chain

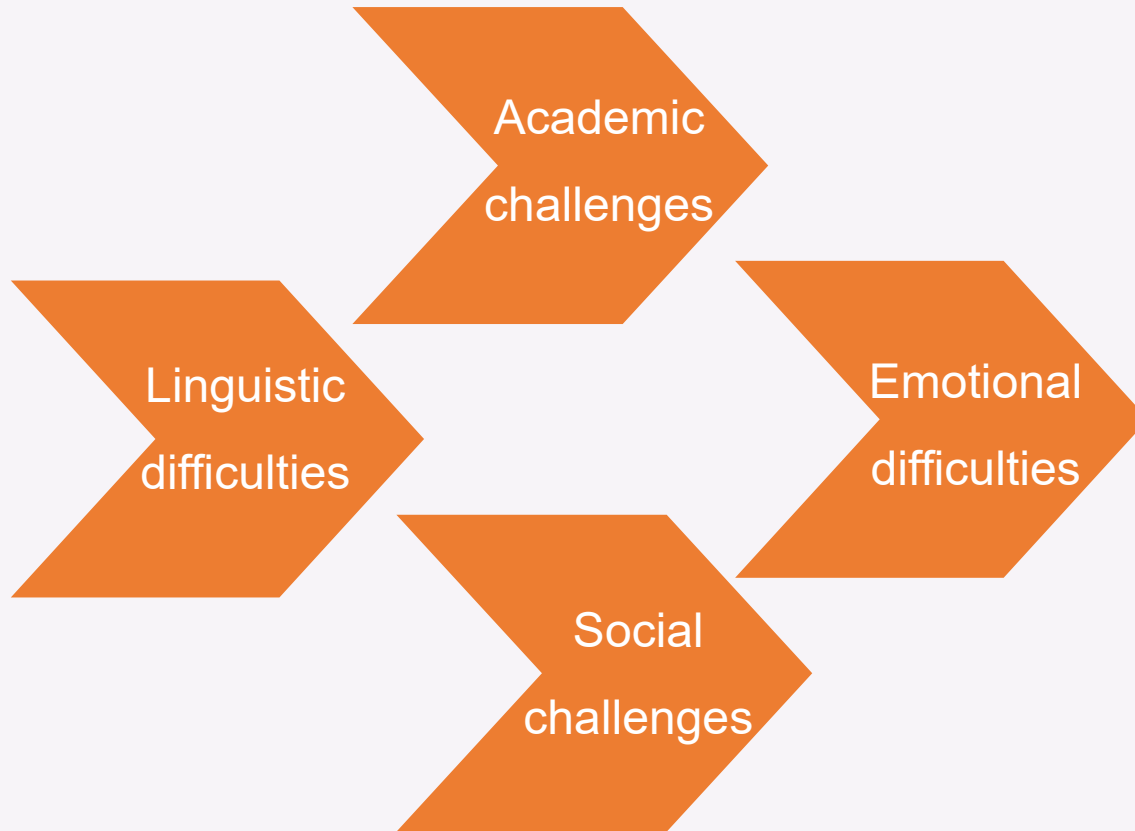


- **Academic challenges as the most obvious one**
Unclear requirements and instructions, distance between teacher and students, different T-L mode, Unfamiliar with regulations and rules
- **Prevailing in stage 2 and 3**
- **Frustrating confidence**
- **Mistakes (e.g. unintentional plagiarism) and misunderstandings (“I feel our teachers do not care about us at all” P10)**
- **Preventing students from other cultural activities (“I really want to visit the UK, but there are too many classes and assignments”P7).**



Acculturative challenges

A chain

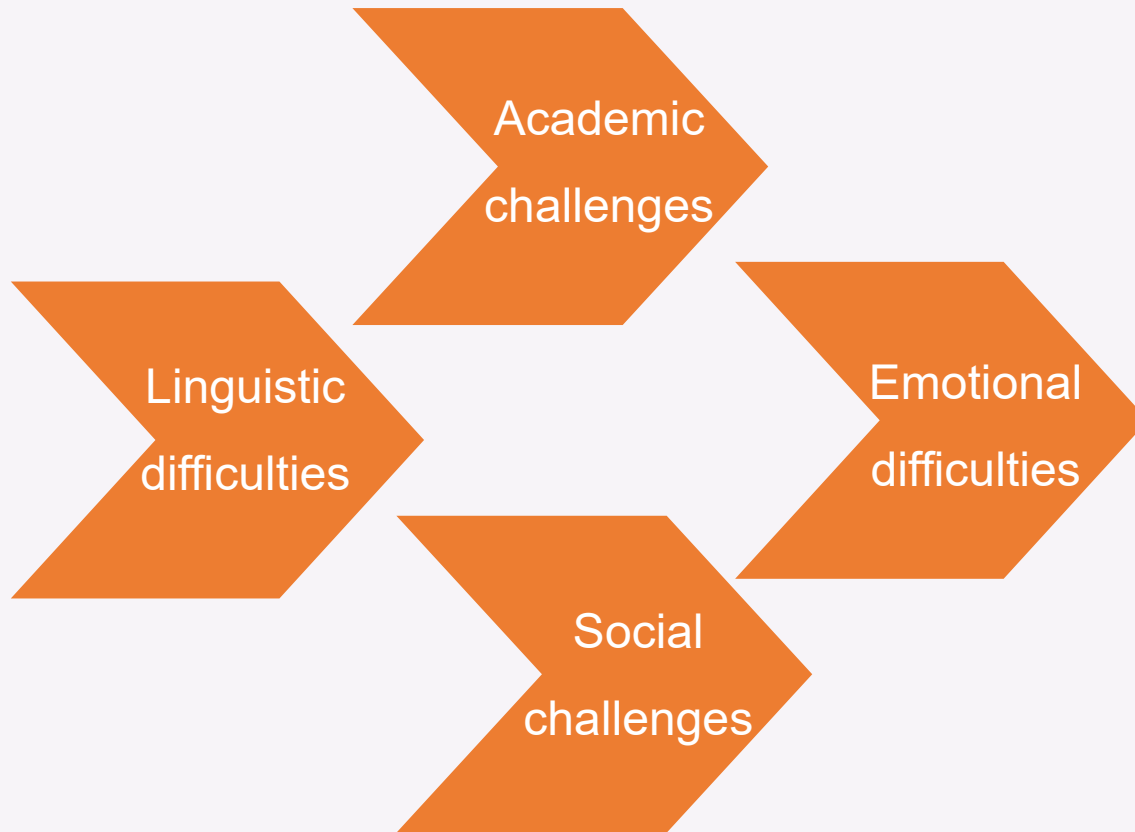


- **Social challenges prevent further cultural contact and communication**
- **Discrimination**
the most serious one
- **low efficiency of public services,**
Detrimental to sense of belonging
- **high life expense**
block the opportunities to explore and contact



Acculturative challenges

A chain



- Emotional challenges as an independent dimensions
- Homesickness, pressure, loneliness and anxiety
- As the final representation and results of other other challenges
- Pressure and anxiety from academic and linguistic challenges
- Homesickness caused by social and linguistic difficulties
- Loneliness caused by social and linguistic challenges



Patterns of the facilitators and challenges

1. Persistence of Social Communication and Linguistic Difficulties:

Language difficulties consistently identified across all stages.

Limited social communication with the host culture throughout the stages.

2. Decrease in Emotional Difficulties:

Fewer participants report emotional difficulties over time.

Adjustment contribute to reducing the impact of all the challenges

As a result of other challenges, emotional challenges are reducing.

3. Shift in Academic Challenges:

Stage 1: Linguistic difficulties and adjustment to different teaching-learning modes.

Stage 2: Language challenges persist.

Stage 3: Limited support from teachers.

Stage 4: Limited support from teachers and unclear requirements.



Conclusions

- Chinese PGT students is connecting to the host culture while losing the original culture
- A significant effect of the length of stay (stages) on all the six constructs
- Acculturative facilitators work as system leaded by individual facilitators and supported by social and institutional ones.
- Acculturative challenges is leaded by linguistic difficulties, followed by social and academic difficulties and represented by the emotional difficulties.