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Interpreting Acculturation Process: An Analogical Mapping Perspective

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Introduction

An analogical mapping (Gentner, 1997; 2003) perspective is applied to interpreting acculturative processes. Mapping native culture (base) into another culture (target) is dynamically shown in the acculturation processes for the immigrants in the USA. For example, Korean-Americans use analogical mapping strategies that attempt to align Korean and American cultures, that is, to find the persuasive similarities and differences between the two cultural representations (Gentner, 2003). In this research, Acculturation processes are interpreted from the analogical mapping perspective, more specifically, six domains for the analogical thinking.

Six Domains of Acculturative Processes

Analogical thinking appears to be very important for the immigrants' acculturation processes. The immigrants facilitate known domains from their native cultural knowledge as an aid in adjusting themselves into new cultural settings. Here, the five domains of acculturative processes are strongly recommended to be considered.

1) Ecological/Cultural Domain

It helps the immigrants map ecological/cultural similarities and differences between the two countries, that is, native country and the host country.

2) Cognitive Domain

Cognitive target domain may include new ways of solving real life problems, learning foreign language (English), and new cognitive coping skills. etc.

3) Behavioral Domain

Behavioral base domain may include familiar life-styles, friends, foods, behaviors or actions. From this domain, the immigrants attempt to get familiar with behavioral target domain.

4) Emotional/Unconscious Domain

The acculturation goal is to grasp a variety of layers or variables of emotional/unconscious domain in the host country as the immigrants get used to cross-cultural similarities and differences.

5) Values/Beliefs Domain

It will take a long period of time for the immigrants to integrate multicultural values after evaluating cultural relevance, abstraction and adaptability.

6) Spiritual/Religious Domain

It helps the immigrants map spiritual/religious similarities and differences among diverse ethnic groups. Spirituality and religiosity would be a resilient factor as an aid in overcoming adverse and stressful situations during the immigration life (Lee, 2004).

Research Outcomes

Lee reported Korean-American college students' rates of behavioral acculturation (Lee, 2006c), values acculturation (Lee, 2006b), and of unconscious acculturation represented in Korean-American college students' dreams (Lee, 2005). Lee (2005) designed "The Lee Acculturation Dream Scale" to analyze the location of each dream by evaluating the dream content, and reported that Korean-American college students' acculturation processes were represented in the unconscious dream images. Lee (2006a) proposed a model of acculturative self-concept as he explicated that the self has a capacity to adapt to different cultures in a resilient way. The five domains of acculturation processes were explicated in terms of Gentner's analogical mapping as well as of Schank's real life experience mapping (1982).

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