

## **CULTURE SHOCK EXPERIENCED BY ENGLISH NATIVE SPEAKER: A CASE STUDY OF AN AMERICAN IN MAKASSAR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Culture shock may happen when people visit a new place or country that they have never been to before. Makassar is one of the major cities in Indonesia has not been known well as a tourist destination and this could lead to more potential to experience culture shock. This research studied the culture shock experienced by English native speakers in Makassar by using Lysgaard's theory of culture shock. Having done the interview and using the qualitative method in analyzing the data, this research revealed that the culture shock experienced by English native speakers in Makassar is described in three phases of culture shock: anticipation, culture shock and adjustment. Moreover, the native English speaker did exercise and prayed as her self-healing an adjustment phase.

**Keywords:** Culture Shock; Native Speaker; American;

### **ABSTRAK**

*Culture shock dapat terjadi ketika orang mengunjungi tempat atau negara baru yang belum pernah mereka kunjungi sebelumnya. Makassar sebagai salah satu kota besar di Indonesia belum dikenal dengan baik sebagai tujuan wisata dan hal ini berpotensi lebih besar untuk mengalami culture shock. Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang gegar budaya yang dialami oleh penutur asli bahasa Inggris di Makassar dengan menggunakan teori culture shock Lysgaard. Setelah melakukan wawancara dan menggunakan metode kualitatif dalam menganalisis data, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa culture shock yang dialami oleh penutur asli bahasa Inggris di Makassar digambarkan dalam tiga fase culture shock:antisipasi, culture shock dan penyesuaian. Selain itu, penutur asli bahasa Inggris melakukan latihan dan berdoa sebagai penyembuhan dirinya dalam fase penyesuaian.*

*Kata Kunci: Culture shock; Penutur Asli; Amerika.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The movement of people from their original area to a new area causes cultural clashes due to differences in language, lifestyle and religion. Changes like this can trigger the emergence of stress such as barriers to communication, the emergence of feelings of alienation that can raise anxiety in the individual (Maizan, 2020). In line with that, Hasrullah (2012) stated that differences in the way of communicating and lack of understanding in culture are one of the triggers for the emergence of culture shock in an individual who has just moved to a new area.

Misunderstandings between two persons from different cultures, regardless of whether the two persons are from the same or different cultures, often arise because they do not understand each other's culture (Mulyana in Weda & Atmowardoyo, 2018). Furthermore, Goa in Yoga (2016) mentioned that a transfer of the culture of

one language into the other may very likely lead to a language misunderstanding, confusion, and even conflicts. Cross-cultural misunderstandings or cultural clashes that occurred in the process of adjustment can help to identify issues that may cause conflict in communication.

Cultural differences can cause people's feelings of unfamiliarity that have a direct impact on individuals such as psychological stress namely depression, anxiety and feeling of helplessness (Xia, 2009). Bochner, S (2003) stated that culture shock is an individual's reaction to a new environment that has not been recognized, causing an initial reaction in the form of anxiety due to the individual losing the familiar signs in the old environment. He further described that culture shock is frequently used to describe how people react to novel or unaccustomed situations.

As one a developing country, Indonesia attracts some foreigners to come and visit. However, the famous place to visit tourist in Indonesia is Bali and Lombok. While Makassar is not as famous as the two places mentioned before to visit. It is also hard to meet the tourist that looks around Makassar. Based on the data from Badan Statistik Provinsi Bali, there were 604.493 visits to Bali in 2019. Compared to Makassar there were only 17.771 visits where most of the tourists were from Malaysia with 10.056 visits, followed by French, Singapore and Germany with a total of 595 visits. Then the United States with 515 visits and China with 411 visits ( BPS, Sul-Sel)

Therefore, visiting Makassar by her/himself without knowing anyone and meeting another international tourist could make them be more potential to get culture shock. Based on it, the problem statement of this research is the obstacles related to culture shock experienced by an American. While the research questions are formulated as follow: What is the phase of culture shock experienced by an American in Makassar? And How does an American overcome the phase of culture shock experienced during her or his time in Makassar?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Culture Shock**

The culture shock was first introduced by an anthropologist named Oberg in the late 1950s. Oberg himself defined it as a "disease" that is inflicted by individuals who live in a new cultural environment. Culture shock is the individual's anxiety as a result of the loss of cultural signs and symbols which are known in social interaction, especially when a person lives in the new culture for a long time (Kristian, 2012: 10).

Furthermore, Alder (1972:8) describes culture shock in more technical psychological terms: Culture shock then is thought to be a form of anxiety that results from the loss of commonly perceived and understood signs, and symbols of social intercourse. The individual undergoing culture shock reflects his anxiety and nervousness with cultural differences through any number of defence mechanisms:

repression, regression, isolation, and rejection. These defensive attitudes speak in behavioural terms, of basic underlying insecurity which may encompass loneliness, anger, frustration, and self-questioning competence. In line with Alder's opinion, Kohls (2001:91) states that culture shock is the term used to describe the reactions to the psychological disorientation that is experienced by most individuals when they move for an extended period into a culture that differs from their own.

Moreover, Ward et al (2001) define culture shock as an active process in dealing with change in an unfamiliar environment. The active process consists of affective, behavioural, and cognitive. It is an individual reaction to the feeling, behaving and thinking when facing the influence of the second culture. Ward, et al (2001) also mentioned that culture shock occurs in the first year the individual moves to another area, which in the early years suffers because of cultural differences.

Culture shock is common among foreign students, immigrants, and expatriates. It can be seen in the previous studies done by Rajasekar, J & Renand, F. (2013), Rahmaniari (2015), Qun, W., Syihabuddin, S., Mulyati, Y. & Damaiantu, V. (2018), and Wakhidah NJI & Adityarini, H. (2020). No matter how well you are prepared, there are many things in a culture that you cannot find in books. This is not simply about meeting new and unexpected things, but also failing to meet what you would have never believed would be missing from any culture. Differences in nonverbal communication and unwritten rules play a large part. Thus, it can be concluded that culture shock is the *feelings of anxiety, confusion and uncertainty that people experience when they come into contact with a new culture that is different from their own.*

### **Cultural Adjustment**

Living in a culture that is different from your own can be both an exciting adventure and a challenging process. Regardless of what country you are from. A visitor coming for short periods do not always experience the same intense emotions as visitors who live in foreign countries for longer terms. The adjustment stage during prolonged stays may last several months to several years.

Martin & Nakayama (2010:327) state that the most common theory is the U-curve theory of adaptation. This theory is based on research conducted by a Norwegian sociologist, (Lysgaard, 1995) who interviewed Norwegian students studying in the United States. He was interested in understanding the experience of cultural adaptation. His results have been confirmed by many other subsequent studies and have been applied to many different migrant groups. The main idea is that migrants go through fairly predictable phases in adapting to a new cultural situation. The first experience excitement and anticipation followed by a period of shock and disorientation (the bottom of the U curve); then they gradually adapt to the new cultural context. Although this framework is simplistic and does not represent every migrant's experience, most migrants experience these general phases at one time or another.

**Anticipation:** The first phase is the anticipation or excitement phase. When a migrant first enters a new cultural context, he or she may be excited to be in the new situation and only a little apprehensive.

**Culture Shock:** The second phase, culture shock, happens to almost everyone in intercultural transitions. Individuals face many challenges of transition in new cultural contexts. Culture shock is a relatively short-term feeling of disorientation, of discomfort due to the unfamiliarity of surroundings and the lack of familiar cues in the environment. Although most individuals experience culture shock during the period of transition to a new culture, they are less likely to experience it if they maintain separateness because culture shock presumes cultural contact. For many individuals, long-term adaptation is not easy. Some people actively resist assimilation in the short term. For example, many students from Muslim countries, especially females, often continue to wear traditional clothing while living in the United States, thus actively resisting participating in U.S. popular culture. Others resist assimilation in the long term, as is the case with some religious groups, like the Amish and the Hutterites. Some would like to assimilate but are not welcome in the new culture, as is the case with many immigrants to the United States from Latin America. And some people adapt to some aspects of the new culture but not to others.

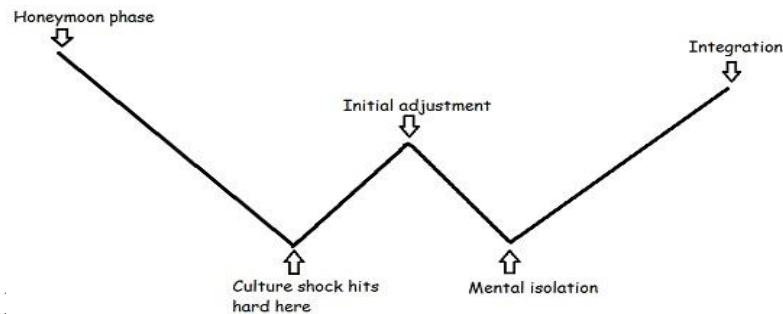
**Adjustment:** The third phase in Lysgaard's model is an adjustment, in which migrants learn the rules and customs of the new cultural context.

Furthermore, The U-curve model for adjustment which was first introduced by a Norwegian sociologist (Lysgaard, 1995), has been developed by other scholars during the following decades (e.g. (Oberg, 1960); Chang, 1973). According to this model, the adaptation process goes through four stages: The honeymoon period, crisis period, adjustment period, and biculturalism period.



Figure 1. U Curve Model of Cultural Adjustment

The following "W" shaped diagram illustrates the period of adjustment in a second culture and might apply to a one-year stay (approximately) in a foreign culture. The stage in the following pattern is a common one.



1. Honeymoon period. Initially many people are fascinated and excited by everything new. The visitor is elated or stimulated to be in a new culture.
2. Culture shock. The individual has been immersed in new problems; housing; transportation; shopping and language. Mental fatigue results from continuously straining to comprehend the foreign language.
3. Initial adjustment. Everyday activities such as housing and shopping are no longer major problems. Although the visitor may not yet be fluent in the language spoken basic ideas and feelings in the second language can be expressed.
4. Mental isolation. Individuals have been away from their family and good friends for a long time and may feel lonely. Many still feel they cannot express they as well as they can in their native language. Frustration and sometimes loss of self-confidence result. Some individuals remain at this stage.
5. Acceptance and integration. A routine (e.g. work, business, school) has been established. The visitors have accepted the habits, customs, food and characteristics of people in the new culture. The visitors feel comfortable with friends, associates, and the language of the country.

In addition, Oberg (Ward & Furnham, 2001: 81) mentions that process of adaptation can be described as consisting of four distinct phases:

1. Honeymoon, is the first phase, its emphasis on the first reactions comfort, enchantment, and fascination of new experience.
2. Crisis (culture shock) is characterized by feelings of confusion with unfamiliar ways of custom, frustration, anxiety and anger with some differences in the new country.
3. Recovery, including culture and adaptability process, they begin learning about customs in a new country.
4. Adjustment, showing enjoyment where the person can be able to participate in the new environment.

In a conclusion, either U-curve or W-curve, people will experience these stages if they come to a new place that is different from their own. The stages will also vary based on personal experiences.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative method was used in this research. The researchers interviewed by asking some questions. This research was conducted at one of the courses in Makassar on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019. It is a place to learn language and culture. It is not only for Indonesian people but also for a foreigner who wants to learn the Indonesian language. The respondent is a businesswoman from America. She came to Indonesia because she wanted to do some business. The instrument of the research was an interview related to culture shock.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The interview session reveals the findings which are in line with the objective of the study, as shown in the table:

| No | Data  | Anticipation | Culture Shock | Adjustment |
|----|---|--------------|---------------|------------|
| 1. | <i>"I was talking with some friends and they said it would be easier to learn Indonesian here because people talk very quickly in Makassar. So if I learn Indonesian quickly, I can understand Indonesia anywhere in this country."</i> (Datum 1)   | √            |               |            |
| 2. | <i>"Ummm, I did not know how to shop at Market I did not know how to bargain, I did not know what prices it would be. In my country, we do not go grocery shopping every day, I go one time a month and it's so here I have to go every day and oh, it is a lot of time umm yea, so that is one of the many things."</i> (Datum 2)  |              | √             |            |
| 3. | <i>"Umm, as I have mentioned before, that is a piece of culture shock, umm another piece would be, learning how to respect people who are older or younger than I am or in the higher position, umm we express it very differently in America. Umm, another one is visiting people's homes and knowing when to enter someone house or go outside in America you never enter anybody's house you call before you come. So it is very opposite here and America."</i> (Datum 3) |              | √             |            |
| 4. | <i>"Oh yeah, there is a lot. When making plans here you can do it all sudden. And my neighbours</i>   |              | √             |            |

|    |  |  |   |   |
|----|--|--|---|---|
|    | <i>would come and say "Ok, let's go we are going to go swimming today", "I have plans today, ok wait for hold on". Whereas in America you always make plans for weeks if not months if you have things to do with your friends. We never do a thing on due at the moment. The food was very different, that was a culture shock cause I am used to eating foods. So like vegetables, sometimes we do not cook in a State we eat them fresh. Whereas here you always cook them, just good cause it is healthy and it kills all the bacteria. Like "I just want to eat fresh vegetables" so yea, learning to eat differently as well." (Datum 4)</i> |  |   |   |
| 5. | <i>"Yea, I got called 'bule' all the time"<br/>"Yes. Not as much as my other friends because my skin is brown I do not have many people to ask for pictures, but I do get sometimes." (Datum 5)</i>  |  | √ |   |
| 6. | <i>"Umm, that is a great question. Umm, a lot of times I pray because that helps me to manage stress and all the differences. Exercising is good and then I have learned to cook foods that are normal to me but at home using things that I have found here. So eating, exercising and praying a lot." (Datum 6)</i>  |  |   | √ |
| 7. | <i>"Umm, I learned a lot that my way in my culture is not always right. I think a lot of times, I think from America is like "No, it should be done this way". Like this is the right way, but it is not true. There is a lot of ways to do good things. I learned a lot from here hospitality, and bringing people in like visitors." (Datum 7)</i>   |  |   | √ |

The table above shows the statements of the respondent in this research. As the above statements as the answers in the interview session, the respondent gets into the three-phase of culture shock's steps during her time staying in Makassar.

The anticipation phase is the first step where a person will feel attractive and joyful in this phase. Datum 1 states this first phase, shows the willingness of respondents in learning about Indonesia by staying in Makassar. The respondent is aware of Indonesia as a multi-ethnic country, as said by (Weda & Atmowardoyo, 2018: 9) Indonesia as a large country has various cultures and languages. Further, to be able to communicate with Indonesian, the respondent chose to stay in Makassar. Rationally, when she could speak up with people in Makassar that is well-known as

people who speak fast. Thus from the answer of the respondent, it could be said that the respondent had made research before she visited Makassar to learn more about Indonesia. However, to know more about this first phase, it should need more questions related to the feeling of the respondent when she came in for the first time in Makassar.

## **Discussion**

Culture shock as the second phase happens to almost everyone in intercultural transition. The data found that the respondent gets some obstacle or discomfort of her surroundings and the lack of familiar cues in the environment. The respondent is still not usual with her new environment, she always reflects her life in America to the daily life in Makassar. The data also found that the respondent finds some distinctions between Indonesia, specifically in Makassar, and America. Such as in Makassar, she could go to the market every day, while she usually buys groceries once a month in America. In addition, she also knows the difference between behaving with older and younger people than her in Makassar. Moreover, the most shocking thing that she finds in Makassar is the unplanned schedule and the food. In America, she used to make a plan at least a month before, while she finds that people in Makassar could make an activity at the right time without any plan before. She also used to consume fresh food without cooking it, but here in Makassar, all the food should be cooked. From this point, it can be stated that even the respondent has come to Makassar twice, she still gets some disorientation. It could be caused by of lack research before coming because all the statements mentioned are about the daily life of people in Makassar, either from the matter of food, the managing time or making a schedule, and dos and taboos of interaction with the older or younger people.

Adjustment as the third or the final phase in Lysgaard's model means the condition where a person learns the rules and customs of the new cultural context. Adjustment is also well-known as the recovery phase where a person has been good at controlling themselves. As mentioned in the previous paragraph that one of the obstacles faced by the respondent is referred to as the food. The respondent is finally learning how to cook foods that are normal to her as shown in datum 6. In addition, she finds ways to release her stress by praying and exercising. From this point, it could be said that the respondent is doing exercise and praying as she self-healing from stressing the time she had been in the culture shock phase.

By encountering the different cultures, the respondent does not only try to find a way to get out from the culture shock phase, but she also learns more about the truth. She could suppress her ego to think that the truth is not always based on her culture. Thus in this phase, the respondent has cut short the words of the dominant feeling of the people in a community regarding their culture, as explained by Mulyana (Weda & Atmowardoyo, 2018) that each cultural group tends to view its own culture as superior to other cultures and measures other cultures by its cultural standard. The respondent here gets more than recover herself, the lesson after passing the adjustment phase is gotten by having awareness about cultural diversity. Although



there are many cultures, one culture should not be wrong, and another culture could be right. There is a lot of ways to do things and it is still good. All cultures have their uniqueness.

*"Umm, I would say make sure you are prepared make sure you read articles about what happens, and when it happens do not be surprised it is normal. Umm, I would probably say talk with more people who have travelled and their experiences. If you travel for a short time you most likely would not deal with culture shock it is usually when you have been somewhere for an extended period that you would not deal with the culture shock." Datum 8*

In addition, culture shock as a condition experienced in visiting a new place could be the real pain if the person does not have any previous knowledge about the culture or the environment in the new place. Thus the respondent suggests avoiding or overcoming the phase of culture shock as represented in datum 8 above. The world is full of diversity. There are so many countries. The countries have many regions. Every region has their culture. That can make people go outside to another country, another religion then finds another culture. People will face a lot of things in a new place like culture shock. Culture shock will happen when people visit a new country or place that they have never visited before.

## CONCLUSION

Culture shock always happens everywhere to everyone. Some theories represent the feeling of people when they get shocked by the new culture. Now we know how culture or even our country on people's opinion. This research showed once you experienced the culture shock, you can identify where you are on the steps of the theory and try to accept and understand the differences. Living in a new environment can be a real pain if we do not know about it and its culture. It is different from just visiting or spending a holiday in a foreign country or place. Culture shock happens when people become anxious because they do not speak the language, know the custom or understand people's daily life. People who cannot adjust themselves to the new environment or new culture may reject everything new to them and exaggerate the positive aspects of their own culture. While an American as a respondent in this research got into three phases of culture shock. She got the anticipated phase, culture shock phase and adjustment phase. Furthermore, she learned about respecting another culture that is distinct from hers. Based on this finding, it is strongly recommended that the sojourners should understand the target culture and target language before going to new places to anticipate culture shock that can happen to them and they are ready with the cultural adaptation process.

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