

CHAPTER IV

SYNTHESIS AND ESSENCE OF TEXTURAL AND STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION

THE ADAPTATION PROCESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE OF THE HOST CULTURE IN SEMARANG

I. SYNTHESIS

Synthesis in phenomenological research refers to the process of integrating and analyzing the data collected from participants' lived experiences to extract key themes, patterns, and insights (Bliss, 2016). This is the final stage of phenomenological study, resulting in an essence. This involves organizing the data into meaningful categories, making connections between them, and identifying common threads or overarching themes that emerge. In this case, the researcher writes the report of the informant, including textural describing “what” occurred and structural describing “how” it occurred. The researcher lists the meaning units of those informants (Heyns et al., 1998).

1. Honeymoon: Experienced feelings of excitement and surprise within the host culture.

Everyone has their way of adjusting to their new environment, as international students at Diponegoro University discovered. According to the researcher of (Adjustment, n.d.), this phase is marked by feelings of joy, optimism, and wonder while entering a new environment or culture. Students are more likely to focus on the positive aspects and enticing differences of the new environment as a result of encountering new people, environments, cultures, and situations. At this point, anyone who moves or travels to a place or country where they live will be excited.

This was also felt by the international students at Diponegoro University, who knew they would transfer to another country and experience a cultural environment in Indonesia. When they initially arrived in Semarang, they felt joyful and enthusiastic. They experienced many new things, including societal conventions that differed widely from their own, the technologically advanced country, and the lush greenery of Indonesia. Furthermore, international students discovered that the food in Indonesia is significantly different from their own, as is the culture, such as the religion,

as most people are Muslims and the fact that people cannot give someone something with their left hand.

Many factors can influence the intensity and duration of the honeymoon stage, including the individual's pre-existing cultural knowledge and experience, the degree of similarity or difference between the home and host cultures, and the individual's personality traits and coping mechanisms. Otherwise, what sets them apart is one informant feels surprised to see the developed country different from his own country. The other informant appears to have expectations met in the host country and a sense of familiarity with the new environment, possibly due to prior exposure or research.

2.1.Culture shock: The food, language, and social norms that surprise foreign students and the difficulties they encounter

Cultural shock will be the next thing foreign students at Diponegoro University will experience. In this stage of their adjustment to Semarang, the students enjoy the cultural differences that surprise and perhaps amaze them. Although it normally lasts a few weeks to a month, culture shock might start right away or later. It could start out with a full-blown catastrophe or with an ongoing series of developing problems, unpleasant encounters, and responses. People who encounter new cultures and surroundings and feel uneasy there may experience culture shock. Adjusting to the new surroundings and culture can take some time (Winkelman, 1994).

a) Food

Culture shock affects every foreign student at Diponegoro University in the same way. Those five informants are foreign students who experience the same feeling regarding the food context in Indonesia. Living in Semarang, they have observed several variations in the food and find that the cuisine in Semarang tastes strongly of spices, while others eat it merely to survive. It means, there are strong differences between their home food and the food in Semarang, such as in Semarang, people eat chicken feet otherwise, it is not appropriate for other students to eat it in their culture. In addition, not only the taste but also the population, because it was the first time

some of those international students to see dishes washed in the bathroom. It shocked those students because of how it can be possible for them. Cause of that, it has an effect on them, which is, they decide not to eat outside but prefer to cook their food. It's not only because of the pollution but also because of the taste differences.

b) Language

Language differences shocked them because it was the first time they heard about it, and the language they used academically was different from the everyday language. However, before they entered academic learning, the language they learned was only the everyday language. In addition, there is a miscommunication between those international students and the local people. It caused misunderstanding because they didn't understand the Indonesian language, and it was difficult to find someone who could speak English, and they were struggling with the interaction with the locals. Also, sometimes some locals, such as in the Mark speak the Javanese language with them which is the main language in the tribe in central Java, it shocked them to hear that language because they never heard about it and even learned about it.

c) Social norms

The social norms of Semarang were somewhat shocking to foreign students because most Indonesians are Muslims and adhere strictly to their social norms. It shocked those international students especially when they discovered that in Indonesia, particularly in the dormitory of UNDIP, boys and girls cannot be in the same building. Indonesian people are very welcoming people when they meet foreign people, however, it was a shock to those students how Indonesian people treat foreign people, and how they react when they meet a foreigner because they are very excited, nice, and polite. It shocked them because it was very different from their own culture, and their social norms.

Most of the particular units that those international students found and shocked them was to discovered for the first time that in Indonesian, "Mas and Mba" is used when someone addresses one another as "Sir or Miss." Indonesian people use it to call each other. It was a Unit of formal

was to call someone not by their name. It indicates that their host culture and their own are very different, something that shocked them and they only realized when they got to Semarang.

Thus, each international student in Semarang were shocked by the social norms of Indonesia, where most Indonesians are Muslims and adhere to strict social norms. They discovered that boys and girls cannot be in the same building in the dormitory of UNDIP. However, Indonesians are welcoming and polite when meeting foreigners, and their treatment and reactions differ significantly from their own culture and social norms. The students also discovered that Indonesians use "Mas and Mba" which means "Sir and Miss" for formal communication, indicating a significant difference between their host culture and their own. This realization was only realized upon arrival in Semarang.

d) Challenge

Most of the challenges faced by those International students were the language, especially related to their academic study. Language is foremost a means of communication, this is why effective communication requires an understanding and recognition of the connections between a language and the people who use it (Kuiper & Allan, 2017). Because of the language barrier, those students were struggling with their studies, and communication with the local people. Cause of that, it was difficult for them to have a local friend. It is a common challenge for them due to the language barrier.

In addition, when the connections between a language and the people who use it, is challenging, the interaction is not working. From those students' experience, it is very different to find Indonesian people who can speak English fluently, especially for instance in the market. Cause of that, there is a misunderstanding between the foreign students and the locals. Also, there is a consequence in their study, because from their experience, in the class they use the Indonesian language not English, however, the academic language is very difficult and new for them. Cause of that, the students didn't effectively inform the class and there is an effect with their grade point, sometimes, even they don't understand the lesson and even the explanation of their teacher. All of those challenges affect that they don't get the response they want sometimes.

2.1.Recovery: Accepting the host culture and effectively adapting to life within it.

The adaptation stage is an important stage for each individual to be able to be in the environment comfortably. This step focuses on learning how to efficiently adjust to the new cultural environment. Cultural shock is resolved by learning how to adjust to the new culture in an acceptable manner (Winkelman, 1994). According to (*Theorizing About Intercultural Communication - Google Books*, n.d.) cultural adaptation is every individual who is in a new environment and tries to survive in the new environment, to maintain his survival in a new environment and culture. The recovery is a process in which each individual can be seen from their activities, as well as the communication process carried out while in a new cultural environment, in which each individual will adapt to culture in a new environment, this adaptation phase goes into the recovery and adjustment stages. At the recovery stage, every individual who is studying abroad will adjust to their new environment and culture, at this stage individuals begin to understand the new environment and the host culture. While at the adjustment stage, each individual is at the peak stage of adjustment where individuals begin to understand how to adapt to new cultures and environments (Winkelman, 1994).

Each international student has a different strategy to overcome the challenges and culture shock they face in the host culture related to their academic study and their everyday life by interacting with the locals. The first thing they did was to accept the differences and the reality, and also, respect the host culture, and stop complaining because fact that they live in a foreign country and inevitably have to be able to adapt. In addition, they also try to communicate more with the local people to practice the language and to gain more vocabulary. By interacting more with the locals, they got to know more about the host culture and understand about it, because international students can adapt by socializing with the country's residents so that it's easier to understand their way of living.

However, other international students decide to live their lives and stay as they are. It means the students come to Semarang to study and the important thing for them is when study and the education they want and eat to survive and be healthy, that's the important. This reason is because by living in Semarang is just temporary since after their study they will go back to their country. Thus, to adapt is to make himself comfortable. In addition, other international students, decide to live with other international students, because as far away from their home culture, they may

understand each other. It means international students have the feeling of not being confident that the people in the host culture don't understand them. In addition, it evited culture shock and crisis between the host culture and the international students.

Thus, International students face various challenges and culture shocks in their host culture, including academic study and everyday life. They adapt by accepting differences, respecting the host culture, and practicing language and vocabulary. Interacting with locals helps them understand the host culture and socialize with residents. Some students choose to live their lives in Semarang, focusing on their education and survival, as they will return home. Adapting is essential for comfort and survival. Some students choose to live with other international students because they fear that the host people may not understand them. This avoids culture shock and crisis with the host people and allows international students to adapt and make themselves comfortable in their new environment. Overall, international students' strategies vary depending on their needs and preferences.

2.1.Adjustment: The duration to adapt to the host culture

Everyone has their own identity, which is useful for individuals to socialize in their environment. Adjustment places an individual in a situation in which many past behaviors and associated consequences are no longer appropriate and new sources of modeled behavior are different from the past (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). It aims to understand the way individuals and their surroundings behave, and also learn what can be done to improve the feasibility and effectiveness of each individual's communication. The existence of this goal is to see how the role of cultural identity in adaptation. Each individual who adapts will adjust their respective cultural identities despite the obstacles and disturbances that occur, this becomes a bridge to be able to adjust each other's perspectives so that an understanding of the differences that exist is formed, so that communication can still be directly accepted and interpreted.

Each international student experiences the host culture in Semarang, they start to understand the host culture and adapt to it. because they know the why during the culture shock and know how to adapt and overcome the challenges they face. What they have in common is during the duration of their adaptation, because those international students can adapt to the host culture after

two years of living in the host culture. In their experience, students can adapt to the host culture after two years because they get to know more about the host culture, and get more knowledge about it. Otherwise, for other students it has to take four years to adapt to the host culture because there is always some culture, that may surprise and shock differ with the place, the situation, and the person that they communicate with. Thus, for one of the participants, it takes four years to adapt.

What sets them apart is those international students have a new identity by following the host culture in Semarang as long as they live here. For instance, one international student from Pakistan started to wear a Hijab because most of the Muslim girls in Semarang wear a Hijab. It was her acculturation. When she arrived in Semarang she didn't wear a Hijab, because even though she is from a Muslim country, it's not their culture for young girls to wear a Hijab. Otherwise, cause of the social norms and influence of the society in Semarang, she decided to wear it and not take it off again. Even her family was shocked by that choice but it's her change caused by the host culture.

International students in Semarang experience a culture shock and adapt to it, with some able to adapt after two years due to increased knowledge and understanding of the host culture. Others may take up to four years due to cultural differences and some new culture that may shock. However, these students often develop a new identity by following the host culture, such as wearing a Hijab, which is customary for Muslim girls in Semarang. This is a result of acculturation, as it is not their culture for young girls to wear a Hijab. Despite being from a Muslim country, the social norms and influence of Semarang society led her to wear it, despite being shocked by her family's reaction.

II. ESSENCE

After the synthesis of all the perspectives of the informant in this study as a whole, this next step is to reach the essence of the experience of the international students at Diponegoro University. Essences are a common goal in phenomenological research because phenomenological research aims to reach the essence of the individual's lived experience of the phenomenon while ascertaining and defining the phenomenon (Dahlberg, 2006). According to (Heyns et al., 1998) The essence of a phenomenon is universal and can be described through a study of the structure

that governs the instances or particular manifestation of the essence of that phenomenon, a universal or essence may only be intuited or grasped through a study of the particulars or instances as they are encountered in lived experiences.

The essence of the international students who study at Diponegoro University Semarang is that all of them experience the phases of honeymoon, culture shock, recovery, and adjustment. The honeymoon stage is a phase of adjustment for international students at Diponegoro University, where they experience feelings of excitement and surprise in their new environment. This stage is marked by feelings of joy, optimism, and wonder, as they encounter new people, environments, cultures, and situations. According to (Novia & Anshari, 2020) The phase where a person experiences excitement as the initial reaction of admiration, full of enthusiasm for new things, enthusiastic, friendly, and has a good relationship with the surrounding population. Someone has been in a new environment, adjusting to a new culture and environment. According to the International students at Diponegoro University, they experienced this when they moved to Indonesia, where they felt joyful and enthusiastic upon arrival. They experienced technological advancements, lush greenery, and a significant difference in food, culture, and religion.

Cultural shock is another stage of adjustment for foreign students at Diponegoro University. The crisis phase may emerge immediately upon arrival or be delayed but generally this stage can last a few weeks to a month and can start with a full-blown catastrophe or an ongoing series of problems, or unpleasant encounters (Winkelman, 1994). People who encounter new cultures and surroundings and feel uneasy may experience culture shock. Food is another aspect of culture shock for foreign students at Diponegoro University experience. They experience strong differences in the food context in Indonesia, such as the strong taste of spices and the fact that dishes are washed in the bathroom. This shock affects them, leading them to prefer cooking their food instead of eating outside due to pollution and taste differences. In regards of the social norms in Semarang were also shocking, as most Indonesians are Muslims and adhere to strict social norms. They discovered that boys and girls cannot be in the same building in the dormitory of UNDIP. However, Indonesians are welcoming, polite, and open when meeting foreigners, and their treatment and reactions differ significantly from their own culture and social norms.

However, the international students in Semarang faced several challenges during their academic studies. Language differences were a shock to them, as they were the first to learn about

it and used it academically. Miscommunication between them and the locals was common, leading to misunderstandings and difficulty in interaction. Some locals even spoke Javanese, the main language of the tribe in central Java. However, the language barrier became a big challenge for them especially related to their academic studies. Effective communication requires understanding and recognition of the connections between a language and its users. Due to the language barrier, students struggled with their studies and communication with locals, making it difficult for them to find local friends. In addition, the students' experience with the Indonesian language in class led to misunderstandings and difficulties in their academic studies. This resulted in lower grades, difficulty in understanding lessons, and sometimes, not receiving desired responses.

The adaptation stage is crucial for international students to adjust to their new environment comfortably. This stage involves learning how to efficiently adjust to the new culture and maintain their survival in a new environment. Cultural adaptation is essential for individuals who are in a new environment and trying to survive in it. According to (Richter et al., n.d.) in this stage the immigrant or the foreigner starts to develop a greater tolerance for what is strange and new and become a mediator between the two cultures. The recovery stage involves individuals adjusting to their new environment and culture through activities and communication processes. International students have different strategies to overcome challenges and culture shocks in their host culture, including academic study and everyday life. Their first strategy to adapt to the host culture was to accept differences (between their home culture and the host culture), respect the host culture (when the locals say don't do this and just don't do it), and practice language and vocabulary (socialize more with the locals and get more local friends), it helps them understand the host culture. Some students choose to live their lives in Semarang, focusing on their education and survival before returning home. Adapting is essential for comfort and survival, while others choose to live with other international students to avoid culture shock and crisis.

The adjustment stage aims to understand the role of cultural identity in adaptation. According to (Ultrual & Tudents, n.d.) in this stage, people come to accept and appreciate the similarities as well as the differences between cultures and each individual who adapts will adjust their respective cultural identities despite obstacles and disturbances that occur. This bridge allows for an understanding of differences and allows for direct acceptance and interpretation of communication. International students in Semarang experience a culture shock and adapt to it,

with some able to adapt after two years due to increased knowledge and understanding of the host culture. Others may take up to four years due to cultural differences and new cultures that may shock them. However, one international student develops a new identity by following the host culture, which is by wearing a Hijab, which is customary for Muslim girls in Semarang.