

CHAPTER I

This chapter presents an introduction of the paper. It covers the background of the study, identification of the problem, and the aims of the study. The last part presents the significance of the study.

1.1. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Current discussion about intercultural communication competence among students who study abroad or international students have significant role for survival and make the learning process successfully. This issue was explored by some researchers (Fungchomchoei & Kardkarnlai, 2016; Pradita, 2013; Cagatay, 2015; Qun, Syihabbudin, Mulyati, et al, 2018). The studies discussed the importance and impact of the intercultural communication competence (Fungchomchoei & Kardkarnlai, 2016; Pradita, 2013; Cagatay, 2015). The other studies reported that culture shock that was experienced by students tends to lead the students to be uncomfortable to communicate with others and do their daily activity (Qun, Syihabbudin, Mulyati, et al, 2018). One of the causes of culture shock is due to the lack of intercultural communication competence (Fungchomchoei & Kardkarnlai, 2016). Intercultural communication competence is a skill that is used by people from other country to communicate effectively. Jandt (2003) explained the importance of ICC, the first is, as an intercultural communicator, we use part of function of our knowledge of others and other cultures. The second, if we learn more about people from different culture, we will also find more about

ourselves. It also gives student understanding about tolerance across culture. Thus, before going abroad, students should learn the culture of the country that they will visit to minimize the culture shock.

Cultural differences do crucial role in promoting student's competence in English. As in case of Islamic university in Yogyakarta, there are Thai students who study English for 4 (four) years. It is found that the students were still confused to use English or Bahasa in their daily communication with Indonesian students for 2 years. They felt confused how to communicate with Indonesian students effectively with Bahasa, because Indonesia and Thailand have different accent. While study in class they also have to deal with Indonesian letter which is very different with Thailand letter. This research is almost similar with Qun, Syihabbudin, Mulyati, et al, (2018) which discuss about Chinese students' culture shock in a university in Indonesia. It is similar to this research in context and in terms of what is examined in their study.

In the previous study on this issues, most of the studies tend to discuss the importance of intercultural communication competence (Kardkarnlai & Funghomchoei, 2016) or just describe kinds of culture shock (Qun, Syihabbudin, Mulyati, et al., 2018). Rarely do researchers elaborate to what extent intercultural communication competence in accordance with culture shock symptoms. Thus, to fill this empirical void, this research focuses on how intercultural communication competence helps Thai students to survive and deal with the culture shock, and Thai students can communicate in English or Bahasa during study in Indonesia.

1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The results of this study are expected to be beneficial to support empirical studies dealing with intercultural communication competence and culture shock. Moreover, this research is also expected to give information to the foreign learners especially in adaptation with new environment if they want to study abroad.

1.3. AIMS AND GOALS

Related to the issues observed, the aim of this study is to investigate Thai students' perceptions of intercultural communication competence to deal with their culture shock during study in Indonesia.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How do the Thai students experience symptoms of culture shock during their study?
2. To what extent does intercultural communication competence help Thai-students to deal with culture shock symptoms?