

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the introduction which is divided into five parts: background of study, definition of key terms, research question, objective of study, significance of study.

A. Background of Study

Culture is a lifestyle, background, complex and abstract. Culture is defined as the values, traditions, customs, religion, language. Culture is more than just music, art, literature, clothing and food, it also encompasses how people interact with one another, and how they express their feelings, and how they communicate both verbally and non-verbally.

Culture is a way of life for its members. It is a design for living that gives meaning to the ideas and habits within a certain group. Culture influences the way we speak, act, behave, and even decide what is good or bad. In this era of globalization, culture develops very quickly and become highly influential.

The world is a global village, and we cannot deny the fact that values differ across the globe. Every country has different culture, different culture will make different perspectives on things. Understanding different culture is known as cultural awareness.

Every country has its own culture, language, values and traditions. The differences among countries create varying perspectives and ways of viewing the world. When people learn about other cultures or even a different language, they realize that there are many diverse group of people in the world, and being different from one another is normal. Furthermore, a single country can have various cultures, such as Indonesia, which has many languages and cultures.

The cultural differences can bring both positive and negative impacts, the positive impact can significantly enrich our lives and work environments. Exposure to diverse perspectives can lead new ways of thinking and problem solving. Additionally, cultural differences can improve communication skills, requires being a better listener and more emphatic communicator. Moreover, diverse culture introduces understanding and respect like cultural awareness and sensitivity, provide valuable insights, leading to open mindedness and deeper appreciation from global diversity. Otherwise, cultural differences can also pose significant challenges. Miscommunication is such a common issues whether it is verbal, nonverbal and contextual meaning can lead to misunderstandings. The differences can also cause a conflict and tension, without a proper awareness and education cultural different can lead to stereotypes, biases and discrimination. Additionally, interacting diverse cultural practice can be difficult and requiring more effort in finding common ground. On individual level, adapting a new culture can be difficult, stressful and overwhelming.

So that balancing these negative impacts requires significant effort, education, commitment and environment where cultural differences are respected and valued.

Cultural awareness is the way of perceiving and viewing the world. It means understanding, respecting, and being successfully aware with worldviews, values, behaviors, traditions, customs, languages and communication styles are different from one another.

As noted above, life is closely tied to culture. Different culture might lead to confusion and misunderstandings, so there needs to be an emphasis on educating cultural awareness to minimize misunderstandings and enhance knowledge about culture. Students' cultural awareness should be emphasized and enhance in cross cultural understanding course.

Cultural awareness is also sensitivity to the similarities and differences that exist between two different cultures. What is considered to be normal behavior in one culture can be entirely different in another. Thus, being respectful of others and accepting these differences allows us to develop more successfully, to have positive thoughts, and to benefit from cultural diversity.

Language is like a mirror that reflects national culture, anything and everything of a culture is reflected in its language. The use of language cannot be separated from society and social culture. Language differs by country, just as culture does. Both verbal and body language is culturally

informed. Thus, being respectful of cultural differences can affect our thoughts and attitudes.

Allah in the Holy Qur'an (Al-Hujuraat: 13) says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ١٣

Based on the above verse, Allah SWT create such a beautiful different. Allah create different human, men and women, different appearances, skin tone, skin color, hair color, height and others. Then, God divide human into nations and tribes which has different culture and create human may know one another.

The verse divine wisdom behind the creation of diverse peoples and cultures, encourages people to learn about respect and differences, recognize and understand the diversity, which involve appreciating the diversity in cultures, values and practices. Cultural differences should be a source of enrichment and unity, not conflict. The verse teaches that all cultures have equal worth and dignity, introducing the importance of cultural awareness and the rejection of prejudice and discrimination. Encouraging the knowledge of different people and tribes reflects a global perspective which is a component of cultural awareness.

The verse and cultural awareness both give harmony and positive interaction among people where diversity is understood and respected,

leading to harmonious and enriching interactions among people, leading to great empathy and appreciate cultural differences effectively. Al-Hujuraat verse 13 serves a powerful reminder of the value of diversity and the importance of cultural awareness in understanding, respectful, appreciation and how various global community.

The writer has found a previous study related to this study in the field of Cultural Awareness. It was conducted by students of English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Makassar, entitled “*STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION TOWARD CULTURAL AWARENESS AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE*” by Nurul Magfirah (2017). This research examines students’ perceptions of cultural awareness in learning English as a foreign language. It emphasizes the relationship between language and culture, which leads to cultural awareness affecting the learning process. The data analysis showed that the students have a good understanding of both culture and language and recognize the relationship between them. The students understand that cultural aspect is important and connected to learning English. They realize that cultural awareness is necessary for studying English effectively.

The previous study by Nurul Magfirah (2017) focused on students’ perception of cultural awareness as a contributing factor in learning English as a foreign language. The result showed that students believe cultural

awareness cannot be separated in English learning. However, this previous study emphasized cross cultural understanding, which differs from the focus of the current study. The current study aims to describe students' cultural awareness after learning Cross Cultural Understanding course.

In this research, the writer focuses exclusively on students' cultural awareness after completing the Cross Cultural Understanding course. This course is one of the offerings in the English Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training Faculty at Antasari State Islamic University.

Based on the description and statement above, the writer is interested in conducting research on cultural awareness, and the title for this research is **“Students’ Cultural Awareness after Learning Cross Cultural Understanding”**.

B. Definition of Key Terms

To prevent the misinterpretation when exploring the content of this research, the writer needs to explain several key terms:

1. Cultural Awareness is about understanding and respecting that one's own and other background have different language, behavior and cultural knowledge.

2. Cross-Cultural Understanding is a course taught in the English Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training Faculty, Antasari State Islamic University.

C. Research Question

According to this study there is one question:

1. How does students' cultural awareness after learning Cross Cultural Understanding course?

D. Objective of Study

Through this study, the writer aims to achieve the following objective:

1. To describe students' cultural awareness after learning Cross Cultural Understanding course.

E. Significance of Study

The result of the study highlights of cultural awareness in describing students' cultural knowledge. This study aims to present an accurate portrayal of students' cultural awareness after learning Cross Cultural Understanding course.

The writer believes that significance is important for improving her works. Therefore, there are several significances of the study, as follows:

1. The Theoretically

The theoretical significance of the study is to understand students' cultural awareness after learning cross cultural understanding. Moreover, the results of the study are expected to describe students' cultural awareness after learning cross cultural understanding course.

2. The Practically

The practical significance of the study consist of three points. Firstly, for students, the writer hopes that they will find interest and enjoyment in learning cross cultural understanding. The writer also hopes that this course can increase students' cultural knowledge and enrich their understanding of other culture. Secondly, for teachers, the writer hopes that the study will be useful to identify students' lack of cultural knowledge and will aid in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Lastly, for the future researchers, the writer hopes that the study will provide an illustration of students' cultural awareness and serve as a reference for those who wish to conduct research on cultural awareness.