

Nigina Begmatova

Information Technologies and Foreign Languages

Diplomat University, Uzbekistan

STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK: CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS

Abstract: Culture shock has been a topic of research for many years because of its significant effects and the workplace. Most international students who study in another country and foreign workers experience culture shock, yet little research exists on differences in its causes and symptoms. This paper the symptoms and causes of culture shock in different nationalities and the moderating effects of demographic factors and travel patterns.

Key words: Culture shock, Honeymoon, Negotiation, Adjustment, Mastery, Reverse Culture Shock, Causes and Symptoms.

Introduction: Culture shock has been a topic of research for approximately 40 years among American and European psychologists and anthropologists (Eickelmann, 2006). It is usually used to describe the discomfort individuals experience when they move to a new country, new atmosphere, or new environment, although it can also lead to a positive learning experience leading to increased personal growth (Adler, 1987).

List of negative symptoms and the different stages one may go through when experiencing culture shock, along with suggestions for dealing with it, is described by Guanipa (1998). Sorrento Lingue - International Study Abroad Programs (2006), and Schneider (2006), although no empirical data were presented. Culture shock has negative effects on both education and the workplace, as noted by Kalervo Oberg (1954).

Main part: This article aims to analyze the five stages of culture shock. Culture shock is a process people experience when adapting to a new country. It typically occurs in five stages:

The Honeymoon Stage

The first stage, often referred to as the honeymoon stage, is characterized by excitement, fascination, and an overall positive experience in the new culture. During this period, differences between cultures seem interesting rather than frustrating, and people may feel adventurous and enthusiastic about exploring new experiences. This stage can last for days or months, depending on the individual and their circumstances.

One of the key reasons for this initial excitement is that individuals have not yet faced major difficulties in adapting. Since they are not fully integrated into the culture, they may overlook or downplay challenges such as language barriers, social norms, or homesickness.

However, the honeymoon stage is temporary. As time passes, individuals begin to notice differences that may feel overwhelming or frustrating. What once seemed charming may start to feel

confusing or difficult. This transition leads to the second stage of culture shock, where frustration and homesickness often set in.

The Negotiation Stage

The second stage of culture shock, known as the Negotiation Stage, is when a person starts experiencing significant differences between their home culture and the new culture. This stage often comes with frustration, anxiety, and sometimes homesickness.

For example:

1. Emotional Reactions – Individuals may feel irritated, confused, or overwhelmed by the unfamiliar customs, language, and behaviors around them.
2. Cultural Clashes – Differences in social norms, food, communication styles, and values may become more noticeable and harder to accept.
3. Language Barriers – Struggles with language can make communication difficult, leading to misunderstandings and feelings of isolation.

What is the role of culture in negotiation?

Different cultures have different negotiation approaches, ranging from direct and combative to indirect and cooperative. Some cultures emphasize direct communication, while others rely on reading between the lines.

The Adjustment Stage

The Adjustment Stage is the third stage of culture shock, where individuals gradually start to adapt to the new culture. The initial frustration and anxiety from the Negotiation Stage begin to fade as they develop routines and gain a better understanding of their surroundings.

1. Increased Familiarity – People become more comfortable with the new culture's customs, traditions, and social norms.
2. Better Communication – Language skills improve, making interactions smoother and reducing misunderstandings.

The adjustment stage marks a turning point, as individuals begin to develop a sense of familiarity and confidence in their new surroundings.

By this stage, individuals have overcome the intense frustration and homesickness experienced earlier. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by cultural differences, they begin to understand and accept them. They become more comfortable with the language, social norms, and daily routines. Milton J. Bennett (1986, 1993) proposed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), explaining how people adjust to cultural differences.

The Mastery Stage

The Mastery Stage (also called the Adaptation or Bicultural Stage) is the final phase of culture shock, where individuals feel fully comfortable and integrated into the new culture. At this stage, they have successfully balanced their original cultural identity with the new one, allowing them to function effectively in both. The mastery stage is the final phase of culture shock, where individuals achieve a high level of adaptation to their new cultural environment.

Key Characteristics of the Mastery Stage

1. **Cultural Fluency** – A deep understanding of local customs, traditions, and social norms.
2. **Bicultural Identity** – The ability to integrate aspects of both cultures into one's identity.
3. **Emotional Stability** – Reduced emotional ups and downs related to adaptation.
4. **Effective Communication** – Confidence in using the local language and understanding cultural nuances.

5. **Social Integration** – The ability to build meaningful relationships with locals.

Reverse Culture Shock

Reverse culture shock (also called re-entry shock or re-adjustment shock) occurs when a person returns to their home country after adapting to a different culture. It can be just as challenging as the initial culture shock because the individual has changed, but their home environment may have remained the same. This phenomenon unfolds in four stages:

1. **Disengagement** – Mixed emotions before returning home.
2. **Initial Euphoria** – Temporary excitement upon arrival.
3. **Irritability & Hostility** – Feelings of alienation and frustration.
4. **Gradual Readjustment** – A balanced reintegration into the home culture.

Conclusion: Culture shock is a psychological reaction to an unfamiliar cultural environment. It is caused by differences in language, customs, social norms, and lifestyle, leading to confusion and disorientation. The symptoms vary but commonly include anxiety, frustration, loneliness, and irritability. Some individuals may experience difficulty adapting to new social rules or struggle with language barriers. While culture shock can be challenging, it is a temporary phase. Recognizing its causes and symptoms helps individuals prepare for cultural transitions, develop coping strategies, and make adaptation smoother and more positive.

REFERENCES:

1. Kalervo Oberg. Introduced the concept of culture shock and its four-stage model. 1954
2. John W. Berry. Developed theories on acculturation. 1980, 1997
3. Milton J. Bennett. Proposed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. 1986, 1993
4. Sorrento Linge. International Study Abroad Programs (2006), also Schneider 2006.
5. FERUZA SIDAMATOVNA KHOLTODJIEVA. (2025). THE PRAGMATICS OF NEGATIVE SPEECH ACTS: INDIRECTNESS STRATEGIES IN REFUSAL, EVASION, AND DISAGREEMENT. International Multidisciplinary Journal for Research & Development, 11(12). Retrieved from <https://www.ijmrd.in/index.php/imjrd/article/view/2339>
6. Aripova, G. T. (2018). ADULTS TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE SPHERE OF ART AND CULTURE. In Язык и культура (pp. 72-81).
7. Tulkunovna, A. G., & Aziza, N. (2025). STUDY OF MUSIC TERMS IN COMPILING A DICTIONARY. SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS AND TRENDS IN THE FIELD OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, 3(29), 253-256.
8. Aripova, G. T. (2021). Principles of compiling music dictionaries. In Язык и культура (pp. 20-23).
9. Aripova, G. T. DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL TERMS IN EASTERN COUNTRIES. УЧЕНЫЙ XXI ВЕКА, 85.
10. Aripova, G. T. (2021). LINGUISTIC APPROACH IN CREATING BILINGUAL MUSIC DICTIONARY. Актуальные научные исследования в современном мире, (1-6), 11-14.

11. Hamidov, X., & Abdullayeva, M. (2024). Alternative Versions and Functional Characteristics of Phraseologists in Uzbek. *EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF INNOVATION IN NONFORMAL EDUCATION*, 4(3), 51-54.
12. Abdullayeva, M. (2022). The Appearance Of The Term “Education Dictionary” In World Linguistics Is Analyzed. *Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences*, 2(Special Issue 28-2), 48-52.