

Culture Shock and Its Stages on the Example of Abduqayum Yuldashev's Story "Is There a Problem?"

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ABSTRACT

The article talks about the issue of the interpretation of the concept of the culture shock and its stages. Abduqayum Yuldashev's story "Is there a problem?.." was selected as an object.

KEYWORDS: Culture shock, negotiation, adjustment, adaptation, reverse culture shock, customs, interaction, story, cultural competence.

As there are various people in the world, so there are very different views, customs and cultures. But without traveling to other countries or cities, without seeing the world, it is almost impossible to learn about people's thoughts and views, lifestyles and, in general, their culture are different. As quoted in "The Ladies of Borobudur" by Barbara Haines Howett, "When the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly". That is why people try to travel around the world without being bordered with their living areas, move to other places to exchange experiences, and most importantly, to expand their worldview. In this way, people face many difficulties and misunderstandings as a result of the diversity of cultures. Moreover, today's increasing demand for people of different backgrounds and cultures to live in an interconnected and communicative space is making our world smaller and more global. It is also making people's lives more difficult and bringing them closer to each other.

So, a person who travels or moves to another place usually experiences what is called "culture shock". When a person meets different people and groups, he/she begins to encounter many new things, opposite actions, completely different views, incomprehensible expressions and some such inconsistencies. Thus, when person encounters completely different rules and behaviors from the society in which he lived, it becomes very difficult to understand and react to them. In many cases, this leads to unpleasant feelings such as nervousness and stress. Because in most cases people get nervous when they try new things and face with a lot of situations that they don't know. The term is explained in the sources as follows, "Culture shock is a feeling of confusion, doubt, or nervousness caused by being in a place (such as a foreign country) that is very different from what you are used to"¹. To be more precise, "Culture shock is the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture and way of life. It can be caused by a

¹Internet site: <https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/culture-shock>

range of things, both big and small, such as unfamiliar greetings and hand gestures, strange food, difficult language barriers, getting lost in a new city or making a cultural faux pas because you didn't know the local custom"².

Culture shock typically includes four stages that are called honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment, adaptation and also there is a reverse culture shock. People go through these stages when they start living in another place. That is, they gradually move from one to the other.

To clarify these points, we can refer to Abduqayum Yuldashov's story "Is there a problem?.."³(Translated by B.B.). Because in this story, the situation of a person, who has experienced culture shock and its stages, is described in a very understandable and interesting way. According to the story, the main character of the story, Uzbek boy Ikram, wins the competition of computer programmers and goes on a fully funded trip abroad, clearly, to one of the European countries. During that short period of time, he faces many challenges and learns a lot of new things.

First of all, when he first arrives in Europe, he experiences the very first stage of culture shock, the honeymoon. The honeymoon period is the first phase of culture shock, which can often last for weeks or even months. This is the most enjoyable part of living abroad, and at this stage any noticeable differences between one's own culture and another culture seem wonderful and extremely exciting. During this period, habits, places, and everything that is unfamiliar to you may seem unique and beautiful. For example, you like and enjoy from the natural conditions of the country, the interaction of the host people and places with a beautiful view. In addition, many people start to believe that the life in their newly visited places is several times better than their own. Ikram, the hero of the story, begins to feel the same way. At first, the green and beautiful nature of Europe amazes him its mirror-smooth roads unlike those of Uzbekistan, dust-free destinations delighted him. He is surprised from the air which is so clean and dust-free, wonders how it can be. To check this, he licks the leaves on the tree, and the interpreter explains to him that this phenomenon is the result of the air being moist and clean and because of the absence of dust. After that, he understands why shoes are not dirty at all and why people there can walk into their rooms with shoes on. These events actually seemed much better to him than in his naturally drier and dustier country.

While gradually studying the life in European country, Ikram begins to notice that there are some customs that seemed strange to him, and in general, negative sides of it. And then second stage, negotiation starts. At this stage, they find it difficult to obey some small habits that people are not used to and do chores and/or obey rules that are totally incomprehensible to their own culture. In many cases, the obligation to do things that are more obscure than what they are used to is frustrating and starts to evoke negative emotions. Therefore, people in this part understand that it is much easier and more comfortable to live in their own

² Internet site: <https://www.now-health.com/en/blog/culture-shock-stages/>

³Йўлдошев А. Муаммо борми. / Йўлдошев А. Қайдасан мўжиза. – Тошкент: Фафур Фулом номидаги НМИУ, 2019. –Б. 160-171.

country. As a result, the feeling of happiness and joy begins to be replaced by dissatisfaction, depression, anger and nervousness. People basically feel homesick. Similarly, the hero of the story begins to see that Europeans have some habits that are not suitable for him. For example, Ikram finds it unpleasant that they can interact with others or eat something without washing their face in the morning. In addition, he learns English, reads on the website of the country's parliament about a group of deputies is preparing a law on how to carry dogs on the street, and again turns to his translator. However, translator describes and explains this situation as something very, very simple.

Then he began to learn European culture and their different customs, that is, he began to try to find his place among them. This is the stage of adjustment. At this stage, people usually try to adopt some of the rules and customs of the host country. During this period, they developed a number of skills, learned how to follow the most important rules along with the habits that seemed positive to them, how to interact with the people here and the things that are necessary for leading a normal life. Likewise, Ikram adjusts some habits as well. He liked how Europeans always look at each other or their children on the street with a gentle smile, say sweet words to each other, and asked warm and kind questions like a close friend or acquaintance. But in the early days, he could not give up his habit he treats them seriously and faces misunderstandings, so he tries to master it over time.

Finally, he gets used to living in Europe. This stage is called as adaptation. In which people learn most of the customs and attitudes of the host country and adopted them almost as if they were his own culture. They adapted to live and behave just like natives. Now it is not an exaggeration to call them people who have overcome all obstacles and difficulties, won, and enriched their knowledge and experience. Nowadays, most of the people who have reached this stage decide to continue their lives here, without returning to home. During a very short seven-week trip, Ikram's views change a lot, and he manages to broaden up his horizons enough, got to know brand new things, and especially learn about a foreign culture.

When Ikram returns to his homeland with wonderful impressions and lots of dreams, he experiences reverse culture shock. Reverse culture shock can happen when a person gets used to and adapts to another culture. During this period, the feeling of surprise when coming to a foreign land for the first time and all these feelings seem to be awakened against one's own culture. Because some of your old habits have been forgotten and replaced by new ones you learned in your country. In addition, when you are in another place, you have compared some situations and views and concluded for yourself, and this can make it difficult to readjust. But mostly, in this case, your home culture is compared negatively with another culture. Therefore, this kind of culture shock can cause more distress and confusion. As Robert Black said, "When you travel overseas, the locals see you as a foreigner, and when you return, you see the locals as foreigner"⁴.

When Ikram returns home, all his adventures started over again. He returned home with unforgettable impressions, valuable memories and many hopes. Coming back to his

⁴Internet site:<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/culture-shock>

birthplace makes him feel over the moon and he waits for only pleasant things from there. Nevertheless, he starts to face some unexpected problems due to unconditionally doing the things that he learned in the European country. In the beginning, he goes to the end of the line of people standing at the station, as he does in his host country, but this is not in accordance with his own culture. He politely smiles at the woman carrying a heavy bag to share a mood and then says: "Let me carry your bags"⁵(Translated by B.B.). And the woman understands it in a completely different way, that is, she thinks he looked at her with flattering eyes and gives a rude respond. The other people in the queue agree with the woman's words and try to support her, and everyone starts looking at the young man with a disapproving and angry look. Ikram feels surprised that he did not understand this, because he was just smiling and trying to give a helping hand, not even thinking of flattering her. That is why this situation hurts and depresses him. Another similar incident happened after he gets on the bus. In Europe, women use to enter without a queue, so according to this Ikram gently smiles and steps back to give way for the woman standing behind him. This time, his politeness is received differently again, and the answer was returned in an opposite and rude tone as well. This makes Ikram very upset and sad because he could not realized what happened with them and why. After such unpleasant and unexpected interactions, Ikram tried to cheer up his mood by having a friendly conversation with someone. So he gets into a taxi and asks the driver: "Sorry, I guess I saw you somewhere?"⁶(Translated by B.B.). Again his "polite request" makes taxi driver crazy. He responds as negative as those women. These misunderstandings confuse and irritate Ikram very much. Ikram, deeply confused by these situations, now hesitates what to say to people and how to treat them in a correct way. That's why he tries to be more careful to look at and deal with people around him. No matter how strange it seems, he begins to try to adapt to the people around him again. Although Ikram is depressed by these occurrences, he thinks that he will tell his colleagues about his foreign experiences with joy while there having a mild smile on his face. And suddenly he sees a cute 20-25-year-old girl looking at him with a bright smile on the other side of the road, and he finally feels grateful and thankful. It seems just like a cure for him. Thus, he says hello to her. Interestingly that girl says: "Is there a problem?"(Translated by B.B.)⁷. It seems a very familiar and pleasant answer to him. After that, Ikram sees his colleagues coming towards him and tries to take off his backpack. That girl kindly wants to help him and takes off the backpack. Ikram, who feels so happy to see his colleagues again and forgets to thank the girl, barely looks back to do so, and sees that both his backpack and the girl have already disappeared.

Evidently, in this story the negative consequences of using the culture of one country

⁵Йўлдошев А. Муаммо борми. / Йўлдошев А. Қайдасан мўжиза. – Тошкент: Фафур Фулом номидаги НМИУ, 2019. – Б. 164.

⁶Йўлдошев А. Муаммо борми. / Йўлдошев А. Қайдасан мўжиза. – Тошкент: Фафур Фулом номидаги НМИУ, 2019. – Б. 168.

⁷Йўлдошев А. Муаммо борми. / Йўлдошев А. Қайдасан мўжиза. – Тошкент: Фафур Фулом номидаги НМИУ, 2019. – Б. 171.

out of place in another are expressed in an interesting and somewhat humorous way. We can learn from this story that it is really normal for people to face such problems when communicating with members of other cultures, views and traditions. Living among people of another culture that is unfamiliar or incomprehensible to you can cause many difficulties and nerves. Also, in our highly globalized and modern world, it is almost impossible not to experience such a phenomenon, that is, culture shock. So we have to prepare ourselves for it. In other words, we overcome any difficulty by acquiring knowledge and skills or experience, as with the hero of the story, Ikram. Therefore, it is recommended to learn more about the country you want to visit, learn about their language, views, most important customs and other very essential things. That is, to strengthen cultural competence is to solve problems that may arise with representatives of other cultures. In this way, it prevents nervousness, depression, anger and sadness caused by culture shock and serves to make your life more beautiful.

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