

**EXPLORING ENGLISH STUDENT TEACHERS' CULTURAL SHOCK  
DURING THE INTERNATIONAL PPKPM PROGRAM IN THAILAND**

**THESIS**

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THE INTERNATIONAL PPKPM PROGRAM IN THAILAND**

**THESIS**

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**THESIS**

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## ABSTRACT

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The International Professional Teaching Practice and Community Service Program (PPKPM) provides prospective teacher education students with the opportunity to practice teaching and community service in a cross-cultural context. However, cultural, linguistic, and educational system differences in the host country have the potential to cause culture shock. This study aims to explore the forms of culture shock experienced by English Education students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh during the International PPKPM Program in Thailand, as well as the adaptation strategies they applied in their learning and social lives. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five students who participated in the International PPKPM Program and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that culture shock was experienced in emotional and psychological, linguistic and communicative, pedagogical, academic, and socio-cultural aspects, with language barriers as the main challenge. The adaptation strategies applied included communication adjustments, the use of visual media, modification of teaching methods, social support, and cultural integration strategies. This study concluded that culture shock is not only a challenge but also a learning process that contributes positively to the development of the professional and intercultural competencies of prospective teachers.

**Keywords :** Culture Shock, Internasional PPKPM Program, Pre-Service Teacher, Cultural Adaptation.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an overview of the research background underlying this study. The discussion in this chapter begins with an explanation of the phenomenon of globalization in education that encourages students to participate in international programs, particularly in the context of the International PPKPM Program in Thailand. In addition, this chapter also explains the issues related to the culture shock experienced by prospective English teacher students during cross-cultural teaching practice. Furthermore, this chapter also presents the research questions, research objectives, the importance of the research, and definitions of important terms used to sharpen the focus and scope of the research.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Globalization has encouraged the mobility of students across countries, especially in the field of education. Higher education institutions now emphasize not only academic competence but also the intercultural skills needed to navigate the global workplace. The State Islamic University (UIN) Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh has designed an international Teaching and Community Service Professional Practice Program (PPKPM) that provides English Education students with the opportunity to conduct teaching practice abroad, including in Thailand. This program is expected to produce professional, adaptive, and competent teachers in the global era. However, in its implementation, students often face challenges in

the form of culture shock that arises in the context of the education system and the teaching and learning process (Thin, 2025).

Culture shock is understood as a psychological, social, and cognitive condition experienced by individuals when confronted with a new culture that is different from their native culture. Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001), through the ABC Model of Culture Shock, explain three aspects that are relevant in the context of education: affect, in the form of stress and anxiety when facing a new learning system; behavior, in the form of difficulties in adjusting teaching styles to student expectations; and cognition, in the form of differences in perspectives on learning. This shows that PPKPM students in Thailand not only face language challenges, but also how their teaching strategies are accepted by students in a different education system.

Recent research confirms that international students tend to experience academic shock when adapting to a new educational environment. Fatimah (2023) found that exchange program students face difficulties in adjusting to teaching methods, assessment, and student expectations that are different from what they are familiar with. Wang (2021) also revealed that foreign students in Thailand choose an integration strategy, which is to try to adapt their teaching style to the local learning culture while maintaining the pedagogical identity of their home country.

Within the framework of Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, the adaptation strategies used by students are key to facing the challenges of teaching in international classrooms. Students who are able to integrate, that is, combine

learning approaches from their home culture with the local culture, have proven to be more effective in reducing anxiety and improving teaching performance (Razak et al., 2021). This is relevant in the context of PPKPM because the success of the program is not only measured by the students' teaching abilities but also by how they adapt to the education system in the destination country.

In addition, Zhou and Todorova's (2023) research emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness in cross-cultural teaching practices. Prospective English teacher students who are highly aware of the social and cultural dynamics of Thai students are better able to adapt learning strategies, such as the use of collaborative methods or communicative approaches that are appropriate to the classroom context. Thus, culture shock in education is not only a challenge but also an opportunity to enrich students' pedagogical skills.

To further understand this phenomenon, several previous studies have examined the experiences of culture shock among foreign teachers and student teachers in the context of Southeast Asian education. Wahyuni (2022) researched the experiences of Indonesian students who participated in teaching practice and community service programs in Thailand and found several main forms of culture shock, including language and communication barriers, differences in lifestyle and culture, academic challenges, psychological difficulties, social adjustment, and positive impacts in the form of cross-cultural learning. Another study entitled Culture Shock Experiences of Foreign Teachers Working in a Selected Private School in Chonburi Province identified recurring themes such as language barriers, differences in school management systems and environments,

hierarchical relationships in school culture, and emotional responses to the adaptation process. Furthermore, research by Srisitanont Luangkrajang (2023) on the experiences and professional development needs of foreign EFL teachers in Thailand highlights the importance of pedagogical adaptation and institutional support in overcoming cultural challenges. Overall, these studies show that culture shock is a common phenomenon experienced by foreign teachers in Thailand, although its form and level vary depending on the role, cultural background, and preparation experience. These findings emphasize the importance of researching the forms of culture shock experienced by English Education students at UIN Ar-Raniry who participated in the international PPKPM program in Thailand.

The educational context in Thailand itself has characteristics that differ from those in Indonesia. Research by Khanh and Pinyosinwat (2023) shows that the Thai education system emphasizes classroom discipline, high respect for teachers, and the use of teacher-centered learning methods. These differences often pose challenges for foreign students, including PPKPM students from Aceh, who are accustomed to a more flexible learning approach. Differences in student expectations regarding the role of teachers can also affect students' confidence in teaching.

Therefore, the experiences of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh students who participated in the international PPKPM in Thailand are very interesting to study. This study focuses on exploring the forms of culture shock they experienced in the teaching process, the adaptation strategies they used to deal with differences in the education system, and the impact on learning effectiveness.

This research is expected to contribute academically by enriching studies on the dynamics of culture shock in the context of international education, especially for prospective English teachers in Southeast Asia. From a practical perspective, this research can provide input for UIN Ar-Raniry to prepare students before participating in international PPKPM, for example through educational culture training, cross-cultural methodology workshops, and mentoring during the program. Thus, students will not only be able to face the challenges of teaching in Thailand, but also gain valuable experience in developing global pedagogical competencies.

### **B. Research Question**

Based on the background described above, the present study is guided by the following research question :

1. What forms of culture shock are experienced by English student teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh during the International PPKPM Program in Thailand?
2. How do these student teachers adapt to the culture shock they face in the teaching and learning process during the program?

### **C. Research Aims**

Based on the above problem formulation, this study aims to:

1. Identify and describe the forms of culture shock experienced by English Education students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh while participating in the International PPKPM Program in Thailand.

2. Analyze the adaptation strategies used by students in dealing with culture shock in the teaching and learning process in Thai schools.

#### **D. Significance of the Study**

##### **1. Theoretical Significance**

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the literature on culture shock in the context of international education. Unlike previous studies that have focused more on the social aspects of foreign students' lives, this study focuses on the experiences of prospective English teachers at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh in teaching practice in Thai schools. Thus, this study provides a new contribution to understanding the application of the ABC Model of Culture Shock (Ward et al., 2001) and Acculturation Theory (Berry, 1997) more specifically in the context of cross-cultural teaching. The findings of this study can also be an additional reference for other researchers who want to study the dynamics of student adaptation in international education.

##### **2. Practical Significance**

Practically, this research is beneficial for several parties. For students, the results of this research can be a practical guide to the forms of culture shock they may experience and the adaptation strategies that can be applied when participating in international PPKPM programs. This helps them prepare themselves more thoroughly, both academically and mentally. For UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, this research can be important input in developing student preparation programs, such as educational culture training, cross-cultural teaching method workshops, or mentoring during the program. In addition, partner schools

in Thailand can also benefit from this research, as the findings can help them understand the challenges faced by foreign students and provide more appropriate support during the adaptation process. In this way, inter-institutional collaboration in the field of education can be strengthened and become mutually beneficial.

### **E. Terminology**

To avoid misunderstandings and ensure clarity in this study, the following key terms are defined:

#### **1. Culture Shock**

According to Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001), culture shock refers to the psychological, behavioral, and cognitive reactions that occur when individuals encounter a new cultural environment and must adapt to unfamiliar norms and expectations. Similarly, Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) define culture shock as a process of adjustment that involves emotional stress, communication difficulties, and changes in social identity when individuals interact in a culturally different context.

In this study, culture shock is understood as the experience of English student teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry when facing differences in educational systems, classroom dynamics, and everyday social interactions while teaching in Thailand through the International PPKPM Program. This concept highlights not only the emotional discomfort of adaptation but also the learning process that contributes to the participants' intercultural competence and professional growth.

## 2. Acculturation Strategies

This term refers to how individuals adapt to a new culture, as described by Berry (1997). There are four main strategies: assimilation (merging into the new culture), integration (combining the original culture and the new culture), separation (retaining the original culture and rejecting the new culture), and marginalization (not being attached to either culture). In the context of this study, acculturation strategies refer to the ways in which PPKPM students adjust their teaching methods, communication, and interactions with students and teachers in Thailand.

## 3. PPKPM (Teaching and Community Service Professional Practice Program)

PPKPM is a teaching and community service practice program implemented by the Ar-Raniry State Islamic University (UIN) in Banda Aceh. This program is designed to provide direct experience to students, especially those from the English Education study program, so that they can develop pedagogical skills as well as adaptability in a cross-cultural context. In this study, the focus of PPKPM is the implementation of international programs placed in Thai schools.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter outlines the theoretical basis and reviews previous studies relevant to this research. It discusses the concepts of culture shock and acculturation theory as the main framework for analyzing student adaptation in the context of cross-cultural teaching. This chapter also examines culture shock in education and reviews related studies to identify research gaps and highlight the contribution of this study. Finally, a conceptual framework is presented to describe the relationship between theory, previous findings, and the focus of this study on the experiences of prospective English teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry during the International PPKPM Program in Thailand.

#### **A. Concept of Culture Shock**

Culture refers to a set of values, beliefs, norms, and practices that distinguish one group from another (Hofstede, 1994; Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Culture encompasses observable aspects, such as language and customs, as well as unobservable aspects, such as values and mindsets. In education, culture shapes teaching methods, classroom interactions, and expectations for learning and behavior. Entering a new educational environment exposes individuals to cultural differences, which can cause challenges and stress, often referred to as culture shock.

Culture shock is a psychological, social, and cognitive phenomenon experienced by individuals who encounter a cultural environment that is very

different from their own cultural environment. This concept has been reframed in contemporary research through the lens of the Acculturation Stress Model by Berry (2005, updated in Berry, 2017), which describes it as a stress response resulting from the interplay between cultural maintenance and participation in the host society, leading to challenges in identity negotiation and psychological adaptation. Recent research emphasizes that culture shock goes beyond social adjustment to include academic and pedagogical challenges, especially in the context of cross-cultural education (Zhou & Todorova, 2023; Huang, 2022). In this context, international students, including prospective teachers, may face difficulties not only in social interactions but also in adjusting to teaching methods, curriculum differences, and communication styles in the classroom.

Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) further developed the understanding of culture shock through the ABC Model, which conceptualizes this phenomenon through three interconnected dimensions: Affect (emotional distress, frustration, and anxiety), Behavior (challenges in performing culturally appropriate actions), and Cognition (differences in thought patterns and interpretations of experiences). This model is particularly useful for analyzing the experiences of international students, explaining why they may encounter barriers in adjusting to different teaching and learning systems. For example, students may experience anxiety when classroom expectations change, difficulty in applying appropriate classroom management strategies, or misinterpreting the cultural behaviors of students and colleagues (Ward et al., 2001; Smith & Khawaja, 2020).

Recent research highlights the importance of "academic shock" as an integral component of culture shock. Fatimah (2023) found that teachers of international students often face challenges in adjusting to teaching methods, assessment procedures, and classroom dynamics that differ from those of their home institutions. Similarly, Wang (2021) observed that many international students in Thailand use integration strategies attempting to adopt local teaching practices while maintaining their pedagogical identity as a way to alleviate culture shock. This suggests that culture shock should not be viewed solely as an obstacle, but also as a dynamic adjustment process that has the potential to enhance professional development.

Furthermore, culture shock is recognized as a multidimensional experience that develops temporally. Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2019) describe that international students typically go through sequential phases of adaptation: the honeymoon phase, the crisis phase (culture shock), the recovery phase, and the adjustment phase. This framework suggests that culture shock is a dynamic process rather than a fixed state, and how students navigate this development influences their ability to transform challenges into valuable learning experiences. In the context of teaching practice, this adaptation process is critical, as it affects both students' personal well-being and their effectiveness as educators in culturally diverse classrooms.

## **B. Acculturation Theory**

Berry's acculturation theory (1997) is one of the most widely used theoretical frameworks for understanding the process of individual adaptation when interacting with a new culture. Berry identifies four acculturation strategies: assimilation, in which individuals fully integrate into the new culture by abandoning their native culture; separation, in which individuals reject the new culture and retain only their native culture; marginalization, in which individuals are disconnected from both cultures, both native and new; and integration, in which individuals are able to combine their native culture with the new culture. Among these four strategies, recent research shows that the integration strategy is the most adaptive because it can reduce psychological stress, strengthen self-confidence, and improve academic and professional success (Ward & Geraert, 2016; Razak et al., 2021; Khanh & Pinyosinwat, 2023).

Recent research also confirms that acculturation strategies significantly influence the experiences of international students. For example, Zhou and Todorova (2023) found that foreign students who use integration strategies tend to have better intercultural communication skills and lower stress levels. Similarly, Nguyen's (2022) research in Thailand shows that international students who choose integration strategies can more easily adapt to teacher-centered learning styles in the local context while maintaining their academic identities from their home countries. This is in line with the findings of Lee et al. (2020), who emphasize that cultural integration supports academic achievement while expanding intercultural skills.

In the context of teaching and community service (PPKPM) in Thailand, Berry's acculturation theory is an important framework for understanding how English Education students from UIN Ar-Raniry adapt to a different education system. They are expected not only to master the learning methods acquired in Indonesia but also to adapt them to the expectations of students and school culture in Thailand. The integration strategy here means that students can combine the communicative and collaborative approaches they have mastered with the Thai learning culture, which places greater emphasis on discipline and respect for teachers. By adopting this strategy, students can not only reduce culture shock but also gain richer pedagogical experiences and build the professional competencies needed in a global context.

### **C. Culture Shock in the Context of Education and Teaching**

The phenomenon of culture shock in education has different characteristics from the culture shock experienced in everyday social life. In academic settings, this phenomenon is often referred to as academic shock or teaching shock, which describes the difficulties faced by students and prospective teachers when adjusting to education systems, teaching methods, and academic expectations that differ from those in their home countries (Thin, 2025). Cultural shock in this context is not only related to communication barriers, but also involves differences in pedagogical paradigms and learning strategies applied in international classrooms.

Recent studies have identified several common forms of culture shock experienced by international students in educational settings. First, language and communication difficulties in the classroom, which affect prospective teachers' confidence in delivering material and interacting with students (Wang, 2021; Zhang & Zhou, 2022). Second, differences in learning methods and academic expectations, for example, students must adapt to the local learning culture, which tends to emphasize teacher-centered learning, whereas they were previously accustomed to a communication-based or student-centered approach (Fatimah, 2023; Nguyen, 2022). Third, adaptation to student discipline and learning culture, as found in the context of education in Thailand, where students show high respect for teachers, compliance with class rules, and adherence to certain academic norms (Khanh & Pinyosinwat, 2023). Fourth, the gap between the pedagogical theory acquired at university and the reality of teaching practice in international classrooms, which often requires flexibility and creativity to adapt learning strategies (Zhou & Todorova, 2023; Lee et al., 2020).

These findings indicate that students participating in international programs such as PPKPM in Thailand face two challenges: social challenges in adapting to a new culture and pedagogical challenges in implementing teaching practices. Therefore, cross-cultural competence, international pedagogical awareness, and high adaptability skills are necessary to overcome these dynamics. Previous research confirms that students who have cultural awareness and are able to make cross-cultural pedagogical adjustments are more successful in reducing the impact of culture shock while improving the quality of their teaching and

learning experiences (Razak et al., 2021; Zhou & Todorova, 2023). Therefore, studies on cultural shock in the context of international education are important not only to identify challenges but also as an opportunity to strengthen the professional competencies of prospective teachers in the era of globalization.

#### **D. Forms of Culture Shock**

This section discusses the theoretical dimensions and various forms of culture shock that are relevant to English student teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry participating in the International PPKPM Program in Thailand. Culture shock, in this context, is understood not merely as an emotional reaction to a new environment but as a multidimensional process that involves affective, behavioral, and cognitive adjustments (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). According to Ward's ABC Model of Culture Shock, these three dimensions influence how individuals respond to cultural transitions: the affective component relates to stress and anxiety, the behavioral component involves learning appropriate social skills, and the cognitive component refers to changes in perception and understanding of the host culture. Meanwhile, Berry's (1997) Acculturation Theory supports this view by emphasizing the strategies individuals use to adapt, such as integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, which directly affect their adjustment outcomes.

In the context of education, especially for student teachers engaged in cross-cultural teaching programs, culture shock often takes more specific forms linked to academic and pedagogical adaptation. These include emotional

discomfort, communication barriers, academic adjustment, social interaction difficulties, and differences in classroom culture (Ward et al., 2001; Berry, 1997; Think, 2025). Each of these forms reflects how individuals experience, interpret, and respond to new cultural settings during their teaching practice abroad. Therefore, examining these forms of culture shock helps to understand not only the challenges faced by English student teachers during the PPKPM International Program but also their processes of intercultural growth and professional development. The following sub-sections elaborate on these main forms as found in previous theoretical and empirical studies.

### 1. Emotional and Psychological Challenges

Emotional and psychological challenges are the first and most personal form of culture shock faced by student teachers abroad. Upon arrival, many participants experience anxiety, homesickness, frustration, or decreased confidence as they encounter unfamiliar teaching systems and cultural expectations. According to Anderson (1994), these emotions often emerge during the early phase of cultural adjustment when individuals face dissonance between prior expectations and real conditions. For English student teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry, the hierarchical and respectful classroom atmosphere in Thailand can feel intimidating compared to the more egalitarian teaching culture in Indonesia. Similar findings were reported by Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2019), who emphasized that emotional instability during cross-cultural experiences can affect teaching performance and self-efficacy. Over time, however, emotional resilience

and peer support help the participants transform this psychological discomfort into a process of personal growth and professional maturity.

## 2. Language and Communication Difficulties

Language barriers represent one of the most tangible challenges in culture shock. Although participants from UIN Ar-Raniry major in English Education, communication difficulties often arise due to local Thai accents, idiomatic expressions, or indirect ways of speaking. Gudykunst's (2005) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory explains that effective intercultural communication depends on managing uncertainty and anxiety during interactions. Student teachers may feel hesitant to engage or misunderstood in classroom discussions, especially when teaching students who speak English as a foreign language. Nonverbal communication differences such as gestures, levels of eye contact, or expressions of respect can further complicate interaction. As noted by Zhou and Todorova (2023), developing intercultural awareness and flexibility enables student teachers to adjust their communication strategies, which is crucial for maintaining classroom harmony and rapport.

## 3. Pedagogical Adaptation Difficulties

Pedagogical adaptation refers to the adjustments student teachers must make in their teaching methods to suit Thai classroom norms. Indonesian teaching practice often emphasizes student-centered, interactive learning, while Thai classrooms tend to be more teacher-centered and discipline-oriented. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory supports the idea that teaching is shaped by the cultural and social environment, meaning educators must adapt their methods to

local expectations. For PPKPM participants, this adaptation might include simplifying lesson plans, using visual aids, or applying stricter classroom management approaches. Research by Nguyen (2022) found that international pre-service teachers who adapted their methods to local educational systems showed higher effectiveness and confidence in teaching. Therefore, pedagogical flexibility not only reduces culture shock but also enhances professional competence and intercultural teaching skills.

#### 4. Academic and Institutional Differences

Academic and institutional differences highlight cognitive discrepancies in culture shock, encompassing unfamiliar curriculum designs, assessment systems, and school hierarchies. For example, Thai grading practices and administrative procedures may prioritize conformity and respect for authority, contrasting sharply with the more flexible systems in Indonesian universities (Fatimah, 2023; Lee et al., 2020). Student teachers in the PPKPM program must navigate these while upholding teaching quality and program requirements, which can heighten stress and reduce internship effectiveness. Razak et al. (2021) emphasize that institutional support, such as orientation on local policies, is vital for mitigating these challenges, enabling students to integrate academic expectations from both cultures and enhance intercultural competence.

## 5. Social and Cultural Adjustment Issues

Social and cultural adjustment issues reflect the broader interplay of all ABC dimensions, involving navigation of new norms, lifestyles, food preferences, and professional relationships within Thai schools and communities (Razak et al., 2021; Almukdad et al., 2024). Differences in social etiquette, gender roles, or hierarchical interactions can challenge UIN Ar-Raniry students, who may need to observe and reflect proactively during short-term programs. Successful adaptation here, through Berry's (1997) integration strategy, not only reduces isolation but also boosts intercultural competence and professional confidence, as supported by recent findings on Southeast Asian mobility programs (Khanh & Pinyosinwat, 2023; Zhou & Todorova, 2023).

Overall, these forms of culture shock are multidimensional and mutually reinforcing, with emotional distress influencing pedagogical performance, language barriers impeding social integration, and institutional unfamiliarity amplifying psychological stress. For English Education students in the International PPKPM Program, understanding these forms grounded in the ABC Model (Ward et al., 2001) and acculturation theory (Berry, 1997) is essential for developing coping strategies, pedagogical flexibility, and intercultural resilience. Addressing them proactively supports individual adaptation and prepares competent global educators, paving the way for insights from previous studies on similar contexts.

## E. Previous Studies

The phenomenon of culture shock in the context of cross-cultural education has been the subject of various studies, especially in Southeast Asia. Wang (2021), in his study entitled "Adaptation Strategies of International Students in Thai Higher Education Institutions," used a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the adaptation strategies of foreign students in Thailand. The results showed that international students experienced academic shock in the form of language barriers and differences in learning styles. However, cultural integration strategies, such as building social networks and adapting to local academic norms, proved effective in facilitating the adaptation process. This study is relevant to the current study because it provides an initial picture of the challenges that PPKPM UIN Ar-Raniry students in Thailand are likely to face.

Another study was conducted by Fatimah (2023), entitled "Academic and Social Shock among Indonesian Prospective Teachers in International Mobility Programs." This study used a qualitative descriptive method through observation and in-depth interviews with Indonesian students participating in international exchange programs. The findings show that students had difficulty adjusting to teaching methods and evaluation systems that were different from what they were familiar with in Indonesia. This had an impact on the decline in students' confidence during teaching practice. The relevance of this study to the current research lies in the similarity of context, namely the pedagogical challenges faced

by Indonesian prospective teachers when placed in a cross-cultural educational environment.

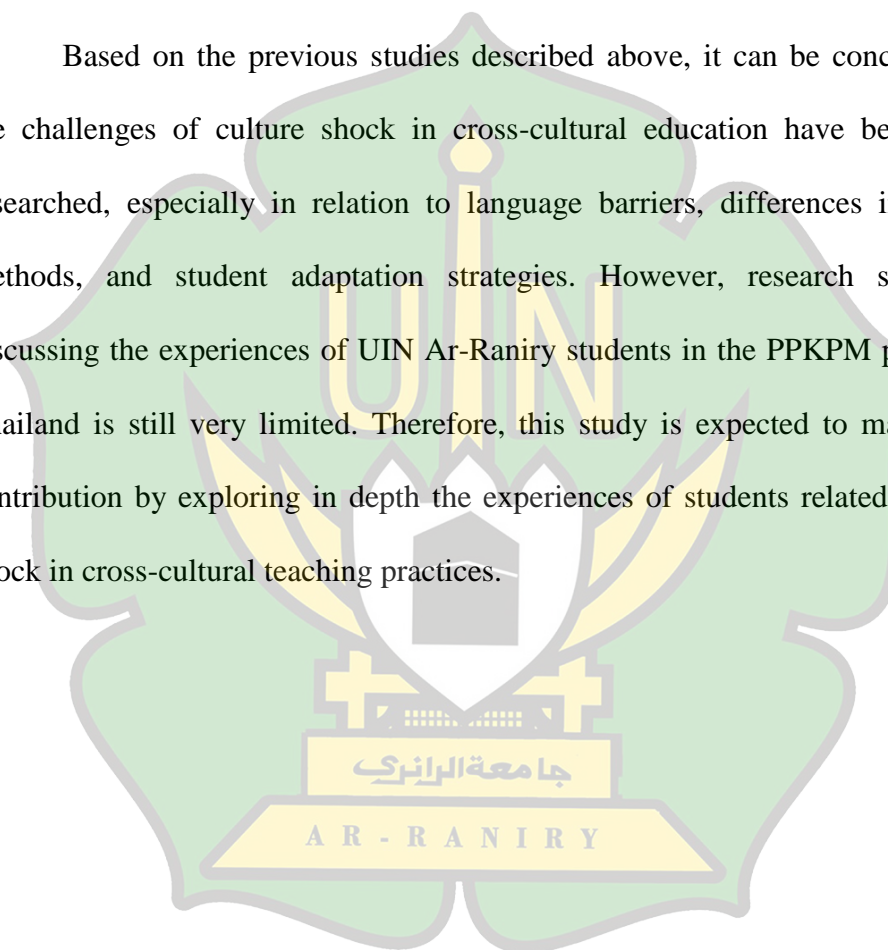
Furthermore, Zhou and Todorova (2023), in their study "Cultural Awareness and Teaching Effectiveness: Lessons from International Internship Programs," emphasize the importance of cultural awareness in improving teaching effectiveness. Through a qualitative case study approach, this research found that teachers or prospective teachers who have cultural sensitivity are more successful in managing multicultural classrooms and increasing student engagement. This research contributes to the understanding that cultural awareness is one of the key competencies that UIN Ar-Raniry students need to develop during their teaching practice in Thailand.

Additionally, research conducted by Khanh and Pinyosinwat (2023), titled "Adaptation and Cultural Acculturation Strategies of International Students in Thailand," used a qualitative approach to analyze the acculturation strategies of foreign students. The results show that the education system in Thailand emphasizes discipline and respect for teachers, which often poses a challenge for international students who are accustomed to a more flexible learning approach. This is in line with the context of the current study, in which PPKPM UIN Ar-Raniry students may face pedagogical expectation gaps that can affect their teaching performance.

Meanwhile, Razak, Hassan, and Jalal (2021), in their study on Institutional Support and Student Adaptation in Intercultural Education Programs, emphasize the importance of institutional support in the student adaptation process. Using

qualitative methods, this study found that a combination of cultural integration strategies and institutional support can increase the effectiveness of international students in intercultural education programs. The relevance of this study lies in the crucial role of both the home university and the host university in supporting PPKPM students to overcome the culture shock they face in Thailand.

Based on the previous studies described above, it can be concluded that the challenges of culture shock in cross-cultural education have been widely researched, especially in relation to language barriers, differences in learning methods, and student adaptation strategies. However, research specifically discussing the experiences of UIN Ar-Raniry students in the PPKPM program in Thailand is still very limited. Therefore, this study is expected to make a new contribution by exploring in depth the experiences of students related to culture shock in cross-cultural teaching practices.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the research methods used to answer the research questions. The research design and methodology, research participants, data collection methods, and data analysis methods used are discussed in this section. The methodology was chosen based on the research objectives, which included an in-depth investigation of the cultural shock experiences and adjustment mechanisms of prospective English teachers enrolled in the Thailand International PPKPM Program. With a systematic presentation of the methodology, this chapter provides an important foundation for the validity and credibility of the research results.

#### **A. Research Design**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. A qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of this study is to explore in depth the subjective experiences of prospective English teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh during the International PPKPM program in Thailand. Culture shock is a multidimensional phenomenon involving psychological, social, and pedagogical aspects that cannot be captured solely through numerical data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, qualitative research provides the flexibility and depth needed to interpret students' teaching and learning experiences in their real context.

The case study design was considered appropriate because it allowed for an intensive investigation of the specific experiences of PPKPM participants in

Thailand. Yin (2018) highlights that case studies allow researchers to analyze phenomena in real-life contexts and consider interrelated factors. In this study, these factors include the educational and socio-cultural environment of Thailand, the personal characteristics of students, and their adjustment strategies in teaching practices. Previous studies, such as Nguyen (2024) and Mustakim, Astri, & Baharuddin (2024), confirm that international students in Thailand experience culture shock related to classroom expectations, language barriers, and pedagogical practices, making the case study design highly relevant.

Furthermore, this design allows for the identification of adjustment mechanisms and adaptation strategies used by prospective teachers when facing cultural and academic challenges. Ye (2006) emphasizes the role of support systems in reducing culture shock, while Zhou and Todorova (2023) highlight the importance of cultural awareness for effective intercultural adaptation. By adopting a qualitative case study, this research aims to comprehensively understand the forms of culture shock faced by prospective teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry in Thailand, how they adapt to different educational norms, and the implications of this experience for their pedagogical development.

## **B. Research Participant**

### **1. Population**

In research methodology, population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects that share similar characteristics and from which researchers intend to draw conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2019), the population is defined as "the larger group to which

the results of a study are expected to apply," while the sample is a smaller group selected from that population. Thus, identifying the population helps determine the scope, representativeness, and generalization of research findings.

The population of this study consisted of students from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FTK) at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, specifically the 2021 cohort, which consisted of 153 students. Among this population, several students participated in the International PPKPM Program in Thailand. They are considered part of the population because they experienced teaching practice in a cross-cultural educational environment, which is closely related to the research focus on culture shock during international teaching practice. By focusing on this group, this study ensures contextual relevance to the educational and cultural adaptation experienced by prospective teachers abroad.

## 2. Sample

A sample is a portion of a population selected to represent the larger group in a study. According to Creswell (2014), sampling is a crucial process because the quality of data depends on how well the participants represent the phenomenon being studied. In qualitative research, the goal is not numerical representativeness but to gain deep insights from participants with direct experience. This study employed purposive sampling, where participants are chosen based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Therefore, the sample consisted of five students from the English Education Study Program (Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris), class of 2021 at UIN Ar-

Raniry Banda Aceh, who participated in the International PPKPM Program in Thailand. These students were selected for their direct teaching experience in a cross-cultural environment and willingness to share openly. The criteria for selection included: (1) Students of the English Language Education Program (PBI) class of 2021 who participated in the seventh wave of the International PPKPM Program in Thailand, (2) students who conducted direct teaching practice in schools in Thailand, (3) students who experienced cultural differences in the educational environment during teaching practice, and (4) students who were willing to participate in in-depth interviews and share their experiences openly. The selection of these criteria deliberately limits the number of participants so that this study can obtain in depth data on the culture shock experiences and adaptation strategies of prospective English teacher students during the program.

### **C. Techniques of Data Collection**

In qualitative research, interviews are one of the most frequently used techniques for obtaining in-depth information from participants. According to Patton (2015), an interview is a purposeful conversation in which the researcher asks questions and listens carefully to the participants' responses in order to understand their perspectives and experiences. Similarly, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) define interviews as an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, with the aim of generating knowledge based on the participants' life experiences. Therefore, interviews are not only a process of

asking and answering questions, but also a collaborative process of creating meaning between the researcher and the participants.

There are several types of interviews in qualitative research, including structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews, which combine predetermined guiding questions with the flexibility to explore new ideas that may arise during the conversation. Semi-structured interviews were considered most appropriate for this study because they allowed the researcher to focus on important themes; such as culture shock, adaptation strategies, and teaching experiences while still giving participants the freedom to share their stories in depth (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

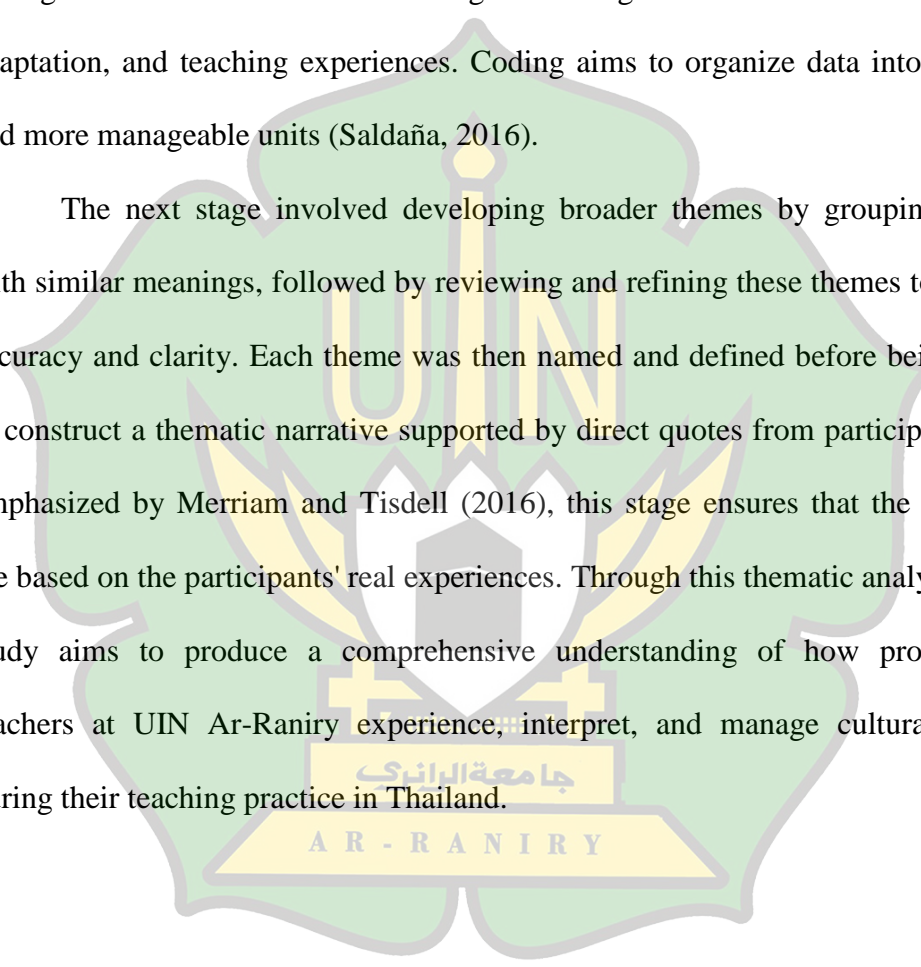
Interviews will be conducted individually with each participant, lasting approximately 30–45 minutes, and guided by 12 key questions. These questions are designed to explore students' experiences of culture shock, their adaptation strategies, and the pedagogical implications of teaching in a cross-cultural environment. With the participants' consent, all interviews will be recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically to ensure data accuracy and credibility. This method is expected to generate rich and meaningful insights into the challenges and learning experiences of prospective English Education teachers at UIN Ar-Raniry during the International PPKPM program in Thailand.

#### **D. Data Analysis**

Data analysis in this study was conducted qualitatively using a thematic analysis approach. The first step was transcription, in which all interview

recordings were converted into verbatim written text for systematic analysis (Creswell, 2014). The researchers then proceeded to the familiarization stage by reading the transcripts repeatedly to gain an in-depth understanding of the content and begin to identify initial patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After that, initial coding was carried out to label meaningful data segments related to culture shock, adaptation, and teaching experiences. Coding aims to organize data into smaller and more manageable units (Saldaña, 2016).

The next stage involved developing broader themes by grouping codes with similar meanings, followed by reviewing and refining these themes to ensure accuracy and clarity. Each theme was then named and defined before being used to construct a thematic narrative supported by direct quotes from participants. As emphasized by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), this stage ensures that the findings are based on the participants' real experiences. Through this thematic analysis, this study aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of how prospective teachers at UIN Ar-Raniry experience, interpret, and manage cultural shock during their teaching practice in Thailand.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research findings obtained from in-depth interviews with participants, then relates them to previous theories and research. The discussion focuses on two main aspects: the forms of culture shock experienced by prospective English teacher students while participating in the International PPKPM in Thailand, and the adaptation strategies they used in teaching and social life. Using a thematic analysis approach, this chapter comprehensively describes the dynamics of the participants' cross-cultural experiences and their implications for their professional development and intercultural competence.

#### A. Research Findings

This chapter presents research findings on the culture shock experiences and adaptation strategies of five English student teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh while participating in the International PPKPM Program in Thailand, as well as discussing the implications of these findings based on relevant theories and literature. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically with a focus on two main points: (1) the forms of culture shock experienced by participants, and (2) the adaptation strategies applied in the context of teaching and social life in Thailand.

The analysis of the findings was conducted thematically and linked to the theories presented in Chapter II, thereby providing an in-depth understanding of

the dynamics of cultural and professional adaptation experienced by the participants. After analyzing the data from the five participants, the researcher identified several key findings that were in line with the objectives of this study.

### **1. Forms of Culture Shock Experienced by English Student Teachers**

Based on interviews, culture shock appeared in various forms, often interrelated and influenced by the new educational and social environment in Thailand. Participants described feelings of anxiety and confusion upon arrival, which then developed into challenges in emotional, communicative, pedagogical, academic, and social aspects.

#### **a. Emotional and Psychological Challenges**

Participants often report initial emotional discomfort, including anxiety, nervousness, and a mixture of enthusiasm and fear, especially when faced with an unfamiliar teaching environment. This is evident in their first impressions and ongoing adjustments. For example, Respondent HR described a combination of enthusiasm and fear: "I felt scared and nervous because I had to face a completely new environment in terms of culture, school atmosphere, and how to interact with people there." Similarly, Respondent UH noted: "I was a little nervous, because this was my first experience teaching in another country. This new situation certainly made me anxious." PZ Respondents expressed nervousness related to the teaching system: "At first, I felt nervous because I didn't know about the teaching system in Thailand and whether I could keep up with the learning pace." PH Respondents mentioned confusion due to expectations regarding language: "I felt

happy but also confused. My initial expectation was that students in Thailand would have adequate English language skills, but in reality, many students cannot speak English or Malay. Respondents AH felt the same way: "When I first arrived in Thailand, I felt nervous and confused, but also enthusiastic. The new environment and students who communicated in a different way made this initial experience a little challenging." Homesickness also emerged as a recurring problem, with Respondent HR stating: "The main way to overcome homesickness is to call my parents and friends in Indonesia," indicating its role in emotional challenges.

The findings show that three out of five participants experienced noticeable emotional and psychological challenges during their initial adaptation period, while the remaining participants adjusted emotionally with relatively fewer difficulties.

#### b. Language and Communication Difficulties

Language barriers were a major issue, as participants struggled to communicate due to limited English or Malay language skills among Thai students and staff. Strategies such as Google Translate and simple gestures were used to address this. Respondent HR highlighted: "Communication difficulties are the biggest challenge. Although we can speak English, most students and teachers are not used to using it. As a result, communication is often difficult." Respondent UH added: "Most of the teachers there cannot speak Malay or English. The students only speak Thai, so communication with them is very limited."

Respondent PZ noted: "The community and students speak Thai. They can barely speak Malay, so we have to teach entirely in English." Respondent PH explained the use of assistive devices: "Language difficulties mostly occur when communicating with students who do not speak Malay or English. We use Google Translate for communication." Respondent AH also reported: "Language difficulties mostly occur when interacting with primary school students who are not used to Malay or English. I sometimes use pictures or Google Translate."

The interview data showed that all five participants experienced language and communication difficulties. These findings indicate that language barriers were the most dominant and consistent form of culture shock among the participants.

#### c. Pedagogical Adaptation Difficulties

Although some participants found teaching methods similar to those in Indonesia, others faced difficulties in adapting due to language barriers and differences in expectations, such as the lack of detailed lesson plans. "There are no striking differences," said the HR respondent. The characteristics of education in Indonesia and Thailand are comparable. The method is not the main issue; the problem is the language. "It's not too difficult, because we have a study guide," said the UH respondent. We use the book when teaching, just like in Indonesia. PZ noted a difference, saying, "The most noticeable difference is the absence of a lesson plan like in Indonesia. Therefore, I have to be more creative in adapting the material. PH respondent adapts by using visual media: "I adjust my teaching style

by using visual media such as pictures and flashcards.” Respondent AH reported: “The differences in teaching methods were not too difficult to follow. The main difficulty was the language. I adjusted my teaching style to be simpler and clearer.”

The findings show that of the five participants, three experienced difficulties in pedagogical adjustment, particularly in relation to lesson planning and instruction delivery, while the other participants considered the pedagogical system to be relatively familiar.

#### d. Academic and Institutional Differences

PPKPM students see differences in exams, assignments, and hierarchical structures, which result in minor changes, but they see similarities in school policies and procedures. Human Resources respondents said: “From my observations, school regulations and systems in Thailand are almost the same as in Indonesia.” “There are not many differences,” continued the UH respondent. The Thai education system is very similar to Indonesia's. “School regulations are basically similar,” noted the PZ respondent. However, compared to Indonesia, I found that learning there does not place too much emphasis on exercises or assignments. The PH respondent observed: “There is a more relaxed atmosphere in Thai schools. In addition, learning activities are more flexible than in Indonesia. The AH respondent emphasized:”Yes,there are significant differences.” The grading system, school rules, and learning activities in Thailand are different from those in Indonesia.

Based on interview data, two of the five participants reported significant academic and institutional differences, while the others considered the differences to be minor and surmountable.

e. Social and Cultural Adjustment Issues

Social adjustments involved adapting to food, dress, and etiquette, with some areas feeling familiar due to Islamic influences. Respondent HR mentioned food differences: "The most noticeable difference is the food. Most Thai dishes tend to be sour, I needed time to adjust." Respondent UH noted regional similarities: "Because we are stationed in Southern Thailand, the food still has a Malay flavor, so it suits the Indonesian palate, many women wear headscarves." Respondent PZ adapted easily: "The most noticeable change was the food. Although different, the food was delicious and I adapted easily." Respondent PH observed: "The most noticeable difference is the food Thai cuisine tends to be sour. Socially, Thai people are very friendly." Respondent AH stated: "Food in Thailand is different from Aceh. There are also slight differences in the way people dress."

The results showed that three out of five participants experienced social and cultural adjustment problems. However, these challenges were considered less intense than emotional and language related difficulties.

## **2. Adaptation Strategies to Culture Shock in the Teaching and Learning Proses**

Despite facing various forms of cultural shock, all participants successfully developed effective adaptation strategies, demonstrating sustainable and flexible adaptation patterns. Through their daily experiences in Thailand, participants were able to adapt emotionally, communicatively, and professionally. The adaptation strategies they implemented covered various aspects, including emotional adjustment, communication, teaching methods, adaptation to the education system, and adaptation to social culture. This entire process shows that adaptation is not a single step, but rather a dynamic process that takes place gradually through direct experience and daily interaction.

### **a. Emotional and Psychological Adaptation**

In the initial phase, participants experienced emotional stress due to significant cultural differences, both in social interactions and in the school environment. This tension arose from different daily habits, unfamiliar social norms, and unfamiliar communication patterns. To cope with stress and anxiety, most participants sought support from friends who had similar experiences, while maintaining communication with their families. UH revealed, "When I start to feel stressed, I talk to friends in the same group, and it helps me feel better."

HR added, "Contacting my parents every night helps me stay calm and strong." Support from those closest to them proved crucial in reducing emotional

stress and building participants' mental resilience in facing new situations. Establishing relationships with familiar people provided a sense of security and comfort, enabling participants to adapt more quickly and feel more confident in facing cultural challenges.

#### b. Communication Adjustments

Communication barriers were one of the main challenges faced by participants, primarily due to differences in language and local understanding among students. Although the language of instruction was English, differences in accents, limited vocabulary, and unfamiliar local terms made daily interactions more challenging. To overcome these challenges, participants utilized creative strategies such as using gestures, speaking more slowly, and utilizing images or visual aids. PH said, "Sometimes I show images on my phone so students understand immediately." AH also added, "I learned a few words in Thai so the students would feel more connected and less awkward." These steps allowed participants to bridge communication gaps and build emotional connections with students. This approach demonstrates that communication is not just about language, but also the ability to utilize various tools and strategies to convey messages more clearly and effectively.

#### c. Adaptation of Teaching Methods

To better meet the conditions and needs of their students, participants modified their teaching strategies in addition to communication. To help students understand, they used visual aids, slowed down the pace of delivery, and included

photos or illustrations. “Sometimes I show pictures on my phone so that students can understand immediately,” explained PH. “I learned a few words in Thai so that students would feel more connected and less awkward,” continued AH.

In addition to improving student understanding, this method strengthens the bond between participants and students. This strategy reinforces the participants' professional ability to successfully deliver material despite language barriers, while demonstrating their flexibility in adapting to local situations.

#### d. Institutional Adaptation

Participants gain a deeper understanding of the local education system and school culture through active participation in school activities and interaction with staff and counselors. “The guidance counselor really helped me understand the rules that apply at school,” said HR. This highlights that successful adaptation requires active participation in organizational structures and procedures, not just following accepted conventions.

“I participated in all school activities so that I could adapt more quickly,” continued AH. Participation provides individuals with personal knowledge of the school's principles, policies, and work culture, enabling them to adapt more quickly and successfully. Participants' confidence in facing new professional challenges is strengthened by their involvement, which also helps them navigate different education systems better.

#### e. Personal and Professional Development

The process of dealing with culture shock and adjusting to a new environment not only helps participants grow professionally, but also encourages

personal growth. PZ said, “This experience made me more mature, more patient, and better ready to teach in any setting.” This experience makes participants more patient, flexible, and able to deal with situations that previously felt challenging.

In addition to improving their pedagogical skills, participants also gain a deeper understanding of cultural differences, communication styles, and diverse perspectives. They become more tolerant and able to confidently overcome cross-cultural barriers. Overall, this experience broadens their horizons on international education, enhances their professional skills, and shapes a more mature outlook on interacting with different cultural environments.

## **B. Discussion**

This study examines the experiences of culture shock and the adaptation process of prospective English teacher students while participating in the International PPKPM Program in Thailand. The results of the study indicate that the culture shock experienced by participants emerged in various interrelated aspects of life, including emotional, communication, pedagogical, institutional, and socio-cultural aspects. This is in line with the view that culture shock is a multidimensional phenomenon, involving affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects when individuals encounter a significantly different cultural environment (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001).

In the early stages of placement, participants experience emotional pressure in the form of anxiety, confusion, and discomfort. This pressure stems

from a new social and educational environment. In addition, this pressure also stems from the demands of their role as prospective educators in a different cultural environment. This situation reflects acculturation stress, which is the mental stress a person feels when adjusting to new cultural values, norms, and customs (Berry & Sam, 2020). This emotional stress becomes more complex because students are not only adjusting personally; they also have to perform professionally in the classroom. To overcome these challenges, participants seek social support through communication with family and bonding with other participants. This support helps them reduce stress and maintain mental stability. This approach is in line with Berry's acculturation theory, which highlights the important role of social support in improving mental well-being during cultural adjustment (Berry, 2017; Berry & Sam, 2020).

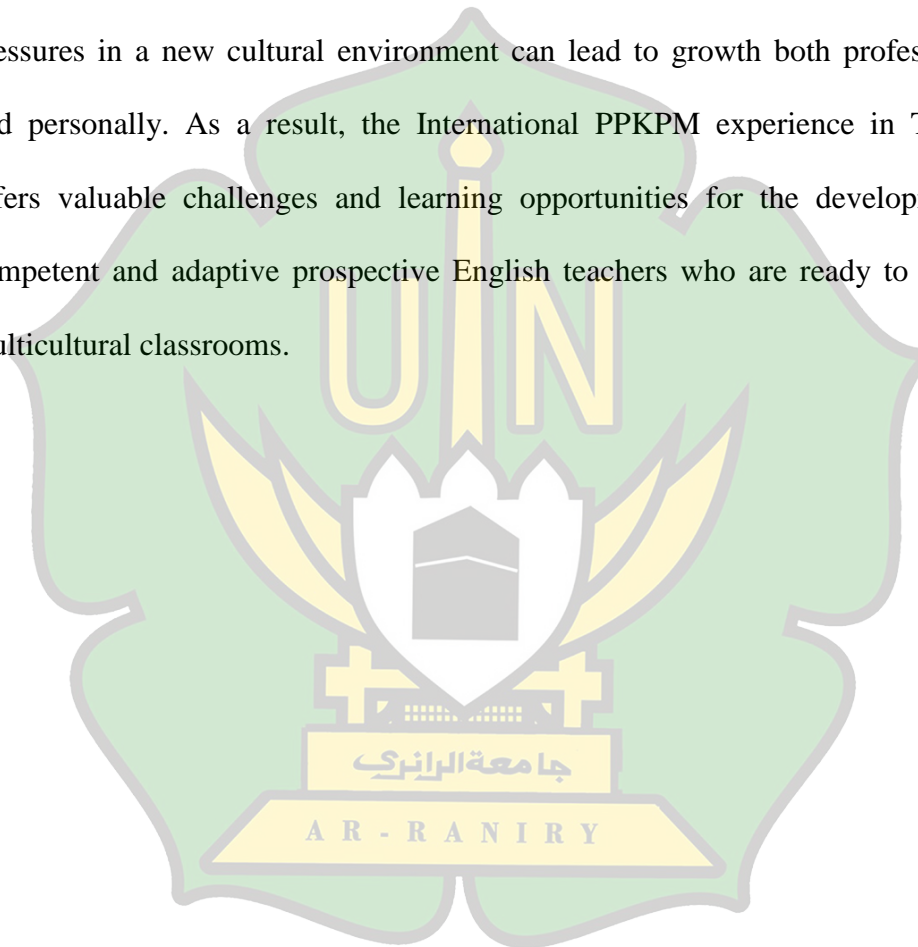
In addition to emotional aspects, communication barriers are one of the biggest types of culture shock. Although English is used as the language of instruction, many local students and teachers have limited English skills. Differences in pronunciation and the use of Thai in everyday conversation also lead to poor communication. This affects how well students learn and interact socially at school. This situation is consistent with the Theory of Anxiety or Uncertainty Management. This theory suggests that language and cultural differences increase anxiety and uncertainty in intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2005; Smith & Khawaja, 2020). To overcome these barriers, participants changed the way they interacted. They simplified their language and used gestures, visual media, and other tools. These changes demonstrate

intercultural communication skills. They not only improve student understanding but also strengthen relationships in the classroom (Bennett, 2020).

Cultural shock also arises in the areas of teaching and institutions. Participants noticed differences in teaching methods, student learning styles, assessment systems, and school rules and customs compared to their experiences in Indonesia. These differences required them to change their teaching practices to be more locally effective. These findings support Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which states that learning and teaching are greatly influenced by social and cultural contexts. The process of adjusting teaching methods demonstrates the growth of professional flexibility. This kind of flexibility is a key sign of future teacher competence in global education. Changing teaching strategies to suit the local culture also increases the effectiveness of learning and helps develop participants' professional skills (Nguyen, 2022; Zhou & Todorova, 2023).

In everyday social life, participants encounter differences in customs, social interaction patterns, and cultural norms of local communities. Although there are some cultural similarities, adjustments are necessary for effective acceptance and interaction. Ways of adapting, such as following school rules, participating in school activities, and respecting community norms, reflect the integration strategies in Berry's (2017) theory of acculturation. This method allows participants to maintain their original identity while adapting to the host culture, making the adaptation process more positive and beneficial for personal and professional growth.

Overall, the participants' experiences demonstrate the interconnectedness and dynamic nature of culture shock and adaptation. In fact, the initial pressures they faced helped them develop flexibility, self-reflection, and intercultural understanding. These results are consistent with Kim's Stress-Adaptation-Growth Model (2001), which explains how, with the right adaptation techniques, initial pressures in a new cultural environment can lead to growth both professionally and personally. As a result, the International PPKPM experience in Thailand offers valuable challenges and learning opportunities for the development of competent and adaptive prospective English teachers who are ready to work in multicultural classrooms.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study by summarizing the findings related to the cultural shock experiences and adaptation processes of prospective English teachers during the International PPKPM Program in Thailand. This chapter also provides recommendations for educational institutions, program organizers, PPKPM participants, and future researchers to improve the readiness, support, and effectiveness of international teaching practice programs.

#### A. Conclusion

This study examines the cultural shock experiences and adaptation strategies used by prospective English teacher students while participating in the International Student Empowerment Program (PPKPM) in Thailand. The results show that their adjustment process was not linear or rigid, but rather dynamic and changeable according to their interactions with the new environment. These findings are in line with contemporary views on cross-cultural adaptation, which emphasize that cultural transition is a continuous process involving negotiation between personal emotions, socio-cultural demands, and the development of intercultural competence.

While in Thailand, participants faced various challenges, ranging from communication barriers, differences in learning styles and classroom behavior, to adjustments to food, daily routines, and different social norms. Although these

situations caused discomfort at first, these experiences became valuable learning opportunities. This supports the view that culture shock is not merely a temporary emotional response, but part of a deep learning process influenced by how individuals interpret and respond to new cultural situations.

Over time, the participants' ability to understand cultural differences, adapt, and communicate effectively increased. These findings are consistent with Kim's (2005) communication-based cross-cultural adaptation theory, which emphasizes that verbal and nonverbal communication adjustments play an important role in bridging gaps and building positive relationships with local communities. Their willingness to adjust their communication style reflects their developing ability to negotiate meaning in intercultural interactions.

The participants' successful adaptation was also supported by their increased sensitivity to the socio-cultural norms at school and in the local community. Through observation, collaboration with local teachers, and direct interaction with students and the community, they gained a deeper understanding of the social context that shapes cultural behavior and expectations. This is in line with the views of Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) that effective intercultural interaction depends on the ability to understand social norms and situational contexts.

Overall, the culture shock experienced by the students did not become an obstacle, but rather a transformative experience that enriched their personal and professional development as prospective educators. They learned to see cultural differences not as obstacles, but as opportunities for reflection, expanding their

skills, and improving their intercultural competence. This experience confirms the importance of international teaching practice programs in shaping educators who are sensitive and responsive to global diversity.

## **B. Recommendation**

Based on the results of the study, several recommendations can be conveyed to educational institutions, program managers, and prospective participants. Educational institutions are advised to strengthen pre-departure training by including material on intercultural communication, emotional readiness, adaptation strategies, and practical insights into the teaching process in a multicultural context. Understanding the concept of cultural adaptation is believed to help students anticipate challenges that may arise in the field. In addition, program managers need to establish clearer coordination with partner schools in Thailand, especially regarding the role of students, school expectations, and the form of assistance provided. An early introduction to school culture, communication styles, and daily habits can reduce uncertainty and facilitate the adjustment process. Ongoing support, both online and face-to-face, is also important to provide space for student reflection during the program.

Prospective program participants are encouraged to have an open mind, curiosity, and flexibility in facing new environments. Efforts to learn basic expressions in Thai, participate in community activities, and observe local communication patterns can strengthen relationships and interactions during the teaching process. Mastering adaptive communication strategies such as the use of

visuals, gestures, and simple instructions is also very helpful in classroom situations with language barriers. On the other hand, future researchers are expected to expand the scope of research by increasing the number of participants, comparing different destination countries, or applying a mixed approach to produce more comprehensive findings. Long-term research is also needed to assess the sustainability impact of international experiences on teaching practices. In addition, educational institutions need to integrate intercultural competencies into teacher education curricula through courses such as multicultural pedagogy, global citizenship, and intercultural pragmatics to prepare prospective educators who can contribute effectively in increasingly diverse learning environments.



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## Apendix A : Appointment letter of supervisor



**KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBİYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH  
NOMOR: 1090 TAHUN 2025**

**TENTANG:  
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA  
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA**

**DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBİYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH**

- Menimbang** :
- bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
  - bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
  - bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
- Mengingat** :
- Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
  - Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
  - Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
  - Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah Ri Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
  - Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
  - Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Peraturan Menteri Agama Ri Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
  - Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Km/05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
  - Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
- MEMUTUSKAN**
- Menetapkan** :
- Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa.
- KESATU** :
- Menunjuk Saudara :
- Azizah, S.Ag., M.Pd**
- Untuk membimbing Skripsi :
- Nama : Siti Annisa  
NIM : 210203094  
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Judul Skripsi : Exploring English Student Teachers' Cultural shock During the International PPKPM Program in Thailand
- KEDUA** :
- Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku.
- KETIGA** :
- Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025 04.2 423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025.
- KEEMPAT** :
- Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan.
- KELIMA** :
- Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh  
Pada tanggal : 28 Juli 2025  
Dekan,

  
Saiful Muluk

**Tembusan**

1. Sekjen Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta.
2. Dirjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta.
3. Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta.
4. Kantor Pelaksanaan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPFN), di Banda Aceh.
5. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh.
6. Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Akuntansi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh.
7. Yang bersangkutan.
8. Arsip.



## Appendix B : Recommendation letter from the Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan to conduct field research



**KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH  
FAKULTAS TARBİYAH DAN KEGURUAN**

Jl. Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh Telp/Fax. : 0651-752921

Nomor : B-8726/Un.08/FTK.1/TL.00/10/2025

Lamp : -

Hal : *Penelitian Ilmiah Mahasiswa*

Kepada Yth,

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh  
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dengan ini menerangkan bahwa:

NIM : 210203094

Nama : SITI ANNISA

Program Studi/Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Alamat : DUSUN TEUNGOH LAMSIDAYA

Saudara yang tersebut namanya diatas benar mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan bermaksud melakukan penelitian ilmiah di lembaga yang Bapak/Ibu pimpin dalam rangka penulisan Skripsi dengan judul *EXPLORING ENGLISH STUDENT TEACHERS' CULTURAL SHOCK DURING THE INTERNATIONAL PPKPM PROGRAM IN THAILAND*

Banda Aceh, 23 Oktober 2025

An. Dekan

Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik dan Kelembagaan



Prof. Dr. Buhori Muslim, M.Ag.

NIP. 197508152001121002

Berlaku sampai : 28 November 2025

جامعة الرانيري

AR - RANIRY

### **Appendix C : Interview Protocol**

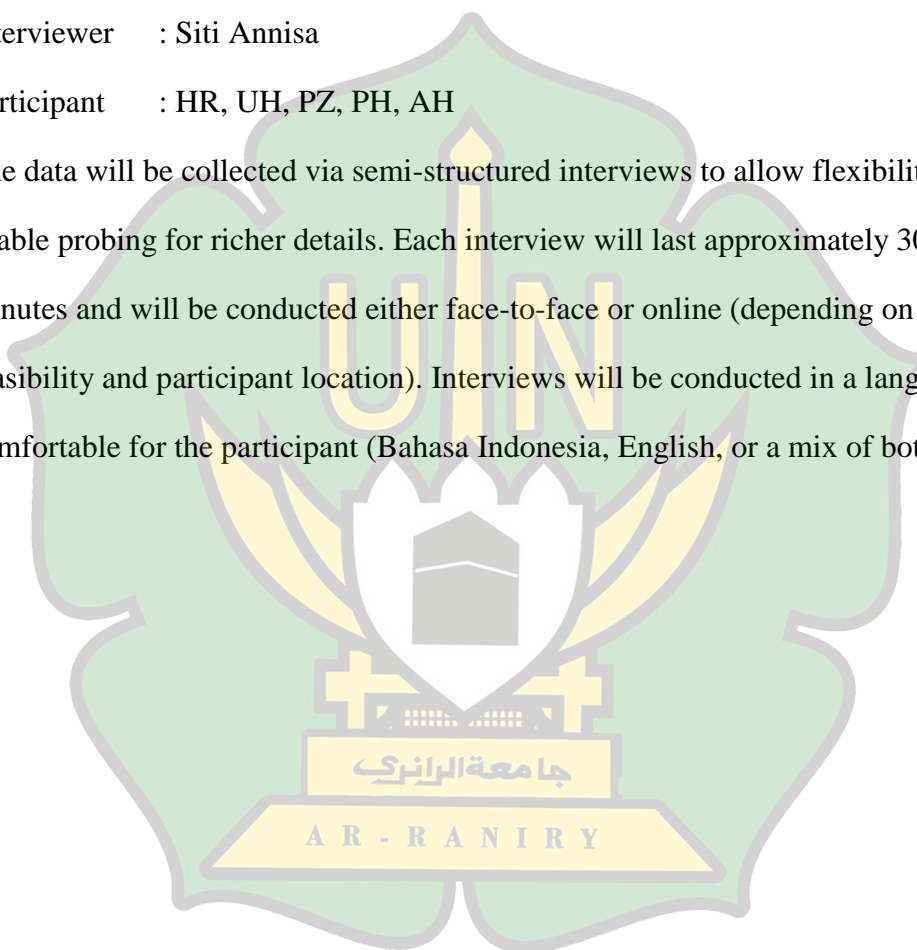
Project : Exploring English Student Teachers' Cultural Shock During the  
International PPKPM Program in Thailand

Place : Ar-Raniry State Islamic University

Interviewer : Siti Annisa

Participant : HR, UH, PZ, PH, AH

The data will be collected via semi-structured interviews to allow flexibility and enable probing for richer details. Each interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes and will be conducted either face-to-face or online (depending on feasibility and participant location). Interviews will be conducted in a language comfortable for the participant (Bahasa Indonesia, English, or a mix of both).



## INTERVIEW QUESTION LIST

### **RQ 1:**

**Research Topic:** Forms of Culture Shock Experienced by English Student

Teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh During the International PPKPM

Program in Thailand

**Instructions:** This interview aims to explore the experiences and forms of culture shock encountered by English student teachers during their participation in the International PPKPM Program in Thailand. You are encouraged to answer based on your personal experiences.

### **Part 1: Forms of Culture Shock**

1. Can you describe your initial experiences upon arriving in Thailand for the PPKPM program? What made you feel surprised, confused, or culturally uncomfortable?
2. How did you feel emotionally (e.g., stress, anxiety, or frustration) when encountering cultural differences in the Thai school environment, especially in the teaching process?
3. What language or communication challenges did you face when interacting with students, teachers, or school staff in Thailand? For example, in terms of accent, terminology, or nonverbal communication?
4. How did differences in teaching methods and student expectations in Thailand affect your teaching experience? Did you have difficulty adjusting your teaching style?

5. Did you experience culture shock due to differences in academic or institutional aspects, such as the grading system, school rules, or hierarchical structure?
6. How did you experience adjusting to everyday social and cultural aspects in Thailand, such as food, social etiquette, dress code, or interactions with the local community?

**RQ 2:**

**Research Topic:** Adaptation Strategies Used by English Student Teachers to Deal with Culture Shock During the International PPKPM Program in Thailand

**Instructions:** This interview aims to understand the adaptation strategies used by English student teachers to overcome culture shock while teaching and living in Thailand.

**Part 2: Adaptation Strategies**

7. How do you overcome emotional or psychological challenges that arise from culture shock? What strategies or habits help you manage stress and anxiety?
8. How do you adjust your communication style and language use when teaching in Thailand? Do you learn new vocabulary, use body language, or employ specific strategies?
9. What steps did you take to adapt your teaching methods to the expectations of students and school culture in Thailand? Did you incorporate elements of Indonesian and Thai culture into the teaching process?

10. How did you adapt to academic or institutional differences, such as the grading system or school organizational structure? Did you receive any support from the university or partner school?
11. Can you share examples of acculturation strategies you used during the program, such as integration (combining your original and new cultures) or assimilation (fully adapting to the new culture)?
12. How did your experience of culture shock and the adaptation process in Thailand affect your professional development as a prospective English teacher? What was the biggest lesson you learned from this experience?



## Appendix D : Interview Transcript

### Respondent : HR

1. Can you describe your initial experiences upon arriving in Thailand for the PPKPM program? What made you feel surprised, confused, or culturally uncomfortable?

*When I first arrived and started teaching in Thailand, I felt a strong mix of emotions. On the one hand, I was very excited because this was my first experience teaching abroad. It felt like starting a new chapter in my life. However, on the other hand, I also felt scared and nervous because I had to face a completely new environment—in terms of culture, school atmosphere, and how to interact with people there. Those feelings continued to mix, but slowly I learned to adapt.*

2. How did you feel emotionally (e.g., stress, anxiety, or frustration) when encountering cultural differences in the Thai school environment, especially in the teaching process?

*Yes, communication difficulties were the biggest challenge. Although we could speak English, most of the students and teachers at the school where we taught were not accustomed to using English. As a result, communication was often difficult. To overcome this, we relied on Google Translate in many situations. In addition, there were some students who could understand Malay because it was used in their homes, so they often helped translate conversations between us and teachers or other students. Their help is very meaningful in facilitating teaching and learning activities.*

3. What language or communication challenges did you face when interacting with students, teachers, or school staff in Thailand? For example, in terms of accent, terminology, or nonverbal communication?

*There are no striking differences. Both Indonesia and Thailand are developing countries with similar educational characteristics. The learning methods, classroom atmosphere, and teachers' approach to students are also almost the same. Therefore, in terms of teaching methods and classroom interaction, I feel that the situation is still quite familiar and not too different from my experience teaching in Indonesia.*

4. How did differences in teaching methods and student expectations in Thailand affect your teaching experience? Did you have difficulty adjusting your teaching style?

*In general, the teaching methods and classroom dynamics are not too different. The main challenge is not the methods, but the language. There are times when I have prepared good teaching methods, but it is still difficult to implement them because the students do not understand the instructions in English. So, the language barrier is the biggest factor that makes the adjustment process challenging.*

5. Did you experience culture shock due to differences in academic or institutional aspects, such as the grading system, school rules, or hierarchical structure?

*From my observations, school rules and systems in Thailand are almost the same as in Indonesia. The learning process, school activities, and the way teachers interact with students are not very different. This makes it easier for me to adjust to the school environment.*

6. How did you experience adjusting to everyday social and cultural aspects in Thailand, such as food, social etiquette, dress code, or interactions with the local community?

*The most noticeable difference is the food. Most Thai dishes tend to be sour, which is quite different from Indonesian tastes. As an Indonesian who is used to savory, spicy, or sweet flavors, I needed time to adjust. In*

*addition, people's clothing styles also vary. Some dress more revealingly, especially in certain areas. However, there are still many people who dress in Islamic or sharia-compliant clothing, so I still feel comfortable in that environment.*

7. How do you overcome emotional or psychological challenges that arise from culture shock? What strategies or habits help you manage stress and anxiety?

*The main way to overcome homesickness is to call my parents and friends in Indonesia. Talking and sharing stories makes me feel better. Just hearing their voices is very helpful in reducing stress and makes me feel like I'm not alone even though I'm far away in another country.*

8. How do you adjust your communication style and language use when teaching in Thailand? Do you learn new vocabulary, use body language, or employ specific strategies?

*I overcome language barriers by asking students who can speak Malay to help me communicate. They are very helpful when I have to interact with teachers or students who do not understand English at all. In addition, I use technology such as Google Translate, which is a practical tool for communicating in urgent situations. With this combination, communication becomes smoother even though there are still challenges.*

9. What steps did you take to adapt your teaching methods to the expectations of students and school culture in Thailand? Did you incorporate elements of Indonesian and Thai culture into the teaching process?

*I took the initiative to learn a little Thai, especially basic words related to the subject matter. For example, when teaching the names of days or animals, I prepare basic vocabulary in Thai before entering the classroom. That way, I can explain the material in English but still*

*reinforce it with Thai, so that students who don't understand English can still follow the lesson.*

10. How did you adapt to academic or institutional differences, such as the grading system or school organizational structure? Did you receive any support from the university or partner school?

*To understand school rules and customs, I ask students a lot of questions about how the school system works. I also try to observe firsthand how teachers and students go about their daily activities. By observing and asking questions, I am able to adapt better.*

11. Can you share examples of acculturation strategies you used during the program, such as integration (combining your original and new cultures) or assimilation (fully adapting to the new culture)?

*My relationship with teachers and students is quite good. In the teachers' office, we often chat and exchange stories. The students are also very friendly and enthusiastic about learning about Indonesia—they often ask about the culture, food, or customs in our country. This warm interaction makes it easier for me to adapt and feel accepted while in Thailand.*

12. How did your experience of culture shock and the adaptation process in Thailand affect your professional development as a prospective English teacher? What was the biggest lesson you learned from this experience?

*The most memorable experience for me was teaching at an Islamic boarding school located very far away, even in the middle of the forest. The conditions were simple, and the students lived far from the city center. But their enthusiasm for learning was very high. From that experience, I learned that no matter how far the terrain and how difficult the obstacles, education must still be pursued. I also learned to appreciate the process, culture, and my own ability to adapt to new environments.*

**Respondent : UH**

1. Can you describe your initial experiences upon arriving in Thailand for the PPKPM program? What made you feel surprised, confused, or culturally uncomfortable?

*I felt a little nervous, because it was my first experience teaching in another country. The new situation certainly made me anxious, but that was normal at first.*

2. How did you feel emotionally (e.g., stress, anxiety, or frustration) when encountering cultural differences in the Thai school environment, especially in the teaching process?

*Yes, it was quite difficult. Most teachers there couldn't speak Malay or English, so they tended to avoid communication to keep things simple. Only a few teachers could speak Malay or English. The students only spoke Thai, so communication with them was very limited.*

3. What language or communication challenges did you face when interacting with students, teachers, or school staff in Thailand? For example, in terms of accent, terminology, or nonverbal communication?

*In Indonesia, we understand the students' personalities and know how to calm them down (for example, by tapping on the table). In Thailand, due to cultural differences, I don't know how to deal with children who throw tantrums or make noise, and no one understands Malay or English. That makes the teaching process more challenging.*

4. How did differences in teaching methods and student expectations in Thailand affect your teaching experience? Did you have difficulty adjusting your teaching style?

*It's not too difficult, because we have a learning guidebook. We teach according to the book, just like in Indonesia, only we use English to deliver the lessons.*

5. Did you experience culture shock due to differences in academic or institutional aspects, such as the grading system, school rules, or hierarchical structure?

*There aren't many differences. In general, the learning system in Thailand is similar to Indonesia's. Only a few minor things are different.*

6. How did you experience adjusting to everyday social and cultural aspects in Thailand, such as food, social etiquette, dress code, or interactions with the local community?

*Because we are stationed in Southern Thailand, the food still has a Malay flavor, so it suits the Indonesian palate. In terms of clothing, the people are also similar to those in Aceh, many women wear headscarves, and the atmosphere is quite Islamic.*

7. How do you overcome emotional or psychological challenges that arise from culture shock? What strategies or habits help you manage stress and anxiety?

*To overcome homesickness, I often video call my parents. If I encounter difficulties while in Thailand, I immediately contact my guardian and discuss solutions.*

8. How do you adjust your communication style and language use when teaching in Thailand? Do you learn new vocabulary, use body language, or employ specific strategies?

*We often use sign language, because the students only speak Thai, while we have not mastered it yet. Sign language is the fastest way to understand each other.*

9. What steps did you take to adapt your teaching methods to the expectations of students and school culture in Thailand? Did you incorporate elements of Indonesian and Thai culture into the teaching process?

*I often use games and hands-on activities so that they can quickly understand what is being taught. This method is more effective than regular explanations.*

10. How did you adapt to academic or institutional differences, such as the grading system or school organizational structure? Did you receive any support from the university or partner school?

*I try not to break school rules. For example, we are only allowed to go out until 10 p.m. If we stay out past that time, we will face consequences. Therefore, I am always careful to obey the rules.*

11. Can you share examples of acculturation strategies you used during the program, such as integration (combining your original and new cultures) or assimilation (fully adapting to the new culture)?

*I always try to be friendly and approachable even though they don't understand my language. I am closer to teachers who can speak Malay. The most valuable impression for me is their friendliness, they are very open, accept us well, and treat us warmly.*

12. How did your experience of culture shock and the adaptation process in Thailand affect your professional development as a prospective English teacher? What was the biggest lesson you learned from this experience?

*The most memorable thing was the friendliness of the community and teachers, as well as the independence of the children at school. Even kindergarteners are independent—they go to the bathroom by themselves and put on their own pants. This experience taught me many new lessons.*

**Respondent : PZ**

1. Can you describe your initial experiences upon arriving in Thailand for the PPKPM program? What made you feel surprised, confused, or culturally uncomfortable?

*At first, I felt nervous because I didn't know the teaching system in Thailand and whether I could keep up with the pace of learning. However, after arriving, that nervousness subsided. The comfortable school environment, friendly community, and food that I could easily adjust to made me feel at home quickly. Eventually, I became more enthusiastic about teaching.*

2. How did you feel emotionally (e.g., stress, anxiety, or frustration) when encountering cultural differences in the Thai school environment, especially in the teaching process?

*Yes, there were difficulties, mainly because the community and students spoke Thai. They could hardly speak Malay, so we had to teach entirely in English. Fortunately, the local English teachers often helped translate into Thai, so communication went more smoothly.*

3. What language or communication challenges did you face when interacting with students, teachers, or school staff in Thailand? For example, in terms of accent, terminology, or nonverbal communication?

*The most noticeable difference is the absence of lesson plans like in Indonesia. In Indonesia, all the material is clearly organized day by day. In Thailand, I was immediately asked to enter the classroom and teach without an RPP guide. The vocabulary material is also often the same between grades 1 and 4, while grade 6 already uses textbooks. So I have to be more creative in adjusting the material.*

4. How did differences in teaching methods and student expectations in Thailand affect your teaching experience? Did you have difficulty adjusting your teaching style?

*The main difficulty was the language, because the students only understood Thai. However, their learning style was actually similar to that of Indonesian students. I was helped by the English teacher who translated some of the instructions into Thai so that the learning process could continue.*

5. Did you experience culture shock due to differences in academic or institutional aspects, such as the grading system, school rules, or hierarchical structure?

*School rules are basically similar. However, I noticed that learning there does not emphasize exercises or assignments as much as in Indonesia. Sometimes only some students complete their assignments, but it is still considered sufficient. This is different from Indonesia, which is usually stricter in assessing assignments.*

6. How did you experience adjusting to everyday social and cultural aspects in Thailand, such as food, social etiquette, dress code, or interactions with the local community?

*The most noticeable change was the food. Although different, the food was delicious and I adapted easily. I lived in an Islamic boarding school-like environment, so the atmosphere was Islamic, orderly, and made me feel comfortable during my stay there.*

7. How do you overcome emotional or psychological challenges that arise from culture shock? What strategies or habits help you manage stress and anxiety?

*I hardly felt homesick or stressed because our activities were very enjoyable. On weekends, we were often invited to go on trips by the*

*program supervisor. Activities like that helped relieve boredom and made the experience even more memorable.*

8. How do you adjust your communication style and language use when teaching in Thailand? Do you learn new vocabulary, use body language, or employ specific strategies?

*I continue to use English in teaching. If there are words I don't know, I look up their meanings on Google. Even though my students and I don't understand each other's languages, we can communicate through context, gestures, and visual examples.*

9. What steps did you take to adapt your teaching methods to the expectations of students and school culture in Thailand? Did you incorporate elements of Indonesian and Thai culture into the teaching process?

*I often use body language to clarify the meaning of words. For example, when teaching the word "run," I demonstrate the movement of running. I include hand gestures or visual examples with almost every lesson so that students can understand more easily despite the language barrier.*

10. How did you adapt to academic or institutional differences, such as the grading system or school organizational structure? Did you receive any support from the university or partner school?

*We are greatly assisted by the program manager, who speaks Indonesian fluently. He explains the rules and school activities and helps us communicate with the teachers there. In addition, we participate in various school activities such as praying at the mosque and daily activities so that it is easy to blend in.*

11. Can you share examples of acculturation strategies you used during the program, such as integration (combining your original and new cultures) or assimilation (fully adapting to the new culture)?

*I build relationships with teachers, students, and the community, and adapt my teaching style to the local culture*

12. Overall, how did your experience of culture shock and the adaptation process in Thailand affect your professional development as a prospective English teacher? What was the biggest lesson you learned from this experience?

*The most memorable lesson for me was the hospitality and kindness of the community and teachers there. Every difficulty, whether in teaching or using learning media, was always responded to quickly and assisted by the teachers at the school. I also learned a lot about Thai culture, creative and effective teaching methods for children, and the experience of interacting with a very friendly community. In addition, I was happy because the children were very honest and enthusiastic about learning, which made the teaching experience more memorable and enjoyable.*

**Respondent : PH**

1. Can you describe your initial experiences upon arriving in Thailand for the PPKPM program? What made you feel surprised, confused, or culturally uncomfortable?

*When I first arrived in Thailand, I felt happy but also confused. My initial expectation was that students in Thailand would have sufficient English skills, but in reality, many students could not speak English or Malay at all. This made initial communication quite challenging.*

2. How did you feel emotionally (e.g., stress, anxiety, or frustration) when encountering cultural differences in the Thai school environment, especially in the teaching process?

*Emotionally, I feel happy because the people and teachers in Thailand are very welcoming and helpful. However, there is a little confusion due to differences in language and terminology. For example, when teaching, we are often assisted by teachers in translating Malay or English into Thai, so that the teaching process runs more smoothly.*

3. What language or communication challenges did you face when interacting with students, teachers, or school staff in Thailand? For example, in terms of accent, terminology, or nonverbal communication?

*Language difficulties arise mainly when communicating with students who do not speak Malay or English. Some teachers know basic Malay or English, so we use them as interpreters. With the local community not understanding Malay or English, we use Google Translate for communication. For example, when explaining the names of objects or locations, we type them into our cell phones and show them the translated results.*

4. How did differences in teaching methods and student expectations in Thailand affect your teaching experience? Did you have difficulty adjusting your teaching style?

*The differences in teaching methods and student expectations were not too difficult to follow. Thai students focus more on certain subjects and have shorter school hours than in Indonesia. I adjusted my teaching style by using visual media such as pictures and flashcards to make the material easier to understand, especially when language was a barrier.*

5. Did you experience culture shock due to differences in academic or institutional aspects, such as the grading system, school rules, or hierarchical structure?

*In terms of school rules, the school environment in Thailand feels more relaxed and allows students to enjoy learning more. I am not very familiar*

*with the grading system because I teach at a foundation that does not emphasize formal assessment. Learning activities are also more flexible than in Indonesia.*

6. How did you experience adjusting to everyday social and cultural aspects in Thailand, such as food, social etiquette, dress code, or interactions with the local community?

*In terms of everyday culture, I don't feel any extreme differences because we are in an area where the majority of the population is Muslim, so the way of dressing, customs, and social norms are quite similar to Indonesia. The most noticeable difference is the food—Thai cuisine tends to be sour, while my taste buds are more suited to Indonesian cuisine, which is savory and spicy. Socially, Thai people are very friendly and often helpful, sometimes even giving me extra food when I buy meals. Children's social interactions are also well-regulated because the surrounding area is a school zone.*

7. How do you overcome emotional or psychological challenges that arise from culture shock? What strategies or habits help you manage stress and anxiety?

*To overcome emotional challenges, I adapted more through interactions with my KPM friends because we lived together and there were many activities, so I didn't feel homesick. In addition, I tried to focus on positive things such as the friendliness of the community and the support of teachers at school.*

8. How do you adjust your communication style and language use when teaching in Thailand? Do you learn new vocabulary, use body language, or employ specific strategies?

*The main strategies for adapting communication are using Google Translate, utilizing teachers who can speak Malay, and learning some*

*basic Thai vocabulary that is often used for transactions or daily needs. When teaching, I add gestures and visual media to make it easier for students to understand.*

9. What steps did you take to adapt your teaching methods to the expectations of students and school culture in Thailand? Did you incorporate elements of Indonesian and Thai culture into the teaching process?

*To adapt my teaching methods, I use interactive media such as flashcards containing pictures, for example, learning about fruits or animals through pictures so that they recognize words in English, Indonesian, and Thai. In this way, students can recognize words and their meanings visually. Students are also interested in learning a little Indonesian, making the learning process more enjoyable.*

10. How did you adapt to academic or institutional differences, such as the grading system or school organizational structure? Did you receive any support from the university or partner school?

*Adapting to school rules and customs was not too difficult because the school was very supportive. They understood that we did not speak Thai, so regular explanations were given in Malay by teachers or the principal. This support was very helpful in understanding how the school worked.*

11. Can you share examples of acculturation strategies you used during the program, such as integration (combining your original and new cultures) or assimilation (fully adapting to the new culture)?

*In socializing and adapting to the environment, I mostly use an integration approach, which is to maintain my Indonesian cultural identity while following the customs and lifestyle of Thai society. I have established good relationships with teachers, students, and the community, and they are*

*very helpful, especially in translating or explaining the local language and culture.*

12. How did your experience of culture shock and the adaptation process in Thailand affect your professional development as a prospective English teacher? What was the biggest lesson you learned from this experience?

*My experience as a KPM volunteer in Thailand taught me valuable lessons, especially about how to deal with cultural differences, teaching methods, and understanding student personalities. What impressed me most was how responsive and friendly the community and teachers at the foundation were, always helping us with our teaching materials and activities. This experience greatly shaped me as a prospective English teacher, especially in terms of my readiness to teach in a cross-cultural environment.*

**Respondent : AH**

1. Can you describe your initial experiences upon arriving in Thailand for the PPKPM program? What made you feel surprised, confused, or culturally uncomfortable?

*When I first arrived in Thailand, I felt nervous, confused, but also excited. The new environment and students who communicated differently made this initial experience a little challenging.*

2. How did you feel emotionally (e.g., stress, anxiety, or frustration) when encountering cultural differences in the Thai school environment, especially in the teaching process?

*My emotions were mixed, between nervousness and curiosity. I was a little anxious when faced with differences in the names of school levels, for example, SD and SMP in Indonesia are different from Prathom and Mathayom in Thailand. However, the teachers and community around me were understanding, which helped me feel more at ease.*

3. What language or communication challenges did you face when interacting with students, teachers, or school staff in Thailand? For example, in terms of accent, terminology, or nonverbal communication?

*Language difficulties mainly arose when interacting with elementary school students who were not familiar with Malay or English. Communication with teachers was easier because some could speak basic Malay and English. For students and other members of the community, I sometimes used pictures or Google Translate to facilitate understanding.*

4. How did differences in teaching methods and student expectations in Thailand affect your teaching experience? Did you have difficulty adjusting your teaching style?

*The differences in teaching methods were not too difficult to follow. The main difficulty was the language. I adjusted my teaching style to be simpler and clearer so that students could understand more easily, for example by using visual examples and gestures.*

5. Did you experience culture shock due to differences in academic or institutional aspects, such as the grading system, school rules, or hierarchical structure?

*Yes, there were noticeable differences. The grading system, school rules, and learning activities in Thailand are different from those in Indonesia. For example, they celebrate important days with great fanfare, such as Children's Day, which makes the school atmosphere more relaxed and different from Indonesia.*

6. How did you experience adjusting to everyday social and cultural aspects in Thailand, such as food, social etiquette, dress code, or interactions with the local community?

*Food in Thailand is different from Aceh or Indonesia in general, tending to be more sour. There are also slight differences in the way people dress,*

*both at school and in the surrounding environment. The different environment and customs of the community made me learn to adjust to everyday life there.*

7. How do you overcome emotional or psychological challenges that arise from culture shock? What strategies or habits help you manage stress and anxiety?

*Alhamdulillah, I didn't feel too stressed while in Thailand. At first, I just missed the food from my region. To overcome this, we did activities together with friends, participated in school kitchen activities, went shopping at the market, shared stories with friends, and called family at night.*

8. How do you adjust your communication style and language use when teaching in Thailand? Do you learn new vocabulary, use body language, or employ specific strategies?

*I adjusted my communication with teachers by using Malay, while for students I used pictures, gestures, and Google Translate. This strategy helped students understand the material more easily.*

9. What steps did you take to adapt your teaching methods to the expectations of students and school culture in Thailand? Did you incorporate elements of Indonesian and Thai culture into the teaching process?

*I teach basic material that is easy for students to understand, learn a little Thai vocabulary, and follow their textbooks. I also use visual media so that students can understand Indonesian and English at the same time, while introducing elements of Indonesian culture.*

10. How did you adapt to academic or institutional differences, such as the grading system or school organizational structure? Did you receive any support from the university or partner school?

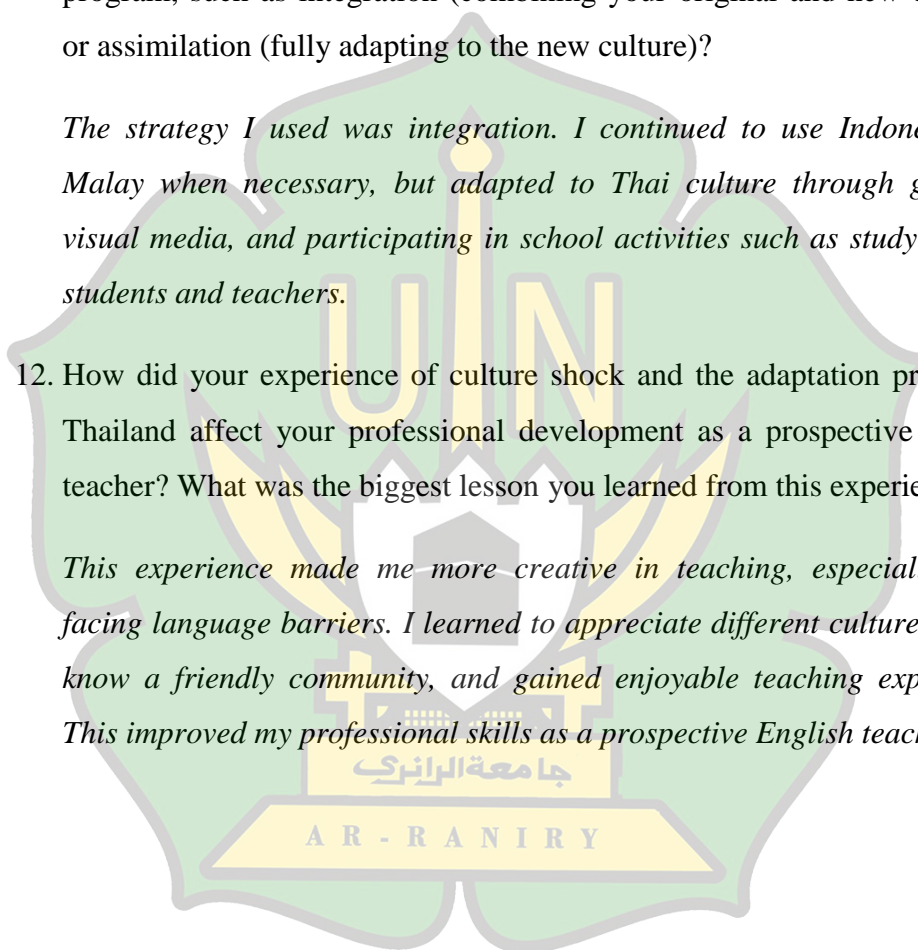
*We were assisted by teachers and school administrators who understood our challenges. They explained the rules and school activities and served as liaisons with other teachers so that we could adapt to the academic differences and school structure.*

11. Can you share examples of acculturation strategies you used during the program, such as integration (combining your original and new cultures) or assimilation (fully adapting to the new culture)?

*The strategy I used was integration. I continued to use Indonesian or Malay when necessary, but adapted to Thai culture through gestures, visual media, and participating in school activities such as studying with students and teachers.*

12. How did your experience of culture shock and the adaptation process in Thailand affect your professional development as a prospective English teacher? What was the biggest lesson you learned from this experience?

*This experience made me more creative in teaching, especially when facing language barriers. I learned to appreciate different cultures, got to know a friendly community, and gained enjoyable teaching experience. This improved my professional skills as a prospective English teacher.*



**Appendix E : Documentation**

