

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Problem

Learning a foreign language is as important as learning a culture. It means that if someone learns a foreign language, he has to learn its culture, too. Since "language and culture are all closely associated..."¹ and "language is a key of component of culture".² Therefore, he cannot learn a foreign language without learning its culture. Otherwise he will get some troubles in communication with foreigners.

Someone sometimes makes a little misunderstanding when he speaks with foreigners. He asks some questions which make the foreigners feel reluctant to answer. For example, he asks about the money they earn every month. He does not know that it is impolite to ask such kind of questions as he does not know much about the culture of those foreigners. In this case, when someone learns a foreign language, he has to learn its culture, too.

¹Blount Ben G., in Wifina Tanuwidjaja, An Analysis of Cultural Aspects Found in Lado English Series, Thesis Unika Widya Mandala, Surabaya, 1987, p.1

²Muriel Saville and Troike, Foundations for teaching as A Second Language : Theory and Method for Multicultural Education, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 1976, p. 45

In our country, the first foreign language is English. All the Junior, Senior High Schools and also Universities use English as a foreign language. Since culture and language are closely related, it is very important, then, to give the cultural items in teaching English as a foreign language to the non-speaking English students. It is in accordance with what Syed Muhammad Abdul Rauf states that a foreign language teacher must have thorough insights into the culture of his students as well as the culture of the language he is teaching.³ Moreover Douglas says that culture is really an integral part of the interaction between language and thought. And cultural patterns, customs and ways of life are expressed in language.⁴ In short, teaching language, specifically English in this context, should be followed by teaching its culture.

At the English department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, Integrated Course is given in the first semester using Jack.C. Richard and M.N. Long's *Breakthrough* which consists of some cultural items in the part of speaking. The objective of the teaching of IC subject is that at the end of the teaching, the first semester students are expected to have integrated English skills in order that

³Syed Muhammad Abdur Rauf, "Culture and Reading Comprehension", English Teaching Forum, April 1988, Vol. XXVI no. 2, p. 43

⁴H.Douglas Brown, Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, Prentice Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 1987, p. 123

they can homogeneously follow the other subjects in English.⁵ The integrated skills include Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading. Besides, since 1989 the English Department of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education has released a policy, as stated by the former Head of English Department, Dr. Wuri Soedjatmiko, that among the integrated skills, speaking skill is given more emphasis or portion in the Integrated Course subject.

In line with this policy, since 1989 too, the English Department has decided to replace the former text book of IC subject, namely *Lado English series 1-5*, with the other text books entitled *Breakthrough 1-3* by Jack C. Richard and M.N. Long. The reason why *Breakthrough* is chosen is: this book emphasizes on speaking ability because "eighty percent of the course materials deals with listening and speaking".⁶ It is in accordance with the policy that speaking skill is given more emphasis or portion in the Integrated Course subject. Besides, *Breakthrough* is based on communicative approach. This means that the organizing principle of the course is teaching learners how to use language in different situations for different communicative purposes.

⁵Buku Pedoman FKIP, Widya Mandala Catholic University, Surabaya, 1991, p. 99

⁶J.C.Richard and M.N. Long, Breakthrough book one, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1985, p. v

In communication, speaking takes an important part in communication. People communicate with each other through writing and speaking. In writing people can communicate with each other indirectly by using letter or written materials. Furthermore, sometimes people want to communicate directly, so they have to speak. In this case, people like to speak directly than to write a letter. Therefore, speaking can be said as an important means to communicate.

Language is viewed as a means for communicating. It is chiefly used by the members of society to communicate or carry on their affairs. They use a certain language to communicate with others. For example, Frank is an American student who studies Indonesia art. He has to learn Indonesian language to communicate with his teachers or his friends. If he cannot speak Indonesian at all, it is very difficult to communicate with others.

Language itself is closely related with culture; since each language is a product of a particular culture and it reflects the culture of the people and their view of the world. In this case, the students who learn a foreign language should know about its culture. Therefore, students who learn English should learn its culture; at least they know something about its culture.

In Widya Mandala University, culture is introduced little by little since the first semester through the material for Integrated Course namely Jack C. Richard and M.N.Long's *Breakthrough* book one, two, and three (for the further explanations, this book is

mentioned as *Breakthrough*). In these books there are many cultural items implicitly stated through the speaking section. The IC teachers would explain some the cultural items while they are teaching this section.

In fact, most of the first semester students cannot understand the cultural items found in *Breakthrough* easily. One of the reasons is because there are so many expressions to say something which cannot be understood clearly by the first semester students. This is proved from the interview between the writer and many of the first semester students. For example, the word "weekend", almost all the first semester students think that weekend is Saturday night. In reality, weekend for American people is Friday night until Sunday evening. It is because of different culture between Indonesian and American. If the first semester students do not have much knowledge about American culture, it is difficult to understand it. Therefore, the first semester students should be given an alternative source to get enough knowledge about the American culture.

Based on the reason above, the writer is interested in analyzing the cultural items in the material for IC namely *Breakthrough*. She finds that there are a lot of cultural items in *Breakthrough* which should be understood by the first semester students.

1.2. Statement of The Problem

Since it is important to know the cultural items in learning English, the first semester students should understand them clearly. However, they have difficulty in understanding the cultural items, in this case the cultural items found in *Breakthrough* book one, two and three. The writer finds three problems namely:

1. What kind of cultural items are there in Jack Richard's *Breakthrough*?
2. What are the possible meanings of cultural items found in *Breakthrough*?
3. Are there any differences between American's and Indonesian's culture?

1.3. The Objective of the Study

Through this thesis, the writer intends to find the cultural items found in *Breakthrough*, and to describe the possible meanings of cultural items found in *Breakthrough*. Besides, she would like to explain the differences between American and Indonesian culture.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that this thesis gives some contributions concerning the cultural items found in *Breakthrough* to the students of Integrated Course at the English Department of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Widya Mandala Catholic University

Surabaya.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

There are three kinds of theories the writer wants to explain concerning with this thesis. They are Language and Culture, Culture, and The Function of Language.

1.5.1. *Language and Culture.*

AS Hornby defined "language is as human and noninstinctive method of communication ideas, feelings and desires by means of a system of sounds and sounds symbols"⁷. In this case, human beings use language to communicate with others. Therefore, the most essential and perfect means of expression of communication is language.

Language itself is a key component of culture because language is actually one of the elements of human culture. It is in accordance with Syeed Muhammad Abdur Rauf's statement in his article that a language does not exist in a vacuum. It is embedded in the culture of a people and reflects the totality of belief and sentiments of the speech community.⁸ Furthermore, Pauline Tomasow

⁷AS Hornby, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, Oxford University Press, London, 1986, p. 473

⁸Syeed Muhammad Abdur Rauf, "Culture and Reading Comprehension", English Teaching Forum, April 1988, vol. XXVI, p.44.

says that a language learner who wants to communicate with individuals from other cultural background should understand the cultural behavior of others.⁹ Therefore, language and culture cannot be separated from each other because they have close relationship.

1.5.2. Culture.

Culture is shaped by the people who live in certain society. This is because they have certain way of life. The examples of this are the way how they response to others the first time they meet and how they get dressed. Dr. Wuri Soedjatmiko states in her book entitle "Understanding American and Indonesian Cultures" that culture related to foreign language learning means "way of life", or "patterns of living", and consists of elements such as verbal and nonverbal behavior, attitudes, traits of people, standards and values which are considered good or proper by the culture bearers.¹⁰ While Charles Felix Widjajakoesoema in his paper says

"every culture has two forms which are called abstract and concrete. The abstract culture refers to certain situations, attitudes, beliefs, religious, table manners, fashions, greeting, etc. In the concrete culture, everything made by human which can be experienced with human sense, such as

⁹Pauline Tomasouw, Buku Materi Pokok Cross Cultural Understanding, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Jakarta, 1986, p. 1.1

¹⁰Wuri Soedjatmiko, Understanding American and Indonesian Cultures, Widya Mandala Catholic University Press, Surabaya, 1987, p. 3

ornaments, tools, furniture, and so on".¹¹

From the definitions above, it can be said that human beings have their own culture and the culture is passed from one generation to another. In other words, the culture of human beings takes an important place in their life.

1.5.3. The Function of Language.

It is previously stated that every human being in this world has to speak with others; they have to communicate with other people by using a language. All the people learn at least one language to communicate. On the other hand, if a person does not learn a language, he will not be able to communicate with others. It is in line with what Raja T.Nasr states that main purpose of language is to communicate ideas and meanings.¹² While Jack C. Richard says that language has three views; the first view is the structural view, the second view is the functional view and the third is the interactional view. The functional view is the view that language is a means for communicating and giving messages. This theory emphasizes the semantic and communicative dimension rather

¹¹Charles Felix Widjajakoesoema, "Several Cultural Aspects in Teaching English Language", Widya Mandala Catholic University, Thesis 1983, p. 2

¹²Raja. T. Nasr, The Essentials of Linguistic Science, Longman Group Limited, London, 1984, p. 113

than merely the grammatical characteristic of language.¹³ In other words, people use language in order to be able to communicate in the society, as in communication each of them wants to express their needs such as their feeling, their ideas and others.

1.6. Research Methodology

In trying to fulfill the aims of this thesis, the writer uses content analysis to analyze the cultural items found in *Breakthrough*.

"Content analysis" means analyzing particular data to evaluate its value, appropriateness and accuracy. In this thesis, the data which will be evaluated are the cultural items found in *Breakthrough* whether or not they can be understood with the possible meanings.

The research design is then explained through the following procedures.

A. Theoretical framework of reference.

B. Phase I :

Research question---sampling---categorizing---
measuring.

C. Phase II :

Data extracting----inferring----concluding.

¹³Jack C. Richard and Theodore S. Rodgers, Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, Cambridge University Press, United States of America, 1986,p. 17

D. Phase III:

Back check through other means of analysis.¹⁴

1.7. Scope and Limitation

Breakthrough which is written by Jack C. Richard and M.N.Long is a series of English books which are written based on a communicative approach to teaching English. It consists of three series for students, three series for teachers, three series for students' workbooks, and a set of tapes.

For student's book, *Breakthrough* series contains of 14 units. Each unit contains:

- a) A conversation section with the heading **Conversation in context**. These are for listening only and are used to present the vocabulary and functions of unit. Then follows **Ways to say it**. In this section, the functions illustrated in the dialogue are displayed, and additional ways of expressing a particular function are provided. A series of practice exercises are prepared in **Pair up and practice**. These move from controlled to freer practice of the language functions.
- b) A **Writing section** is generally a short writing task, which practices a writing skill associated with the theme of the unit.
- c) A **Reading section**, contains a reading text and a number of different reading tasks. The reading passages are

¹⁴Wuri Soedjatmiko, Content Analysis unpublished paper, 1990, p. 3

thematically related to the unit.¹⁵

In this thesis the writer limits her study to the conversation sections with the headings *Ways to say it* and *Pair up and practice*. She chooses both sections because she analyzes cultural items found in the speaking section. She does not discuss the writing and reading sections.

1.8. Definitions of the Key Terms

In this thesis the writer needs to explain some terms, namely Analysis, Cultural items and *Breakthrough*.

1.8.1. Analysis.

According to Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English by Hornby, the word analysis means " a careful examination of something that is written or done in order to find out the problem solving as much as possible".¹⁶ The writer takes this definition because she wants to examine cultural items in *Breakthrough* in order to find out the possible meanings of cultural items.

¹⁵Jack Richard and M.N.Long, Breakthrough book one, Teacher's book, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 2-5

¹⁶AS. Hornby in Juanna Tjin, "An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Summative Test Items of The Second Grade (A1A2,A3) of SMAK Stella Maris Surabaya", Thesis Unika Widya Mandala, Surabaya, 1989, p. 16

1.8.2. Cultural items.

This term is defined as "the ideas, thoughts, customs, terms, skills, arts, and tools, which characterize a given group of people in a given period of time."¹⁷ Cultural items in *Breakthrough* are found as ideas, thoughts, customs, terms because they reflect the everyday American life. For example, in introducing a friend, it is just said his new friend, Anne, to Tony. It is unnecessary to give long introduction like what we usually do.

1.8.3. Breakthrough

This books written by Jack C.Richard and M.N.Long, is a set of English text books for upper secondary school students, young adults, and adults who have had two or more years of study of English but who lack basic functional communication skills in English. This book has some general objectives, one of the objectives is to give learners confidence in using English for real communication, by providing experiences which enable them to successfully perform different communicative tasks in English.¹⁸

There are two kinds of *Breakthrough*, namely *American Breakthrough* and *British Breakthrough*. Actually those two books

¹⁷Pauline Tomasouw, Buku Materi Pokok Cross Cultural Understanding, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Jakarta, 1986,p. 1.3.

¹⁸Jack C.Richard and M.N. Long, Breakthrough, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988.

are the same, except for the cassettes in which the editors change the spellings and the accents on the cassettes. Its cover is also different. *American Breakthrough's* cover is black while *British Breakthrough* is white. At Widya Mandala University English Department, the Integrated Course's teachers use *American Breakthrough* because *British Breakthrough* has not available yet and it is difficult to be found in 1989.

1.9. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I is about the introduction, chapter II discusses the review of the related literature. In chapter III the writer discusses the research methodology of the study, and in chapter IV she discusses the findings and discussion. In the last part, namely chapter V, she includes the summary and suggestions.