

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION



#### 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Culture and language cannot be separated. When we are reading certain books, for example, we will be familiar with the culture of the people speaking the language in those books. By reading English books, we know how the English people react about the value system around them. Here is the simplest example. When an Englishman is introduced to someone for the first time; he will say: "How do you do?" And the answer will be "How do you do?"

Nowadays the most important objective of learning English as a foreign language for students of High Schools is to be able to read English Textbooks; however, the facts are below expectation. Most of the students cannot easily comprehend English books. One of the reasons is due to the English teachers' failure in explaining culture in the relation to teaching English. They rarely consider cultural elements in teaching English. Although language and culture are discussed separately, they have to be considered as a unit because language is actually one of the elements of culture.

Activities to introduce English culture do not necessarily have to be done in class time. They can be

completed outside class, in many instances as homework, or assignments. For example, the students are assigned to find the differences between the school system in Indonesia and America and to make a comparison between them.

Under this consideration, the writer is interested in writing this paper entitled " Cultural Elements to be Considered in Teaching English for the SLTA Students' Book I by Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan "which may be useful for the English teachers.

#### 1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As what have been stated in the previous section, one of the reasons why most of the Senior High School students cannot comprehend English books easily is due to the English teachers' failure in explaining culture in the relation to teaching English. Therefore, the problems which arouse and will be discussed in this paper are: " How to consider cultural aspects in teaching English for the SLTA Students' Book I and What cultural aspects to be considered in teaching English for the SLTA Students' Book I?"

#### 1.3. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

To understand the reading passages is not easy, the English teachers should have proper knowledge of the read\_ ing passages, the patterns found in the reading passages, the vocabulary, and the cultural aspects as well.

Understanding cultural aspects can increase the English teachers' knowledge in teaching English for the SLTA Students' Book I. Also, the students are able to understand the reading passages better if they understand the cultural aspects included in the passage. In other words this study is aimed at giving a kind of reference or guide for the English teachers in teaching English for The SLTA Students' Book I.

#### 1.4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The teaching of cultural elements is to help the students understand the reading passages better and eventually like reading English books.

#### 1.5. ASSUMPTION

The units of the reading passages taken from the SLTA Students' Book I which contain cultural elements can be introduced in teaching English for the students of High School especially in teaching reading comprehension.

Understanding cultural elements can make the students comprehend the reading passages better.

#### 1.6. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

There are many ways to teach English to Senior High School students, but in this study the writer discusses only cultural elements for teaching reading comprehension at SLTA i.e those found in Students' Book I.

The cultural elements or items to be discussed in Students' Book I are unit 1 - 5, 11 - 12 and 20 - 21.

There are some parts of the reading units which are informative stories such as: The Javanese Wayang Kulit, At Borobudur, Madura Bull Races, and Bali - the Island of Tourists. Informative stories are not always culturally bias, that's why not much information can be presented.

The writer intentionally does not discuss the conversation that can be found in Students' Book I, because all of them look strange, the speakers are Indonesians. It would be better if the conversations take place between an Indonesian and a foreigner.

#### 1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to understand the following chapters, it is important to define the key terms found in the title of this paper. The key terms are: culture, cultural elements, and teaching.

There are many abstract definitions of culture, most of which have been suggested by anthropologists, Kroeber, and Kluckhohn (1952) concluded that the "following central idea is now formulated by most scientists..."

...Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected ideas and especially their attached value; culture system may, on the one

hand, be considered as product of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action (p.180)<sup>1</sup>

The term " cultural elements " includes " ingroup outgroup, stereotype, prejudice, tolerance, traits, ethno centrism, culture shock, cultural adjustment, cultural conflict, attitudes, and values. " <sup>2</sup>

In this study the writer uses only some terms which concern with the " cultural elements " which are related to the English for the SLTA Students' Book I by Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, as follows:

- Attitude : People's reactions toward a concept or, in everyday language, their feelings, beliefs, and readiness to act.
- Prejudice : A person's emotional reactions.
- Discrimination : A person's behavior which puts out-group members at a disadvantage.<sup>3</sup>
- Culture Shock : A shorthand descriptor which summarizes sojourner's reactions after they lose the security of familiarity. <sup>4</sup>
- Culture Adjustments: A feeling that one is "at home" in the society and is not a total outsider.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Richard W. Brislin, Cross Cultural Encounters: Face-to-Face Interaction, Pergamon Press, New York, 1983 p.5.

2 Wuri Soedjatmiko Understanding American and Indonesian Cultures, Widya Mandala Catholic University Press, Surabaya, 1987, p.4.

3 Brislin, op. cit., p.41.

4 Ibid., p. 155.

5 Ibid., p. 283.

**Tolerance** : Quality of tolerating opinions, beliefs, customs, behavior etc different from one's own. <sup>6</sup>

**Values** : Quality of being useful or desirable. <sup>7</sup>

James C. Tyson and Mary Ann Carroll say in their book: " Teaching is a process of Interaction, somewhat like that between players in tennis match or dogs in a fight. The teacher does something in return. " <sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> AS Hornby with A P Cowie and A C Gimson, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English , Oxford 1974, p. 910.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 950.

<sup>8</sup> James C. Tyson and Mary Ann Carroll, Conceptual Tools for Teaching in Secondary Schools , Houghton Mufflin Company, Boston, 1970, p.6.