### **CHAPTER I**

#### INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

The general language definition is "a matter of a series of words with a sequence of rules to connect them all together in order to create the purposed meaning from the speaker." In a deeper understanding of language definition, the language is not merely viewed as a code whose learning scopes are grammar, sentence construction and vocabulary only. Language is not a thing to be studied but a way of seeing, understanding and communicating about the world and each language user uses his or her language(s) differently to do this.<sup>2</sup>

A shallow language definition can make the language itself being comprehended in a narrow understanding and consequently affects in language acquisition, moreover if the paradigm of learning language is more emphasized on the form of language than the meaning or the context used in language practice. Otherwise, language has broader understanding than as a mere form, language is seen as a social practice which involves the rich complexities of communication, something that people employ in daily basis to express and convey the meaning with the intention to establish and continue the interaction with the society surrounding. In a nutshell, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The Australian Government.Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.*Language*, *Culture and Learning*.(Canberra: GPO. 2005), 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The Australian Government.Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.*Language*, *Culture and* ... 2.

main objective of language use is to keep the social and interpersonal relationship in human being's life. Therefore, language cannot be learnt from vocabulary and grammar only, but people or learners also need to know how that language is used to create and represent meanings and how to communicate with others and engage into communication.<sup>3</sup> Svalberg stated that in order to achieve that goal, it requires the development of awareness of the nature of language and its impact on the world.<sup>4</sup> It means that cultural awareness is required in language learning process to attain the function of language as a social practice.

Integrating culture in language learning has been realized and become a concern by many experts and authors for decades. It happened because language is always used to refer something beyond itself depending on its own society, which means the language meaning refer to distinctive cultural context. In foreign language learning, language and culture position will reflect on learners' attitude and process significantly in learning a new language. Without learning the target language's culture, the comprehension of the meaning will be inaccurate and incomplete. Noted, inaccurate and incomplete comprehension in communication can lead conversation by the communicators into misunderstanding and misinterpretation which can result into any tangible or intangible conflict. Hence, language and culture cannot stand alone without influencing and impacting each other.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Language, Culture and ...* 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Language, Culture and ... 16.

The way to introduce the culture in the class is by delivering cultural content information within the materials. Quoted by Frank, Cohen stated that cultural content refers to things like the beliefs, values, customs, products, and the communication styles of a given culture or society.<sup>5</sup> As mentioned before that language cannot exist without any influence of its socio-cultural condition where the language is derived, and in conversely, without language, cultural content cannot be transmitted to other people. The reciprocal relationship of those two entities shows that culture and language is inseparable thing. Thus, if one person starts learning a new language, they cannot ignore the context of that target language used in the conversation by setting aside the inter-cultural knowledge.

Due to this issue, language learners are not only demanded to understand the linguistic matter, but also to learn and understand the context, which means that students should associate the meaning with time, place and circumstance of the target language society. Then, learning language is not simply learning communication, but also learning how the language allows the speaker to adjust the linguistics aspect and meaning in order to be accepted socially in both the learners' own and target language's society. Thereby, it requires cross-cultural knowledge.

In addition, the relationship between language and culture is more emphasizing in verbal communication or in the other words related with speaking skill. In that case,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Jerrold Frank, "Raising Cultural Awareness in English Language Classroom "English Teaching Forum.No. 4, 2013, 3.

the incorporation between speaking skill as a part of language learning and cultural content is a crucial and significant matter.

Unfortunately, the introduction of diverse cultural content in language classroom is not considered very important since culture learning is not the exclusive domain of language educators. Culture content has always been a marginal aspect and put down into minor area in language learning process. That contrasts with what Tang states, "the true content of the foreign language course is not the grammar and the vocabulary of the language, but the cultures expressed through that language." Thus, it means the proper content that should be learned as well in a language is the cultural content. However, Salem states that culture remains the weakest component of our curricula; cultural teaching remains insubstantial and sporadic in most language classes, especially those related to the Less Commonly Taught Languages.

State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya faces this problem as well. Thus far, there is a boundary between cultural knowledge and language learning since it is considered as two different subjects instead of integrated one. For instance, in English Teacher Education Department of State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel, although there are specific classes available for both culture material in cross-cultural understanding class and language material in several classes specifically for speaking

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Oxana Dema,- Aleidine J. Moeller, "Teaching Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Language Classroom". *Faculty Publications: Department of Teaching, Learning, and Teaching Education*, Paper 181, 2012, 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Nada M. Salem, "Teaching Cultures: Problems and Solutions". *National Capital Language Resource Center*. May-June 2012, 1.

class, those are held in different classes or both materials are seemed as two separated and unrelated courses. Therefore, the cultural-embedded teaching in speaking classes is necessary since learners need to attain the cultural information to speak and convey its meaning in precise and appropriate manner.

In the case of speaking class, the cultural content inserted in teaching learning process and materials is very lacking. The outset indication of this problem shown by inadequate cultural substances taught within class. According to one of the speaking class lecturers, Mr. Sigit<sup>8</sup>, there is no sufficient time to insert cultural content in speaking class lesson appropriately. Notwithstanding, he said that actually there is cultural information attached in the students' course book, but it is not delivered to students frequently, even sometimes it is not included in learning process.

The absence of cultural content in the classroom may be caused by many factors. There are two main indicated reasons behind why the cultural content is meagerly taught or not embedded well as contended by Salem; (1) the first problem teachers are facing is that of an overcrowded curriculum. Many teachers find it difficult to spare their time to deliver the cultural information since there are lots of other materials need to be delivered as the curriculum demand. Due to lack of time, teachers tend to disregard the cultural knowledge and more emphasize the linguistic form. The culture content is mostly considered insignificant for learning process. (2)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>The lecturer of Speaking for Everyday Communication Class in English Teacher Education Department of State Islamic University of SunanAmpel Surabaya.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Nada M. Salem, "Teaching Cultures: Problems...

The second problem faced by is the fear of not well-informed.<sup>10</sup> Mostly EFL teachers are afraid of teaching culture because of misconception of teaching mindset that teaching culture is solely about transferring cultural fact.

That mislead paradigm of cultural teaching emerges the fear to teach culture since they feel their knowledge about target language's culture is limited since they lack of foreign experiences as well. <sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the available methods and materials are still meager. It is becoming worse as teachers only think that they need to deliver the factual culture information and disrespect the analysis of deeper sense within culture like norm, beliefs and values. In fact, teaching culture is not only merely about imparting the facts to students, but also about process rather than the facts. Moreover, the foreign culture sometimes commonly is seen bad and biased because of media these days. It makes the teacher has more anxiety for the teacher to teach cultural substances, especially about the foreign values. However, in every society in the world, there are always some positive and negative traits thus teacher role is to filter them and transfer it in a better way toward students.

Integrating culture in language classroom is not something in vain, considering the advantages carried by it. One of the most significant benefits of culturalembedded teaching is intercultural competence. The starting-point for understanding interculturality as a part of language proficiency lies in an examination of the notion

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Nada M. Salem, "Teaching Cultures: Problems...

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Nada M. Salem, "Teaching Cultures: Problems and... 1-2.

of 'communicative competence'. As quoted by Liddicoat from Hymes and Troike, communicative competence means everything that speakers need to know in order to communicate properly within a particular speech community. Accordingly, the main benefit of incorporating the cultural content in language class is helping students to gain and improve that communicative competence by introducing and teaching different cultures and contexts.

In essence, culture is something that cannot be separated from language and inextricably bound up; without language, culture will not be possible represented well, and without culture, language will be like a tree without roots. <sup>14</sup> Thereby, the cultural content is something essential in almost each English class, especially in EFL context. Thus, this research takes place in speaking classes in order to examine whether the class contains the cultural substance or not, and also the techniques used by lecturer to deliver them.

Pertaining to this issue, there have been several previous studies that inquire the connection between those two variables; culture and language. First, a research which is written by Bilal Genc and Erdogan Bada entitled "Culture in Language Learning and Teaching" that delves the students of The ELT department of Çukurova University in Turkey responses and opinions about the effect of learning culture.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Anthoy J. Liddicoat, et.al., "Report on Intercultural Language Learning", *Australian Government: Department of Education, Science and Training*. July 2013, 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Anthoy J. Liddicoat, et.al., "Report on Intercultural...

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Li Sun, "Culture Teaching in Foreign Language Teaching", *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*.Vol. 3 No.2, February 2013, 371.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Bilal Genc - ErdoganBada, "Culture in Language Learning and Teaching". *The Reading Matrix*. Vol. 5 No. 1, April 2005.

Moreover, this study illustrates how statements of language teaching experts are proven by the result of this research to support culture-embedded learning can be beneficial for language learning.

The second research is by Mohamed Amin A. Mekheimer and Hamad S. Aldosari entitled "Impediments in Cultural Teaching in EFL Programmes at Saudi Arabia University"<sup>16</sup>. This study reviews the cultural teaching specifically through literature means. Furthermore, it also explores the faculty and the students' attitudes and perception toward cultural-embedded teaching by literature as the ultimate manifestation of cultural expression.

Third research entitled, "Is It Culture or Is It Language? Examination of Language Effects in Cross-Cultural Research on Categorization, by Li-Jun Ji, Richard E. Nisbett, Zhiyong Zhang<sup>17</sup>. This research makes inquiry about the relationship between cultural background and categorization style which occurred in Chinese descendant. The research took Chinese with different backgrounds and in several different places as their objects to confirm whether place and starting point time in learning second language can influence their style to categorize certain words.

Comparing with those three previous studies, this research takes different focus and topic. While, the abovementioned studies focus and emphasize more on benefits and relations carried by cultural teaching based on students' perspective, this study

<sup>16</sup>Mohamed Amin A. Mekheimer-Hamad S. Aldosari, "Impediments in Cultural Teaching in EFL Programmes at Saudi Arabia University", Journal of Intercultural Communication. Issue 26, July 2011.

<sup>17</sup>Li Jun Ji, et.al., "Is it Culture or Is It Language? Examination of Language Effects in Cross-Cultural Research on Categorization". Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. Vol. 87, No. 1, 2004.

emphasizes on what cultural contents inserted in language classes. Thus, this research did not investigate what are the advantages; otherwise it examined on how extent cultural aspects which is believed can be beneficial in language learning has been involved and delivered in language classroom.

### **B.** Research Questions

- 1. What cultural content has been taught in speaking for everyday communication class?
- 2. How has cultural content been taught in speaking for everyday communication class?

# C. Objective of the Study

According to the statement of research problem, this study has certain objectives as follow:

- 1. Toknowwhat materialsof cultural content taught in speaking classroom.
- 2. To investigate how the cultural content was delivered to the students.

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

The research intended to determine in what extent and aspect the cultural information taught in speaking class. Therefore, lecturer and students can be aware of how much the cultural knowledge's role in language learning. Additionally, it is aimed to promote incorporating culture in language learning classes, especially in

EFL classes. For particularly, the teacher or lecturer, the result of this study can become a consideration to embedding cultural teaching in their class as often as possible—with suitable strategy and materials for speaking class students since language and culture are inseparable. It can be accomplished by the educators through analyzing in which part cultural learning can help students better.

## E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted in State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel (UIN Sunan Ampel) Surabaya. The subject of the study is the students of speaking classes in English Teacher Education Department. The study focused on investigating what and how much the information of target language's culture embedded in speaking class. The research is limited on content usage as an integral part of language learning. Moreover, it was searching any further information about the implementation of certain strategy to embed the cultural knowledge in speaking class. However, this study is neither going to investigate the further information about the effects and influences of cultural content in second language learning process nor how the students attitude toward the cultural-embedded learning.

### F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Cultural content: substantive information related with the quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellent in arts,

letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, etc.<sup>18</sup>. In this study, cultural content defines as any materials contain with cultural information related with the native English speaker' context embedded in speaking class. Cultural information here refers to knowledge that represents of a particular understanding of real things and abstract concepts as the manifestation of Native English speakers culture.

- 2. Language learning: the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive, produce and use words to understand and communicate, this capacity involves the picking up of diverse capacities including syntax, phonetics, and an extensive vocabulary; the language might be vocal as with speech or manual as in sign.<sup>19</sup> In this study's context, language learning means the process of learning and acquiring English as the foreign language.
- 3. Culture teaching: Also called as cultural transmission is the process through which cultural elements, in the form of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavioral scripts, are passed onto and taught to individuals and groups. <sup>20</sup>Whereas, in this study cultural learning refers to the process of any cultural information that is delivered to the students within the language classes.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Dictionary.com, *Culture*, <a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/culture">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/culture</a>, accessed on February 20<sup>th</sup> 2015.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Cognitive Atlas, *Language Learning*, <a href="http://www.cognitiveatlas.org/concept/language\_learning">http://www.cognitiveatlas.org/concept/language\_learning</a>, accessed on September 29<sup>th</sup> 2014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Springer Reference, *Cultural Transmission*, <a href="http://www.springerreference.com/docs/html/chapterdbid/179936.html">http://www.springerreference.com/docs/html/chapterdbid/179936.html</a>, accessed on September 29<sup>th</sup> 2014.

