

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, there is a cultural competence, in other word known as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), as one of the knowledge that should learners have nowadays (Kareluik&Mishra, 2001). Byram (1997) defined ICC as the ability to interact with people from another country and another culture in foreign language. ICC involves an appreciation of the creative expression of ideas and emotions by all types of individuals (Kareluik&Mishra, 2001). ICC can be developed through the representation of cultural aspects in the reading text since part of language learning is understanding the different aspects of culture in which language is used (Brody, 2003; Yuen, 2011) and also internalizing the cultural norms of other speakers from different countries (Byram, 1997; Scollon and Scollon, 1995).

In line, the National Standards for Foreign Language Education (2006) identified culture as one of the five goals in language learning. Learners study the language and culture through a text or passage by learning the products, practices, perspectives of the target area cultures and comparing them with their own culture. Moreover, the other 5c's language learning goals are communication (an ability to understand and convey ideas orally and in writing), connections (the transfer of knowledge and its application to different situations in the target language), comparisons (the study of

similarities and differences between languages and cultures), and communities (the extension from classroom to community offers experience with real-life situations).

Besides, the national education in Indonesia is an education that rooted in religious values, national culture, and globalization. The principles of implementing education in Indonesia are (1) carry out education in a democratic and in a fair manner and not discriminative and uphold human rights, religious values, cultural values, and pluralism of the nation and (2) organize education as a process of civilization and empowerment of students through lifelong learning (UU No. 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional). In this study focuses on cultural values contained in reading passages of English national examination for junior high school student year 2017 and 2018.

The term 'culture' can be defined in various viewpoint which consists various aspects or dimensions. Hinkel (1999) describes culture as areas of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviors and activities. Newmark (1988) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" and he classifies culture into different categories namely; ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations, customs, activities, procedures, gestures and habits.

Moreover, Moran (2001) gave a definition of culture as the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated

with a shared set products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts. He divides cultures into five aspects include products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons. Culture in education is important due to the unfamiliar and disproportionate cultural content may create difficulties for learners.

Faris (2015) emphasized that one of attentive issues in the field of language testing and evaluation is culture. In National Examination of English subject, cultural contents can appear in the reading passages. Vijver & Tanzer (as cited in Faris, 2015) stated that there is a high tendency of bias when cultural issues are not treated carefully. This statement is supported by Gass & Selinker (as cited in Faris, 2015) who stated that unfamiliar materials and disproportionate cultural contents, included in the reading passages of a test, may lead the students as the examinees into an improper comprehension towards the reading passages.

As written by BSNP (2018), the purpose in applying National Examination in Indonesia is to measure the achievement of graduates' competencies in certain subjects nationally by referring to *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan* (Graduate Competency Standard). *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan* is criteria regarding qualifications of graduates' abilities that include attitudes, knowledge and skills dimension. Knowledge dimension for Junior High Schools students include (1) having factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge at a simple technical and specific level with regard to science, technology, art and culture and (2) able to link that knowledge in

the context of self, family, school, community and the surrounding natural environment, nation, country and region.

English subject in National Examination contains listening section, reading section, and writing section with total fifty questions in every packet. Although, the section in every education program is different such as National Examination for Junior High School that contains only reading section. Each passage in reading section may have two to five questions to examine students' reading skills. The questions appear in the reading section are likely to assess the width of students' vocabularies, students' grammar knowledge, and students' ability to comprehend the purpose, the contents, and both explicit and implicit meaning of the passage. The kind of passages examined in the reading section are descriptive text, narrative text, recount text, procedure text, report text, and some short functional texts such as advertisement, letter, announcement, invitation, congratulation, memo.

Junior high school level is selected based on the assumption that junior high school age (12-15) is a range which is the phase that students recreate their self-identity based on what they have gotten. Farmer (2013, as cited in Santosa, 2015) suggested the importance of this adolescence learner range. First, learner or the student will face developmental vulnerability. Student will realize that the world is not the same and school is getting more complex. Second, this is time of opportunity. With all the chances, students get an opportunity to recreate themselves and develop new skill, identities, social values, and relationship (Farmer, 2013 as cited in Santosa, 2015). Third,

adolescence learner has an opportunity to learn to become self-directed and independent learner.

There are a number of researches in the field of analyzing cultural contents in a test conducted by Faris (2015), Mutia (2017), Sevira (2018). The three previous studies above has similar focus which is analyzing cultural contents in reading passages in an English test for Senior High School students. Although the studies has some differences (1) the first study, analyzing only the source culture and the data sources are tests that developed by the teachers; (2) the second study, analyzing the cultural aspects and the cultural sources with the data sources are English National Examination year 2016 and 2017; (3) the third study, analyzing the dimension of culture and the source of culture with the data sources are English National Examination year 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Relevant to the background, this study is purposed to analyze the aspects and sources of culture which contained in the reading passages of English National Examination for Junior High School students year 2017 and 2018. The significance differences in this study with the previous study are the educational level (Junior High School) and the years (2017 and 2018) of the English National Examination as the data sources.

## **1.2. Scope of Study**

In this study, the researcher focuses on analyzing aspects and sources of culture represented in words, phrases, sentences, pictures and symbols in

reading passages of English National Examination for Junior High School year 2017 and 2018.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

Based on the background, the main research question in this study is: “How are cultural contents presented in reading passages of English National Examination for Junior High School student year 2017 and 2018?”

From the main research question above, two sub-questions arise:

1. What aspects of culture do reading passages of English National Examination for Junior High School student year 2017 and 2018 contain?
2. What sources of culture do reading passages of English National Examination for Junior High School student year 2017 and 2018 contain?

### **1.4. Purpose of Study**

This study aims:

1. to depict the cultural contents presented in reading passages of English National Examination for Junior High School student year 2017 and 2018
2. to obtain the profile of aspects of culture found in reading passages of English National Examination for Junior High School student year 2017 and 2018

3. to obtain the profile of sources of culture found in reading passages of English National Examination for Junior High School student year 2017 and 2018

### **1.5. Significance of Study**

Theoretically, this study gives information about the profile of aspects and sources of culture in reading passages of English national examination for junior high school student year 2017 and 2018. Besides, this study can be as one of references for further researchers in studying cultural contents in reading passages of English test.

Then, this study practically can help English test designers to develop the test items coherent with the national education, *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan*, and National Standard for Foreign Language Education in terms of cultural contents. Moreover, the result of this study can be useful for English teachers in considering on how to analyze cultural contents in reading passages, so teacher can select the appropriate reading materials for teaching that can motivate students in reading and in learning English.