

ABSTRACT

We know that language is part of culture. When we learn a foreign language we should also learn its culture thus when we communicate using the language we can use it in an appropriate and acceptable way. We may be able to avoid offending or being offended. The cultural communication can take place and misunderstanding can be avoided.

This thesis deals with some questions that are generally used by Indonesians to greet, show attention, or start conversation with others, including the Americans staying in Yogyakarta. However, these questions are considered personal questions by the Americans. Such questions should not be uttered in public or in a casual conversation.

Accordingly, the objective of this thesis is to find out whether such personal questions should or should not be put forward to the Americans. It also aims to explain the specific level of rudeness of the personal questions that can be found in Chapter IV.

In order to find out the objective above I used a qualitative method. The technique that I used to obtain the data was an interview technique. I interviewed ten Americans who were staying in Yogyakarta. There were three lecturers of Sanata Dharma University and there was one lecturer of Gajah Mada University. There were two teachers of ELTI (English Language Training International) Yogyakarta. And the rests were students of Wisma Bahasa Yogyakarta.

From the data obtained, it is clear that those personal questions can be asked for a number of reasons, such as the purposes to ask such personal questions, the relationship between the interlocutors and the ways of asking the personal questions, that is, whether people are asked in an intrusive way or in a polite way. Although

the personal questions can be asked, we have to try to avoid questions number eight; *why don't you have a husband or a wife yet?*, ten: *why don't you have a kid yet?* and eleven; *how much did your (eg. watch) cost?*.(See page 41 and 42)

It can be concluded that by knowing American culture we ,as Indonesians, can behave appropriately when interacting and communicating with the Americans. We will, then, know which personal questions can and cannot be put forward to them and the reasons why we cannot ask them. We will also know how to ask the Americans such personal questions without offending them. We will know how to start a conversation when we want to speak and practise English with the Americans without annoying or offending them.

