CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Teaching English has become an essential part of the educational curriculum, aiming to equip students with the ability to communicate effectively in a globalized world. To achieve this communicative competence, teaching English encompasses four fundamental language skills that students should learn to master: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Among these skills, teaching speaking skill holds a crucial role as it directly trains learners to interact, negotiate meaning, and express themselves orally in real-time situations. Speaking itself is a vital productive skill that allows students to communicate with other people to accomplish particular objectives or to express their thoughts, intentions, hopes, emotions, ideas, and perspectives. Furthermore, according to Brown (2007), speaking is defined as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information.

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Some important parts of learning and teaching activities are speaking materials and the activities. The students can learn to speak English by practicing it with some exercises. According to Weimer (2012), there are five reasons why getting students to talk is highly beneficial for their learning process. First, students gain a better understanding of the material through discussion. Second, they can learn from one another by talking. Third, they can practice speaking the discipline's language. Fourth, talking helps students connect with each other. Fifth,

conversation allows them to bond with one another. A textbook with teaching materials and activities should be provided to the teacher in order to teach speaking skills in the classroom. These components are the foundation of the curriculum and serve as a means of achieving objectives in teaching and learning activities. Additionally, it assists teachers in preparing subject-specific materials and directing students' learning.

The textbooks materials and activities should encourage students to be active in the classroom in order to achieve teaching and learning objectives. This is the teacher's role where the teacher is the facilitator for the students in the classroom. Teaching and learning activities should also take into account the variety and attractiveness of the materials and activities, in addition to the teacher's role in the class. Students will have a better chance of understanding the lessons if the materials and activities are delivered successfully.

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According to Cunningsworth (1995), language teaching materials have several important functions. They serve as resources for presenting spoken and written language, provide activities for students' practice and communicative interaction, act as refferences for grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, and offer ideas and stimulation for classroom activities.

All teaching and learning activities presented in the textbook are designed in accordance with *Kurikulum Merdeka*, Indonesia's current national curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. According to Nadiem Makarim, *Kurikulum Merdeka* was developed to provide students with greater opportunities to explore and develop their individual talents

and interests. Therefore, the textbook analyzed in this study is the English for Nusantara textbook, which was specifically developed for first-year junior high school students under the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Nevertheless, developing English speaking skills is not as straightforward as it may seem, particularly for Indonesian students who have limited exposure to English. One of the most important aspects of improving speaking ability is providing learners with opportunities to use English words and expressions in meaningful communication. To support this process, teachers commonly rely on textbooks that provide speaking materials and activities as the primary source of classroom instruction. Therefore, it is essential for textbooks to contain high-quality speaking materials and activities that effectively support students' speaking development.

Textbooks play an important role in supporting the teaching and learning process because they provide learning materials, classroom activities, and guidance for both teachers and students. Before the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, English teaching in Indonesian junior high schools generally used textbooks developed based on the 2013 Curriculum. However, previous studies have shown that the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum in English teaching was not always carried out optimally. Astria (2017) found that although the lesson plans generally fulfilled the requirements of the 2013 Curriculum, the implementation of teaching and learning activities in the classroom still faced several challenges. These findings indicate that the quality and implementation of textbooks and curriculum-based materials need to be continuously evaluated to ensure that they support students'

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learning needs.

To improve the quality of education, the Indonesian government introduced *Kurikulum Merdeka*, Indonesia's current national curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. This curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning and provides opportunities for students to develop their competencies, talents, and interests. As part of the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the government published the *English for Nusantara* textbook as a learning resource for seventh-grade junior high school students.

Based on the previous studies and the importance of evaluating English textbooks, this study aims to analyze the speaking materials and speaking activities presented in the English for Nusantara textbook for first-year junior high school students. The researcher selected this textbook because it is used by seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Padang Panjang, where the researcher conducted the Teaching Practice Program (PPL). The English textbook entitled English for Nusantara, published by the Standards, Curriculum, and Educational Assessment Agency, consists of 264 pages and was written by Ika Lestari Damayanti et al. The textbook contains five chapters that present various English learning materials and activities, including speaking activities. The decision to specifically investigate the speaking materials and activities is driven by several crucial considerations. First, despite the curriculum's emphasis on communicative competence, speaking remains the most challenging skill for Indonesian EFL learners to master due to anxiety and limited exposure. Second, because Kurikulum Merdeka strongly promotes interactive,

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student-centered learning, it is critical to evaluate whether the speaking tasks provided in this newly published textbook genuinely stimulate students to actively participate, negotiate meaning, and communicate in real-life contexts. Furthermore, during the researcher's Teaching Practice Program (PPL), it was observed that the success of classroom interactions heavily relied on how well the textbook's speaking activities were designed. Therefore, analyzing the speaking materials and activities in this textbook is important to determine how far the textbook supports students' speaking skill development under Kurikulum Merdeka.

The researcher expects this research can be useful for the educational terms, for (1) students, as the origin for the study; (2) teachers, as a guide for activities related to education; and (3) school, as a source and reference for raising the standard of learning activity and teaching in the English subject.

In addition, the researcher conducted research titled "Analysis of Speaking Materials and Activities in "English for Nusantara" Textbook for the First Year Students of Junior High School" in light of the preceding explanation.

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B. Focus of the Study

According to the background of the research above, this research analyzes the materials and activities of speaking in the textbook entitled *English for Nusantara* for seventh grade students of Junior High School. Based on Cunningsworth's theory, the focus of this study is to determine the type of speaking materials and activities that is most frequently presented.

C. Formulation of the Problem

The following are the formulations of the problem in this study based on the preceding description:

1. What types of speaking materials are majority presented in the "English for Nusantara" textbook for first-year Junior High School students?
2. What types of speaking activities are majority included in the "English for Nusantara" textbook for first-year Junior High School students?

D. Purpose of the Study

In view of the formulation above, the purpose for this research is following:

1. To determine the types of speaking materials majority presented in the "English for Nusantara" textbook for the first-year students of Junior High School.
2. To determine the types of speaking activities majority presented in the "English for Nusantara" textbook for the first-year students of Junior High School.

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E. Significance of the Study

Numerous theoretical and practical benefits are expected to be obtained from this research for the following parties:

1. Theoretical

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the understanding of English textbook evaluation, especially in analyzing speaking materials and speaking activities. This study provides information on how speaking materials and

activities can be evaluated using appropriate theoretical frameworks, including Cunningsworth's textbook evaluation criteria and the classification of speaking activities.

2. Practical

a. For the researcher, this study provides experience in analyzing and evaluating English textbooks systematically and improves the researcher's ability to conduct textbook analysis.

b. For English teachers, the findings of this study are expected to provide information that can assist them in selecting and evaluating textbooks for teaching and learning activities, particularly in developing students' speaking skills.

c. For future researchers, this study can serve as a reference for further research related to English textbook evaluation, especially the analysis of speaking materials and activities.

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F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Speaking Materials

Speaking materials are the source of the study, which can be anything from a textbook, newspaper, audio, video, or game that can be used in teaching and learning activities. These materials can help students learn the language.

2. Speaking Activities

Speaking activities are activities or exercises that can be found in textbooks or other educational materials to help students become better speakers.

3. Textbook

One of the most essential components of the learning process, textbooks are supported by teacher explanations. Textbooks, as stated by Stará, Chvál, and Star (2017), play a significant role in the teaching or learning process. A textbook is a standard book that contains lessons from a particular field of study or science. It is used in schools and other educational establishments to earn diplomas or degrees. A textbook contains comprehensive information about a particular field of study. Textbooks are commonly used in educational institutions and are designed to fulfill the needs of teachers in the teaching and learning process.

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