CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In this current era where communicative competence becomes the topic of interest, the term of naturalness has been much debated within the field of English language teaching both in the applied linguistics and general education. This introductory section of the study explains the current condition dealing with the authenticity in language teaching in the Indonesian context, particularly with the way EFL textbooks incorporate the features of the real-life language use. Moreover, it states the research question and the goal which is expected to achieve. Further, it also justifies the significance of conducting a research on the issue of authenticity and the focus which is intended to be covered in this study. To end, it presents the organization of the study.

A. Background of the Study

One essential role of textbooks in the context of English teaching which is much agreed among practitioners is that they exist to prepare learners to use the target language independently in the real world. Regarding this matter, it is justifiable, then, for textbooks to equip learners to understand the real-life language use by providing the models which correspond the way the target language speakers communicate in everyday contexts (Cunningsworth, 1995). The idea that textbook dialogues and other talks should resemble real talk is becoming well accepted these days (Jones & Ono, 2005). In other words, most of the teachers are more concerned about the naturalness of the model of conversations they present to the students.

Though it is suggested that EFL textbooks should expose learners to language in authentic use (Carter et al., 2011; Nguyen, 2011; Tomlinson, 2011), in the Indonesian context artificiality can still be noticed in some teaching and learning materials used in the EFL classroom. One short example taken from Pathway to English 2 written by Sudarwati and Grace (2013b) is presented below:

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Man   : Mom, look at the sky. It's very cloudy. I think it's going to rain.

Woman : I suggest you should take an umbrella when you're going out.

Man   : But Ella has taken the umbrella with her. There isn't any umbrella left.

Woman : Well, how about taking a raincoat with you, instead.

Man   : Yes, mom.
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The sample of the conversation above shows a number of factors which make the interaction seem artificial and contrived; the neat and tidy turn-taking and the absence of performance errors such as hesitation, repetition, or false start. This pedagogic artifice is understandable as it may well reflect the textbook writers' perceptions regarding teachability, and learnability at the intermediate level. Artificiality itself is not necessarily a bad thing and should still be considered in the context of learning and testing (Widowson, 1998). This is also justified in materials as students are still in a stage or a process of becoming competent users of another language (Gilmore, 2004).

However, to what extent should we deprive our learners of exposure to authentic language use? In addressing this question, previous studies on commercially produced textbooks have criticized them for not providing models which offer naturalness (e.g. Carter et al., 2011; Cullen & Kuo, 2007; Gilmore, 2004; Lin, 2012; Lin & Adolphs, 2012; Nguyen & Ishitobi, 2012; Nguyen, 2011). Gilmore (2004), for example, investigated the discourse features in a variety of EFL textbook dialogues and contrasted them with comparable authentic interactions. He found that a range of typical features of naturally occurring conversation, such as false starts, repetitions, pauses, latching, terminal overlap, back-channels and hesitation devices, appeared in extremely few instances in textbook conversation. Moreover, Lin (2012) explored the spoken grammar in three recent series of EFL textbooks used in junior high schools in Taiwan and contrasted them with face-to-face intercultural communication among Taiwanese and British adolescents. The

research findings identified specific gaps between textbook conversation and authentic intercultural discourse where the distinctive features of spoken discourse were significantly underused in the textbook dialogues.

Although there have been numerous studies conducted overseas, the issue of textbook authenticity has not much been explored in the Indonesian context. A specific analysis of textbooks published and used in the Indonesian EFL classrooms has ever been done by Khoirunnisa (2015). However, her research emphasized more on pragmatic areas, those are request strategies and request types. Furthermore, there was no attempt done by the researchers to reveal the gap between the language used in the textbook and that of in a natural context. As far as the issue of the authenticity of textbook materials is concerned, the explanation above shows that there is still a clear gap in the current condition which needs to be filled in. Hence, this research was conducted to fill in it.

B. Research Questions

Regarding the earnestness of the notion of authenticity in English language materials, it is essential to conduct a research which can reveal the artificiality of audio dialogues in commercially published textbooks used in Indonesia and the factors which make them less natural. A research question is, therefore, formed as the followings:

How do the audio dialogues of EFL textbooks published in Indonesia display the distinctive discourse features of naturally occurring conversation?

C. Purpose of the Study

By comparing the textbook dialogues with the reality-like conversations, this study aims at revealing the artificiality of textbooks widely used in the Indonesian EFL classroom. In other words, this study reveals whether the textbooks relatively have in common with authentic conversation in incorporating the spoken discourse features into them.

D. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to enrich the literature on the English teaching materials, particularly about the linguistic features which

considerably need to be displayed in student books. Practically, this study is projected to give new insights among EFL practitioners and textbook writers which can result in a better picture on which to base any effort to improve the EFL classroom instruction and materials development in language teaching. More specifically, it increases teachers' awareness of the importance of exposing their students to more authentic materials and convinces the material developers to incorporate the features of natural language into textbooks.

E. Scope of the Study

This study focuses only on the dialogues performed by the speakers in the recordings provided by the textbook publisher. The comparison is also limited only to some topics of which their reality-like equivalents can be gained since different types of talk may elicit different types of language. Therefore, there is no attempt to differentiate all the spoken languages provided in the textbooks from the reality-like interactions. Additionally, the language features which are analyzed to confirm the differences between the textbook dialogs and the reality-like conversations are limited only to some features which are explained later in Chapter II.

F. The organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters as follows:

Chapter I

The first chapter is an introduction to what the research project is all about and covers the background of the study, research questions, objective of the study, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study, and the organization of the study.

Chapter II

The second chapter contains a review of related literature to understand the whole idea of what the projected study is trying to communicate. The chapter includes the theories and some related research on the gap between textbook dialogues and natural interactions.

Chapter III

This chapter provides the elaboration on the designed research methodology. It mainly contains the description of research design and details of data collection and data analysis procedure to conduct the research.

Chapter IV

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis which reveal how textbook audio dialogs contrast with their reality-like equivalents. It also explains further implication for the EFL practice.

Chapter V

The last chapter of this research report summarizes what has been found out and discussed throughout the research processes. Following this, some suggestions are addressed to some parties that relate to the findings of this research.