



### Formative Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum English Textbook entitled English for Nusantara

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#### Abstract

Using formative assessment to analyze tasks in the textbook is uncommonly used. Textbooks as the primary resources should follow the latest curriculum version in teaching-learning processes. This study aimed at investigating the implementation of formative assessment on speaking and writing activities in the "English for Nusantara" textbook. Qualitative research was used as the approach to collect and analyze the research. Types of speaking and writing assessment in the textbook were analyzed using assessing speaking skills by Brown (2003) and typical formative activity and criteria by Irons (2008). The result showed that the majority of formative assessment tasks used in this textbook are discussions and conversations (interactive speaking), one each type of oral presentation (extensive speaking), and picture-cued tasks (intensive/extensive speaking). In addition to that, the commonly used writing tasks in the textbook are paragraph construction tasks (responsive and extensive writing), short-answer and sentence completion tasks (intensive writing), and guided question and answer. Furthermore, typical formative activities found in the textbook are diagnostic tests, practical exercises, student demonstrations, group discussion/work, student presentations, checklists, and self-assessments. Finally, the findings of this study may provide scientific information about types of formative assessment in the textbook to support teacher practices in the implementation of formative assessment. Finally, future studies are needed to continue this research by using a curriculum guide with varying levels in order to obtain more information regarding the formative assessment.

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## INTRODUCTION

A textbook is a source of learning material; it is associated with the educational process that allowed students to expand their knowledge and potential. It consists of numerous components, such as the textbook's title, core competencies or primary content, exercises, and evaluations. It is possible to say that the assessment in the textbook drives the knowledge and skills of students toward the desired competency in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, Cunningsworth (1995) claimed that textbooks are a good resource for self-directed learning, a good source of presentational material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, and a syllabus where that reflects pre-determined learning goals. It is a vital component of the educational process. Moreover, assessment, on the other hand, is a continuing process that involves a wide variety of methodological approaches (Brown, 2003). Thus, an assessment is conducted in order to obtain information that will assist teachers in determining the various appropriate resources and activities in the textbook.

Further, as we know the Indonesian education system is undergoing and adapting to rapid changes, such as the transition from offline to online schools, then back to normal offline schools after all. Along with this modification, also the curriculum changed from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum. As a response to the changes, any resources and materials including the textbook should adopt the latest curriculum version set by the government. Based on Pemerintah Republik Indonesia (2003) article, 36 verse (1) curriculum development is in accordance with Indonesian educational national standards. Hence, every textbook in Indonesia has been updated to reflect the most recent curriculum revision. Moreover, the Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) published a book that had been prepared to go along with Indonesia's recent curriculum entitled "English for Nusantara". It is a highly recommended

textbook to be used as a teaching and learning resource because it was developed by the government regarding our recent curriculum.

"English for Nusantara" was published in 2022, and it is connected to the most recent Indonesian curriculum. In general, our most recent curriculum, which refers to as the Merdeka Curriculum, offers a more comprehensive assessment technique that encompasses cognitive and non-cognitive measurements, whereas the Curriculum 2013 curriculum placed more of an emphasis on academic measurement. This may be seen by the assessment methods that are utilized. For example, each lesson in the Merdeka Curriculum books begins with a diagnostic evaluation at the beginning of the session, and each chapter concludes with a self-assessment that is completed by the students. After that, it allows educational units or programs to have more freedom in terms of developing the students' skills and personalities. Additionally, for the skills that are emphasized, this book covers listening, speaking, reading, watching, and writing, and it presents the content in a variety of different formats.

In the teaching and learning process, assessment is a crucial component for evaluating students learning, as evidenced by the variety of instructional materials resulting from curriculum development. Furthermore, assessment support the teachers in their work to enhance the student's knowledge, provide feedback, and plan their lessons appropriately through suitable assessment (Bulan et al., 2020; Mosquera & Castillo, 2019; Tosuncuoglu, 2018). However, it is not easy work for the teacher to do assessments because of the materials, lack of training and limited time (Widiastuti, 2021; Wijayanti, 2019).

To conduct the analysis, it is quite important to discuss the authentic assessment as the former formative assessment. Aliningsih & Sofwan (2015) find that most teachers have a positive perception of authentic assessment. Along the same line Mursyida et al. (2020), claimed that English teachers had a solid understanding of authentic assessment for speaking, both conceptually and practically. Furthermore, the authentic assessment had a

positive impact on learners (Ardianti & Mauludin, 2017; Ayubi et al., 2021; Muthohharoh et al., 2020; Nugraheni et al., 2022). However, time allocation is the biggest challenge in the implementation of authentic assessment (Muthohharoh et al., 2020; Rizavega, 2019; Sastrikirana, 2017).

Related to the previous theory, the utilization of formative assessment in any form of media helps both teachers and students in the teaching-learning processes (Elmahdi et al., 2018; Hasan et al., 2021; Hesmatantya, 2019; Sofyana et al., 2020).

However, Arraffi and Sumarni (2018) found that teachers' understanding of formative assessment on a poor level, it's because lack of teacher training in assessment. In the same case, Fitriani et al. (2021) teachers' lack of training still becomes the most problem in formative assessment, it made the teachers can't follow the process of formative assessment properly. Thanh et al. (2021) stated that the online learning platform enabled students to access abundant online learning resources, actively engage in a flexible, personalized learning environment, and practice their listening skills effectively. Then, Lakoro (2016) stated that the lack of teachers' resources is a barrier to developing English formative assessments.

Moreover, other studies discussed the challenges of performing formative assessments while the pandemic (Beleulmi, 2022; Fatmawati et al., 2021; Firdaus et al., 2022; Guangul et al., 2020; Mariadi et al., 2022; Montenegro-Rueda et al., 2021; Rahmawati et al., 2021; Robiasih & Lestari, 2020). All those studies assumed that the problems while working on online formative assessments are technical problems and academic dishonesty.

In the realm of English textbook research, however, textbook analysis employing formative assessment is still uncommon. In addition, few research on textbook analysis utilizing formative evaluation were discovered. Sa'adah et al. (2022) claimed that this study demonstrates that the use of flipbooks for formative English assessment can be successfully implemented in schools with the necessary technological resources. Some students

find the use of flipbooks to be entertaining and useful. Moreover, Habiburrahman and Trisno (2022) tried to evaluate English textbooks for the eleventh grade of senior high school using formative assessments.

The English textbook analyzed was in the previous curriculum or 2013 curriculum and more focuses on formative assessment of productive skills. And the result shows that it needs to be decided that the formative assessment of productive skills in the 11th-grade textbook needs some improvement. Furthermore, the task content also needs to be changed by adding more activities for formative assessment of productive skills to meet learning goals and objectives. Adding more activities for pair and group work that require students to work together. Some arts of the formative assessment of productive skills need to be changed before they can be used in the future.

It is possible to draw the conclusion that many studies have been undertaken on the implementation of assessment, authentic assessment, particularly formative assessment, and formative assessment on the textbook. This conclusion can be drawn from all of the previous studies that have been evaluated. As a result of what was discovered, it was discovered that formative evaluation has a substantial impact on evaluating the aspects that are required.

Previous researchers have not combined these two contents and subjects in a single frame. Meanwhile, analysis of the formative assessment contained in the latest textbook of the current curriculum is still quite uncommon. To close the research gap, this project will investigate how to analyze formative assessment in English textbook based on the most recent curriculum. This research is primarily conducted because the English textbook is one of the most important academic tools in Indonesian education. The consumption of the textbook should therefore be monitored and reviewed. In addition, the formative assessment technique necessitates textbooks that are suited to the needs of students in order for them to make substantial and beneficial language performance gains.

This study aimed at investigating the implementation of formative assessment on speaking and writing activity in the "English for Nusantara" textbook. In the end, the result of this study expected to contribute to language assessment and will give more insight into how teachers identify the formative assessment of speaking and writing activity in the textbook to support their teaching practices. Also, the findings of this study may help teachers to identify formative assessments of speaking skills in the textbook so that they can make some adjustments if needed.

**METHOD**

This study applied qualitative descriptive research. The data were derived from an English textbook entitled "English for Nusantara", by looking at the speaking and writing activities. To examine the speaking and writing activities for formative assessment, the data separated each chapter. Then, capture the textbook's form of speaking exercises to determine the sort of formative assessment employed and the formative activity criteria included in the task.

Moreover, the collected data from observation was analyzed to determine how the English textbook contains formative evaluation values. Types of speaking and writing assessment in the textbook were analyzed using assessing speaking skills by Brown (2003) and typical formative activity and criteria by Irons (2008).

Furthermore, following the compilation and examination of all of the observational data, this study offers an interpretation that is founded on the results of the research. In this explanation, the results are discussed, and then compared to both previously established ideas and research done in the past.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The present study aimed at investigating the the implementation of formative assessment on speaking and writing activities in the "English for Nusantara" textbook. Before discussing the formative assessment on students speaking and

writing activity, the following description shows about the finding of the formative assessment implementation on the "English for Nusantara" textbook. The finding of formative assessment on the textbook analyzed by using Irons (2008) criteria and typical of formative assessment. From the analysis, the typical of formative assessment and criteria found in each chapter in the textbook. All the criteria of assessment that provided by the textbook contains suitable types of formative activity, and the typical of formative assessment found in the textbook.

**Table 1.** Speaking and Writing Activities in the "English for Nusantara" Textbook

Ch.	Speaking	Writing
1	Students Demonstration, Checklis, and Self Assessment	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self Assessment
2	Students Demonstration, Checklis, and Self Assessment	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self Assessment
3	Group Discussion, Checklist, and Self Assessment	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self Assessment
4	Students Presentation, Checklist, and Self Assessment	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self Assessment
5	Group Discussion, Checklist, and Self Assessment	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self Assessment

And the typical formative assessments found are practical exercises, self-assessment, student demonstration, group discussion/work, and diagnostic test. These types of formative assessment can be found in each book chapter from speaking, and writing activities in Your Turn, Say What You Know, and Fun Time sections.

This book provided with Say What You Know section as the diagnostic assesment or in typical formative assessment called diagnostic

test. Say What You Know section or the diagnostic test can be found at first page in every chapter. Furthermore, the type of the test in this section could be in any type of questions. To assess the students, teachers are required to make their own format of assessment based on their needs to achieve the learning outcome. In this section, the teacher additionally instructs students to fill in the correct answers on the question sheet based on their skills, this activity promotes interaction between teachers and students due to the variety of student abilities. For the assessment rubric in the diagnostic test part, the book allows teachers to construct their guidelines according to their needs, allowing them to assess students while administering tests.

**Formative Assessment on Speaking Activity in the “English for Nusantara” Textbook**

The assessment on students’ speaking activity proposed in every chapter of this book. The activity using three types of tasks, such as oral presentations (extensive speaking), discussion and conversation (interactive speaking), and picture cued tasks (intensive/extensive speaking). Moreover, for the typical formative assessment activities applied in this section are student demonstrations, group discussion/work, and student presentations. Besides, techniques of formative assessment used are checklist and self-assessment. In addition, the assessment method described in the teacher's manual offers no other purpose. If necessary, teachers can create their own assignments.

1	Oral Presentations	Student Demonstrations, Checklist, and Self-assessment
2	Discussion and Conversation	Student Demonstrations, Checklist, and Self-assessment
3	Discussion and Conversation	Group Discussion/Work, Checklist, and Self-assessment
4	Discussion and Conversation	Group Discussion/Work, Checklist, and Self-assessment
5	Discussion and Conversation	Group Discussion/Work, Checklist, and Self-assessment
6	Discussion and Conversation	Student Presentations, and Self-asesment
7	Picture Cued Tasks	Group Discussion/Work, Checklist, and Self-assessment

The characteristics of this activity, which is part of a formative assessment in speaking activities, encourage interaction between students and teacher. In addition, the teacher has the opportunity to provide students with performance feedback. Below the explanation and depiction of the tasks type followed by the technique of assessment used.

This task activity mostly utilized *group discussion/work* as the typical formative assessment, this typical formative assessment is a significant learner-centered strategy that is frequently implemented in communication classrooms because partner work allows students to practice language together. Besides, during the activity, teachers can perform two tasks at the same time as an observer to make the activity efficient and as responder to a request with assistance, information, and feedback while performing the task. It implies that this type of

**Table 2.** Speaking activities in the "English for Nusantara" textbook

Ch.	Speaking Tasks	Formative Assessment
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activity improves formative assessment since it involves student-teacher interaction.

In addition, this activity makes use of photo cued activities, the kind of which allows the instructor to generate feedback for the students in a more timely and effective method. This is due to the evaluation method that is supplied in the instructor’s manual for this section. The textbook uses a checklist as one method of formative evaluation, as seen in the following illustration; this is done in order to evaluate the students’ overall performance.

**Table 3.** Checklist on speaking assessment technique

Focus	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Fluency				
Pronunciation				
Accuracy				
Initiation, Response, and Interaction				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

In addition, this activity provides students with learning reflections at the conclusion of each chapter and summarizes additional reflection skills in the Your Turn section. It indicates that the students are conducting an evaluation of the chapter’s material. In addition, this type of formative evaluation is classified as Self-Assessment.

The learning reflection related to speaking activity in this section, several statements related to students’ evaluation of their speaking performance provided in the textbook are “I can ask and give directions at school”, “I can talk about extracurricular activity”, and “I can describe school festival”. According to the preceding description, formative assessment was used for the speaking assignment in this book section because it facilitates interaction between teacher and student, thereby allowing the teacher more time to provide students with feedback.

**Formative Assessment on Writing Activity in the “English for Nusantara” Textbook**

The assessment on students’ writing activity proposed in every chapter of this book. The activity using three types of tasks, such as paragraph construction tasks (responsive and extensive writing), short-answer and sentence completion tasks (intensive writing), and guided question and answer (responsive and extensive writing). Moreover, for the typical formative assessment activities applied in this section is Practical Exercise. Besides, techniques of formative assessment used are Checklist and Self-Assessment. In addition, the assessment method described in the teacher’s manual offers no other purpose. If necessary, teachers can create their own assignments

**Table 4.** Writing activities in the "English for Nusantara" textbook

Ch.	Writing Tasks	Formative Assessment
1	Paragraph Construction Tasks	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self-assessment
2	Paragraph Construction Tasks	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self-assessment
3	Short-Answer and Sentence Completion Tasks	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self-assessment
3	Guided Question and Answer	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self-assessment
4	Paragraph Construction Tasks	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self-assessment
5	Paragraph Construction Tasks	Practical Exercises, Checklist, and Self-assessment

This activity, which is part of a formative assessment in writing activities, encourages student-teacher interaction due to its characteristics. In addition, the instructor has the

opportunity to provide performance feedback to students.

This task activity uses Practical Exercise as a typical formative assessment and required students to formulate their thoughts, opinions, and case-solving decisions. Besides, during the activity, Teachers can review student writing and provide corrections or feedback. It implies that this type of activity improves formative assessment since it involves student-teacher interaction and teacher’s constructive feedback.

Moreover, this activity using Paragraph Construction Tasks. The assessment method supplied in the teacher’s manual for this section is of a type that enables the teacher to construct feedback for students more efficiently. As depicted below, the textbook uses Checklist as one form of formative assessment when evaluating student performance.

**Table 5.** Checklist on writing assessment technique

Focus	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Genre				
Text Structure				
Accuracy				
Vocabulary				
Mechanics				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

In addition, this section includes students' self-evaluations of their authorship growth throughout one chapter of the book. This task is a formative assessment because students evaluate themselves in the self-reflection section. Furthermore, the type of formative assessment technique use is Self-Assessment. The learning reflection statement related to writing activity in this section is “I can write a description about my study habits”. According to the preceding description, formative assessment was used for the speaking assignment in this book section because it facilitates interaction between teacher and student, thereby allowing the teacher more time to provide students with feedback.

Lakoro (2016) indicates that the lack of teachers’ resources is a barrier to developing English formative assessments. This difficulty is a result of the lack of a teacher's guide to formative assessment as one of the guidelines. Same line with different case, another problem which faced by teachers is the lack of language assessment knowledge, and it makes the teachers can’t enhance their teaching and assessment tasks (Widiastuti, 2021; Wijayanti, 2019).

The difficulty can be overcome with following the newest teacher’s manual in “English for Nusantara” textbook since it promotes formative assessment. Based on this study findings, the textbook applied formative assessment techniques such as Diagnostic Test, Self-Assessment, and various typical formative assessment. Moreover, the textbook has a very systematic and easy to understand step by step, starting from the direction to the teacher to conduct a diagnostic assessment to the end of the evaluation of the student's own self-assessment. Moreover, this statement supported by Moqbel (2018) on his study that doing self-assessment helped their teaching practices and recommend that self-assessment should be considered for implementation in EFL classrooms. Then Syafar (2013) also support this findings that self-assessment is not only for the students, but also for the teacher to measure their professional competence.

In relation to the previous study that discussed productive skills (speaking and writing), Habiburrahman & Trisno (2022) shows that to overcome the problem by adding more activities for pair and group work that require students to work together. And stated that some parts of the formative assessment of productive skills need to be changed before they can be used in the future. Moreover, the findings of one of productive skill in this study promotes formative assessment activity such as Group Discussion/Work and Students Presentation.

In addition, the findings of one of the productive skills in this study encourages formative assessment activities such as group discussion and work, as well as student presentations. In addition, self-assessment, a

finding from this research that was backed by another study that claimed the benefits of utilizing self-assessment on teacher practices. First, students considered self-evaluation as extremely valuable because it enabled them to evaluate their functionality and develop it in order to reach the course objective, particularly the speaking course objective. Second, students viewed peer assessment as extremely beneficial because it enabled them to determine their functionality and develop it. Second, students' speaking self-efficacy (confidence and belief in their ability), self-regulation (knowledge of research, time management, and independence), and engagement all increased as a result of participating in self-assessment activities. Third, the findings of the Independent Samples t-test reveal that there is a statistically significant difference in the speaking performance of students in the experimental group after the introduction of self-assessment. Accordingly, the research (Alek et al., 2020; Alfianti & Aminin, 2022; Masruria & Anam, 2021; Sintayani & Adnyayanti, 2022) suggested that it would be beneficial to encourage the use of self-assessment in the process of facilitating students' speaking performance. In relation to the prior study that covered productive skills (speaking and writing), the following is a brief discussion.

The findings of this study was also supported by Zia et al. (2019). The study's key findings indicate that formative English language assessments helped students improve their writing skills by providing them with effective learning opportunities.

In relation with finding in this study, students are required to complete the task or writing activity that promotes them to write effectively using paragraph construction tasks. It makes the students formulate their thoughts, opinions, and case-solving decisions constructively.

In addition, to support the previous findings of the study regarding self-assessment, Purwanti, (2015) discovered that after implementing self-assessment, students are able to revise essays at the phrase, surface, content, and lexical levels. Same phrase with a distinct

subject According to Harus & Fatmawati (2022) study findings, there are significant differences between students who are self-assessed and those who are not. Moreover, Taufik & Cahyono (2020) recommended that EFL instructors consider integrating self-assessment with e-portfolios in order to improve the writing skills of EFL students.

Moreover, the findings of one of productive skill in this study promotes formative assessment activity such as group discussion/work and students' presentation.

The objective is to explain the implementation of formative assessment on speaking and writing activity in the "English for Nusantara" textbook. Theoretically, the study outcome will likely contribute to language assessment. It will give more insight into how teachers identify the formative assessment of speaking and writing in the textbook to support their teaching practices. In the scope of practice, the findings of this research question hopefully can help teachers' knowledge in formative assessments of speaking and writing skills in the textbook and be more creative in providing an additional resource of the textbooks if needed. Further, in terms of pedagogy, reading the study's findings hopefully helps the teachers identify formative assessments of speaking and writing skills in analyzing the textbook to support the teaching and learning processes.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions of this research, it can be concluded that English textbook for the eleventh grade of senior high school, "English for Nusantara", published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia has applied formative assessment based on the speaking task. the implementation of formative assessment on speaking activity in the "English for Nusantara" textbook use several types of the typical formative assessment activities such as Student Demonstrations, Group Discussion/Work, and Student Presentations. Furthermore, Checklist and Self-Assessment applied as a technique of formative assessment at



the end of every chapter. Besides, this type of tasks fit with formative assessment criteria that the activity in line with the learning outcome, promotes interaction between students and teacher, and teacher have a time to make constructive feedback. Furthermore, checklist and self-assessment applied as a technique of formative assessment at the end of every chapter.

Also, the implementation of formative assessment on writing activity in the “English for Nusantara” textbook use Practical Exercise as the typical formative assessment activities, and Self-Assessment technique of formative assessment at the end of every chapter. Furthermore, Checklist also used in this activity as the technique of formative assessment. Besides, this type of tasks fit with formative assessment criteria that the activity in line with the learning outcome, promotes interaction between students and teacher, and teacher have a time to make constructive feedback.

And the weaknesses of this study are as follows. First, this study is limited to identifying the type of formative judgment found in books without knowing whether formative assessments in books are actually implemented according to instructions by teachers. Second, the data taken from this study only comes from books intended for junior high school grades, so the data obtained is few and less varied.

Based on the research findings, it is suggested that English teacher should be creative in conducting formative assessment. Using various types of formative assessment will give more insight into how teachers identify the formative assessment in the textbook to support their teaching practices. Teachers are expected to be able to adapt to the various changes that occur in the world of education, as there are numerous demands that accompany the changes. Further research is needed to address this issue and to see whether or not the Curriculum Merdeka English textbook in upper grade apply numerous types of formative assessment. Also, the researchers hope that this study can be used for other researchers in the scope of formative assessment practices, especially on the textbook analysis since only few the study conducts analysis formative assessment

on the textbook. The researchers hopes that future studies will be conducted on how the teacher implement the textbook in the classroom.

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