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Analysis on an English Textbook for Grade 7: Focus on Compliance to the K-12 Grade Level Standards and Competencies

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Abstract

This analysis is aimed at evaluating the current English learning material used in Ibn Siena Integrated School Foundation. Since textbook evaluation has become an important tool in searching for an effective learning material, this paper sets the goal of providing answers to the presented research objectives such that it highlights the use of the learning objectives indicated in K-12 Curriculum Guide. The researchers identify the consistency of the content of the textbook analyzed in terms of the learning objectives provided in the k-12 Curriculum Guide. Lastly, results suggest that there should be an equal distribution of activities of the given skills. Among the skills, writing has the most number of inconsistencies as far as the K-12 Curriculum Guide is a concern. Moreover, the authors of this textbook (English Communication Arts and Skills 7) should be able to continue working on more editions of the book so as to produce more effective and practical learning materials.

Keywords: English Textbook, Compliance, K-12 Curriculum, Level Standards, Competencies

Introduction

Textbooks have always been integral to education, particularly in teaching and learning. They serve as frameworks for what ought to be taught and how it is to be taught. Textbooks reflect the program in the curriculum. They serve as guides or roadmaps for teachers, especially those who are new in the teaching profession.

Although the internet provides an ocean of information and it is indeed true that almost everything can be googled, its integrity sometimes is not as consistent as it is hoped to be. This is the very reason why textbooks have always been worthy choices in terms of dependability. They are sources of knowledge which are easiest to obtain (Rahmawati 2018).

The researchers chose to evaluate a Grade 7 Philippine English textbook since it is the inherent responsibility of a teacher to continue searching for effective textbooks that are not only appropriate to the learners but are also relevant in their learning development. Thus, as part of the national objectives of the Philippines, a new curriculum has been introduced to enhance and develop the educational system of the nation.

In the school year 2012-2013, the K-12 was finally implemented. However, many textbooks produced claimed compliance of K-12 Curriculum Guide. It is for this reason that the researchers opted to evaluate whether this

textbook (ECAS 7) adheres to the learning objectives of K-12 Curriculum Guide. Moreover, since this book deals with the English language, the researchers included the evaluation of activities in terms of language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The researchers aimed at finding out whether the said activities are equally divided and whether their contents are relevant to the learners' needs and interests.

Faustino, et al. (2013) highlighted that the contribution of English learning in the Philippine educational system has led to the development and improvement of the English textbooks used in the country. More of these textbooks have undergone numerous revisions and new editions solely for the purpose of making them effective sources of knowledge. In addition to the recent changes of the curriculum, the K-12 Program requires all textbooks to be aligned to its goals. Consequently, there have been significant reforms in the Philippine educational system in recent years. The implications of the implementation of the new system led to the changes in curriculum and changes in the instructional materials to support the new curriculum. The emphasis was towards the textbooks to be used.

Vedyanto (2017) clearly argued that a teacher who does not have sufficient knowledge of the features of the English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks might end up with the wrong choices. For example, ELT textbooks which do not contain materials that suit the levels of the students' knowledge and skills, might lead to a confusing learning system among them. This argument was reinforced through Yamanaka (2006) talked about this pandemonium in the learning process. In order to avoid the improper use of ELT textbooks while instructional and learning activities last, Vedyanto concluded that a superfine decision should be made in advance and that evaluation is acceptable to take to ascertain that the decision made does not go wrong.

In ELT textbook evaluation, Tomlinson (2011) revealed that the materials are measured. They added that a set of criteria is being used to evaluate these textbooks. He directed emphasis on providing a checklist. The checklist evaluation yields a great recommendation. Cunningsworth (1995) offered a quick-reference checklist for evaluation and selection. It comprised the criteria of aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topic, methodology, teacher's books, and practical considerations. These points of evaluation made ELT textbooks very attractive to researchers.

With the premise that curriculum should be supported with different instructional materials, Mahmood, et al. (2009) mentioned that a textbook is considered one of the most common instructional materials that teachers usually use. In the educational reform, the textbook is the revised tool in the process of reformation. John (2001) as cited by Faustino, et al. (2013) also claimed that most teachers used textbooks as their principal curriculum guide and source of lessons. Tyson (1997) as cited by Faustino, et al. (2013) added that those teachers who are beginners in the teaching profession, especially those who do not have enough time to prepare lesson plans, might use "religiously" the textbook from cover to cover.

Mahmood, et al. (2009) concluded that textbooks become a portion of the educational system, particularly in developing countries wherein textbooks are the only available learning materials in most schools.

Schader, et al. (2008) suggested standards that make sure of a quality textbook. They believed that educators should look into the following:

- 1) the formal aspects, design, etc., includes the compatibility of the textbook to the curriculum, design, presentation, transparency, and illustration. The evaluation of the textbook is based on the alignment with the principles of the curriculum, the nature of the subject and the level of the students.
- 2) methodological-didactical aspects cover quality with regards to the contents and subject matter, relevance and topicality, age-appropriateness, didactic approaches, and question and task instructions.
- 3) pedagogical aspects whose focus fall on the established relations to social, historical, and political reality, relation to aspects of education maturity/autonomy, education for democracy and peace, relation to gender aspect, and relation to important additional pedagogical concerns;
- 4) aspects related to practice include commentary/assistance for teachers and manageability, additional materials for the textbook and tried and tested in practice; and

5) additional subject-specific standards. These standards can be helpful for educators in evaluating the textbooks that they are planning to use or that they are presently using.

In the Philippines, the NBDB or the National Book Development Board is the agency that is assigned to review textbooks under textbook review service. It has the mandate to: firstly, formulate, adopt, and implement the National Book Policy and the National Book Development Plan; and secondly, to provide capability-building services for the agency's stakeholders, such as publishers, authors, printers, and other publishing entities that will need its support. Included in the policy are:

- 1) coverage of learning competencies;
- 2) the accuracy of content (i.e., conceptual, factual, pedagogical, grammatical, etc.);
- 3) appropriateness of presentation, language, and visuals to target users, to society, and to culture; and
- 4) grammatically correct use of language that can be understood easily by target users.

Meanwhile, the Department of Education (2004) developed a manual of textbook style and standard to ensure quality textbook in the Philippines. The manual includes:

- 1) general and technical standards (size, paper stock, preferred bidding);
- 2) cover specification (use of logos, font, font size, general layout, qualifiers); and
- 3) printing specifications (font types and size, suitable per grade level).

This textbook analysis focuses on The New Grade 7 English Communication Arts and Skills 7th edition by Milagros G. Lapid and Josephine B. Serrano. Primarily it seeks to evaluate its compliance with the K-12 level standards and competencies.

Research Objectives

This textbook analysis has the following research objectives:

- 1) To evaluate the aforementioned textbook in the light of its contents whether or not it contains or reflects the learning goals of the k-12 Program based on the English 7 Curriculum Guide;
- 2) To assess whether this textbook has an equally distributed activity on the four major skills that entail good English skill and;
- 3) To appraise whether the contents of this textbook is relevant to the learner's interests and need.

Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative method was used for analyzing and evaluating the data. This section discusses design and instrument used in the study.

Design

The textbook under study is currently being used by a known private school in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Philippines. The textbook itself is entitled: The New Grade 7 English Communication Arts and Skills, published and distributed by the Phoenix Publishing House, Inc. situated at 927 Quezon Avenue, 1104 Quezon City. It contains 348 pages and has four major units. Each of these units has six lessons except for lesson unit two. In its cover, it depicts the map of the Philippines hence the book reflects the unfolding of Philippine history.

Instruments

Checklists and a Curriculum Guide were used as the main instruments of the study. McGrath (2002) also cited by Gul Fatima, et al. (2015) explains the checklist method, where essential criteria are listed and systematically checked off. Other methods are the impressionistic and in-depth method which means that materials are chosen for a thorough examination. The K-12 curriculum guide was used as a tool in checking whether the book being analyzed was consistent as to the learning objectives of the K-12. This analysis has three levels:

Level 1: Impressionistic evaluation involves an overall presentation and analysis of the textbook related to its design, table of contents, distribution of units, lessons and sections in the book.

Level 2: In-depth evaluation examines separately and more analytically the treatment of the different skills, reading, listening, writing, and speaking and the ways of assessment practices through the book.

Level 3: Consistency and compliance with the English 7 curriculum guide's learning objectives examine the quality of the textbook in terms of responding to learners' needs.

Results and Discussions

Level 1. Impressionistic and Level 2. In-depth Evaluation

Table 1. *Quantitative Checklist (The New Grade 7 English Communication Arts and Skills through Philippine Literature)*

Impressionistic View	Total
Units in the book	4
No. of Exercises/Tasks in the book	237
Values Connection	14
Lessons Per Unit	6
Cultural Units	22
In-Depth View	Total Activities
Activities for Listening Skills	8
Activities for Speaking Skills	37
Activities for Reading Skills	24
Activities for Writing Skills	43
Activities for Vocabulary	21
Activities for Grammar	68

The in-depth analysis of the textbook shows that there are more activities on writing skills followed by the speaking skills. All lessons have included grammar activities. Furthermore, topics are separated into four units and under each unit are lessons numbered from 1-6 except unit two which only has five lessons. McGrath (2002) as cited by Gul Fatima, et al. (2015) explains the checklist method, where essential criteria are listed and systematically checked off. Other methods are the impressionistic and in-depth method which means that materials are chosen for a thorough examination. He posited the very idea of evaluation which is judgment-making thus also means that evaluation is subjective.

Level 3. Consistency/compliance with the English 7 curriculum guide's learning objectives examines the quality of the textbook in terms of responding to learners' needs.

Listening skill is one of the four macro skills of the English language. English Communication Arts and Skill 7 includes lessons and activities that develop the various language and listening skills of the learners. Different purposes of listening activities are included in Table 2.

Table 2. Activities for listening skills

Title	Types of Listening Activities	Page No.
Introduction to the Philippines	Listening for Specific Information	5-6
The Monkey and The Turtle	Listening to Appreciate the Plot, Characterization, and Theme	72-74
English-Language Radio Program	Listening to Extract Information and Noting Details	153-154
How to make a Polvoron	Listening for Noting Steps in a Process	195-196

Analysis of Speaking Skill

English Communication Arts and Skills 7 has the following activities of Speaking Skill.

Table 3. Categories of Speaking Activity

Categories	Frequency	Page no.
Introducing One's Self	1	6-15
Pronouncing Words with Correct Syllable Stress	1	38-39
Interview	1	60
Intonation Patterns	2	89-90
Producing Critical Vowel Sounds	2	109-110
Avoiding Possible Misinterpretation	1	130
Discussions (Agreeing or Disagreeing)	2	154, 155
Producing Sounds /a/ and /a/	2	237
Reading Words with Silent Letters	1	290

Table 3 shows various speaking activities as illustrated in the book. It is primarily aimed to develop and enhance the learner's speaking skills in different speaking situations. The intonation patterns, producing sounds and discussions have much frequency than the others. All the rest have the same frequency or less activity.

Analysis of Reading Skill

Different Activities for reading are given in the table.

Table 4. Categories of Reading Activity

Categories	Frequency	Page No.
Literary Text	5	34-37,61-66, 103-107, 181-184, 293-300
Narrative	1	44-49
Explanation	1	157

There are more reading activities for literary text. Comprehension questions are given to analyze the reading ability of the learners.

Table 5. Activity for each lesson

Types of Reading Activities for each lesson	Purpose of Activity
Reading Comprehension Questions	Reading for information/ideas
	Reading for details
	Reading for meaning

Analysis for Writing Skills

Categories of Writing Skills are shown in the table below.

Table 6. *Categories of Writing Skills*

Categories	Frequency	Page No.
Letters	1	166-177
Completing Colloquial Terms	1	9
Recognizing, and Revising Paragraphs	2	116-118, 311-312
Writing Reaction Paper	1	186

Activities on Recognizing and Revising Paragraphs have more activities compared with the rest of the categories. The aim of recognizing and revising paragraphs is to develop writing skill. It is established to paraphrase texts using the learners' own understanding of what they have grasped in the given activities on paragraphs.

Analysis for Grammar Activities

All Lessons have grammar points. Thus in this analysis, there is no table for grammar analysis since it is understood to have been included in each lesson.

Analysis of Vocabulary Activities

The activities under vocabulary are shown in the table below.

Table 7. *Categories for Vocabulary Activities*

Categories	Page No.
Synonyms and Antonyms	67, 149-150
Using Dictionary	158-159, 236-237
Sentence Completion	244-245

There are more activities pertaining to the use of a dictionary and less on sentence completion.

Table 8. *Reading Skills as reflected in the Curriculum Guides' learning objectives*

Learning Objectives	Observed	Not Observed
Use the appropriate reading style (scanning, skimming, speed reading, intensive reading, etc.) for one's purpose		
Skim for major ideas using headings as a guide		
Read intensively to find the answer to specific questions.		
Use non-linear visuals as comprehensive aids in content texts.		
Transcode orally and in writing information presented in diagrams, charts, table, graphs, etc.		
Give the meaning of given signs and symbols (road signs, prohibited signs, etc.)		
Follow directions using a map.		
Use appropriate mechanisms/tools in the library for locating resources.		
Use the card catalog, the online public access catalog, or electronic search engine to locate.		
Get information from the different parts of a book and from general references in the library.		
Gather current information from newspaper and other print and non-print media.		
Use one's schema to understand a text better.		
Use one's schema as the basis for conjectures made about a text.		
Use the universe of the text to activate one's schema.		
Make predictions about the text.		
Identify the author's intentions for writing.		
Distinguish fact from opinion, fantasy from reality in the text.		
React to assertions made by the author in the text.		

Classify text types (narrative, expository, explanation, recount, persuasive)		
Use appropriate reading strategies for various text types.		
Make generalizations from different text types.		
Distinguish between general and specific statements.		
Sequence/reorganize ideas or information.		
Sequence steps in a process.		
Cite evidence to support a general statement.		
Organize information read into an outline		
Narrate events.		

Table 8 shows that there are 27 Reading Skill learning objectives indicated in the k-12 Curriculum Guide. Out of the 27, there are 4 learning objectives that the book missed to establish consistency as to content, these are: 1. To gather current information from newspaper and other print and non-print media 2. To classify text types (narrative, expository, explanation, recount, persuasive) 3. To distinguish between general and specific statements and 4. To cite evidence to support a general statement.

Table 9. Listening Skills as reflected in the Curriculum Guides' learning objectives

Learning Objectives	Observed	Not Observed
Recognize prosodic features: volume, projection, pitch, stress, intonation, juncture, and speech rate that serve as carriers of meaning.		
Listen for important points signaled by volume, projection, pitch, stress, intonation, juncture, and rate of speech.		
Note the changes in volume, projection, pitch, stress, intonation, juncture, and rate of speech that affect meaning.		
Use listening strategies based on purpose, familiarity with the topic, and levels of difficulty of short texts listened to.		
Extract information from the text listened.		
Recognize main/key ideas.		
Note specific details/elements of the text listened to.		
Recognize signals/cues to determine the order of ideas/events.		
Determine the tone and mood of the speaker or characters in the narrative listened to.		
Infer the purpose of the text listened to.		
Make predictions about the contents of the texts listened to.		
Infer thoughts and feelings expressed in the text listened to.		
Use different learning strategies based on purpose, topic, and levels of difficulty of simple informative and short narrative events.		
Note specific details listened to.		
Recognize the main points and supporting ideas in the text listened to.		
Determine the order of ideas as signaled by cues.		
Follow steps in the process.		
Sequence, a series of events in the text, listened to.		
Identify the persons speaking and addressed, and the stand of the speaker based on the explicit statements made.		
Formulate predictions about the contents of the text.		
Process information mentioned in the text listened to.		
Determine the intentions of speakers by focusing on their unique verbal and non-verbal cues.		
Predict the outcomes of a verbal exchange listened to and their possible effects on the speakers.		
Sequence, a series of events mentioned in the text, listened to.		
Make simple inferences about thoughts and feelings expressed in the text listened to.		
Determine the worth of ideas mentioned in the text listened to.		
Express appreciation for entertaining texts (anecdotes, jokes, fables, myths, tales) by recognizing the punch lines.		

Table 9 shows that there are 27 Listening Skill learning objectives indicated in the k-12 Curriculum Guide. Out of the 27, there are 5 learning objectives that the book missed to establish consistency as to content, and these are: 1. To use different learning strategies based on purpose, topic, and levels of difficulty of simple informative and short narrative events 2. To identify the persons are speaking and addressed, and the stand of the speaker based on the explicit statements made 3. To formulate predictions about the contents of the text 4. To determine the intentions of speakers by focusing on their unique verbal and non-verbal cues and 5. To predict the outcomes of a verbal exchange listened to and their possible effects on the speakers. Ahmed, et al. (2015) explained that listening skill contributed to both speaking and grammatical performance. This further implies that a learner who is good in listening skill will likely to perform well in speaking and grammar activities.

Table 10. *Writing and Composition Skills as reflected in the Curriculum Guides' learning objectives*

Learning Objectives	Observed	Not Observed
Distinguish between oral and written language use.		
Recognize the common purposes for writing.		
Identify the basic features and kinds of the paragraph.		
Recognize the parts of a simple paragraph.		
Sequence steps in writing a simple paragraph.		
Retell a chosen myth or legend in a series of a simple paragraph.		
Extract information from a text, using a summary, précis, and paraphrase.		
Identify key ideas.		
Identify supporting details.		
Simplify ideas.		
Compose simple narrative texts.		
Identify the features of narrative writing.		
Compose personal and factual recounts.		
Compose a series of journal entries.		
Compose an anecdote based on a significant personal experience.		
Compose a travelogue.		
Compose a personal letter to a friend, relative, and other people.		
Compose simple, informative texts.		
Identify the features of personal essays.		
Distinguish between and among a capsule biography, biographical sketch, and feature article.		
Organize information about a chosen subject using a graphic organizer.		
Organize information about a chosen subject using a one-step topic outline.		
Compose a capsule biography of a person interviewed.		
Compose a biographical sketch based on a personal interview and background research.		

Table 10 shows that there are 24 Writing Skill learning objectives indicated in the k-12 Curriculum Guide. Only 10 of the learning objectives the researchers see consistent as to the content of the book. They are 1. To distinguish between oral and written language use 2. To identify basic features and kinds of paragraph 3. To recognize the parts of a simple paragraph 4. To sequence steps in writing a simple paragraph 5. To extract information from a text, using a summary, précis, and paraphrase 6. To compose a personal letter to a friend, relative, and other people 7. To identify features of personal essays 8. To organize information about a chosen subject using a graphic organizer and 9. To compose a biographical sketch based on a personal interview and background research.

Table 11. *Oral/Speaking Skills as reflected in the Curriculum Guides' learning objectives*

Learning Objectives	Observed	Not Observed
Observe the production of vowel and consonant sounds, diphthongs, blends, glides, etc.		
Read words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs using the correct production of vowel and consonant		

sounds, diphthongs, blends, and glides.		
Use appropriate prosodic features of speech like pitch, stress, juncture, intonation, volume and projection and rate/speed of speech in differing oral communication situations.		
Observe the correct pitch levels (high, medium, low) when reading lines of poetry, sample sentences, and paragraphs.		
Use the correct stress (primary, secondary, tertiary, and weak) when reading passages.		
Use the rising intonation pattern with Yes-No and tag questions; the rising-falling intonation-seeking questions, option questions and with statements.		
Observe and use correct juncture/phrasing and rate of speech when reading sample passages (prose or poetry).		
Use verbal and nonverbal cues in conversations, dialogs, and interviews.		
Use appropriate verbal and nonverbal cues when developing, maintaining and ending conversations and dialogs.		
Employ correct turn-taking, turn-giving and topic control strategies in conversations and dialogs.		
Use appropriate techniques and strategies when asking questions and eliciting answers.		
Observe and use the appropriate gestures (hand-body) that accompany oral language.		
Use the correct pitch, juncture, stress, volume and projection and rate/speed of speech in conversations and dialogs.		
Express ideas, opinions, feelings and emotions during interviews, group/panel discussions, forums/for a, debates, etc.		
Use the appropriate prosodic features of speech during interviews, discussions, and forums.		
Employ the appropriate oral language and stance in an interview, a panel discussion, in a forum and in a debate.		
Express ideas and opinions based on text listened to.		
Raise sensible, challenging thought-provoking questions in public forums/panel discussions, etc.		
Observe and use the appropriate oral language, stance, and behavior when giving information, instructions, making explanations, and narrating events in factual and personal recounts.		
Give clear precise and concise information, explanations and instructions in varied oral communication situations.		
Orally narrate events in factual and personal recounts using appropriate verbal and non-verbal cues.		
Use correct and appropriate multi-media resources when orally giving information, instructions, making explanations and narrating events in personal or factual recounts.		
Use correct and appropriate prosodic features of speech when giving information, instructions, making explanations and narrating events in personal or factual recounts.		

Table 11 shows that out of 23 Oral/Speaking Skill learning objectives indicated in the k-12 Curriculum Guide, five (5) learning objectives missed to establish consistency as to the content of the book. They are: 1. To employ correct turn-taking, turn-giving and topic control strategies in conversations and dialogs 2. To use appropriate techniques and strategies when asking questions and eliciting answers 3. To observe and use the appropriate gestures (hand-body) that accompany oral language 4. To raise sensible, challenging thought-provoking questions in public forums/panel discussions, etc. and 5. To observe and use the appropriate oral language, stance and behavior when giving information, instructions, making explanations, and narrating events in factual and personal recounts.

Qualitative Analysis of the textbook (ECAS 7)

Table12. *The analysis shows that most of the features or characteristics of these chosen textbooks are falling in the "Average" category providing that this textbook provides the learners' needs.*

Legend: The check mark signifies that a particular category corresponds to the learners' needs.

	Needs Improvement	Average	Above Average
Are the contents and activities of the curriculum fit the age of the students?			
Is the length of the lessons and activities appropriate?			
Does it enhance the learner's creative skills?			
Are the goals of this book realistic, clear and explicitly stated?			
Is the layout of the book attractive?			
Is there a checklist /rubrics at the end of the units to ensure achievements?			
Would learners able to apply the skills they learned from the book?			
Are the contents / lessons current, relevant, and accurate?			
Are the contents appropriate for the target cultural group?			
Is it organized into learning units?			

Is it organized from simple to complex according to the level and interest of students?			
Are the reading, writing, listening, and speaking well balanced in the book?			
Does it provide opportunities for task-based learning?			
Is the linguistic input (idioms, expressions, slangs, etc.) dense?			
Are the learning activities qualitatively excellent?			

Pervesen (2011) as cited by Gul Fatima, et al. (2015) conducted her study to evaluate the curriculum at the primary level in the light of education policies and plans in Pakistan. She explained the objectives of the curriculum at the primary level and analyzed different education policies and plans regarding the achievement of objectives. Since the researchers had been using the book for quite a few years, she had also evaluated the textbook on the basis of the learners' needs. Fredriksson and Olsson (2006) explained that one of the most relevant criteria is if the book is interesting so that students can relate to and do not feel boredom in the process of learning. Similarly changing and engaging texts are both relevant for teachers and students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the result of this analysis, the researchers have drawn some conclusions. First, since textbooks have become the primary source of lessons among teachers, it is indeed vital to consider the learning standards and competencies required in the existing curriculum guide. This implies that a teacher must not go away with what is in the learning objectives however he should not sacrifice creativity and resourcefulness for better learning. Second, writers and authors should continue writing new editions specially to cope with the latest trends in education. This further means that constant evaluation of the textbook must be done to ensure that it is effective and suitable to its target learners. Lastly, teachers themselves must evaluate the textbooks they are using so that they would be able to identify which textbook is for a particular group of learners.

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