

The National Achievement Test Performance in English of Selected Public Secondary Schools: Basis for a Proposed Language Skills Program

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Abstract---The main thrust of this study is to analyze and point out the relationship of the performances of fourth year high school students from selected Manila public secondary schools in the National Achievement Test (NAT), English area with the academic performances in their English subject for school years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. The results of comparison and correlation were used as basis for a proposed English language skills program for Senior High School students under the new K to 12 Curriculum in the Philippines. These students took the NAT on its first two school years of implementation for fourth year high school. Through the use of descriptive-correlation method, the researcher analyzed the language test results of the students in the NAT and correlated it with their final grades in English subject. The findings revealed that the population of students per class is big in size. Majority of fourth year students showed a moderately satisfactory performance in the English area of NAT as they fell only on the average performance. The results of performances also revealed that the big class number of student population greatly affects the outcome of students' learning. Likewise, the years of existence of schools also showed very significant differences. Further, the academic performances of these students in their English subject revealed that majority of them fell on the average level. The obtained Pearson r values of .853 for the overall NAT, English area and 0.120 for the overall mean grade in their English subject manifested a very high positive relationship. On the basis of these findings, the researcher deemed appropriate to propose an Integrated English Language Skills Program (IELSP), tailor-made to address the needs of Senior High School (SHS) K to 12 Curriculum in the Philippines and hoped for its full-blown implementation by academic year 2016-2017.

Keywords---Centro Escolar University-Philippines, K to 12 Curriculum, Manila Public Secondary Schools, National Achievement Test

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has become a world of competitions marked by new discoveries and innovations. Hence, if there is one qualification that is needed for a job, it is global competitiveness. Inherent in this reality are the greater challenges that are posed to the Filipino students.

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The clamor to keep track with the fast pacing development of literacy especially in English language among Filipino learners signifies the emerging need for the Filipino students to have a parallel vertical take-off vis-à-vis with that of global demands of fluency and expertise in English language. The need to upgrade the quality of education and to prepare the students specifically in public secondary schools to a globally competitive level is now an alarming call to the sector of educators concerned. The K to 12 Education Program is the flagship program of the Department of Education and it has two rationales. First, enhancing the quality of basic education program in the Philippines is urgent and critical. Second, the poor quality of basic education is reflected in the low achievement scores of Filipino students. The Enhanced K to 12 Basic Education Program seeks to provide for a quality 12-year basic education program that each Filipino is entitled to. This is consistent with Article XIV, Section 2 (1) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution which states that:

"The state shall establish, maintain and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the need of people and society."

In line with this, the focus now of the Department of Education in the Philippines is to produce competent graduates who can follow the current trends of globalization and modernization of the 21st century. Educators believe that part and parcel of this objective is to equip the Filipino students with quality education to the highest possible level.

The test performance of the students particularly in the English area of the National Achievement Test (NAT) is the emerging challenge being faced by the K to 12 Education Curriculum. The need to assess the basic education skills and competencies of the learners particularly in the English language must be widened and intensified in its scope in a number of ways. As such, in order to broaden its view of language ability, the curriculum must come to recognize the variety and complexity of factors other than language ability that affect the test performance of the learners.

The report of the Department of Education through the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) posted on May 08, 2007 stated that the mastery level of the senior students the National Achievement Test (NAT) results reflected a declining academic performance of the students in the country.

The Philippines is a promising country. Even though tormented by frequent devastating typhoons and calamities, Filipinos are able to withstand them and remain strong. With

the seed of faith and resiliency imbedded in their hearts by their forefathers and with their innate armor of optimism, there is no doubt, the Filipinos, if given a chance, can compete globally with the rest.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hughes, Pride and Kapoor (2013) in their book *Business Foundation* highlighted the significant role played by language communications specifically in international business. The Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) they employ in business focused on the coordination of promotion efforts to ensure maximum information by sending consistent messages to the customers through tri-media and social media.

In her work, Benites (2012) noted that the requirement for mastering English as a means for written and spoken communication and study has grown due to the interconnected global environment. It then demands that an educator need to comprehend the impact of critical theory on English language teaching and learning in EFL/ESL classrooms. However, in a multilingual country like the Philippines, with more than 170 languages (Nolasco, p.134), this adamant endeavor is being divided upon by conflicting issues among policy makers especially in the implementation of Medium of Instructions (MOI). This is exactly the reason why the practice of English Language Teaching (ELT) has significant implications on how students view and learn English inside the classroom. (Paez, 2012)

Benesch (2012) discussed a thorough overview of both the concepts involved in investigating the affective dimension in the language classroom and of the literature in the field of emotions, not only explaining critically different approaches to research on emotions but also demonstrating in ways in which the approach taken by the author departs from them. The discussion includes various approaches to emotions: the cognitive, the sociocultural, and the multidisciplinary.

An academician and researcher for more than 25 years, Keri L. Heitner (2011) encouraged workers to consider proficiency in a world language in demand in their industry sector as a priority skill. The corporate world always starts inside the classroom. The best way to train future leaders of the country begins inside the classroom. Nonetheless, what Heitner (2012) said about preparing current workers and students is true. Duggan (2009) a Senior Strategist at the Language Flagship, National Security Education Program based in Washington DC, affirmed in her work that in the face of strong perceptions, English is — and will continue to be — the *lingua franca* of international business and that most companies address their language needs through creative “workarounds” (hiring in-country nationals and using translators).

Orcino (2012) challenged the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education in the Philippines by recounting the fact that in a survey of top managers on the dynamics of work forces around Asia, it was found that the standard of education in the Philippines is said to be quite low. This affirmed the common perception in the academic sector that the standard of English in the Philippines is a lot worse than many Filipinos would like to portray.

Ocampo’s paper, (2012) about the K to 12 Integrated Language Arts Curriculum shed light on the revised curriculum focusing on the content standards that must be met by all students at the end of the basic education.

The article of Patrocina A. Orfiano (2012) identified the demands of global economy; that the young people should develop 21st century skills like digital literacy, problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration. They must also excel in mathematics, science, and engineering which are the building blocks of technical innovations. What binds these innovations is the English language used throughout the world in its rise to the peak of globalization.

According to Go & Posecion (2010) language learning tests are essential parts of assessment especially in the Philippines. Hence, it is important that their functions and objectives must be clearly identified.

III. RESEARCH RATIONALE

The National Achievement Test (NAT) is a Philippine-made standardized test purposely designed and administered to gauge pupils/students’ academic performance and achievement level, strengths and weaknesses in five key curricular subject areas at the end of the school year. The NAT was developed to measure what pupils/students in *Grade Three, Grade Six and Fourth Year* in elementary and in secondary level.

Under the management of National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC) in the Philippines, NAT is being administered yearly in Elementary and Secondary students in both public and private schools. The Department of Education assigns a specific date for the test at the end of the school year and it is held simultaneously throughout the country. The tests will determine what the graduating students know and can do in different subject.

The Department of Education has two rationales for emphasizing the urgent need of keeping the Filipino students abreast with the impelling demands of global competition and for implementing the K to 12 Education flagship program. First, enhancing the quality of basic education program in the Philippines is urgent and critical. Second, the poor quality of basic education is reflected in the low achievement scores of Filipino students. This study deemed appropriate to propose a curriculum plan that hopes to address the needs of language education of Senior High School K to 12 Program in the Philippines which hopefully will have its full blown implementation this Academic Year 2016-2017.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

The main objective of the study was to provide an in-depth analysis of the performance of the selected Manila public secondary schools in the National Achievement Test (NAT) particularly in the English area. It must be noted that this study covered only the results of NAT from school years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

In the previous years, NAT is usually given to second year high school. However, with the *DepEd Memorandum no. 266, series of 2011*, the NAT was ordered for administration among fourth year high schools students during School Year 2011-2012 under the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC).

In the process of conducting the study, the researcher chose the **descriptive-correlation** as the most appropriate method of research to be used. The tools used were the language tests which yielded the National Achievement Test Results of the six selected secondary schools in Manila from school years 2011 to 2013. These were correlated with the final average grades of students in their English academic subject on the mentioned school year.

V. RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents of the study were the fourth year high school students from the six schools selected to represent each district in the Division of Manila. These were the students who took the National Achievement Test during the school years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

The two consecutive school years mentioned above were of primary concern to this study because those were the first two years when the NAT was administered to these fourth year high school students. This will be the means of evaluating what these students have learned in the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC).

As regards to the data on the total population of the students as well as their final grades in English, it was the registrar of the concerned schools who provided the actual copy with the approval of the School Principal.

VI. STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

The data were treated statistically using both descriptive and inferential techniques. These techniques provided frequencies which are the number of occurrences of a language phenomenon, as well as impressions, and better understanding of the learners' proficiency on the language elements which are the focus of this study.

VII. FINDINGS

The following findings were gathered from the study:

1. Characteristics of Public Secondary Schools in Manila

It was Magsaysay High School (District 4) which consistently got the highest rate of enrollment with a total of 2395 enrolled fourth year students. It covered the 29 percentage rate of the six selected schools. This was seconded by Mapa High School (District 6) with a total of 1727 or 20 percent. Third in the rank was Arellano (District 3). It had a total of 1418 or 17 percent of the students' population. Meanwhile, it was Paez High School (District 1) which landed fourth in the rank of the schools. It has 1194 population of students' enrolled or 14 percent. The school seconded to the least number of enrolled students was Laurel High School (District 2). It had total population of 1113 fourth year students or 13 percent. It was Manila Science High School who got the least number of enrolled students, for it only had 592 or 7 percent enrolled students for two consecutive school years.

Among the six selected schools, Arellano was the oldest school with 94 years of existence as public secondary school. This was followed by Mapa with 90 years to date and followed immediately by three schools which coincidentally were founded simultaneously in 1959; and now 54 in

existence. The youngest of all the six schools was Paez High School.

2. Performances in the National Achievement Test, English Area for SY 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

The performances in English area of the NAT showed that majority of fourth year high school students from the six selected schools had an "Average" performance.

TABLE I: THE NAT PERFORMANCES IN ENGLISH AREA FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012 VS SCHOOL YEAR 2012-2013

Schools	School Year 2011-2012			School Year 2012-2013		
	N	MPS	DE	N	MPS	DE
Magsaysay	1226	59.47	Average	1122	62.05	Average
Mapa	742	54.35	Average	676	62.21	Average
Arellano	619	54.16	Average	618	53.72	Average
Laurel	536	61.34	Average	496	70.44	Moving Towards Mastery
Paez	523	46.15	Average	589	49.32	Average
Manila Science	298	79.66	Moving Towards Mastery	291	83.03	Moving Towards Mastery

Legend: MPS-Mean Percentage Score
DE-Descriptive Equivalent

3. Comparison of the Performances in the NAT, English Area according to:

3.1. Population

When these selected schools were compared according to their population, the F-values 413.843 (SY 2011-2012) and 315.520 (SY 2012-2013) implied that schools of different populations significantly differed in their performances in the English area of National Achievement Test.

TABLE II: THE PERFORMANCES IN THE ENGLISH AREA OF NAT ACCORDING TO POPULATION

SY 2011-2012	Mean	SD	F-Value	Significance	Remarks
500 & below	79.66	6.48	413.843	P=0.000<0.01 Very Significant	500 & below vs 501-1000
501-1000	54.08	15.91			501-1000 vs 1001-1500
1001-1500	59.47	13.65			501-1000 vs 1001-1500
SY 2012-2013					
500 & below	83.03	6.27	315.520	P=0.000<0.01 Very Significant	500 & below vs 501-1000
501-1000	58.53	17.04			501-1000 vs 1001-1500
1001-1500	62.05	14.52			501-1000 vs 1001-1500

3.2. Years of Existence

The F-value of 207.687 and 269.101 respectively for SY 2011-2012 & 2012-2013 revealed that there was a very significant difference in the performances in the NAT,

English area of schools when grouped according to their years of existence.

4. Overall Mean Grades of the Students in Academic English

Manila Science High School obtained the highest mean of 89.35; with a mean of 83.49, Magsaysay was second to Manila Science. Arellano, ranked third having a mean of 83.07. Paez High School got a mean of 82.22 and landed 4th in the rank. Meanwhile, Mapa High School with its mean 81.77 fell next in rank to Paez High School. However, the school with the lowest mean grade in academic English IV subject and has landed on the sixth rank is Laurel High School. It had a mean of 79.48. The total mean grade in the academic English IV of these schools was 83.23 and interpreted as Average.

The mean grades in English academic subject of different schools varied probably because teachers considered different ways of giving grades to their students. The overall findings in their English mean grade was **83.23** which shows that majority of the schools performed only on the *average level*.

5. Overall Performance in the NAT English Area in Relation to Overall Academic English Grade

The obtained Pearson r values of **0.853** for the overall NAT, English area and **0.120** for the overall mean grade in their academic English subject manifested a very high positive relationship. Hence, schools whose students performed well in the English area of the National Achievement Test were likely to have high grades in their English Academic subject.

The summary of findings is illustrated in Table 4 showing the overall performances of the fourth year students in the NAT English area in relation to their overall mean academic grades in English. Statistically, the performances of schools in NAT English area 61.32 and the mean grades in English subject 83.23 clearly pointed out that students who graduated in public secondary schools of Manila are performing only on the average level in English.

TABLE III: RELATIONSHIP OF THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE IN NAT-ENGLISH AND OVERALL MEAN ENGLISH GRADE

Particulars	N	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significance
Overall NAT, English Area	7736	35.72	10.01	0.853	P=0.000<0.01 Very Significant
Overall Mean English Academic Grade	8708	82.78	4.92	0.120	P=0.000<0.01 Very Significant

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Based from the findings the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Majority of fourth year high school students have an average performance in the National Achievement Test, English area.
2. Majority of high schools students in Manila perform only on the average level in their English subject.
3. Students who perform well in their English subject are likely going to perform well in the National Achievement Test or vice-versa.

4. The number of student population greatly affects the learning process in the outcome of standardized test like the National Achievement Test. The lower the class size the greater is the possibility for the students to achieve better positive learning outcomes.

5. The years of existence of schools affect the performances of the NAT, English area. Schools that exist longer have better performance in English than those with shorter existence.

The Proposed English Language Skills Program

This proposed Integrated English Language Skills Program is made comprehensive for the senior high school of the K to 12 Curriculum. It is designed with the focus on K to 12 Language Arts for grades 11 and 12.

It uses the five macro skills which are said to be the pillars where language competencies are mainly anchored upon. The additional skill **viewing** is added on the onset of K to 12 Curriculum. These macro skills follow certain content key standards of mastery of what it hopes to achieve at the end of the school year.

The program aims to be of help to teachers as instructional support in preparing students for the content area standards assessments. Thus, this program is subject to revisions to adapt to learner’s needs and available resources.

The Course Description:

The proposed language program is called *Integrated English Language Skills Program (IELSP)*. This is a year-long subject designed to meet the learning demands of Senior high school students in line with the K to 12 Curriculum. Guided by the content key standards in teaching, it is said to be integrated because it is anchored on the five macro skills or strands of English language namely reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing.

The Course Objectives:

Integrated English Language Skills Program (IELSP) primarily aims to meet the following objectives:

1. To enhance the accumulated knowledge of senior high school students on what they learned in English during their junior high school and to upgrade their English language proficiency for the next level in tertiary;
2. To empower Filipino learners for global competition by helping them boost their self-confidence and develop more their communicative competence.

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