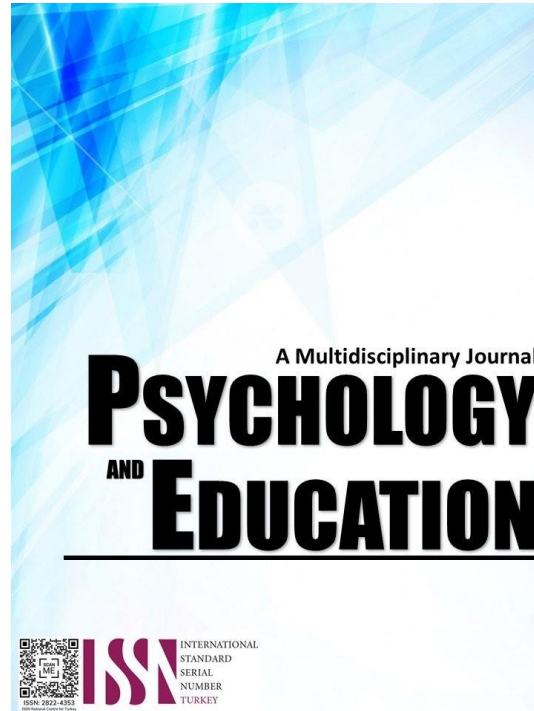


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SKILLS IN ENGLISH**



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Grade 7 Learners' Performance in Five Macro Communication Skills in English

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the performance of the grade 7 learners in five macro communication skills in English language learning at Cotabato City National High School- Main. Campus. Specifically, it determined their performance in listening focused on stress and intonation, speaking focused on correct production of vowel and consonant sounds and pitch levels, reading focused on comprehension and use of appropriate reading style, writing focused on writing purposes and sequencing sentences, and viewing focused on identifying meaning of signs and symbols and use of structural analysis. Finally, it determined the skills they performed best and worst. Thus, the subjects of this study were the 728 grade 7 students of CCNHS- Main Campus in the school year 2022-2023. Their performance in five macro communication skills were measured. The researcher used a quantitative descriptive design particularly teacher-made test in listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing. The test questionnaire was based on the K-12 Curriculum Guide competencies which consisted of 50 test items for the five macro communication skills and divided it into 10 test items in each skill. Furthermore, after conducting the test, the results were analyzed and interpreted and came up with an output which is intervention materials in macro communication skills in English (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The intervention materials aims to help the grade 7 students in improving their communication skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The findings revealed the following: the performance level of the grade 7 students in listening, speaking, and reading are all described as “did not meet expectations”; the grade 7 learners’ performance in viewing skill is found to be in the “very satisfactory” level; in writing skill, the grade 7 learners’ performance level is described as “fairly satisfactory”; their performance level in five macro communication skills is described as “fairly satisfactory”; and the learners perform best in viewing while they perform worst in reading. Based on the findings, it is concluded that the grade 7 learners are good viewers but they have very poor performance level in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The following recommendations are offered based on the findings and conclusion: the language teachers should utilize different strategies and activities to help improve students’ deficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing; there is a need for students to involve actively in interactive activities in school or watch English tutorial videos in speaking and listening to enhance their listening and speaking skills, likewise, they may also engage in writing tasks to eventually overcome their deficiency in writing and they may expose themselves in different reading texts or books in order to improve their reading comprehension level; the school administrators should provide opportunities for the students to develop and to enhance their communication skills through different events conducted inside and outside the school such as seminar-workshops, trainings, and academic festivals or contests; the intervention materials constructed as an output should be used by the language teachers to remediate learners’ learning gaps; language teachers should integrate viewing English programs activity to enhance the students’ speaking skill; the Department of Education and school administrators should intensify monitoring the efficient implementation of reading programs under DepEd and see to it that all schools implement it, teachers need to implement the reading program religiously; and future researchers may conduct further study about the students’ English communication skills using different setting and respondents to validate the results of the study.

Keywords: *english language learning, learners, macro communication skills, structural analysis*

Introduction

Communication skills are the key and major advances in learning new things more accurately and efficiently (Rhei, n.d.). Without communication nothing would be done, and the world would essentially come to a standstill. All five macro skills of communication are indispensable in everyday life and should be given

equal importance on each of these skills. According to Alonzo as cited in Cabigon (2015), English is not a series of facts to be learned but a skill to be used for conversation. The K-12 basic education framework also stipulates that learners must acquire the English language holistically.

However, many studies and reports exposed that

students' academic performance in English is declining. This notion is based on the results of achievement tests. The Department of Education (DepEd) regularly releases statistics on the performance and internal efficiency of the basic education sector. The National Achievement Test (NAT) results for the SY 2017-2018, revealed that the grade 6 pupils who took the test did not reach proficiency level specifically in English subject. For Grade 10 results, the students got "low proficiency" in English, Mathematics, and Science subjects while for Grade 12 results, the level of proficiency as measured in the NAT Grade 12 test (Basic Education Exit Assessment) was also "low proficiency" in Language and Communication grouped content areas.

In the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) results for Grade 9, the data for both SY2017-18 and SY2018-19 revealed that the Mean Percentage Score (MPS) for all measures of aptitude in all assessed areas (scientific ability, reading comprehension, verbal ability, mathematical ability, and logical reasoning ability) is at a "Low Aptitude" level.

Moreover, the DepEd claims that in terms of reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy, the overall performance of PISA 2018's representative participants lagged much behind than of its surrounding ASEAN countries (Almerino et al., 2020). Additionally, UNICEF (2022) reports that nearly two-thirds of 10-year-olds have difficulty reading and understanding basic texts. Without immediate action, this global learning problem could lead to a generational disaster. Our educational systems were already failing our youth even before pandemic. In Cotabato City Division, particularly in Cotabato City National High School- Main Campus, most teachers have also observed the same problem with students' declining performance in English particularly among grade 7 learners.

If these learning gaps are not given due attention, they will serve as hindrance for the learners to learn new lessons in English across higher level. This often causes learners to lag behind their peers and makes it harder for them to understand more complex or advanced things. As the schema theory affirms, prior knowledge is a crucial component to create a new cognitive schema and acquire new knowledge, (Bartlett, 1995). On contrary, if learning gaps are detected at an early stage, they can be fixed. However, if they are ignored at this early stage, they may become so severe that they can only be addressed with extensive remedial intervention.

This being the case, this study is proposed to be

conducted preferably in the secondary level specifically among grade 7 students of CCNHS – Main Campus. The researcher as an English teacher wants to eventually determine the grade 7 learners' performance in five macro communication skills in English in order to determine appropriate intervention materials to address the continuing decline of learners' performance in English. It is in this premise that this study is considered important.

Research Questions

This study sought to determine the performance of the grade 7 learners in five macro communication skills in English. Specifically, sought to answers to the following questions:

1. What is the grade 7 learners' performance in the following communication skills:
 - 1.1 Listening focused on stress and intonation;
 - 1.2 Speaking focused on correct production of vowel and consonant sounds and pitch levels;
 - 1.3 Reading focused on comprehension and use of appropriate reading style;
 - 1.4 Writing focused on writing purposes and sequencing sentences; and
 - 1.5 Viewing focused on identifying meaning of signs and symbols and use of structural analysis?
2. In what skills do the grade 7 learners perform best and worst?
3. Based on the findings, what intervention materials can be constructed?

Literature Review

English Communication Skills

According to National University (2022), to communicate effectively in English requires the four macro skills which are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The more proficient you are in all skills, the more chance you succeed personally, socially, and professionally. Practice is the best remedy for enhancing any skill you find challenging. The slow and progressive process of learning English could be seen as a set of difficulties to overcome. The development of certain skills is part of this learning process.

In the common framework as mentioned by Hossain (2015), English communication skills are divided into productive and receptive categories. Reading and listening are both considered as receptive skills. They play an important role because they help students comprehend what is stated in textbooks, works, or

documents. Speaking and writing are two components of productive skills. They are important because they enable students to participate in communicative activities like reports, oral presentations, and written studies, among others. In addition to the four macro skills, viewing skill is the most recent macro-skill newly added to the English language and is enhanced by a variety of print and non-print materials (Carolino and Queroda, 2019). Being proficient in only one of these communicative skills won't make communication problems go away. Harmer (1991) as cited in Hossain (2015), suggested that no skill can be achieved without the other. If you don't listen, you can't talk, if you don't read, you can't write. Coşkun et al., (2021) also mentioned that language ability is acquired through listening (45%), speaking (30%), reading (15%) and writing (10%) when people communicate.

Listening Skill

Listening is described by Rost (2005) as cited in Barot (2015) as a difficult activity that requires processing spoken facts and receptive, interpretative, or constructive cognitive processes. This description suggests that listening involves comprehension. According to Linse (2005) as cited in Sevik (2015), developing listening skills is essential for successful development of all other language skills.

Additionally, according to Rost (2005) as cited in Barot (2015), decoding, comprehension, and interpretation are the three subprocesses of L2 listening. Attending, perceiving speech, identifying words, and analyzing grammar are all parts of decoding. Comprehension involves the activation of schema, expressing propositions, and drawing logical inferences. Evaluation of discourse meanings and meaning matching are both terms used to describe interpretation. Training using visualizations of prosodic features like displays that represent intonation patterns, stress and rhythm are easy for learners to interpret and can enhance their awareness and understanding of prosody Chun et al. (1998) as cited in Bambaeroo & Shokrpour (2017). Rost (2005) as cited in Barot (2015) also added that, speech rate and prosodic rhythm are other factors that affect comprehension. 90% of content words in the majority of English dialects, the majority of which are monosyllabic, have the first syllable stressed. Additionally, each speech pause has at least one significant content item. As for speech rate, listening often gets better as it is slowed down to an ideal level.

According to Elfiona et al. (2019), listening skill is one of the crucial skills used in communication

activities. Listening is essential for learning pronunciation, vocabulary, word stress, and grammar. In short, teaching listening means increasing students' skills and linguistics competence in which both are the core of English itself. Elfiona et al. (2019) added that listeners must perform processes such as sound discrimination, vocabulary and grammatical structure comprehension, stress and intonation interpretation, retention of what was learned in previous skills, and interpretation within the immediate as well as larger socio-cultural context of the utterance.

Listening skills are important for social communication. Language learning is mostly dependent on listening, which means that students' learning will suffer if they fail to achieve an adequate level of listening (Salem, 2017). Listening is a skill that encompasses comprehension and thinking skills Kapanadze (2019) as cited in Coşkun et al. (2021). Despite its importance, according to Vandergrift (2004) as cited in Salem (2017), listening is most likely the most disregarded, or at least the least explicit, of the four English communication skills. Goh (2008) as cited in Salem (2017) also stated that listening skills have received no due attention since the 1960s as it was heavily influenced by reading and writing pedagogy. This can be observed also in the DepEd's Most Essential Learning Competencies Guide in which only 2 listening competencies are included to be taught to the grade 7 learners for the whole school year.

In fact, Hamouda (2013) as cited in Sapla (2019) emphasized that comprehending speech is very difficult activity for students and they face numerous difficulties when listening to spoken language. Renukadevi (2014) as cited in Coşkun et al. (2021) stated that despite technological advances in education, students are still having difficulty with the act of listening. These issues arise because of insufficient time spent on strengthening students' listening skills, as well as the use of ineffective strategies in the learning environment, listening materials, and physical environment. Coşkun et al. (2021) found out in their study that unaware of listening rules is the primary issue among listening problems of secondary school students.

Therefore, listening skills should be practiced constantly, otherwise it will increasingly weaken because according to Armstrong & Rentz (2002) as cited in Salem (2017), listening can help you achieve academic goals. It is critical for students to gain academic achievement in the classroom; this means in order for learners to achieve higher levels of thinking, teachers must encourage stronger listening skills. Listening is a skill that could potentially learned and improved upon regardless of age, gender, education, or

previous skills level; however, as with any skill, if it is not exercised, it will deteriorate. According to Lana et al. (2015), listening can be improved through practice, identification with the speaker, and organizing what has been heard.

Speaking Skill

Speaking is a complex process that necessitates paying attention to content, vocabulary, discourse, information organization, morphosyntax, sound system, prosody, and pragma linguistic aspects all at the same time Hinkel (2006) as cited in Barot (2015). Bueno et al. (2006) as cited in Rao (2019), affirmed this saying that one of the most challenging skills for language learners to master is speaking. It is regarded as the most crucial of the four macro skills. Even after learning the language for many years, learners find it difficult to speak in real-life situations when it is required. Rao (2019) also added that speaking is the most important skill where students will be judged in real-life circumstances.

One way to develop speaking skill is voice training. It is an important component of teaching oral communication to L2 learners at all levels of competency and in all learning situations. Vocal delivery refers to aspects of speech delivery that are related to your voice. Rate, loudness, pitch, articulation, pronunciation, and fluency are examples of these. Rate of speech refers to how quickly or slowly a person speaks. If one speaks too quickly, the audience may not be able to comprehend the information offered; if one speaks too slowly, the audience may lose interest. The volume of one's voice refers to how loud or soft it is. The pitch of a speaker's voice refers to how high or low it is. Articulation refers to the clarity with which a speaker creates sounds and words. Pronunciation relates to saying words correctly, including the proper letter sounds and emphasis. And fluency refers to the flow of your speech; to speak fluently means that your speech flows smoothly and without interruptions. (10.3 Vocal Delivery – Communication In the Real World, 2016).

The K to 12 Curriculum Guide for English dated 2016, designed specific speaking skills for junior high school students to develop. This includes fluency, use of verbal and nonverbal cues, and the knowledge on the use of prosodic features of speech such as stress and intonation patterns.

Speaking is a transferable skill that is typically mentioned in skills frameworks as the top skill required by employers, but it is also identified as the skill most deficient among today's graduates Sulphrey (2015) as cited in Grant-Smith et al. (2016). As Dewi

(2016) found in her study, there are many commonalities in the challenges that students have when speaking English, such as the fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by other students since they lack an idea about the grammar and pronunciation that they use. Furthermore, they lack the confidence to convey their ideas and are cautious due to a lack of vocabulary. Hutabarat & Simanjuntak (2019) found out in their study that establishing learning support from teacher and peers can reduce the language learners' speaking anxiety.

In a different study, Dianalan (2019) found out that the oral communicative competence of the Grade 11 students is in "need improvement" level. Similarly, Haron (2019) also noted in her findings that the oral communication skills of 7th grade students were poor in terms of pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary. This result is alarming because according to Boileau (1984) as cited in Haron (2019), students' failure to learn and perform effectively in school typically reflects a lack of basic communication skills - reading, writing, listening, and speaking - rather as a lack of mastery in the subject matter.

As speaking is one of the most crucial skills for English language learners as it allows them to demonstrate their communication skills for a variety of purposes, teachers must take a special interest in helping students improve their speaking skills. To attain this, teachers must look at current sources and attempt to implement a variety of strategies and approaches to help students improve their speaking skills in English classes. In the study conducted by Elias (2017), it was found out that those students who are viewing English TV programs performed better in the speaking test in areas of grammar, fluency, and pronunciation than those who are not viewing English TV programs. So, the students should expose themselves in interactive English videos to enhance their speaking skill. As Rao (2019) suggested, learners must create situations in which they can talk not only in the classroom but also outside of it.

Reading Skill

According to contemporary comprehension models and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) paradigm, reading literacy can be defined as the capacity to use and grasp those written language formats required by society or valued by the individual. There are numerous ways for readers to acquire meaning from written texts. They read to learn, to participate in reading communities in school and in everyday life, and to have fun (Mullis & Martin, 2021). This concept of reading comprehension reflects several views in which reading comprehension is

viewed as a constructive and interactive activity.

Prior knowledge, according to schema theory, gives a schema - a framework or structure - that aids thinking. A text cannot convey all of its meaning on its own. The reader offers information, knowledge, emotions, and culture - schemata - to the printed word Brown (2001) as cited in Carin (2018). It implies that one's comprehension of a book is dependent on how much associated schema and background knowledge the reader possesses when reading. As a result, a reader's inability or difficulty in comprehending a text is caused by a lack of relevant schemata that can easily match with the text's content, Carin (2018) added.

However, according to Boardman et al. (2008) as cited in Carin (2018), a lot of adolescents struggle with understanding text because they lack prior knowledge, have no ability to employ comprehension strategies, have deficits in metacognition (they are often unaware that they are not comprehending), or have trouble grasping the meaning of words. As Manguda (2017) and Kusain (2015) found out in the results of their study that grade 7 and 8 students' performance in reading comprehension were under "frustration level" or very low. This is distressing because reading is a powerful tool of constructing meaning and acquiring new knowledge Pretorius (2002) as cited in Carin (2018).

The PIRLS assessment framework described the four main processes for comprehension as mentioned by Bruggink et al. (2022) such as concentrating on and extracting information explicitly mentioned in the text, making simple inferences, analyzing and integrating concepts and information, and assessing and criticizing content and literary components.

Aritonang et al. (2018) cited Harmer stating, reading includes scanning and skimming. Scanning is the ability to swiftly identify specific facts and details in which learners seek for specific information within a text such as dates, names, and places. On the other hand, skimming is the process of swiftly obtaining the main idea or gist of a selection in a written text in which the student develops powers of inference via systematic practice that enables them to anticipate meaning of a text, Aritonang et al. (2018) added. Thus, skimming can assist students in locating key words that allow them to deduce the general meaning of the text, allowing them to analyze content more quickly and advance the reading process. Furthermore, Oostendorp and Goldman (1998) as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) expressed that while reading a text, a reader can develop a mental representation of the text that

describes how the reader interprets the text.

The Department of Education implemented the Every Child A Reader Program, or ECARP, under DepEd Memorandum No. 402, series of 2004, and Administrative Order No. 324. Recamara (2018) as cited in Abaniel & Rosa (2022) describes this program as "planned training in reading and writing to make public elementary pupils become young readers and writers." Despite the reading programs that have been established, there are still non-readers among Filipino learners (Abaniel & Rosa, 2022). Teachers in Dapitan City division claimed that PHIL IRI is supposed to assess the learners' reading abilities and that interventions should follow after the results of the assessments have been determined. However, administrators did not introduce follow-up intervention. Teachers were left in the dust when it came to devising a suitable classroom intervention Recamara (2018) as cited in Abaniel & Rosa (2022). Other teachers only use the tool for documentation of the results of the diagnostic tests and no follow up or intervention was conducted to address the existing problems. Similarly, in the study conducted by Magaso (2022), it was concluded that principals and teachers in the central schools of Agusan Del Sur division were very busy with many concerns and intervening activities, thus, the full implementation of the different activities under ECARP was difficult to attain. School authorities sometimes either forgot or find the activities tedious considering the overlapping of reports.

The problem on the reading proficiency of the students cannot be taken for granted because it is foundational skill for all school-based education. Moreover, reading is an essential component of instruction for all students, regardless of skill level, because it lays the groundwork for future growth and success Scott (2010) as cited in Carin (2018). Titus (2018) as cited in Abaniel & Rosa (2022) claims that reading is very crucial in the learning process. The better the students can read, the easier for them to learn what they need to in school. Bruggink et al. (2022) also added that reading comprehension is an important ability in today's society. Readers who lack comprehension skills deal with difficulties in everyday life.

Writing Skill

Since K to 12 curriculum uses spiral progression, writing skill is also expected to be mastered by the learners in the early stages as a prerequisite for them to cope with the more advanced lessons in the higher levels of their education. Golkova & Hubackova (2015) emphasized that among the four macro skills, writing is a productive skill and therefore requires

special attention. According to Nunan (1989) as cited in Durga and Rao (2018), writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity, and writers must simultaneously demonstrate control over multiple variables. These include content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, and letter formation at the sentence level. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to organize and assimilate information into cohesive and intelligible paragraphs.

Langan (2001) as cited in Saputra (2020) presents reasons why writing skill vital. First, writing competence is a basic requirement for English learners in order to succeed academically. English learners are frequently expected to complete written assignments, and their writing performance reflects their English proficiency. Second, English writing skills are a realistic requirement for future employment. Batalla and De Vera (2019) stated that, students' writing skills are critical to their academic performance because the majority of school activities, such as tests, assignments, reports, and researches are written. Also, writing is taught at an early stage of learning in the Philippines, and teachers must use efficient instructional strategies to help learners communicate their thoughts and ideas through writing.

Bazerman (2015) added that writers write to participate in social situations, they write to get things done and make statements within situations. Cole & Feng (2015) on the other hand described writing as a traditional fundamental skill in English language acquisition. This importance stems from the fact that it strengthens the grammatical structures and vocabulary that teachers are trying to teach their students.

Unfortunately, students' writing outputs today present a variety of writing challenges at various phases of their learning development. These issues can be categorized into linguistic, psychological, cognitive, and pedagogical categories. Haider (2012) as cited in Fareed et al. (2016) added that learners struggle with English's structural elements in which a poor structure makes the text's content and meaning more difficult for readers to understand and interpret through the use of mental effort.

Viewing Skill

Viewing is a competency to be learned by learners, particularly in Junior High School, according to the English Curriculum Guide (DepEd, 2016). Tigo (2014) cited in Bullecer (2017) defined viewing as a process that supports oral and literacy skills as part of an integrated language curriculum. Viewing skills, she claims, increase students' ability to understand and articulate their thoughts. Results in the study of

Hobbs & Frost (2015) suggests that media literacy teaching develops the students' capability to identify important concepts in written, auditory, and visual media.

Barrett's Taxonomy of Comprehension (1980) addresses the several stages of comprehension, which are literal, reorganization, inferential, evaluation, and appreciation. The theory assumes that learners progress from one literal comprehension to another until they fully comprehend while appreciating the cognitive and aesthetic components that make up the viewing material.

In the Canadian Common Curriculum Framework as referred by Donaghy (2019), viewing is defined as the active process of attending to and comprehending visual materials such as television, commercial images, films, diagrams, symbols, photographs, videos, theatre, drawings, sculpture, and paintings. Therefore, 'viewing' is about reading' - analyzing, evaluating, and enjoying visual texts. Viewing is an active process, not a passive one. It is the fifth skill that needs to be developed among learners aside from the 4 macro skills.

According to cognitive study, the human brain analyzes images faster than it analyzes words, and visuals are more likely to be retained in our long-term memory than text Levie and Lentz (1982) as cited in Baker (2015). Saravanakumar et. al (2019) as cited in Fajagutana (2022) affirms this theory by saying that instructional videos are more interactive in which learners can easily understand the topic as they hear the simplified explanation and see the actual forms of objects in the lesson. Moreover, pictures are sometimes utilized to aid comprehension, as a scaffolding tool to assist learners in swiftly associating unknown words with concepts, Baker (2015). He also explained that exploring visual images can help to encourage widened language production. The way a person interprets images is determined by his or her existing schema, which is the result of memories and prior experiences that are unique to each individual.

Donaghy (2019) likewise found out that the majority of texts that students access outside of educational settings are visual texts and multimodal texts that use images; therefore, teachers should provide students with opportunities to 'read' - analyze and evaluate - these types of texts in the classroom. Gray (2012) as cited in Bullecer (2017) confirms the same theory saying that today's society is visually illiterate. Three R's are no longer enough. The ability to maintain the historical modes of thinking and speaking is becoming increasingly difficult as the world evolves fast. As the information revolution progresses, visual literacy – the



capacity to learn visually, to think visually, and to solve issues visually – will become necessary for success in both business and life.

Bullecer (2017) in his report pointed out that the young children cannot distinguish reality from imagination, and they are incapable of regulating their desires and behaviors to what they see on television. From these perspectives, learners need guidance so they can develop the comprehension skills needed to understand what they see on television or in printed images. This implies that teachers should not only pay attention to students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, but also pay attention to their viewing skills.

Methodology

Research Design

In order to satisfy the objectives of the study, a quantitative descriptive design specifically the frequency counts and percentage were used by the researcher to answer problem number 1 which is to determine the performance of the grade 7 learners in five macro communication skills. The findings are bases of researcher in constructing appropriate intervention materials that can improve learners' performance in five macro communication skills to answer the problem number 2.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in Cotabato City National High School – Main Campus, District II, Cotabato City Division. The respondents were the grade 7 students of Cotabato City National High School – Main Campus who were enrolled during the school year 2022-2023. The school has a total of 823 grade 7 students, 13 sections, and 4 English teachers for grade 7. Cotabato City National High School – Main Campus was formally established in 1924. It is located along the national highway of Sinsuat Avenue, Cotabato city which was donated by the prominent Sero family. The school is situated near Cotabato State University and Cotabato Chinese Cemetery. For many years, the said school has continued its commitment of providing education with its academic and socio-cultural opportunities. With the school's effective and efficient management and delivery of educational services, it became an attraction to parents in all walks of life. Ever since, the school is considered as the biggest public secondary school in Cotabato City Division because of its large population.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the grade 7 students of Cotabato City National High School – Main Campus enrolled during the school year 2022-2023. CCNHS – Main Campus has a total population of 823 grade 7 students. The researcher used complete enumeration of the population as respondents.

Research Instrument

The researcher formulated a test questionnaire based on the K-12 Curriculum Guide competencies which tested the five macro communication skills of the respondents. The test was a 50-item multiple choice test divided into five parts; listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing. Each skill was given 10 items to test. Before the administration of the test, the questionnaire was subjected to validity evaluation by the advisory panel.

Data Gathering Procedures

Upon approval of the research proposal, the researcher sent a letter to the school's division superintendent of Cotabato city and to the principal of Cotabato City National High School- Main Campus asking permission to conduct the study to the grade 7 students of their school. After the approval of the request, the researcher met the advisers and English teachers of the students to explain the nature and purpose of the study so that they would be aware, and they could relay it to the students. After the briefing, the researcher together with the English subject teachers agreed on the schedule for the performance test. The researcher administered the test personally with the help of their English subject teachers to maintain the reliability of the test. Before the test, the researcher explained to the students how they were going to answer the questionnaire. The respondents were given an hour to answer the test. After the test, the data were collected and recorded for statistical treatment and interpretations of result.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data was gathered and submitted to a statistician for analysis and interpretation. The frequency counts and percentage were used to describe the gathered data and to answer the research problems. In determining the performance of Grade 7 students in 5 macro communication skills, the researcher adopted the formula in conversion of the actual score to the transmuted score from DepEd Order 8, s. 2015. The transmuted scores in each macro communication skill

were labeled as: 90-100 (Outstanding), 85-89 (Very Satisfactory), 80-84 (Satisfactory), 75-79 (Fairly Satisfactory), and below 75 (Did not meet expectations).

Results and Discussion

The Students' Communication Skill in terms of Listening

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution as well as the description of the students' communication skill in terms of listening. The data presented in the table are students' transmuted scores in the listening test.

Table 1. *Performance of Grade 7 Students in Listening*

Transmuted Score	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Description
90-100	64	8.67	Outstanding
85-89	49	6.64	Very Satisfactory
80-84	86	11.65	Satisfactory
75-79	98	13.28	Fairly Satisfactory
below 75	441	59.76	Did not meet expectation
Total	738	100	
Mean = 74.19 (Did not meet expectation)			

As shown in table 1, 441 or 59.76% of the students were not able to meet the expected performance in listening. This means that more than half of the grade 7 students have a very poor listening performance. These students cannot note the changes in stress and intonation of the speech which is the basic skill needed in listening. This is very alarming to the DepEd especially to the teachers who are handling communication arts subject because Linse (2005) as cited in Sevik (2015) stated that developing listening skill is essential for successful development of all other language skills. This idea is also supported by Salem (2017) as he stated that language learning depends mainly on listening which means that students' learning will decrease without the proper proficiency in listening. According to Lana et al. (2015), listening can be improved through practice, identification with the speaker, and organizing what has been heard.

Meanwhile, 98 or 13.28% of the students had a fairly satisfactory performance in listening. It simply

explains that these students have poor performance in listening skill particularly in observing the changes of the stress and intonation of the speech. They got many errors in their answers. Coşkun et al. (2021) found out in their study that unaware of listening rules is the primary issue among listening problems of secondary school students.

While 86 or 11.65% of the students attained a satisfactory performance, it also tells that only few of the students have minimum competency in listening particularly in noting the changes in stress and intonation of the words or speeches. This means that they got occasional errors in their answers, but they need enhancement in noting the changes in stress and intonation. Training using visualizations of prosodic features like displays that represent intonation patterns, stress and rhythm are easy for learners to interpret, and can enhance their awareness and understanding of prosody Chun et al. (1998) as cited in Bambaeroo & Shokrpour (2017).

Furthermore, 64 or 8.67% of the students achieved an outstanding level. This shows that only few of the grade 7 students have excellent performance in listening. They are the students that can accurately comprehend the meaning of the stressed words and intonation of the sentences. This is an implication that only few numbers of the grade 7 students acquired the basic skills needed in listening. The result reflects the contention of Hamouda (2013) as cited in Sapla (2019) which emphasized that comprehending speech is very difficult activity for students and they face numerous difficulties when listening to spoken language which only few learners can perform well. The language teachers play an important role for students to cope with this problem through engaging the students in different listening activities so that every learner will be equipped with the necessary skill in listening.

In the same table, 49 or 6.64% of the students gained a very satisfactory level which also shows that few of them answered the listening test with minimal errors. These students have the capability to comprehend the meaning of the stressed words and intonation of the sentences.

The mean score of the students' performance in terms of listening skill is 74.19 which was described as "did not meet expectation". This indicates that considering all the scores of the grade 7 students in the listening test, majority of them did not meet the expected performance in listening skill. They cannot comprehend the changes in stress and intonation of the speeches that affects its meaning. This finding reflects



to what Vandergrift’s (2004) as cited in Salem (2017) statement that listening is probably the most neglected skill or rather the least explicit of the four skills of English language. This idea is also supported by Goh (2008) as cited in Salem (2017) stating that listening skills have received no due attention since the 1960s as it was heavily influenced by reading and writing pedagogy. This can be observed also in the DepEd’s Most Essential Learning Competencies Guide in which only 2 listening competencies are included to be taught to the grade 7 learners for the whole school year. This implies deficiency in educational system.

The Students’ Communication Skill in terms of Speaking

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution as well as the description of the students’ communication skill in terms of speaking. The data presented in the table are students’ transmuted scores in the speaking test.

Table 2. *Performance of Grade 7 students in Speaking*

<i>Transmuted Score</i>	<i>Frequenc y (f)</i>	<i>Percentag e (%)</i>	<i>Description</i>
90-100	40	5.4	Outstanding
85-89	33	4.5	Very Satisfactory
80-84	48	6.5	Satisfactory
75-79	92	12.5	Fairly Satisfactory
below 75	525	71.1	Did not meet expectation
Total	738	100	
Mean = 72.03 (Did not meet expectation)			

The data in table 2 shows that 525 or 71.1 percent of the grade 7 students did not meet the expected performance in speaking. This indicates that more than half or majority of the total respondents have very poor performance in terms of speaking. These learners cannot differentiate the correct production of vowel and consonant sounds. Also, most of them are unable to observe the correct pitch levels of the given statements during the test. This also shows that they are not able to develop the skills they should master during elementary. This result is supported by Sulphey (2015) as cited in Grant-Smith et al. (2016) stating that speaking is a transferable skill that is typically mentioned in skills frameworks as the top skill required by employers, but it is also identified as the skill most deficient among today’s graduates. Brown and Yuke (1983) as cited in Rao (2019) also added that

speaking is the most important skill where students will be judged in real-life circumstances.

The table also shows that 92 or 12.5 percent of the students got a “fairly satisfactory” level of speaking skill. This means that students have poor performance in speaking particularly the correct production of sounds and pitch levels. These students commit numerous errors in the speaking test. This result supports the claim of Bueno et al. (2006) as cited in Rao (2019) stating that one of the most challenging skills for language learners to master is speaking. Even after learning the language for many years, learners find it difficult to speak in real-life situations when it is required.

The 48 or 6.5 percent of the students obtaining satisfactory level indicates that few of the learners achieved the minimum level of expected performance in speaking. This implies that they got occasional errors in the speaking test, but they need enhancement in producing correct vowel and consonant sounds and pitch levels. Speaking is a complex process that necessitates paying attention to content, vocabulary, discourse, information organization, morphosyntax, sound system, prosody, and pragma linguistic aspects all at the same time Hinkel (2006) as cited in Barot (2015).

Only 40 or 5.4 percent of the students achieved an outstanding level. This also means that only few of the total respondents can produce vowel and consonant sounds correctly and articulate the proper pitch levels. These students were able to develop the competency they should master in speaking. In the same table, 33 or 4.5 percent of the students gained very satisfactory level. This illustrates that 33 of the grade 7 students can produce vowel and consonant sounds appropriately and articulate the correct pitch levels with minimal errors.

The mean of the students’ performance in terms of speaking skill is 72.03 which is described as “did not meet expectation”. This indicates that considering all the scores of the grade 7 learners in the speaking test, majority of them did not meet the expected performance in speaking skill. This result shows that there is a big gap between the current speaking ability of the respondents with that of the competence level that they must achieve under grade 7 English curriculum which is producing English sounds correctly and using the prosodic features of speech effectively in various situations (K to 12 English Curriculum Guide, 2016).

These findings support those obtained in the study of



Dianalan (2019) that the oral communicative competence of the Grade 11 students is in “need improvement” level. The same findings are articulated in Carin (2018) describing the competence level of the students in speaking as poor. Furthermore, Dewi (2016) found out in her study that there are many commonalities in the challenges that students have when speaking English such as the fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by other students since they lack an idea about the grammar and pronunciation.

The Students’ Communication Skill in terms of Reading

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage distribution as well as the description of the students’ communication skill in terms of reading. The data presented in the table are students’ transmuted scores in the reading test.

Table 3. *Performance of Grade 7 students in Reading*

<i>Transmuted Score</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Description</i>
90-100	34	4.6	Outstanding
85-89	23	3.1	Very Satisfactory
80-84	38	5.1	Satisfactory
75-79	55	7.5	Fairly Satisfactory
below 75	588	79.7	Did not meet expectation
Total	738	100	
Mean = 70.51 (Did not meet expectation)			

It can be deduced from the table that 588 or 79.7 percent of the students were not able to meet the expected performance. This means that more than three quarters of the grade 7 students have very poor reading skills. These students cannot answer many of the comprehension questions about the material they read. This is an implication that the students did not acquire the basic skill needed in reading which is comprehension. This posts an alarming situation for the successful learning of the learners as Amini et al. (2020) stated that reading comprehension is an important skill which not only affects language learning, but also the academic achievement.

Meanwhile, 55 or 7.5 percent of the learners had fairly satisfactory level of reading skill. These students are considered as poor readers. They can answer only few of the comprehension questions with maximum errors.

This is alarming because despite the reading programs that have been implemented by Department of Education, there are still non-readers among Filipino learners (Abaniel & Rosa, 2022). Only 38 or 5.1 percent of the students gained satisfactory level. This indicates that only 5% of the total respondents attained the average performance level in reading. This is an indication that only few students demonstrate less serious problem on their reading comprehension. According to Brown (2001) as cited in Carin (2018), one's comprehension of a text is dependent on how much associated schema and background knowledge the reader possesses when reading. As a result, a reader's inability or difficulty in comprehending a text is caused by a lack of relevant schemata that can easily match with the text's content.

Furthermore, table 3 shows that 34 or 4.6 of the students achieved the outstanding reading performance level. This means that these students can use appropriate reading style to find answer to specific questions. These students have a high level of reading comprehension. They have done the four main processes for comprehension as mentioned by Bruggink et al. (2022) such as concentrating on and extracting information explicitly mentioned in the text, making simple inferences, analyzing and integrating concepts and information, and assessing and criticizing content and literary components.

The 23 or 3.1 percent of the students who got very satisfactory performance level imply that very few of the total respondents were able to answer maximum number of the comprehension questions with minimum errors. They can use some of the appropriate reading style. This finding presents a picture that only few of the students are able to read and thus have better chance of success in school as pointed out by Titus (2018) as cited in Abaniel & Rosa (2022).

The mean score in terms of reading skill is 70.51 which is described as “did not meet expectation” indicates that most of the grade 7 students have problems in reading comprehension. They cannot comprehend what they are reading based on their scores. The result affirms previous studies and reports like in the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) results for Grade 9 in SY2017-18 and SY2018-19 which revealed that the Mean Percentage Score (MPS) for the measure of aptitude in reading comprehension is at a “Low Aptitude” level. Additionally, UNICEF (2022) also reports that nearly two-thirds of 10-year-olds are unable to read and understand a simple text.



Similarly, Manguda (2017) and Kusain (2015) found out in the results of their studies that grade 7 and 8 students' performance in reading comprehension were under "frustration level" or very low. This is upsetting because Amini et al. (2020) stated that reading comprehension is an important skill which not only affects language learning, but also the academic achievement of the students.

The Students' Communication Skill in terms of Viewing

Table 4 shows the frequency and percentage distribution as well as the description of the students' communication skill in terms of viewing. The data presented in the table are students' transmuted scores in the viewing test.

Table 4. Performance of Grade 7 students in Viewing

Transmuted Score	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Description
90-100	171	23.2	Outstanding
85-89	268	36.3	Very Satisfactory
80-84	113	15.3	Satisfactory
75-79	85	11.5	Fairly Satisfactory
below 75	101	13.7	Did not meet expectation
Total	738	100	
Mean = 86.20 (Very Satisfactory)			

It can be gleaned from the table that 268 or 36.3 percent of the students got very satisfactory performance in viewing. This means that most of the grade 7 learners are equipped with the basic skill needed in viewing which is understanding of what they have viewed. These students can determine the meaning of the symbols and words from the material viewed with minimal errors. The result can be explained by what cognitive study has exposed that the human brain analyzes images faster than it analyzes words, and visuals are more likely to be retained in our long-term memory than text Levi and Lentz (1982) as cited in Baker (2015).

Furthermore, 171 or 23.2 percent of the students obtained an outstanding performance. This tells that slightly less than a quarter of the respondents has an excellent performance in viewing. These students can give the meaning of the symbols and use structural analysis to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words from the material viewed. The findings contradicted to what Gray (2012) as cited in Bullecer (2017) stated

that nowadays, society is visually illiterate. This result points out otherwise, learners now are not visually incompetent since they are more exposed to use of technology and social media.

However, there were 101 or 13.7 percent of the students who did not meet the expected performance in viewing. These students cannot identify the meaning of the symbols they see, and they can't use also structural analysis to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words from the material viewed. This finding implies that the 101 out of 738 students did not acquire the basic skill of viewing at a young age. According to Baker (2015), the way a person perceives pictures depends on one's existing schema, a product of memories and past experiences unique to everyone. This means that these are students who lack background knowledge of the tested viewing skill despite mandating viewing competency in the curriculum. This seems to imply that either the skill was not taught by the teacher or the students failed to acquire the required skill.

The same table presents 85 or 11.5 percent of the students who got fairly satisfactory level in the same skill. These respondents have poor viewing skill. These students know the meaning of few of the symbols and words with maximum number of errors. They need to be exposed to interactive viewing activities like instructional videos in which learners can easily understand the topic as they hear the simplified explanation and see the actual forms of objects in the lesson, Fajagutana (2022).

The mean score 86.20 which is described as very satisfactory indicates that most of the grade 7 students have almost met the expected performance in viewing skill. This means that viewing is the least problematic skill to acquire among Grade 7 students.

The Students' Communication Skill in terms of Writing

Table 5 shows the frequency and percentage distribution as well as the description of the students' communication skill in terms of writing. The data presented in the table are students' transmuted scores in the writing test.



Table 5. Performance of Grade 7 students in Writing

Transmuted Score	Frequenc y (f)	Percentage (%)	Description
90-100	73	9.9	Outstanding
85-89	72	9.8	Very Satisfactory
80-84	100	13.6	Satisfactory
75-79	119	16.1	Fairly Satisfactory
below 75	374	50.7	Did not meet expectation
Total	738	100	
Mean = 75.97 (Fairly Satisfactory)			

As presented in the table, 374 or 50.7 percent of the learners were not able to meet the expected performance in writing. This implies that more than half of the respondents have very poor performance in writing. These learners cannot identify the purpose of the different kinds of paragraph and have difficulty to arrange sentences in chronological order to make a simple paragraph. This is very upsetting because writing is a very important skill that learners need to master. Langan (2001) as cited in Saputra (2020) identified two reasons why writing skill is very important. First, writing competence is a basic requirement for English learners to succeed academically. English learners are frequently expected to complete written assignments, and their writing performance reflects their English proficiency. Second, English writing skills are a realistic requirement for future employment.

The same table also shows 119 or 16.1 percent of the students who got fairly satisfactory level. This indicates that 119 out of 738 respondents have poor performance in writing. These learners commit many mistakes when asked to recognize the common purposes for writing different kinds of paragraph. They cannot also arrange the sentences in chronological order. This result posts an alarming situation because Batalla and De Vera (2019) stated that students' writing skills are critical to their academic performance since the majority of school activities such as tests, assignments, reports, and researches are written.

Furthermore, 100 or 13.6 percent of the students obtained satisfactory level. This shows that only 100 of the respondents have minimum competency in writing. These learners can distinguish some of the purpose of a paragraph with some errors and can arrange 3 out of 5 sentences in correct order to form a simple paragraph but some sentences are misplaced. These students need enhancement in sequencing sentences to form a simple paragraph and need to be

familiarized with the different purposes of writing. Bryson (2003) as cited in Carin (2018) specified that writing is the most concrete and systematic of the language skills. The more developed the writing skill, the more systematic the individual's overall use of language.

Moreover, 73 or 9.9 percent of the learners reached an outstanding performance level in writing skill. This means that only one in ten respondents can recognize the common purposes for writing different kinds of paragraph. These learners can correctly arrange sentences in chronological order to form a simple paragraph. Similarly, 72 or 9.8 percent of the learners got very satisfactory level which is almost the same to the number of respondents who got an outstanding with a difference of 1 respondent. These students can recognize the purposes of writing the different kinds of paragraph with few errors. They can also arrange 3 to 4 sentences in correct order to make a simple paragraph.

More importantly, the mean of the grade 7 students' performance in terms of writing skill is 75.97 which is described as Fairly Satisfactory. This means that most of the grade 7 students have poor performance in writing skill. They struggle to coherently create a simple paragraph and to recognize the common purposes of writing a specific kind of paragraph. The findings implicate that the level of writing skill of grade 7 students is very alarming.

Results of this type agree with those obtained in the study of Carin (2018) that the students' competence level in writing is described as poor. According to Haider (2012) as cited in Fareed et al. (2016) learners struggle with English's structural elements in which a poor structure makes the text's content and meaning more difficult for readers to understand and interpret through the use of mental effort.

Table 6. Grade 7 Learners' Performance in Five Macro Communication Skills in English

Communication Skills	Mean	Description
Listening	74.19	Did not meet expectation
Speaking	72.03	Did not meet expectation
Reading	70.51	Did not meet expectation
Viewing	86.20	Very Satisfactory
Writing	75.97	Fairly Satisfactory
Overall Mean	75.78	Fairly Satisfactory

Based on the data given in the table 6, statistics shows that the grade 7 learners performed best in viewing as indicated by the mean of 86.20 or with a description of “very satisfactory”. This implies that students are equipped with the basic skill needed in viewing which is understanding of what they are viewing. They can determine the meaning of the symbols and words from the material viewed. In the English Curriculum guide, viewing comprehension is a competency to be learned by the learners especially in Junior High School (DepEd, 2016).

It can be seen in the same table that the grade 7 students performed worst in reading. They ranked the lowest in reading skill as indicated by the mean of 70.51 which described as did not meet expectation. This implied that the students are struggling readers. They are having difficulty in understanding what they have read. According to Boardman et al. (2008) as cited in Carin, (2018), a lot of adolescents struggle with understanding text because they lack prior knowledge, have no ability to employ comprehension strategies, have deficits in metacognition (they are often unaware that they are not comprehending), or have trouble grasping the meaning of words. As Manguda (2017) and Kusain (2015) found out in the results of their study that grade 7 and 8 students’ performance in reading comprehension were under “frustration level” or very low. This is distressing because reading is a powerful tool of constructing meaning and acquiring new knowledge Pretorius (2002) as cited in Carin (2018).

In listening skill, the mean of their performance is 74.19 which described also as did not meet expectation. This signifies that the students are not equipped with the basic skills in listening. Renukadevi (2014) as cited in Coşkun et al. (2021) despite technological advances in education, students are still having difficulty with the act of listening. These issues arise because of insufficient time spent on strengthening students' listening skills, as well as the use of ineffective strategies in the learning environment, listening materials, and physical environment.

Along with that, the speaking skill of grade 7 students was also identified as did not meet expectation in their performance level with the mean of 72.03. This connotes that they are having difficulty in speaking particularly in producing correct vowel and consonant sounds and pitch levels. This result is supported by a particular study of Haron (2019) stating in the findings of her study that the grade 7 students’ oral communication skill is very poor in terms of

pronunciation, fluency, grammar and vocabulary. The language teachers have to take a special interest in improving the speaking skills of the learners. In the study conducted by Elias (2017), she found out that those students who are viewing English TV programs performed better in the speaking test in areas of grammar, fluency, and pronunciation than those who are not viewing English TV programs. So, the students should expose themselves in interactive English videos to enhance their speaking skill. As what Rao (2019) suggested, learners must create situations in which they can talk not only in the classroom but also outside of it.

In the same table, the writing skill of the grade 7 students has the mean of 75.97 with the description of fairly satisfactory. It can be inferred that students have poor performance. They cannot recognize the common purposes for writing a paragraph and cannot arrange also the sentences in chronological order. This result is supported by study of Carin (2015) which she found out in her study that the senior high school students’ writing level is poor.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the grade 7 learners are good viewers but have very poor performance level in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Finally, it is concluded that the grade 7 learners need intensive interventions on these skills to further enhance their performance level.

The following recommendations are offered based on the findings and conclusion: (1) The language teachers should utilize different strategies and activities to help improve students’ deficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. (2) The students may actively involve in interactive activities in school or watch English tutorial videos in speaking and listening to enhance their listening and speaking skills. Likewise, they may also engage in writing tasks to eventually overcome their deficiency in writing. Furthermore, they may expose themselves in different reading texts or books in order to improve their reading comprehension level. (3) School administrators should provide opportunities for the students to develop and to enhance their communication skills through different events conducted inside and outside the school such as seminar-workshops, trainings, and academic festivals or contests. (4) The intervention materials to be constructed as an output should be used by the learners with the supervision of their language teachers to remediate their learning gaps. (5) Language

teachers should integrate viewing English programs activity to enhance the students' speaking skill. (6) The Department of Education and school administrators should intensify monitoring the efficient implementation of reading programs under DepEd and see to it that all schools implement it. Similarly, teachers need to implement the reading program religiously. (7) The future researchers may conduct further study about the students' English communication skills using different setting and respondents to validate the results of the study.

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