ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOK FOR CLASS XI PRESCRIBED BY MIZORAM BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract: The study deals with analysis of English textbook prescribed for Class XI by Mizoram Board of School Education. The books – Hornbill and Snapshots are published by NCERT in accordance with NCF 2005. Analysis is performed on the basis of the physical aspects of the textbooks and in addition to that, cross-analysis is done with the curriculum prescribed by the Mizoram Board of School education to see if the objectives of the curriculum are supported by the contents of the textbooks.

1. INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are widely recognised as a standard component of classrooms all around the world and are significant tools for curriculum advancement. As a result, its form and content are crucial for the promotion of a certain curriculum perspective. Cunningsworth (1995) identifies a textbook as a resource in presenting the materials and a source for learners to practice and do the activities.

Analysis of textbooks is crucial to promoting educational reform. In this article, Class XI English textbooks namely, Hornbill and Snapshots which are published by NCERT are analysed based on their physical aspect such as cover design, quality of paper used, printing and layout, font size, illustrations and price. Hornbill and Snapshots are both officially prescribed by Mizoram Board of School Education for the Class XI English textbooks.

Class XI students are generally within the age of 15 – 17, and are adolescents who are at the critical stage of development. It is crucial that they have textbooks that are age appropriate that will cater to their needs. In order to ascertain the effectiveness of textbooks, one of the best ways is to analyse and evaluate the textbooks based on certain criteria.

It is often possible that the aims and objectives that are outlined in the curriculum prescribed by respective board of education are not reflected in the content of the textbooks. Analysis is necessary to find out the gaps in the textbooks for the purpose of improvement and betterment of academic journey of students.

2. OBJECTIVES

• To analyse the physical aspects of English textbook prescribed for Class XI by Mizoram Board of School Education.
• To analyse the language skills in the English textbook with reference to Mizoram Board of School Education higher secondary school curriculum.

3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Research Design: Descriptive and analytical methods were used.
Tools used: Class XI English textbooks and Curriculum for Higher Secondary School, both prescribed by Mizoram Board of School Education were used.
Data Analysis: The “Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks” developed by the Textbook Committee, Education Bureau, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was used and adapted for analysis of the textbook.

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 To analyse the physical aspects of English textbooks prescribed for Class XI by Mizoram Board of School Education.

Textbook Cover design

The textbook, which is called Hornbill has the picture of the hornbill bird both in the front and in the back cover. The pictures are both printed on the background which is lime green in colour. The words printed on the cover is black. The illustration used on the cover is appropriate to the name of the book, however, questions could be raised on whether or not the name and the illustration both are relevant to the content of the book. The colour is found to be appealing and attractive enough for the students. The supplementary reader which is called Snapshots has the picture of a film roll with illustrations of diverse scenes from the text. The illustration is found to be quite in line with the content of the book. On the back cover, there is a picture of Mahatma Gandhi with a short quote about ‘ahimsa’. Although the quote itself is good, they have no direct relation howsoever to the content of the
book. The text printed on the cover is white in colour, which is on the background of a deep saffron colour. The overall look of the book cover is found to be satisfactory.

Quality of the paper used
The thickness of paper as per MBSE guidelines is “58 gsm cream wove”. NCERT prints their books on 80 gsm papers which is considered to be of a good quality which is likely to last for one academic session.

The quality of paper determines the price and weight of the book. Considering this, the quality of paper used is much appreciated, which does not hinder the handling of the book due to its weight and also, the price is reasonable.

Printing and layout
The printing and layout is observed to be quite appropriate as there are clear distinctions between topics, units and headings.

Font size
Times New Roman with thirteen (13) fonts is used in the texts, which is considered appropriate and convenient for most students, in exception to those who may be visually challenged. The headings are printed in bigger fonts which gives distinction to the texts and is found to be convenient. The activities and questions, on the other hand, are printed in a smaller font which can be a problem for students with visual issues. The overall view is that, the font size of the activities could be enlarged for better inclusivity. In addition to that, the spacing could be widened, for the same purpose.

Illustrations
There are very few illustrations found in both the textbook and the supplementary reader. Although Class XI students are not expected to learn based on pictorial representations, a picture of the author or poet alongside their writings could be beneficial for added knowledge.

Price
Hornbill consists of 128 pages, including the forward, contents, acknowledgements etc. and is priced at Rs. 89. Snapshots consists of 81 pages and is priced at Rs. 80. Although the price of hornbill textbook can be said to be affordable for most parents considering the number of pages and the quality of the paper, the supplementary reader i.e. Snapshots is a little expensive as it contains a lot fewer pages.

3.2. To analyse the language skills in the textbook with reference to Mizoram Board of School Education higher secondary school curriculum

Reading Skills
The Hornbill textbook is categorized into two sections: reading skills and writing skills.

The reading skills section largely dominates the pages of the textbook. Out of 118, 86 pages are devoted to this section. Within this section, there are eight (8) prose pieces and five (5) poems, which are supposed to develop the reading skills of the students. The skill of reading is the ability of an individual to be able to read and also comprehend, interpreting and decoding the written texts and language.

The prose contents are quite varied, ranging from “The Portrait of a Lady” by Khushwant Singh, which depicts the Indian background, to “Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues” which is set in Egypt. These texts provide the cultural variance which will enhance the comprehension and interpretation skills of students, which in turn will improve their reading skills. In the beginning of each chapter, a few expressions are written with the instruction to notice them in text and infer their meaning form the context.

Besides the text itself, activities are given in each chapter which is titled ‘Understanding the text’ where students are asked questions, to clarify situations in the narrations, to find out whether statements are true or else. These activities will prompt the students to re-read the texts and hone their skills of ‘reading between the lines’ i.e. understanding connotations. These additions will definitely improve the objective mentioned in the MBSE curriculum ‘to perceive the overall meaning…’ and ‘identify central main point and supporting details’ of the text.

The 5 poems included in the reading section also provides the opportunity for the students to develop proper diction. As the importance of poetry reading is immense, a few more poems should be included in the text for added reading.

The reading section occupies 72.8% of the textbook (Hornbill).

There is also the supplementary reader (Snapshots) which consists of 8 stories with a section ‘reading with insight’ at the end of each. The questions are structured in such a manner that induce thinking and requires comprehension to answer them. This can help in achieving the objective of the curriculum ‘to develop ability…required in order to engage in independent reflection and enquiry’.

Writing Skills
From pages 86 – 118, the books contains various types of writing: Note making, Summarising, Sub-titling, Essay- writing, Letter-writing and Creative- writing.

In each type of writing, instructions and formats are provided along with examples. These are followed by listed activities for the students to do. These activities are platform for achieving the objectives of MBSE to develop ‘text-based writing for prescribed or unseen texts’.

The writing section occupies 27.125 of the Hornbill textbook.

Listening Skills
The teacher plays the major role here. The textbook contains fictions and non fictions, poetry and other genres which allows for the students to listen to the teacher to develop proper pronunciation, proper diction and understand the texts through listening. In each chapter, there is a section called talking about the text, where both the students and the teacher could take turns in narrating their own version and the others could play the role of active listeners. These activities are included mostly in the reading section.

Speaking Skills
At the end of each chapter in the Hornbill textbook there is a section called ‘Talking about the text’ where activities are listed with instructions to ‘Discuss with a partner’ or ‘discuss in pairs of two’ or ‘discuss in groups of four’. Such activities will hone the
speaking skills of students, which is inline with the objective given in the MBSE curriculum ‘to build communicative competence’ and ‘understand and respond to texts.’

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION
It would be preferable to have the knowledge and relevance of the hornbill bird which is illustrated in the cover of the textbook, which is also the name of the textbook. Also, the cover quality could be more improved to easily last one academic session. One of the objectives of the MBSE English curriculum is to translate texts from mother tongue to English and vice versa, however, there is no activity given in the book pertaining to that. Although arrangements could be made by the teacher, translation activities could be added to facilitate the true understanding of the language.

REFERENCES