

Content Analysis of Quarterly Tests in English: Unveiling Patterns and Content Emphases

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Abstract

Assessment remains a cornerstone of the teaching-learning process, providing feedback on students' instructional progress. This study examines the quarterly tests in English, Grades 4, 5, and 6, focusing on content and test distribution, recurring topics, concepts, and skills; alignment between test content and content standards or curriculum objectives; and potential implications for student learning and instructional practices. Using content analysis and expert validation, the study identifies valuable insights for refining English assessment practices, enhancing test construction, and ensuring curricular alignment. Further, the identified gaps and weaknesses suggest the need for targeted professional development in test designing and the formation of review teams to oversee and refine quarterly assessments at the local school level.

Keywords: Assessment; Content Analysis; Curricular Alignment; Quarterly Tests; Test Content

INTRODUCTION

Assessment has always been the heart and an integral part of educational instruction. According to Tontus (2020), one purpose of assessment is to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' knowledge, comprehension, and application of that knowledge resulting from their educational experience. It is accomplished by the collection and discussion of data from a variety of sources and activities. Rather than teaching itself, assessment has a greater value in the spectrum of educational practice. From this point of view, the teacher's role in the construction of assessment, especially in the form of written tests, is crucial for a student's academic growth, achievement, and eventually, success in later life.

Understanding the intricacies of assessment can offer insights for curriculum designers and implementers to focus on curriculum alignment, instructional design, and educational equity. Quality instructional materials and assessment tools must be context-responsive and deliberately crafted to support learning outcomes (Dapat et al., 2023). Curriculum alignment determines how much an assessment aligns with the standards and the learning outcomes it is meant to. It ensures that the curriculum is relevant, challenging, and adaptable to the ever-developing

needs of the students. Instructional design reinforces useful learning experiences that help engage students' minds and promote learning. Lastly, the goal of educational equity is to provide all students with equal opportunities for success (SD Goal 4: Quality Education, 2023), irrespective of their background or circumstances. Through the concerted effort of teachers and stakeholders, it captures the end goal for the students to receive quality assessments in the classroom. However, in most cases, analysing tests is usually done quantitatively to measure or evaluate students' performance. This leads to the assumption that analysing the content of tests qualitatively is one of the less-researched areas.

One way to assess the students is through testing. Testing is a method of measuring a student's knowledge, ability, or performance from a given lesson's objective, using a time-tested method, which can be a multiple-choice questionnaire with the best answer. Nasr (2021) comprehensively lists and discusses the key characteristics of a good test in an article posted online. Additionally, it is important to note that the use of a good test is a crucial tool for educators because tests can determine if students can meet the desired lesson objectives.

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Moreover, lesson objectives in the classroom are anchored on the revised version of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. The taxonomy consists of six levels of thinking skills from lowest to highest (remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating). This framework was originally intended to categorise test questions from educators, until it gained greater relevance as an educational value. The rich history and background of this framework up to its revision were carefully rationalised by Krathwohl (2002). The emphasis on higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) and lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) in test questions is greatly discussed by Musliha et al. (2021). Significantly, the framework is presently being utilised in lessons, activities, and assessment planning. (Derico et al., 2018).

In adherence to the guidelines outlined in DepEd Order 8, series 2015, quarter tests, a type of assessment, serve as fundamental checkpoints, providing teachers with the knowledge of whether a student has mastered the units in a particular quarter. It is only through assessment that teachers can find out whether the students have attained the intended learning. By analysing the content of these assessments in general, teachers can discern not only the extent to which students have grasped key concepts but also areas where further intervention may be merited. Teachers can therefore customise their instruction to suit the students' requirements, and in doing so, promote a positive teaching-learning process. In addition, assessments give information and feedback that summarises the teaching and learning process, which is usually conducted after the learning has been finished (Northern Illinois University Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning, 2012).

Despite heavily relying on using English tests to measure the performance of students, there is an existing gap in understanding the alignment of these to the present learning competencies. This gap raises questions about whether these tests reflect or perhaps emphasise the necessary content that a student must possess at a particular level. Thus, unveiling the patterns of quarter tests could provide insights into improving test construction in English and could perhaps reveal potential solutions to address the problem of students' English performance.

On this note, it was a challenge for teachers to assess their students during the pandemic (Sandvik et al., 2022), in addition to teachers' multiple responsibilities (Cristobal, 2022). In the local scene, a way to address this issue was through the initiatives of the teachers, as test constructors, based on the directives of the district supervisor to implement unified quarter tests for the whole district. This required teachers to work with their corresponding master teachers to construct test questions based on the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs). Taking this into account, it is of great concern for this study to analyse the existing quarter tests, particularly in English, to uncover their significance in the present teaching-learning process. Thus, this study aims to provide insights into the design, structure, and content priorities of quarter tests in English 4-6, with implications for curriculum development, assessment practices, and educational policy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilises qualitative content analysis as a research design. By employing qualitative content analysis, the quarter tests in English in grades 4, 5, and 6 were analysed. By definition and use, qualitative content analysis offers a methodical approach to reveal bigger themes, concepts, and patterns in the data to understand the context and significance of the information based on source material (Delve et al., 2023). It is the most appropriate because it enables the researchers to explore the underlying nuances of the test construction solely based on the source of data. Further, analysing tests qualitatively allows an in-depth understanding of the test material in each of the specific identified aims of the study. Lastly, this design supports the essential discussions on the potential implications of the results of the study.

Sources of Data

This qualitative study utilises quarterly tests in English as the main source of data and the basis for content analysis. All quarterly tests utilised for analysis were from grades 4, 5, and 6 English only, and all test items in all the quarterly tests used the multiple-choice type of tests. In these grade levels, learning English is considered a "read to learn" phase for the students. A school year is divided into four quarters; consequently, there are

four quarter tests in English for each grade level. Overall, there were 12 quarterly tests analysed in this study. Additionally, these quarter tests were utilised as quarterly assessments for students in a public school.

In the context of the study, some of these quarter tests collected and analysed are still in the process of peer review of their content, with due consent from the test constructors. Thus, the rawness of the data has made the study relevant in terms of analysis, as it can capture insights for broader discussion. Furthermore, the analysis of quarter tests from grade levels 4, 5, and 6 provides a larger overview of students' progression in English across different targeted language skills.

Data Analysis

The researchers developed a coded analysis of the data to identify any patterns, trends, or commonalities of these quarter tests to answer the aim of the study. Further, a coding technique was developed based on the content analysis process of Hurst (2023). It was tailored to the context of this study. This is done to carefully categorise and code data accordingly to reveal key patterns and uncover commonalities within the test materials in English. Hurst (2023) proposed the following steps in analysis: *selecting content, collecting and storing, analysing, and writing*.

While selecting the content, it is important to establish a clear link between the study's questions or aims and the type of content. Research questions in the form of statements of the problem of study were first identified along with the identification of the data source. As the next step, after collecting the data, the researchers obtained the informed consent of the test constructors while informing them of the aim of the study. After securing their permission, the test materials were conveniently stored in soft copies (document format). Further, in the analysis step, the patterns were thoroughly extracted using the analysis technique mentioned. This led to the final step of writing the results based on the analysis. In the final step, the discussion of the findings and interpretation of the content was linked to the research questions of the study.

First, the content and distribution of questions were examined within the tests. A validated rubric was developed to specifically examine the scope

and quality of content and the range and disparity of questions based on revised Bloom's taxonomy of the test material. This was done through tabular presentations, comprehensively showing the generated standards, acceptable standards, and below standards analysed by the raters. Then, the expert validators of the study identified any recurring topics, concepts, or skills emphasised in the assessments. The results were shown through tabular presentations, indicating the frequency of occurrences to show how often it occurred within the tests, allowing the researchers to draw conclusions. Further, the expert validators evaluated the alignment between test content and content standards or curricular objectives. Relative to this, the rubric was also used as a tool to verify if the test content completely aligned with content standards in English, and if the test questions completely aligned with Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) in English, and lastly, if the test questions were parallel to the prepared Table of Specifications (TOS). The summary of results was presented in a table to show the occurrence of poorly aligned, partially aligned, and completely aligned test materials.

To establish the rigour of the study, a thorough cross-validation of the research instruments and findings was done through the collaboration of ELT experts. This included frequent consultations and detailed feedback processes. The analyses of the tests were conducted following data validation, ensuring the integrity, accuracy, and reliability of the findings of the analysis. Lastly, the potential implications of test content and emphasis on student learning and instructional practices were also explored.

All quarterly tests used in the study are treated concerning the intellectual property of their test constructors. This means that informed consent was obtained. Further, to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the names of test constructors and schools were not identified during the coding of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section objectively reports the results and comprehensively discusses the corresponding interpretation of the content analysis of 12 quarter tests, subsequently based on the identified statement of the problem of the study.

Content and Distribution of Questions within the Tests

In the content analysis of 12 quarter tests in Grades 4, 5, and 6 English, the study examined the content and distribution of questions within the tests. Firstly, *content* is operationally referred to as the scope or coverage of the quarter tests. Secondly, *content* is also operationally referred to as the quality of work in terms of basic language conventions. This focus ensures that the exam not only comprehensively covers all learning competencies but also adheres to standards of linguistic accuracy, especially since this is a language subject (English). On the other hand, *distribution* is operationally defined as the allocation of Bloom's cognitive level in the revised format in test materials. For this reason, these are translated into tables presenting the coded standards, acceptable standards, and below the standard in terms of content.

Table 1: Coded Standards, Acceptable Standards, and Coded Below Standards for Content

A. Coded Standards		Frequency Percentage	
1. All learning competencies are covered in the quarter test.	8	67%	
2. The quarter test is free from language errors.	2	17%	
B. Coded Acceptable Standards		Frequency Percentage	
1. 50-75% of the learning competencies are covered.	3	25%	
2. The quarter test is almost free from language and technical errors (spelling, punctuation, grammar, spacing, etc.)	8	67%	
C. Coded Below Standards		Frequency Percentage	
1. Below 50% of the learning competencies are only covered.	1	8%	
2. The quarter test contains language and technical errors and is unsystematic / disorganised	2	17%	

Table 1 (A) presents the coded standards for content as observed in the analysis of 12 quarter tests in English. As gleaned from the table, 8

quarter tests covered 100% of the required coverage in a quarter. This means that these test constructors were able to trail around with all the listed learning competencies or topics in a quarter. Moreover, only 2 quarter tests analysed by all raters were able to meet the quality of content, which is free from any language errors. Additionally, section B in the table shows the coded acceptable standards for content as observed in the analysis of 12 quarter tests in English analysed by all raters. It can be seen (B), that 3 quarter tests had only covered 50-75% of the learning competencies. This means that a few topics were not covered in the test material. While 8 quarter tests had language and technical errors observed by all raters, Section C shows the 'coded below standards' for content. It was observed by all raters that only 1 test quarter had only a few of the learning competencies; on the other hand, 2 quarter tests had noticeable errors in language and technicalities.

As implied by Nasr (2021), a good test should highlight the comprehensiveness of its content to ensure the quality of the items it contains. The analysis of quarter tests indicates a considerable percentage of adherence to its scope or coverage, but it is still presenting significant issues in language and technical accuracy. Some of these observable errors included errors in subject-verb agreement, errors in spelling, unnecessary capitalisation, etc., as evidenced in the snippets images below.

Vet: a doctor who practice veterinary medicine
a. vegetarian b. veterinarian c. veteran d. Vietnamese

A quarter test that contains an error in subject-verb agreement. The proper form should be "practices" to comply with the subject-verb agreement requirements. The sentence in question featured the verb "practice," which did not agree with the singular subject "Vet." To guarantee the test's grammatical accuracy and equity for every student, this error has to be fixed.

1. I wanted to buy a newspaper _____ I don't have enough money.
a. And
b. But
c. Or
d. Forh

There was a misspelling of the word "for" in one of the exam choices. It was also observed that the conjunctions in the selections don't need to be

capitalised because they should flow naturally into the sentence. To preserve the integrity of the test and guarantee that all of the alternatives are accurate and grammatically correct, these mistakes must be fixed.

1. What did the fox felt one hot summer day?
a. Sad b. thirsty c. afraid d. happy

The above test question had a verb usage problem in the stem. For clarity and to have proper sentence structure in the test, the word “felt” should have been in its base form “feel,” as it follows the auxiliary verb “did.” This grammatical error is required to be fixed. Correcting such errors is crucial to preserving the assessment’s quality and accuracy.

The errors made on these tests concur with the findings of Cristobal (2022). In his study on the violated test construction principles of selected summative tests in English, he asserted that a great number of these analysed tests violated several principles in vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension tests (Cristobal, 2022). This indicates an issue in test designs that could compromise its content in terms of quality. Such oversight suggests a need for test constructors to consistently revisit their test construction practices. It is important that teachers receive adequate assistance to develop effective and quality assessments, especially given the shifts, such as the pandemic (Sandvik et al., 2022), in the education landscape. By improving the content (coverage and quality) to align with its standards, the effectiveness of these quarter tests can significantly contribute to the enhancement of assessment outcomes.

Table 2. Distribution of questions within the tests based on the revised Bloom’s taxonomy

Cognitive Level	IV	V	VI	Total	Percent age
Remembering	39	37	35	111	22.6%
Understanding	52	27	53	132	26.8%
Applying	23	24	22	69	14.0%
Analysing	23	38	27	88	17.9%
Evaluating	10	42	31	83	16.9%
Creating	5	2	2	9	1.8%
Total				492	100%

Table 2 shows the distribution of test questions based on the revised Bloom’s taxonomy of learning objectives. For the *remembering* level, 111 test items (22.6%) are from the overall test item of 492. To remember is to retrieve relevant

knowledge from long-term memory (Krathwohl, 2002). This dealt with questions such as defining specific terminology or terminologies, recalling basic ideas, or memorising facts. Oftentimes, responses to this type of question can be found in the given text. Below are snippets of questions that pertain to this level.

19. It is a sentence that tells what the paragraph is about. It is what the writer wants us to know and remember about the topic in the paragraph. It is called _____

- A. Main Idea B. Specific Sentences
C. Supporting Details D. General Sentences

To answer test item #19, students are required to recall their knowledge about the parts of a paragraph and their definitions and functions. In this case, students need to remember facts about the parts of a paragraph (such as the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence), their definitions, and their functions. This is purely a retrieval of information that they have previously learned.

28. How many families were the beneficiaries of the Sagip Gutom Program?
A. 1000 B. 100 C. 10 D. 5
29. Who sponsored the Sagip Gutom Program?
A. Hapag Kainan Foundation C. Paghapag Foundation
B. Kahapag Kasubo Foundation D. Pagsubo Foundation

The answers to these test items (28-29) are explicitly found in the news report provided in the test material. These test items require students to read the news report first; hence, these test questions exemplify the remembering level. The remembering level, the foundational layer in Bloom’s taxonomy, focuses on the ability to recall and recognise information. Since the answers are directly stated in the text, students must simply retrieve these specific details from the report, demonstrating their ability to remember and locate explicit information.

For *understanding*, a total of 132 test items belong to this second level, with the largest percentage (26.8%) among all the levels. This could be the widest level as it had the greatest number of sub-categories, namely: interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarising, inferring, comparing, and explaining (Krathwohl, 2002). 69 test items (14.0%) were related to the *application* level. This last level of lower-order thinking skills requires students to carry out or utilise a procedure in a provided situation or scenario (Krathwohl, 2002). Below are snippets of test items, which are examples of understanding and application levels.

5. When I grow up, I want to be an entrepreneur like Henry Sy of SM and Tony Tan Caktiong of Jollibee.

- A. artist B. performer C. businessman D. teacher

For this test item (#5), students are expected to infer the meaning of the unfamiliar word 'entrepreneur' using context clues found on the stem of the test item. A hint or clue is given (like Henry Sy of SM...) to help the students unlock the underlined word in the statement. Besides, the students need to understand the meaning of the words in the choices (artist, performer, businessman, and teacher). Clearly, this test item belongs to the understanding level under the sublevel of inferring (the meaning of unknown words).

Choose the letter of the correct answer that corresponds to the Filipino characteristics being portrayed in each situation. (16-20)

16. Manong Tony and his family survived many calamities in our country even all their livelihood resources were being damaged.

- a. Resilient
b. Hospitable
c. Respectful
d. Hardworking

For test items #16 to #20, students are expected to use their knowledge of Filipino characteristics in the given scenarios presented in the stem of the test items. In other words, they need to apply their understanding by choosing the characteristics of the new situation correctly. These test items are examples of the application level.

Moreover, for the *analysis* level, a total of 88 test items (17.9%) were in this fourth level. At this level, students are expected to break concepts into parts and detect how these parts relate to one another, to the overall structure and purpose (Krathwohl, 2002). This level goes beyond lower-order thinking skills (remembering, understanding, and applying) wherein students start to analyse their knowledge using their judgment. On the other hand, for the *evaluation* level, a total of 83 test items (16.9%) were in this fifth level. This level requires students to evaluate concepts, ideas, materials, and objects. Additionally, at this level, students have to make judgments based on criteria and standards (Krathwohl, 2002). Below are the examples of test questions that belong to the analysis and evaluation levels in snipped images.

D. Identify the author's purpose in writing the given passage.

19. Protect yourself and others from COVID-19. If COVID-19 is spreading in your community, stay safe by taking some simple precautions, such as physical distancing, wearing a mask, keeping rooms well ventilated, avoiding crowds, cleaning your hands, and coughing into a bent elbow or tissue. Check local advice where you live and work. Do it all!

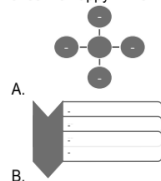
The author's purpose is to:

- a. instruct where to buy cheaper mask
b. tell the places most affected by COVID-19
c. persuade readers to follow safety health protocols
d. describe how to COVID-19 affected the lives of the people

Identifying the author's purpose in writing on the given passage for test item #19 is an example of the analysis level because this requires students to break down the given text and look for key components like supporting details or evidence to help them identify the purpose of the written passage. This level requires students to make a careful examination of how the sentences contribute to the overall message of the author.

Directions: Choose the most appropriate graphic organizer to present the important details in each paragraph/text.

27. My teacher is a very nice person. She smiles most of the time. She encourages us to study hard and to do our best. She looks pleasant and approachable. Seeing her every day makes me happy. I like my teacher so much.



Choosing an appropriate graphic organiser to present important details is an example of evaluating level (test item #27) because it requires the students' judgment on the suitability of the different graphic organisers in the choices. At this level, they need to assess various types of graphic organisers to determine which one best serves the given scenario. This involves the decision-making process of evaluating the strengths and limitations of each option concerning the nature of information, and that is to give justifications why the teacher is a very nice person.

Lastly, for the *creation* level, only 9 test items (1.8%) were there in this final level out of 492 test items. The highest level in the hierarchical structure had the least number of test items. The subcategories of this level include generating, planning, and producing (Krathwohl, 2002). Below is an example of the creating level exemplified in a snipped image below.

40. Put the words in the correct order to make a sentence.

arm, Alita`s, broken, completely, was

- Broken arm was completely Alita`s.
- Completely broken arm was Alita`s.
- Was arm completely Alita`s broken.
- Alita`s arm was completely broken.

The test item (#40) above requires students to arrange the jumbled words to make a sentence. This follows the level of “putting the elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product” (Krathwohl, 2002). The students need to arrange the words which involve their ability to ‘create’ the sentence from the given words (parts). By doing so, the students will be required to generate a coherent output (produce a meaningful sentence) while planning the structure and considering knowledge of grammatical relationships (functions of the words).

As a result, the dominant levels were found to be in the understanding level (26.8%) followed by the remembering level (22.6%). Similarly, a content analysis of teacher-made test questions in English using the revised Bloom’s taxonomy framework done by Musliha et al. (2021) revealed lower cognitive cognitions and limited higher-order thinking. Remembering and understanding levels are more noticeable, while only six out of eighty questions were of higher-order thinking skills. Also, in a content analysis of Science textbooks, Derico et al. (2018) reveal that the understanding level is the most dominant in the 9th grade, which “is a contradiction between the prescribed learning competencies of the textbooks and the K-12 envisions.” However, Derico et al. (2018) argue that having lower levels should not be the basis of discernment of prescribed learning materials in DepEd, but rather, remembering and understanding levels are fundamental and wider in scope. While it is essential to acknowledge the foundational roles of the lower levels of cognition, future tests should balance the emphasis on both lower and higher levels to align with the intended goals and actual tests.

3.2 Recurring Topics, Concepts, or Skills Emphasised in the Assessments

On the same 12-quarter tests, the content analysis of the recurring topics, concepts, and skills was conducted in these assessments. Particularly, an examination of the diversity of topics and concepts, the variety of skills assessed, and integration with other learning

areas was conducted thoroughly. The tabular presentations below are the results of quarter tests on these areas, subsequently followed by their comprehensive discussion.

Table 3. Frequency of Recurring Topics, Concepts, or Skills Emphasised

Coded Topics, Concepts, or Skills	Frequency of Occurrence
Unlocking: Inferring unfamiliar words using context clues, word association	6
Paragraph development: Composing paragraphs, essays	4
Using resources (printed and online)	1
Text types; Text discrimination	3
Parts of speech	6
Using graphic organisers	1
Elements of a short story	2
Elements of writing; Filling out forms; Composing sentences	6
Facts and opinions	2
Identify point-of-view; Viewpoints	2
Viewing materials; Analyse visual elements and multimedia, making connections from viewed materials	3
Infer the speaker’s tone, mood, and purpose; Detecting word choice biases from speakers	3
Restating sentences heard	1
Infer the target audience	1

Table 3 shows the list of recurring topics, concepts, or skills emphasised in the analysed quarter tests (N=12). As seen on the table, quarter tests in grades 4, 5, and 6 emphasised the topics, concepts, or skills on – unlocking or inferring unfamiliar words using context clues or word association, using the different parts of speech, as well as on writing and composing sentences.

In general, the quarter tests encourage students to infer the meanings of unknown terms from the surrounding text. This ability is essential for improving reading comprehension and empowering them to handle difficult words on their own. Second, an emphasis on parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.) helps students understand the structure of the English language. Mastery of this area is foundational for both

writing and reading comprehension. Third, most quarter tests exposed students to creating or composing clear and coherent sentences, which is fundamental for effective communication. This includes understanding simple, compound, and complex sentences throughout the grade levels. Moreover, the next table (Table 4) is the list of recurring macro skills in the analysis of the 12 quarter tests in English.

Table 4. List of Recurring Macro Skills found within the Quarter Tests

Macro Skills Assessed	Frequency of Occurrence
Reading and Comprehension	12
Writing	6
Viewing	4
Listening	2

As presented in the table, all test materials required students' reading and comprehension skills. This includes vocabulary building, discriminating texts, inferring, understanding contexts, etc. Subsequently, writing skills were assessed on 6 quarter tests, which generally require students to write or compose sentences showing relationships and develop or construct paragraphs. Moreover, four of the analysed quarter tests assessed the viewing skills of the students. These include, but are not limited to, the skills that require students to analyse visual materials and develop graphic organisers. Significantly, listening skills were only present in 2 quarterly tests among the tests analysed by the rater and the validator.

The analysis disclosed the representation of the different language skills assessed, but mostly in reading and comprehension. The fact that the writing skills were frequently assessed could suggest an elaboration of the production skills of the language. The inclusion of viewing skills underscores the relevance of visual literacy in modern learning of the language. However, the finite testing of listening skills could suggest improvement in future assessments to balance the interdisciplinary nature of learning the English language, if the concern is the holistic learning experiences of the students. Furthermore, in addition to the topics and skills assessed in quarter tests, there is the integration of concepts with other learning areas. In the next table is the frequency of learning areas integrated as observed by all raters of the quarter tests.

Table 5. Integration with other Learning Areas

Coded Learning Areas	Frequency of Occurrence
Science	4
Health	4
Values Education	3
Arts	1
Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE)	2
Mathematics	1
Social Sciences	2

Table 5 shows the list and frequency of occurrence of other learning areas integrated within and across the quarter tests analyzed by all raters. Significantly, four quarter tests had an integration on Science and Health. This is an indication that test constructors emphasized Science and Health, especially connecting the previous experiences of the students during the pandemic. This implies that test constructors recognized the importance of integrating health-related and scientific concepts, not only for academic learning but also for promoting students' well-being and understanding of real-world issues. To support, this is evidenced by some of the snippets of test items below.

19. Protect yourself and others from COVID-19. If COVID-19 is spreading in your community, stay safe by taking some simple precautions, such as physical distancing, wearing a mask, keeping rooms well ventilated, avoiding crowds, cleaning your hands, and coughing into a bent elbow or tissue. Check local advice where you live and work. Do it all!

The author's purpose is to:

- instruct where to buy cheaper mask
- tell the places most affected by COVID-19
- persuade readers to follow safety health protocols
- describe how to COVID-19 affected the lives of the people

For example, a test item (#19) shows an integration on Health that specifically shares a text about COVID-19 while evaluating the purpose of the author in the test. The test makes a direct connection to students' previous experiences by incorporating a text about COVID-19. The test may become more meaningful and interest students more as a result of its relevance.

11. We had a staycation during the COVID-19 pandemic because we were not allowed to go out of our house.

- A vacation at the beach
- A vacation at home
- a vacation at the farm
- a vacation at the resort

12. The hi-tech super microscope is very helpful to the scientists who study about the nature of coronavirus.

- a style of material
- the science of arts
- a kind of equipment
- technologically advanced

Another seamless integration is done on the test items (#11-12) above. Topic about COVID-19 has been integrated into these test items while unlocking the meaning of the unfamiliar blended

words, *staycation*, and *hi-tech*. Through this integration technique, the test helps students understand and remember these terms more effectively. The pandemic has popularised many new terms, and integrating them into test items makes learning more relevant and engaging.

On this note, the analysis shed light on the recurring topics and skills of the analysed English quarter tests given by the test constructors. Drawing upon the insights of the study of Levi & Inbar-Lourie (2019), the assessment literacy for teachers and the ability to integrate other components should be highlighted as test constructors in the context of seeing assessment as a valuable learning tool for improving student achievement Tontus (2020) and promoting engagement. Analysing recurring components related to topics of English quarter tests serves to inform future efforts in crafting the balance in the student's evaluation of the targeted English competencies in line with the curriculum (Department of Education, 2015).

Alignment between Test Content and Content Standards or Curricular Objectives

After a thorough content analysis of 12 quarter tests, the results on their alignment to the test content and content standard or curricular objectives are presented in a tabular presentation below. Specifically, it qualitatively examined the alignment of test content to content standards in English, the alignment of test questions to the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) in English, and the alignment of test questions to the prepared Table of Specifications (TOS).

Table 6. Alignment of Test Content to Standards and Objectives

Coded Alignment Standards	Poorly Aligned	Partially Aligned	Completely Aligned
Alignment of Test Content to Content Standards in English	0	2	10
Alignment of Test Questions to Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs)	0	4	8
Alignment of Test Questions to the Table of Specifications (TOS)	0	2	10

As indicated in the table, the test content of 10 quarter tests completely aligned to content standards in English, while 2 were partially aligned as analyzed by all validators. This means that most of the analyzed contents of quarter tests were parallel to curricular standards necessary to be attained by the students in English. Also, the test questions of 8 quarter tests analyzed by all raters were completely aligned to Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), while the remaining 4 were partially aligned. This further indicates that all test questions prepared in most tests were anchored on the required learning competencies in English needed in a quarter. Lastly, the test questions of the 10-quarter test analyzed completely aligned to the Table of Specifications (TOS) prepared by the test constructors respectively. This means that the test questions in most quarter tests in English agreed with the Table of Specifications (TOS) prepared. On the contrary, 2 quarter tests were partially aligned as evidenced by a snapped image of a specific misalignment on one of the test items.

		No. of Items	Test Placement
Fill out forms accurately EN5WC-IIj-3.7	3	1	1

1. What do you call a person who deposits or places money in a bank account?
a. bank teller b. cashier c. depositor d. manager

While the learning objective requires students to *fill out forms accurately*, the test item (#1) constructed intends to assess otherwise. To assess students' skill in filling out, the crafted test item asked to name a person instead. This is a demonstration of the misalignment of test questions to the prepared TOS.

Interestingly, in this particular aspect of analysis, the analyzed quarter tests established a direct adherence specifically in terms of the alignment of test content to standards and objectives. This further revealed a pattern in the conforming principle in test-making with the prepared standards and objectives. Similarly, Alonzo et al. (2023) uncovered a significant finding in their study that TLE teachers manifested a high level of awareness of the standards set in the context of outcomes-based education, however, there was a challenging gap observed on exercising their assessment practices to their students. Notably,

it can be regarded in the present study that test constructors gave attention to the alignment trend on preparing quarter tests by unpacking the standard, making sure learning competencies engage with the standard, anchoring the objectives (prepared TOS) to learning competencies, and aligning test questions to the objectives. This approach of the test constructors highlights the critical importance of aligning the assessments to the intended outcomes thereby contributing to the efficacy of the language curriculum.

Implications of Test Content and Emphasis on Student Learning and Instructional Practices

The results of the analyzed quarter tests shed light on its focus on assessing the English language for Grades 4-6. Primarily, the test constructors gave remarkable attention to the scope or coverage of content. Additionally, part of their conformity is adhering to content standards and may be regarded as a manifestation of the practice of standard-based instruction. The clarity of the alignment among these test materials in vital aspects strongly supported this significant pattern of conforming to standards, while assessing the students in English. This closed the gap in the tests' alignment to standards. Certainly, it may safely be told that students have been assessed based on the outcomes and expectations of learning English language curriculum in context with their level.

Notably, most of the test materials made a satisfactory display of content quality. While some of the test questions contained grammatical errors, these were tolerable in the eyes of the students and did not cause total confusion or ambiguity to them. To add, most of these test questions satisfactorily assessed the students' lower cognitive levels following the revised Bloom's taxonomy in a quarter test. However, this can be a good basis and a priority for quality improvement and also a continuous modification of test materials to strike a balance of lower and higher-order thinking skills. This further implies a hint of constantly developing test materials as part of post-assessment practices in schools.

Significantly, topics and concepts assessed within test materials were intentionally designed to evaluate students' learning of the language. Moreover, there should also be an equilibrium of

topics and concepts to cater to the different learning competencies. With regard to the skills assessed, a focus on reading and comprehension was found, also there was less emphasis on other skills in English, such as but not limited to listening skills. Lastly, most of the test material made a venture to integrate other learning areas, which could have been enhanced by linking vital learning areas seamlessly and coherently.

Overall, the analysis of these quarter tests provided a comprehensive understanding into its breadth and depth, which helped reveal important key aspects that may serve as resources for test enhancement, modification, or refinement. Through this, results were discussed and collectively analysed to help understand the priorities and emphasis in content, distribution, topics, concepts, skills, and standards of English assessment in grades 4, 5, and 6 levels in the locale. After all, providing quality resources such as assessments will always be part of "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all." (SD Goal 4: Quality Education, 2023)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and discussions presented in the study, it is concluded that the analyzed Grades 4, 5, and 6 quarter tests in English unveiled patterns and content priorities. The findings of the study revealed the breadth and depth of the quarter tests in terms of content and distribution. The reoccurring topics, concepts, and skills have disclosed the assessment's emphasis on what key areas of the English language the students were assessed. Moreover, the analysis has exposed the quarter tests' substantial alignment with the intended learning outcomes in English.

Furthermore, this analysis may help test constructors recognize the importance of the peer-review process of test materials, especially on graded assessments such as quarter tests. It is recommended that revealed results may be utilized as priorities in conducting test material *writeshop* or sessions like Learning Action Cell (LAC). In addition, a school may create a team in a faculty solely for review and editing to intensify quality-assured assessment.

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