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An Investigation of Exposure to Informational Text through English Textbooks

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This study investigated the extent of informational text genre appeared in English textbooks at grades six, seven, and nine. Employing content analysis to analyze the literary forms, the researcher identified genre in each reading selection of each English textbook and classified it into six categories—fiction, information, biography, poetry, play, or fantasy. Especially, informational genre was classified further into two subcategories—non-narrative and narrative—in order to investigate the extent of non-narrative informational text only. The text genre was examined by analyzing (a) the number of reading selections representing each genre and (b) the number of words in reading selections devoted to each genre. The most frequent type of genre at grade 6 and 7 was fiction with 94% and 71% respectively, whereas at grade 9 it was devoted to information (51%), followed by fiction (37%). The largest number of words was devoted to fiction with 96% at the sixth grade and 70% at the seventh grade; on the other hand, for grade 9, it was devoted to information (46%), followed by fiction (39%). Although there was variance across different publishers, the informational text genre gained more significance as the grade level increased. In particular, the percentage of reading selections and words devoted to the non-narrative or expository informational genre was overall 4% at grade 6, 17% at grade 7, and 44% at grade 9. The findings demonstrated the need to pay more attention to informational literacy especially in the early grades for the development of balanced genre knowledge.

[genre/informational text/expository text/English textbooks]

I. INTRODUCTION

With many changes in literacy instruction such as the whole language movement or a call for use of literature, storybook reading has received the primary attention in the field of emergent literacy and has taken an important part of early emergent experience. Many researchers' investigation of varying aspects of storybook reading supports a large amount of attention to storybook reading (Kim & Im, 2009; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Yaden, Rowe, & MacGillivray, 2000). However, several researchers started to point out the importance of balanced genre knowledge development, questioning the narrative as primary hypothesis and calling for more attention to expository or informational text in early literacy development (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Duke, 2000; Newkirk, 1987; Pappas, 1991, 1993). Currently, informational literature written in a non-narrative mode is gaining popularity in classrooms in ESL context.

Despite calls for informational literacy, studies indicated, however, that little informational text has made its way into reading basals or textbooks (Caswell & Duke, 1998; Duke, 2000; Pappas, 1991). It was criticized that reading choices in schools are clearly skewed toward fiction or stories written in a narrative mode, especially in the early grades. Considering EFL context, as Kim (2008) addressed, there has been little research on informational text genre or informational literacy along with a lack of attention to informational literacy.

Thus, among many other aspects to be studied further, the researcher has questioned first how much attention is currently devoted to informational text genre or expository text in English textbooks. Exposure to a variety of texts is imperative for English language learners to have even in early schooling because there is no reason why narrative text must do for all and expository text must be put aside for later experience and also because they would encounter expository text most of their time at school later.

With such rationale, this study examined the presence of informational text genre in English textbooks at grades six, seven, and nine. The researcher identified genre in each reading selection of English textbooks at each grade level. The examination of text genre was made by determining the number of reading selections representing each genre and the number of words in reading selections devoted to each genre.

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which informational text genre appears in English textbooks of sixth, seventh, and ninth grades. Two research questions framed this study:

(a) What percentage of the reading selections and words in English textbooks at grades six, seven, and nine is devoted to the informational text genre?

(b) To what extent do these percentages vary across grade levels and publishers?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Revisit of the Narrative as Primary Hypothesis

There has been a common, longstanding, but unexamined assumption in literacy development that narrative texts are primary in early schooling. This narrative as primary assumption includes the unexamined belief that (a) young children are not capable of learning from informational texts, (b) their literacy development is better facilitated by stories, and (c) the developmental progression moves from story genre to informational genre (Adam, 1990; Egan, 1993; Wells, 1986). This exclusive emphasis on story during the elementary grades has resulted in little experience and few opportunities of reading, writing, and making meaning of expository texts or informational genre, limiting children's access to narrative texts in early literacy development.

From the early 1970s, as Armbruster (1992) reported, there was a pioneering call for denouncing the predominant use of fictional texts to teach reading and arguing for the incorporation of more expository materials in reading programs. Afterward, many researchers have started to question the "preponderance of narrative texts" (Caswell & Duke, 1998, p. 114) in children's literacy development, concerning that children's extreme exposure to narrative texts or story genre may lead to their unbalanced genre knowledge development (Chall et al., 1990; Donovan, 1996, 2001; Duke, 2000; Duke & Kays, 1998; Newkirk, 1987; Pappas, 1991, 1993).

Duke (2000) reported the paucity of informational text experience in the first grade of students in the United States. The investigation of 20 first-grade classroom selected from very low- and very high-SES school districts showed the scarcity of informational texts in classroom print environments, including classrooms walls and other surfaces, in classroom libraries, and during classroom written language activities. Furthermore, children spent a mean of only 3.6 minutes per day with the informational texts during the written language activities.

Such a lack of experience with informational texts due to the exclusive use of narrative texts may be a reason why students encounter difficulties of developing informational reading and writing skills at a later time. Newkirk (1987) addressed that "the early elementary years need not be a time when 'narrative must do for all.'" (p. 142). The difficulty that older students have with expository texts may be due to the "'great divide' theories that have excluded serious instruction in exposition in the elementary years" (p. 142). Similarly, according to Chall et al. (1990), the unbalanced genre knowledge instruction has triggered "fourth grade slump" in literacy development. In other words, an important shift comes to students, in which they newly encounter expository texts such as reports or essays around the fourth grade and face difficulties of reading and writing such

texts. Because the newly increasing expository texts require different skills and functions from reading narrative texts (i.e., the former requires information-getting skills to communicate the information, whereas the latter involves aesthetic and empathic functions), students may fall into slump and need to overcome this transition dilemma.

In a related work, Pappas (1991) strongly emphasized that we should reexamine the "unacknowledged narrative as primary ideology" (p. 460) in literacy development. If children are only exposed to stories and do not have any opportunity of interacting with information books, they will neither develop the skills of writing expository texts nor learn about the language functions of written language. Such unbalanced, "exclusive use of stories, thus, may end up being a barrier to full access to literacy" (p. 461).

The lack of attention to expository texts may derive from the unsupported belief that children at such young age may not be able to deal with the informational book genre. As Duke and Kays (1998) maintained, "inattention to expository texts in early childhood settings cannot be justified on the basis that children are unable to interact productively with these texts" (p. 314). Although little research has been done on the field of expository texts yet, several scholars have argued for children's capability of learning informational genre even in early schooling if the opportunities of engaging in informational books are given.

Pappas (1991) study reinforced the argument for this unexamined belief of children's inability of comprehending informational books. Pappas asked a five-year-old kindergartner to pretend readings in order to examine the ways of learning the differences or distinctive linguistic properties found in stories and nonfictional information books. The results of study indicated that young children were truly capable of processing nonfiction texts very well, learning to take on aspects of informational text only if the chances of interacting with this form of text were given. This case study, however, might have a limitation of drawing on the generalization about young children's capability in that only one subject was investigated, although it could provide deeper information on how an individual child interacts with both stories and information books.

Along the same line, Duke and Kays (1998) study also demonstrated evidence supporting young kindergarten children's capability in developing knowledge of information book language and learning distinctive linguistic features of the text of this kind. Duke and Kays asked 20 children in a kindergarten classroom to perform pretend reading informational books. After three months of exposure, they found the significant gains of informational genre development between before and after a three-month period of experience; that is, children's December readings contained more strong linguistic features of information book language than September ones. Kindergarten children were able to pick up the characteristics of informational text genre and showed their genre knowledge development even during the short period of three-month experience.

In brief, educators and researchers would need to pay more attention to the problem or the expository gap caused by the unbalanced genre knowledge instruction in early language learning. Even young children have the capability of differentiating the features of varying types of texts as well as developing their informational genre knowledge. Thus, it would be imperative to facilitate the inclusion of expository texts in instruction and educational materials as early as possible in order to foster young children's balanced literacy development, both story and informational literacy.

2. The Importance of Informational Literacy in Language and Literacy Development

Educators and researchers have examined how young children's experience of expository texts can make an impact on their literacy development (Caswell & Duke, 1998; Chall et al., 1990; Duke & Kays, 1998; Moss, Leone, & Dipillo, 1997; Pappas, 1991, 1993). Beyond preparing children to encounter with expository or informational texts later in schooling, children's chances of interacting with informational texts served as "an important catalyst for their overall literacy development" (Caswell & Duke, 1998, p. 109). Caswell and Duke's three-year case studies of two struggling students showed the significant role that non-narrative texts play in helping find the "world of literacy" (p. 108). In detail, one student had the personal history of learning disabilities, and the other was an immigrant child who had learning difficulties. After they experienced with non-narrative texts, they could overcome the learning difficulties, boost their interest in informational texts, and find real reasons or purposes to read and write—"literacy for 'real purposes'" (p. 115). These two children became more interested, purposeful, and active when they read and wrote. Non-narrative texts, thus, at least for some children, could play a pivotal role of helping struggling readers and writers enter "a 'way in' to the world of literacy" (p. 108), which had not been found through the use of narrative texts.

In addition to serving as a catalyst to literacy development, Yopp and Yopp (2000) proposed many other purposes to share informational books in early elementary schooling. Experiencing informational books provided students with exposure to a variety of text features, global structures, concepts, and specialized vocabulary, whereby they could expand their repertoire of background knowledge for later use. More importantly, sharing informational books could "capitalize on children's interests, whet their appetites for more information, and motivate them to read" (p. 412). Informational texts were significantly more beneficial than stories in contributing to children's motivation to read.

In sum, providing to children more experience with expository or informational texts exerts varying benefits on literacy and genre development. It helps young children overcome their challenging difficulties with expository texts when they encounter later in

schooling. It also serves as a catalyst for their overall literacy development because informational book experience facilitates reading and writing processes. Therefore, the longstanding, exclusive view of narrative texts as primary in early literacy development would require thorough reexamination.

3. Definitions of Informational Text, Expository Text, and Nonfiction

Calling for more engagement in informational text, a fundamental problem arises: there are different opinions in using such terms as informational text, expository text, and nonfiction. Some researchers make distinction in using these terms, whereas others tend to use them interchangeably. Such instability in definitions of the terms would urge practitioners to exercise care in generalizing from one study to another.

Rhetorical modes of discourse describe the variety, conventions, and purposes of the major kinds of writing, and four of the most common rhetorical modes include exposition, narration, argumentation, and description. In other words, exposition, or expository writing, is one of the four rhetorical modes of discourse. The purpose of exposition is to explain or inform something to the reading audience by definition, sequence, categorization, comparison-contrast, enumeration, process, problem-solution, description, or cause-effect. An expository text is representative of specific linguistic characteristics (i.e., co-classification, timeless present tense verb construction, and relational processes) and global elements. (i.e., topic presentation, description of attributes, and characteristic events), whereas a narrative text includes such elements as a theme, a plot, conflict(s), resolution, characters, and a setting. A variety of forms of expository text in nature include textbooks, scientific books or journals, term papers, reports, essays, encyclopedias, and newspapers, among other things. Plus, the term nonfiction is defined as one of the categories of literature genre consisting of works that deal with facts or real events, opposed to fiction.

Scholars, however, make different use of these three terms. Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002) *and* Duke and Bennett-Armistead (2003) described informational text as written about the world of information such as the biological, the physical, the social, and the applied sciences. They defined the term informational text to mean one type of nonfiction, along with biography as another type of nonfiction.

Mitchell (2003), on the other hand, used the term informational text interchangeably with nonfiction, which includes true-life adventure stories, history, science, dictionaries, encyclopedias, biography, autobiography, sports stories, photographic essays, first-person narratives, interviews, and so on. According to Mitchell, the genre of nonfiction is divided into two types: narrative nonfiction and non-narrative nonfiction.

In the meanwhile, Kletzien and Dreher (2004) pointed out that the term informational text is frequently used interchangeably with the term expository text. They also noted that

informational text can be found in a narrative or story format, especially for young children. For example, Joanna Cole's Magic School Bus books contain both narrative and expository writing. Thus, Kletzien and Dreher described informational text as narrative, expository, or a combination of the two, suggesting a broad definition of informational text to cover various forms of texts that deliver information.

III. METHOD

1. Grade and Textbook Selection

It has been noted that English language learners need exposure to a wide variety of text types form early schooling. In order to investigate whether young children experience such a various text type from an early age, the researcher determined to explore grade 6. Among other elementary grades, it seemed that the highest elementary grade or sixth-grade textbook holds some form of texts devoted for reading. The elementary English textbook mainly focuses on teaching spoken language or expressions to achieve various communicative functions. Thus, the texts included in the textbook can be merely considered as written language which is transformed from spoken language students learn, not as texts for real reading. Although the purpose of the texts was not for meaningful reading, the researcher included this grade level in that the texts were assigned to the 'Let's read' section and that they were written language served as text exposure to students. Plus, the researcher chose grade 7 and 9 to see any differences or progress in the inclusion of informational text between the two middle school grades' English textbooks *and* across the three different grades at both elementary and middle school levels.

Almost all of the published English textbooks of each grade level that were currently in use at the time of research, or year of 2009, were selected for analysis. If a publisher created two or more different English textbooks, one of them was randomly selected to include one textbook per one publisher. For grade 6, only one textbook that was commonly used for all elementary students was examined for analysis. For grade 7, the total number of publishers was 19. Four out of these publishers created two textbooks, and one publisher, three textbooks. One textbook per each publisher was randomly selected for analysis so as to be equivalent to publisher. Two textbooks were not available at the onset of research and excluded for analysis. As a result, the researcher examined 17 textbooks for grade 7. For grade 9, two publishers produced two textbooks respectively; likewise, one for each publisher was randomly selected for analysis. This led to the number of English textbooks examined as 12. For convenient reference, each textbook was coded with alphabets (i.e., a and b) for grade level and a series of numbers. For example, a textbook for grade 7 was

named as A1; one for grade 9, B1. The publishers of seventh- and ninth-grade English textbooks examined for this study are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Publishers of Middle School English Textbooks Examined

Grade 7			Grade 9	
Coruo	Didimdol	Sinsago	Kyohak	Didimdol
Kyohak	Doosan	Jinhak	Kumsung	Saehan
Kumsung	Parkmungak	Chunjae	Daeil	Joongang
Neungyule	Visang	Happy House	Daehan	Jihak
Daekyo	Sungandang	YBM Si-sa	Donghwa	Chunjae
Daehan	Eduwang		Doosan	Hyundae

2. Procedures

Two measures were employed to determine the presence of each genre in each English textbook at each of the grade levels examined. To do so, the part devoted to only reading among many other parts of a textbook was considered as a reading selection. First, the researcher read and classified all reading selections in sixth-, seventh-, and ninth-grade English textbooks according to one of six categories that represent genre: fiction, informational, biography, poetry, play, or fantasy. Especially, informational genre was classified into two subcategories depending on the rhetorical mode involved—non-narrative and narrative informational text genre. The development of six genre categories was based on the genre criteria addressed by Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002). Next, the researcher counted the number of words appearing in each reading text, including the title and the main text. In order to obtain totals, means, percentages, and mean percentages, MS-Excel program was used. Another researcher voluntarily helped with rating the genre to ensure accurate classification. The half of the English textbooks for each grade level was double-checked, and both raters showed quite strong agreement on the assignment of reading texts to categories about 89%.

3. Data Analysis

Using content analysis (Merriam, 1998), the researcher identified and classified the text genre appearing in each reading selection of English textbooks examined. The reading selections were assigned to one of the six genres—fiction, information (non-narrative or narrative), biography, poetry, play, or fantasy—and especially, informational genre was classified again into two subcategories, non-narrative and narrative, in order to investigate the extent of non-narrative or expository informational text only. The definition and explanation of each genre used in this study are briefly presented in Table 2 (refer to

Appendix A for the excerpts of reading texts that represent genres and Appendix B for the overview of the features of genres).

TABLE 2

Description of Genres

Genre	Description
Fiction	Stories that are convincingly true to life, including stories about adventure, family, growing-up, social issues, school, sports, to name a few * Other formats (e.g., email, letter, or dialogue) rather than story format considered as fiction only if a text talks about something fictional that can happen in the real world
Information	Texts written on any aspect of the physical, biological, and social world to inform * Various formats (e.g., dialogue, diary, or letter) considered as information only if a text deals with some facts and its purpose is to inform
Biography	Real stories about the life of an actual person of the past or present with the intent of commemorating
Poetry	The expression of ideas and feelings through a rhythmical composition which has special parts such as sound patterns, figurative language, and sense imagery
Play	Dramatic scripts intended to be acted, which has special parts such as acts and scenes
Fantasy	Stories that cannot happen in the real world or outside the realm of possibility (e.g., animals or inanimate objects come to life, future worlds are explored)

Note. Modified from Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002).

When classifying reading selections, the researcher took into account the extent to which each selection presented particular genre features. Especially when a certain reading selection is a hybrid text in which two different genres—fiction and nonfiction—coexist, then the researcher used her best judgment in rating a hybrid text. When the factual aspects of the reading text predominated and the purpose of the reading was to inform something, it was rated as information even though it was written in a narrative or a dialogue format. Similarly, when the text was biography but delivered in a dialogue format, it was rated as biography regardless of the rhetorical format involved because the chief purpose of the reading was to express a person's history. In contrast, when the predominant feature of the reading text was narrative, it was rated as fictional. In another form of a hybrid text, that is, when a reading selection is divided into two separate, related reading texts that contain different genres, for example of the mixture of fiction and informational text, the researcher made the final decision about the genre by determining which text is made up of greater number of words.

When it comes to the calculation of the number of words in a reading text, the researcher counted all the words written in each reading text, including the title of a text and the main text. If illustration (e.g., charts, diagrams, or figures) being within a main text is significant

enough for reading comprehension, words written inside the illustration were also counted. On the other hand, a before-you-read part frequently positioned between a title and a main text, in which pre-reading questions are provided, was excluded in calculation, and so was a vocabulary-tip part which gives the meaning of words or short expressions emerged from a main text. Plus, other types of instructional guidance or explanation which was supplementary and interrupted within a main text were counted out.

Lastly, mentioning about the definition of key terms (i.e., informational text, expository text, and nonfiction) used in this paper, the researcher employed what Kletzien and Dreher (2004) defined about informational text which takes such formats as narrative, expository, or a combination of the two and considered first of all whether the purpose of text is to explain and inform information and second, the types of rhetorical modes. In addition, the term non-narrative or expository informational text was interchangeably used with the term expository text. The researcher also agreed upon the idea that the genre of nonfiction is composed of informational text and biography.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Percentages illustrating the total number of reading selections of each type of genre appeared in English textbooks at grades six, seven, and nine are presented in Table 3. The most frequent type of genre appeared in English textbooks was fiction at grade 6 (94%) and 7 (71%). For grade 6, fiction was exclusively predominant, compared with a little or no inclusion of other types of genre. For grade 7, it included a variety of types of genre, but still fiction was the major text type to be provided for students through English textbooks. On the other hand, at the ninth grade level, the highest percentage of reading selections was devoted to information (51%), compared with fiction (37%). More specifically, 45% of reading selections was devoted to non-narrative or expository informational text genre.

TABLE 3

Types of Genre Included in English Textbooks: Total Percent of Reading Selections

		Information						
	Fiction	Non-nar	Nar	Biography	Poetry	Play	Fantasy	Total
Grade 6	94	6	0	0	0	0	0	100
Grade 7	71	17	8	1	1	1	2	101
Grade 9	37	45	6	5	1	2	3	99

Note. Totals may not equal 100 because of rounding. *Non-nar* refers to non-narrative; *nar* refers to narrative. Refer to APPENDIX C for the number of reading selections and words devoted to each genre in the seventh-grade English textbooks, and APPENDIX D in the ninth-grade English textbooks.

Since each of the reading selection does not have the same number of words written, the analysis only based on the number or percentage of reading selections may not generate accurate outcome, whereby another aspect of the number of percentage of words written in each reading selection was employed for more reliable analysis. Percentages illustrating the total number of words of each type of genre were presented in Table 4. When it comes to the percentage of words devoted to each type of genre in English textbooks, the similar results were found compared to the ones from the previous analysis of reading selections. The largest percentage of words was devoted to fiction with 96% at the sixth grade and 70% at the seventh grade, whereas the most frequent type of text genre for grade 9 was information (46%), followed by fiction (39%).

TABLE 4

Types of Genre Included in English Textbooks: Total Percent of Words

		Information						
	Fiction	Non-nar	Nar	Biography	Poetry	Play	Fantasy	Total
Grade 6	96	4	0	0	0	0	0	100
Grade 7	70	17	8	1	1	2	1	100
Grade 9	39	41	5	6	1	4	4	100

Note. Totals may not equal 100 because of rounding. *Non-nar* refers to non-narrative; *nar* refers to narrative. Refer to APPENDIX C for the number of reading selections and words devoted to each genre in the seventh-grade English textbooks, and APPENDIX D in the ninth-grade English textbooks.

According to the findings from Table 3 and 4, it is obvious that the percentage devoted to information overall became much greater as the grade level increased. If we only consider the non-narrative informational text genre across three different grade levels, the percentages of reading selections ranged from a high of 45% at the ninth grade, to 17% at the seventh grade, to 6% at the sixth grade (see Table 3). Likewise, the percentages of words ranged from 41% at the ninth grade, to 17% at the seventh grade, to 4% at the sixth grade (see Table 4).

If we only consider the percentage of words devoted to the non-narrative informational text genre, its increase rate accounted for approximately 10 times between grade 6 and 9 from 4% to 41%; between grade 7 and 9, about over twice increase from 17% to 41%. Overall, this shows that as the grade level increased, students could encounter expository text genre through English textbooks more frequently than narrative; in other words, expository text received more attention as the grade level went up. Similarly, as seen from Table 4, the percentages of words devoted to nonfiction (which is composed of information and biography), were also greatly increased from 4% at the sixth grade, to 16% at the

seventh grade, to 52% at the ninth grade.

Next, among many different genres, the informational text genre was separately investigated for the in-depth analysis. Table 5 presents the percentages of reading selections and words of informational genre included in each English textbook of grade 7. The percentages illustrating the informational text genre were divided into three types—non-narrative, narrative, or both in total.

TABLE 5
Percentage of Reading Selections (RS) and Words of Informational Genre in English Textbooks at Grade 7

	Non-narrative		Narrative		Total	
	RS	Words	RS	Words	RS	Words
A1	16.7	14.8	25.0	30.5	41.7	45.3
A2	16.7	20.1	8.3	9.7	25.0	29.8
A3	33.3	31.9	16.7	18.2	50.0	50.1
A4	10.0	8.8	10.0	11.1	20.0	19.9
A5	20.0	20.6	0	0	20.0	20.6
A6	25.0	24.6	0	0	25.0	24.6
A7	0	0	8.3	7.0	8.3	7.0
A8	25.0	23.4	8.3	6.7	33.3	30.1
A9	16.7	19.1	8.3	8.4	25.0	27.5
A10	0	0	0	0	0	0
A11	9.1	12.7	0	0	9.1	12.7
A12	25.0	24.5	0	0	25.0	24.5
A13	36.4	26.8	0	0	36.4	26.8
A14	26.0	25.8	8.3	8.8	33.3	34.6
A15	8.3	11.0	33.3	30.3	41.6	41.3
A16	0	0	0	0	0	0
A17	27.3	25.8	9.1	11.5	36.4	37.3
Total mean %	17.3	17.1	8.0	8.4	25.3	25.4

There was variance to some extent across different publishers in terms of the percentages of reading selections and words of informational genre. Only for the non-narrative informational genre, the amount of reading selections ranged from a low of 8.3% (A15) to a high of 36.4% (A13); the percentage of words ranged from a low of 8.8% (A4) to a high of 31.9% (A3). A publisher with the highest percentage of reading selections devoted to informational genre does not always mean that the publisher would contain the highest percentage of words to the same genre. When both non-narrative and narrative informational genre were considered, the percentage of reading selections ranged from a low of 8.3% (A7) to a high of 50% (A3); the percentage of words ranged from a low of 7.0% to a high of 50.1%. Moreover, there were two English textbooks that contained no

informational text at all. Overall, at the seventh grade, 17% of reading selections and words in English textbooks were devoted to non-narrative informational text genre; 25%, to informational text genre in total.

Next, Table 6 presents the percentages of reading selections and words of informational genre included in each English textbook of grade 9. Similar to grade 7, a wide range of percentage was found within individual publisher. The least percentage of reading selections devoted to non-narrative informational text genre was 25% (B12), and the highest, 75% (B10). As for the percentage of words, it ranged from a low of 23.7% (B12) to a high of 72.4% (B10). When both non-narrative and narrative modes were considered into informational text genre, the percentage of reading selections ranged from 30.8% (B7) to 75% (B10); likewise, the percentage of words ranged from 31.4% (B7) to 72.4% (B10). Unlike the seventh grade level, all publishers of the ninth grade level paid attention to the inclusion of informational genre into English textbooks. Overall, at the ninth grade, 44% of reading selections and words in English textbooks were devoted to non-narrative informational text genre; 48%, to informational text genre in total.

TABLE 6
Percentage of Reading Selections (RS) and Words of Informational Genre in English Textbooks at Grade 9

	Non-narrative		Narrative		Total	
	RS	Words	RS	Words	RS	Words
B1	28.6	24.0	23.8	22.3	52.4	46.3
B2	58.3	55.2	0	0	58.3	55.2
B3	42.9	36.2	7.1	7.9	50.0	44.1
B4	33.3	32.5	0	0	33.3	32.5
B5	56.5	51.1	8.7	8.7	65.2	59.8
B6	50.0	42.7	0	0	50.0	42.7
B7	30.8	31.4	0	0	30.8	31.4
B8	50.0	50.9	0	0	50.0	50.9
B9	41.7	40.3	8.3	9.6	50.0	49.9
B10	75.0	72.4	0	0	75.0	72.4
B11	50.0	41.7	0	0	50.0	41.7
B12	25.0	23.7	8.3	8.1	33.3	31.8
Total mean %	45.2	41.8	5.0	4.7	49.9	46.6

Compared to the results of grade 7 and 9, a substantial increase was found in terms of the extent of both non-narrative informational text genre only and informational text genre in total. In other words, the overall increase for non-narrative informational text genre was from 17% at grade 7 to 44% at grade 9; as for informational text genre in total which includes non-narrative and narrative, the increase was from 25% at grade 7 to 48% at grade

9. According to the Mann-Whitney test, it revealed that there was the significance of the difference between the two grade levels in all four aspects—the number of reading selections and words devoted to non-narrative informational text genre and that of reading selections and words devoted to informational text genre in total (p=.000 for all four tests). Such growth in percentages implies that as the grade level goes up, the significance of the informational text genre becomes greater. If we would expect to deal with informational text genre more often than any other genres at a later schooling, it would be better to enable students to have sufficient exposure to that genre as early as possible.

Table 7 illustrates the percentage of words devoted to a range of genre in English textbooks at grade 7. There was a wide variance among publishers in terms of the number of different genres included in their English textbooks. Two English textbooks (A10, A16) contained only fiction; eight English textbooks (A2, A3, A5, A7, A8, A13, A14, A15) included both fiction and information. With a relatively small percentage ranging from 6% to 13.9%, six English textbooks (A1, A4, A6, A11, A12, A17) contained three different genres, including one of the other genres—biography, poetry, play, or fantasy—other than fiction and information. One publisher (A9) created English textbook that has four different genres.

TABLE 7

Percentage of Words of Various Genre in English Textbooks at Grade 7

		Information						
	Fiction	Non-nar	Nar	Biography	Poetry	Play	Fantasy	Total
A1	40.8	14.8	30.5	0	0	13.9	0	100
A2	70.2	20.1	9.7	0	0	0	0	100
A3	49.9	31.9	18.2	0	0	0	0	100
A4	68.0	8.8	11.1	0	12.1	0	0	100
A5	79.4	20.6	0	0	0	0	0	100
A6	69.4	24.6	0	0	0	0	6.0	100
A7	93.0	0	7.0	0	0	0	0	100
A8	69.8	23.4	6.7	0	0	0	0	99.9
A9	54.7	19.1	8.4	0	0	11.8	6.1	100.1
A10	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
A11	77.2	12.7	0	0	0	0	10.1	100
A12	66.1	24.5	0	9.4	0	0	0	100
A13	73.2	26.8	0	0	0	0	0	100
A14	65.4	25.8	8.8	0	0	0	0	100
A15	58.8	11.0	30.3	0	0	0	0	100.1
A16	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
A17	51.2	25.8	11.5	11.6	0	0	0	100.1

Note. Totals may not equal 100 because of rounding. *Non-nar* refers to non-narrative; *nar* refers to narrative.

Similar to grade 7, the analysis of the percentage of words devoted to different text genres in the ninth grade English textbooks showed the variance across publishers in terms of the number of different genres included, as illustrated in Table 8. Two English textbooks (B2, B12) contained both fiction and information. Three different types of text genre, with either biography or fantasy added to fiction and information, were included in four English textbooks (B3, B9, B10, B11). With a relatively small percentage of words ranging from 4.1% to 16.7% devoted to genres other than fiction and information, three English textbooks (B1, B5, B8) included four different types of text genre; another three (B4, B6, B7) contained five different genres.

TABLE 8

Percentage of Words of Various Genre in English Textbooks at Grade 9

		Information						
	Fiction	Non-nar	Nar	Biography	Poetry	Play	Fantasy	Total
B1	39.4	24.0	22.3	7.4	0	0	6.9	100
B2	44.8	55.2	0	0	0	0	0	100
B3	46.3	36.2	7.9	0	0	0	9.7	100.1
B4	43.2	32.5	0	9.1	0	7.3	7.8	99.9
B5	25.8	51.1	8.7	4.1	0	10.2	0	99.9
B6	17.6	42.7	0	9.0	0	14.0	16.7	100
B7	43.9	31.4	0	7.4	7.0	10.3	0	100
B8	36.1	50.9	0	8.5	4.5	0	0	100
B9	42.6	40.3	9.6	7.5	0	0	0	100
B10	18.8	72.4	0	8.8	0	0	0	100
B11	46.9	41.7	0	11.4	0	0	0	100
B12	68.2	23.7	8.1	0	0	0	0	100

Note. Totals may not equal 100 because of rounding. *Non-nar* refers to non-narrative; *nar* refers to narrative.

Overall, as the grade level increased from grade 7 to 9, English textbooks contained more various types of text genre, and this phenomenon was more significant when grade 6 was altogether considered. As illustrated in Table 4, the English textbook was comprised of mostly fiction with 96% and information with a small percentage of 4%.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Findings of the present study indicate that the presence of informational text in English textbooks became more predominant than fiction as the grade level increased. For instance, the increases in the amount of non-narrative or expository informational text from sixth to

seventh to ninth grade were notable, increasing from 4% to 17% to 44%, respectively. Put it in another way, it means that students in the early grades have a relatively little exposure to informational text through English textbooks.

Along with narrative text to which young students have much exposure through experiencing fiction, they also need to have sufficient exposure to expository text as well, in order to achieve their balanced genre development. If they are not familiar with a certain type of text, they may feel difficulty when they encounter it later. Thus, it is imperative to provide opportunities of reading, writing, and making meaning of informational text in the early grades.

These had been a common but unexamined assumption that young students are not able to deal with informational text; on the contrary, researchers confirmed that even young students are capable of learning from informational text. Because they are equipped with the ability to process it and also because they would encounter it much more frequently in their later schooling, it is essential that they should obtain greater exposure to informational text from early schooling.

Different forms of written texts may serve different social purposes or communicative functions. In order to meet such unique communicative functions of each written genre, each form of text contains distinctive linguistic features as well as global elements. Along with the call for the compelling need for more attention to informational literacy in early schooling, it would be vital to understand first what informational or expository text looks like and what specific linguistic characteristics or global elements the text genre embraces, especially in order to teach their students how this text works and how they should prepare to deal with it (refer to Donovan, 2001; Donovan & Smolkin, 2002 for more detailed explanation on the features of informational genre).

Since there is a lack of research with regards to informational text, it would be of considerable value to conduct further studies to investigate various aspects associated with it. One of the themes to study can be motivation and engagement in working with informational text for young English language learners, which can be compared to narrative text which currently holds dominance. Informational text offers an entryway into the wonders of science, history, math, geography, or any of the other content areas, which is relevant to our life. For this reason, it may trigger more motivation and engagement in English learning for young students, probably in different ways fiction does. In addition, it would be worthwhile to explore ways how young English language learners can have more experience with expository text. They are required to learn from given English textbooks; however, there should be an alternative to provide more opportunities with informational text if the textbooks include an insufficient amount of it. Third, it would be also desirable to explore how they read, write, and interact with expository text. For example, how they interact with expository text can be examined by investigating their written responses to

see if the peculiar features of expository text are represented in their writing.

This study has limitations in several aspects. Only English textbooks were examined, and any other materials students may experience either inside or outside of school were disregarded. Thus, it may make it fail to examine the real amount of exposure to informational text they are having. In addition, it could be more comprehensive study if high school level was also included in the analysis. An examination of three main, subsequent grade levels—elementary, middle school, and high school—would have helped see how much exposure to informational text students have through English textbooks after the middle school level and if the increasing rate of informational text continues to go in the same direction or not. Finally, the study could be more valuable if it encompassed further analysis to explore how the text structure of each genre becomes sophisticated as the grade level increases.

Despite some limitations, the study has significance in that it calls for an awareness of balanced genre knowledge development from early schooling. The importance of informational literacy should be stressed in the early grades because the more various text types students have in their early schooling, the better they are in comprehending the text later. Along with the call for the importance of informational literacy, this study may provide insights into decisions about the types of text to include in English textbooks.

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APPENDIX A

Excerpts of Reading Texts That Represent Genres

[Fiction]

I Am a Guide Dog

I'm Bingo. I'm a guide dog. I'm helping Minji. She can't see. I feel sorry for her. I like her. She likes me, too. Mingi walks with me. With my help, she can walk well on the street. She can't run. I can run, but I don't run for her. I don't bark, either….Today, Minji and I took the subway. There were many people on the subway. They were kind to us. Other dogs couldn't enter the subway. But I could! I am a guide dog, you know….

(Excerpted from Parkmungak, Grade 7)

[Information—Non-narrative]

Cows Give Us Electricity

Pigs give us meat, chickens give us eggs, and cows give us… electricity? That's right! Cows can produce electricity. Where does the electricity come from? It comes from their waste. A cow can make about 12 kilograms of waster in a day. Think about the waste from all the cows in the world. That's a lot of waste. Cow waste gives off methane gas. It can be used to make electricity….

(Excerpted from YBM Si-sa, Grade 7)

[Information—Narrative]

Just Remember the Three R's!

Jina and her friends are working on a class project. Their project is about the three R's. They have to finish writing a report about them.. They visit Dr. Green because she know much about the three R's. Dr. Green asks Jina, "Do you know the three R's?" Jina answers, "Yes, I do. They are reduce, reuse, and recycle." Dr. Green says, "Good! Then, do you know the difference?"…

(Excerpted from Jinhak, Grade 7)

[Biography]

Ella Grasso: A Mother and a Governor

In the past, very few women were successful in American politics. Those who achieved high position did so because their family had the position before them. Ella Grasso, however, was different. Ella Grasso was born on May 10, 1919, in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, the daughter of Italian-American parents who had very little money. But she was a bright student, and she went to very good schools….In her twenties, Ella decided that she wanted to be in politics….

(Excerpted from Jihak, Grade 9)

[Poetry]

All Different Clouds

Adam

There are lots of clouds in the sky.
They're all different shapes way up high.
Sometimes clouds change colors too,
But very rarely they do….

(Excerpted from Didimdol, Grade 9)

[Play]

The Paper Bag Princess

Characters Princess Wisdom / Prince Pride / Dragon / Narrator

Setting In front of the dragon's cave

Narrator Once upon a time there lived a pretty princess whose name was wisdom. The princess lived in a castle and had many beautiful dresses. She was going to marry a prince named Pride. One day a large dragon destroyed her castle, burned all her clothes, and carried off Prince Pride….

Scene I

(Princess Wisdom in a paper bag dress comes to a cave with a large door and knocks on the door.)

Dragon (Comes out.) Well, it's another princess! I love to eat princesses, but I have already eaten a whole castle today. I am quite full now. (Closes the door.) Come back tomorrow.

Princess (Knocks on the door again.) Hi, dragon….

(Excerpted from Didimdol, Grade 9)

[Fantasy]

Looking Toward 2030

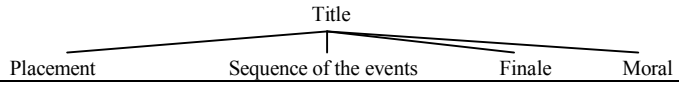
Home Watch Keyless locks will be common by 2030. Doors will open automatically when the right person comes up to them. Some devices will scan and recognize a person by his[her] voice or face. Others will recognize us, or even identify us by our DNA make-up.

Smart Home Smart homes not only will recognize us but also will respond automatically to our needs. They will not just do what they are programmed to do. The intelligent buildings of 2030 will also be able to learn. They will remember, for example, the user's likings for lighting levels and room heat.…

(Excerpted from Daehan, Grade 9)

APPENDIX B

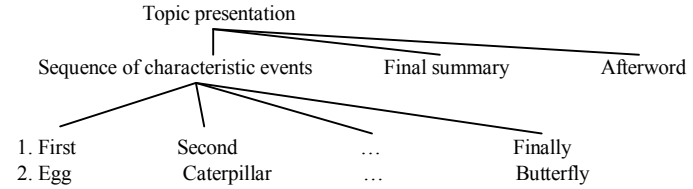
Overview of the Features of Genres

Genre	Features of the Genre
Fiction	*Linguistic features* • Cohesion: co-referentiality (connections within and across sentences are created in part through coreferentiality, the continuous referencing of specific characters through the story. • Tense: past or real time • Common sense vocabulary use • Formulaic openings ("Once upon a time…," "Once there was…") and endings ("The end") • Literary word order ("loudly came the scream") • Literary words and phrases ("she hurried past," "…in a land far, far, away") *Global elements* • Placements: description of the main characters and where the story takes place • Initiating event: first event or action of the story that creates a problem or conflict • Sequent events: events of the story in which characters work to resolve the conflict • Final events: conflict resolution • Finale: how things get back to normal • Moral: a lesson, typical in fables, is provided *Global structure* 
Information	
Narrative	*Narrative informational texts relate factual events over time.* *Linguistic features* • Cohesion: created in part through coclassification, the focus on a general class

of the topic and not on specific characters
- Tense: present or past
- Technical vocabulary use
- Formulaic openings (topic introductions such as "The female trapdoor spider chooses a place for her nest…")

Global elements
- Topic presentation: introduction of the topic
- Description of attributes: description of attributes of the topic or class
- Characteristic events: description of typical events that occur
- Category comparisons: description of two different members of the topic
- Final summary: recap of information presented in the book
- Afterword: presentation of additional information about the topic

Global structure



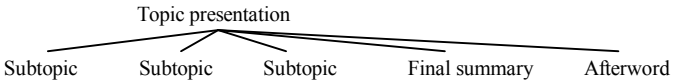
(Descriptive attributes or category comparisons may be presented for any of the events or subtopics covered with the events.)

Non-narrative

Linguistic features
- Cohesion: created in part through coclassification, the focus on a general class of the topic and not on specific characters
- Tense: generally "timeless" present
- Technical vocabulary use
- Formulaic openings (topic introductions such as "Elephants are…")

Global elements
- Topic presentation: introduction of the topic
- Description of attributes: description of attributes of the topic or class
- Characteristic events: description of typical events that occur
- Category comparisons: description of two different members of the topic
- Final summary: recap of information presented in the book
- Afterword: presentation of additional information about the topic

Global structure



(Descriptive attributes, characteristic events, or category comparisons are presented for any number of subtopics.)

Biography
- Usually chronological organization used

Poetry

Sound patterns
- Rhyme—repetition of similar sounds in two or more words. Types of rhyme include end rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and consonance
- Rhythm—pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in language

Figurative language
- Simile—a direct comparison, using a connective such as 'like' or 'as'
- Metaphor—an implied comparison
- Personification—the attribution of human qualities to an inanimate abject, an abstract idea, or a force of nature.

Play
- A play is divided into acts; in turn, each act is divided into scenes.
- Usually set, costume, and stage directions noted

	• Dialogue provided for each actor
Fantasy	• Settings, characters, plots, style, and themes vary tremendously in fantasy.

Note. Modified from Donovan (2001), Donovan & Smolkin (2002), and Tomlinson & Lynch-Brown (2002).

APPENDIX C

The Number of Reading Selections and Words in English Textbooks at Grade 7

		Information						
	Fiction	Non-nar	Nar	Biography	Poetry	Play	Fantasy	Total
A1	6 (897)	2 (325)	3 (671)			1 (305)		12 (2198)
A2	9 (1374)	2 (394)	1 (189)					12 (1957)
A3	6 (960)	4 (614)	2 (350)					12 (1924)
A4	7 (1218)	1 (158)	1 (198)		1 (217)			10 (1791)
A5	8 (1205)	2 (313)						10 (1518)
A6	8 (1604)	3 (568)					1 (138)	12 (2310)
A7	11 (2176)		1 (163)					12 (2339)
A8	8 (1325)	3 (445)	1 (128)					12 (1898)
A9	7 (1283)	2 (448)	1 (196)			1 (276)	1 (144)	12 (2347)
A10	12 (1803)							12 (1803)
A11	9 (1533)	1 (253)					1 (200)	11 (1986)
A12	8 (1218)	3 (451)		1 (174)				12 (1843)
A13	7 (1548)	4 (568)						11 (2116)
A14	8 (1585)	3 (626)	1 (214)					12 (2425)
A15	7 (1055)	1 (197)	4 (543)					12 (1795)
A16	12 (2047)							12 (2047)
A17	6 (800)	3 (403)	1 (179)	1 (181)				11 (1563)

Note. Numbers without parentheses indicate the number of reading selections. Numbers within parentheses indicate the number of words.

APPENDIX D

The Number of Reading Selections and Words in English Textbooks at Grade 9

		Information						
	Fiction	Non-nar	Nar	Biography	Poetry	Play	Fantasy	Total
B1	8 (2886)	6 (1753)	5 (1629)	1 (544)			1 (504)	21 (7316)
B2	5 (1732)	7 (2132)						12 (3864)
B3	6 (2297)	6 (1795)	1 (392)				1 (479)	14 (4963)
B4	5 (2636)	4 (1983)		1 (556)		1 (448)	1 (476)	12 (6099)
B5	6 (1484)	13 (2939)	2 (503)	1 (235)		1 (588)		23 (5749)
B6	2 (948)	6 (2301)		1 (485)		1 (757)	2 (903)	12 (5394)
B7	6 (2041)	4 (1460)		1 (344)	1 (326)	1 (478)		13 (4649)
B8	4 (2140)	6 (3015)		1 (505)	1 (269)			12 (5929)
B9	5 (1924)	5 (1822)	1 (435)	1 (338)				12 (4519)
B10	2 (845)	9 (3245)		1 (394)				12 (4484)
B11	5 (2657)	6 (2362)		1 (643)				12 (5662)
B12	8 (2831)	3 (982)	1 (336)					12 (4149)

Note. Numbers without parentheses indicate the number of reading selections. Numbers within parentheses indicate the number of words.

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Elementary/Secondary

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