



Elements of Content and Presentation of School History Textbooks for Vth Grade of Basic Education in Albania From 1946 to 1991

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Abstract

The study aims to provide a picture of the content and presentation of history texts for the fifth grade of basic education during the period of communist rule in Albania (1946-1991). Part of the analysis in the study are elements of design, organization of written text, book size, paper quality, font size, etc., as an important part of a textbook. The methodology used relies on the prevailing situation in the field and the lack of a single methodological model for studying history texts. For this reason, she relied on a list of questions about the content and pedagogic elements of history texts compiled by UNESCO expert Robert Stradling, adapted to the features of the historical period that include texts taken in the study. The analysis was accompanied by the processing of quantitative and qualitative data extracted from the history textbooks, including illustrations, classified into several sub-categories based on their importance for the development and acquisition by students of historical concepts of "change" and "continuity". The survey findings reflect the most important features of the field for a period of 45 years, some of whose deficiencies, despite ongoing improvements, continue to be present in current textbooks.

Keywords: Textual text model, physical features, text structure, readability

1. Introduction

Today in basic education, through the history teaching, it is aimed, inter alia, to equip students with intellectual abilities and qualities through the development and construction of a number of subject concepts and competences, which enable them to analyze information in a critical way, consequently, to interpret resources, building reasoned and argued explanations, and evaluating different interpretations of the past (Institute for Educational Development, Tirana, 2016). Historical knowledge that enables these goals is reflected in the curriculum, part of which are and textbooks as well.

It is not easy for textbook authors to adapt content with other curriculum requirements within a reasonable time frame. In addition, parts of a textbook are also other components of conceptual and methodological character, which in their entirety affect not only the degree of acquisition of student knowledge but also the realization of other important functions.

Design elements, organization of writing text, book size, paper quality, font size, etc. are part of the analysis in the field of textbook research.

In our study we will try to analyze the aforementioned elements in the textbooks of the history of basic education in the period 1946-1991 for which we do not know to have other similar studies.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 The textbook

The textbook has many functions. It is a very important instrument in the teaching process and continues to be considered as the central source of knowledge gained in school. Along with the transmission of knowledge, the textbooks also aim to develop the ability to argue, evaluate and form reasonable and rational opinions. They carry a global understanding of society's history and rules and living standards with others (Scissler, 1989-1990).

Different authors in their studies about the role played by history textbooks in the classroom join with the fact that they are an important instrument in student acquisition of knowledge (Foster, 2011).

In an effort to give a definition on what a textbook is, Ivan Ivić and Ana Pešikan consider such a teaching instrument or combination of them, which systematically reflects knowledge and information on a particular subject, designed from a didactic point of view, in line with a certain educational level and group of students, in order to fulfill the developmental and training role in building the knowledge of the latter (Ivić & Pešikan, 2013).

Based on the importance and its multi-dimensional functions, the textbook has become the object of studies and of numerous debates.

Certain views regarding content, presentation mode, language used, textual text reports, illustrations etc., have been reflected in a large number of studies. Parts of the latter have also been history textbooks as well.

The development of new technologies in the field of teaching has not diminished the dominant role of the history textbooks in this process (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2009). The debate on how will the curriculum (textbooks) reflect in a balanced way these knowledge, what knowledge / skill ratio will be, how content, reports, and parts should be presented etc., has never been interrupted. From this point of view textbooks authors always face different opinions, often critical ones, of teachers.

Research conducted in the field of compilation and production of history textbooks is scarce. They relate to research on textbooks in general. The categorization of a school text as "good" or "bad" is determined by the degree of its readability. Readability is a broad concept. Part of it is the sentence structure, illustrations, graphic design, paper quality, printing, font size, visual aspects in the text, information organization, clarity of meaning, and binding of books.

All this together with the interest and motivation of the reader affect not only the reading of a text but also its meaning (Jonson, 1998).

In their study on readability of the texts Tarasov, Sergeev and Filimonova present a summary of the results of studies conducted in this field since the 19th century to the present day. In conclusion, they point to the fact that although there are numerous studies of topography, there is no agreement among researchers about the factors that influence readability in a printed text. According to them this has to do with the lack of a unified methodology (approach) and is the main reason for the contradictory results in this direction (Tarasov, Sergeev & Filimonova, 2015)

2.2 Authors of history textbooks

With regard to the possible authors of textbooks, there are very few studies. According De Baets (1994), the author of the history textbook is considered as a mediator between historiography and society. Conducting studies in this viewpoint allow us to understand who are the authors of textbooks, their historical inspiration, and the nature of perceptions, part of their responsibility in compiling history textbooks.

Even with regard to critical review of history textbooks, studies are limited due to the lack of a clear evaluation methodology. Authors rely on individual criteria to write and evaluate their texts. The study in this regard focuses on:

- Prejudice and stereotype against other countries;
- Ideological Impacts in Historical Texts;

- Structure of text in history texts;
- Illustrations used;
- Readability; (Kabapinar, 1998)

2.3 Ideological impacts in history textbooks

When it comes to the values and importance of history, different scholars and historians have given their definitions. John Tosh among other things considers history as "a political battlefield" ... because the interpretations of our history from the institution penetrate everywhere through textbooks, press and television (Tosh, 2005). Texts promote political ideologies not only in dictatorial states. The ideological character of the system in which a history book is produced influences its content and presentation, offering more or less space for an independent opinion and debate (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2009).

3. The Physical Features of the Textbooks

3.1 Structure of text in history textbooks

The structure of the text is about how to organize written information. Together with the language they use, they play an important role in acquiring knowledge in history textbooks.

Armbruster (1988) lists three main reasons which make it difficult to read the content of a text by children. They are:

- ✓ Lack of prior knowledge regarding the content;
- ✓ Failure to use knowledge in reading even when children possess this knowledge;
- ✓ Knowledge about content is "encountered" and is hampered by new knowledge interference during the learning process

In an effort to identify the features that affect the acquisition and memorization of a text written in order to increase global textual coherence, Armbruster and Anderson created five key strategies that are:

- ✓ Selecting a general clear text structure;
- ✓ Access to chapters;
- ✓ Establishment of functional titles and sub-titles;
- ✓ Creating functional tables;
- ✓ Relocating trivial information to a trivial space in the text.

They also created a general structure called "Syn-Action-Result". This structure is supposed to structure "the main ideas" coupled with the explanation of historical events (Armbruster & Anderson, 1984).

3.2 Illustrations

Various experts are engaged in the production of manuals with instructions for improving the design or even other elements in the textbooks. Seguin (1989) suggests that illustrations should describe and explain faithfully what is described in the text. They must be clear and accurate and not cause confusion.

According to him the model of a textbook is determined by:

- ✓ Physical aspect of the book (with a cap in accordance with its purpose, for example exercise book, manual etc.);
- ✓ The format or size of the book, which should enable easy retention by students;
- ✓ Choice of letters and layout, which determine the ease of reading and understanding the text;
- ✓ Ratio text - illustration. Aesthetic quality can not be the only criterion in the selection of illustrations, because they have to be adapted to the content of the text and the type of teaching. Choosing one or several colors partially determines the readability of the book and its cost;

- ✓ Type of paper used, which varies according to thickness, color, quality and whether it is less or more suitable for printing.

The studies of the 1990s -the beginning of 2000s supported the assertion that carefully constructed illustrations in the text generally increase student performance (Carney & Levin, 2002).

Levin and Mayer (1993) suggest that illustrations improve learning by text because they make the text more focused on the reader's attention orientation, compact (a picture is worth a thousand words), concrete (representation function), coherent (function of organization), understandable (interpretation function), rapporteur (about an unknown text for the reader's initial knowledge), and coding (memory transform function).

Other researchers have come to the conclusion that an effective way to improve the effectiveness of textbooks is to improve the effectiveness of their illustrations. When pictures are included in the written material, memory retention improves substantially (Levin & Mayer).

Laspina (1998) suggests that in all cases the written text and accompanying illustrations should be considered as partners and not competitors. The use of various illustrations in history textbooks helps in the acquisition of historical concepts, often abstract to be understood only through written texts, increases the interest and curiosity of students for the subject by motivating them but also serving as historical sources.

3.3 Readability, visibility and layout

Texts apart from content also reflect a certain design that aims to be appealing to students. Though they are typographical elements, they affect the fulfillment of the text content mission.

According to Xhamaj (2013), the text is well read when it is placed among the optics of the site, ie slightly above the geometric middle and slightly to the left. The whitespace around the text page serves to facilitate reading, aesthetic appearance of the publication, and inadequate text while browsing.

The readability of book page elements means images, ornaments, related to language and visual problems as well as image reproduction techniques.

Visibility means the way in which all the graphic elements of the page are presented: texts, figures, ornaments. Its importance is great because it is the method by which the content is transmitted. Choosing the visibility of the site enhances the reader's focus, keeps his interest alive, helps the reader in reading and then in his sense.

Layout is a formal system that is based on the alignment of textual material and graphics elements in the space of a given format.

If the ranks of the printed text pages do not match, the space between them would not look white but gray, thus worsening the readability (Xhamaj, 2013).

3.4 Paper quality

The paper used in the publication of textbooks is a determining element in the life span of the latter. A good quality paper is resistant to external factors, but also to everyday use by students, which is also the main function of a textbook.

According to Pearce (1990). The larger the number of copies of a book's production, the higher the percentage of the total cost represented by the paper, which can reach more than 60% of the total cost.

3.5 Page size and characters

According to (Hartley, 2014) there are no specific rules or specifications regarding defining the size of a book page. But in fact it is the one that determines the size of "screening" of all the visual material in the book. One of the important factors that determines these dimensions is the purpose of why that book is designed.

Researchers claim that the font size for children aged 9-13 years should be 10-12 points. Different types of writing can be used in a textbook to characterize different rubrics.

3.6 *The size of the book*

Williams and Hughes (2003) have suggested three different book sizes for different readership age. According to them, the large size (297 x 210mm) may be suitable for children aged 5-7 years; the mid size (246 x 189mm) are quite suitable for children ages 7-9; while the small size (198 x 129mm) may be suitable for children ages 9-11 years old.

3.7 *Binding and book cover*

It is an important process because it determines to a considerable extent the life span of a book. It is therefore associated with a considerable financial cost. The importance of this process is even greater when it comes to textbooks that are subject to their everyday use.

3.8 *Research model and methodology*

Designing a unique model for analyzing history textbooks has been the goal of different scholars. Efforts in this direction have been numerous and timely.

Some of them have succeeded in realizing to analyze specific aspects of the content by trying to conceive of study tools (Hummel, 1988), (Morgan & Henning, 2013), (Mahadi & Shahrill, 2014) or the guidelines they contain and list a number of criteria for authors of compilation, evaluation and selection of history texts (American Historical Association, 1997).

Given the importance of the problem, UNESCO with its experts is included as well. (Stradling, 2001) lists 40 questions that need to be considered for evaluating history texts. According to him, these questions are not final and can be supplemented by further discussions. They range from one education system to another and consequently every effort to provide a final answer can lead to banal generalizations (Stradling, 2001).

Another UNESCO expert, Falk Pingel, in his handbook also emphasizes the very complex nature that characterizes the field of textbook analysis. It recommends the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in this regard and provides the main categories to be considered for the design of research instruments (Pingel, 2010).

Despite these efforts, scholars admit that we still do not have a final methodology for studying textbooks in general.

Weinbrenner (1992) acknowledges that "we still have no tools and methods for dimensioning, categorizing and evaluating textbooks."

Nicholls (2003) tries to give us an overview of the methods used in studying history texts. He emphasizes the fact that in the field of textbook research the methods used are rarely discussed explicitly and in depth. After summing up the contributions that have been made in this direction, various scholars such as Michael Apple, Falk Pingel, Robert Stradling etc., emphasizes that very little work has been done to outline a general method for searching textbooks by created a gap in this direction. According to him, detailed instructions should be set out regarding the construction of methodological instruments to analyze the texts, to clearly identify the different methods currently in use and their relationships with each other. Lack of a unique methodology for researchers affects the quality of the research.

Text studies can only be guaranteed with the systematic development of general frameworks and instruments. According to him, in general, the current state of affairs in this regard is less than satisfactory. This requires more work.

Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon (2009) seek to create models for the interpretation of history texts because it is difficult to develop teaching not only as a space for social and political responsibility but also as a theoretical discipline without a theoretical model.

Sergiu Musteață (2011) in an attempt to provide a list of criteria to be considered in the analysis of texts emphasizes the fact that each method of analysis has its own methodology of implementation.

4. Analysis of History Textbooks

4.1 The ideological influence on determining the pattern of history textbooks

The governance of Albania by the Albanian communist party for about half a century finally determined as an alternative to the social and economic development of the country the socialist model. An important part of this model would be the Albanian school which could not be conceived outside of politics.

The 1946 educational reform turned the school into an institution dominated by the Leninist Marxist ideology of the ruling party according to the Soviet school model. Particular attention was devoted to the design of new school documentation aimed at educating the younger generation with this ideology.

The Albanian government decided that textbooks were translations by Soviet authors (Kambo, 2005).

Certain parts of these textbooks began to fit with our school programs (Korovkin, 1961).

In the educational system of that period there was no concept of alternative textbooks and for each subject there was a unique one. The history textbook was the central source of knowledge. It reflected only one historical point of view, that of the ruling party.

In the V-XI grade programs, approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the 1958-1959 school year, history was defined as a subject of great importance for communist education of the younger generation. In accordance with this goal, explanatory guidelines were provided for each historical period studied in the school. This attitude remained unchanged until the end of regime (*History Syllabi*, 1972, 1974, 1978, 1984).

In the study of Ancient History, teachers were instructed to work with students so they could clearly understand the decisive role of popular masses in history.

Based on concrete historical facts, the teacher had to "*face the lives of oppressed people, slaves, peasants, craftsmen, to the life of the oppressors and show life picture from the slavery uprisings and their heroisms in the war*" (High School Syllabus for School Year, 1958).

The decisive role of popular masses in the development of society, "*reflected in a lively and attractive form for students*", remained important for the Middle Ages as well. Teachers had to keep in mind the fact that "*the most important content of the course of the Middle Ages is the fight of the classes of oppressed people against the exploiters - above all of the peasants against the feudal owners and then the citizens against the sages and the plebeians of the city against the bourgeoisie being born*". They "*had to show clearly, with concrete examples, the reactionary character of the Catholic Church and to underline the religious-ecclesiastic character of science and art and the submission of every free scientific opinion to the church and religion*" (High School Syllabus for School Year, 1958).

Russia's great role in the salvation of European culture by the Mongol invaders should also be underlined, to show clearly the historical role of other Slavic peoples in the destruction of the slave sovereignty and their centuries-old struggle for national independence (High School Syllabus for School Year, 1958).

The collapse of relations between Albania and the Soviet Union in 1961 was accompanied by the initiation of the efforts of party and state bodies to eliminate Soviet influence in the Albanian school. Part of these efforts was the radical review of history texts, ordered by the Ministry of Education. It was decided that all plans, programs and textbooks for pre-university education, including history, would be rewritten by Albanian authors. According to the instructions given, "texts in accordance with age and educational categories had to be more organically transposed by Marxist- Leninist, by communist formation of students" Kambo, (2014).

Given the changes made to the authorship of the history texts and the presentation of their contents, in this period we can distinguish two phases:

- ✓ First Phase 1946 - The beginning of the 1960s
In this period the texts of world history were translations of Russian authors.
- ✓ Second phase of mid-1960 - 1991
- ✓ At this stage we have a gradual shift of authorship from Russian to Albanian authors.

Although there are some improvements in the field of publishing during the 1970s, they had to do with presentation rather than content. In some cases the texts were republished without any change or with slight changes in content for many years¹².

The subject of history continued to be considered as a powerful instrument for the Leninist Marxist education of the younger generation. The continuous viewing and review of history programs and texts was accompanied by the further strengthening of the ideological character of the content.

5. Methodology

Based on the prevailing situation in the field as well as the lack of a single methodological model for the study of history textbooks, we thought that in our analysis we should rely on the list with questions about content and pedagogical elements of history texts developed by the expert of UNESCO Robert Stradling. There are no significant changes from those compiled by other scholars, although he says that these questions are not conclusive and can be supplemented by further discussions. Evaluating questions he classifies in three main categories. The first category consists of questions related to the content and the pedagogical side of the history text, the second category contains questions that focus on the inner qualities of the text, the age of the pupil for whom it is designed, while the latter category includes questions related to with other factors of the process of drafting, publishing and using text (Stradling, (2001).

In view of the purpose of the study, mainly related to the content, the list is adapted by me to the features of the historical period involving the texts, namely, the Ancient World History and a part of the Middle Ages, and not the 20th Century European History in function of which the author has compiled evaluation questions.

The analysis was accompanied by the processing of quantitative and qualitative data extracted from the history textbooks, including illustrations, classified into several sub-categories based on their importance for the development and acquisition by students of historical concepts of "change" and "continuity".

Our study focused on textbooks of the 5th grade of basic education for two main reasons:

- First, the mandatory character of this level of education, which implies the inclusion of almost all children in school;
- Secondly, in the fifth grade, the subject of world history developed for the first time. For this reason, the role of the text of history as an instrument for the acquisition of historical knowledge was of particular importance.

5.1 Sample size

In defining the mass of the sample we relied on two important features:

- Relatively long period of study;
- Changes of history texts in the Albanian Education System within the period of study, closely related to political developments at home and abroad.

Based on the above characteristics, it was thought that the study included 3 history texts of 5th grade: one for the first phase and 2 for the second phase due to the longer time period of the latter.

In the Albanian Education System of that period there was no concept of alternative texts, each subject had a unique text. Such a fact facilitated to some extent the work regarding the description and generalization of the features that characterized the 45-year period involved in the study.

Selected texts are:

- 1) History (text for grade V), (1961) F.P. Korovkin (translation);

¹ Faik Lama is the author and co-author of the history textbook for Vth grade for almost 20 years, (1971-1991).

- 2) History 5 (1971), Faik Lama, Xhevat Repishti;
- 3) History 5 (1984), Faik Lama, Todi Dhama, Bajram Xhafa.

6. "HISTORY" for Vth grade, (1961) author F.P.Korovkin (translation)

6.1 *The content*

The textbook includes only a part of the Ancient History (Primitive Community - Shek III B.C. (Alexander the Great). It was approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture in accordance with the fifth-grade history program of the school year 1961 -1962, which provided for the inclusion of only 10 chapters translated from the Russian text "Ancient History" by author F.P.Korovkin (Korovkin, 1961).

From a structural point of view, the historical material is organized according to the chronological order, but the latter is not faithfully followed. The study does not include Ancient Rome, an integral part of the old world history. The text focuses entirely on the Ancient History of the old global scale represented by the Ancient East and Greece. There is no combined treatment of national and regional history. The text contains 53 lessons in 163 pages organized as follows:

- Introduction (2 topics);
- Life of primitive people (4 topics);
- Ancient East (Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Persia, Ancient India and China) (22 topics);
- Ancient Greece (25 topics).

Chapters Ancient East and Ancient Greece represent 47 topics or 88.7% of the material in the text. If we compare the number of topics and pages for each of these chapters, we notice that the balance is easily attributed to Ancient Greece with a difference of 3 topics or 14 pages more.

In the text, 53% of teaching topics deal with political and military history, while 47% of them address aspects of social, economic, cultural and religious history. In different chapters this indicator ranges from 50% to 56% as follows:

- ✓ "Ancient East" of 22 topics 11 or 50% of them treat political and military history;
- ✓ "Ancient Greece" out of 25 topics 14 or 56% of them treat political and military history.

6.2 *Pedagogical overview*

The text contains only a few questions at the end of each topic. Although there is no map for Egypt and Assyria, in the text we find questions about determining their location on the map: "Show in the map the Egypt" (Korovkin, 1961), "Which countries occupied the Assyrian army"? (Korovkin, 1961).

Given the above characteristics, we can say that this text, with no source material and a small number of maps, can be considered as a theoretical text.

The pedagogical apparatus for the most part is characterized by low level questions of reproductive character. For example, "Tell how did the types of job of primitive people change?", "What work tools were needed for each job?", "What conditions of Egypt's nature made people's lives difficult?" (Korovkin, 1961). Comparative questions are also scarce. Almost the same situation is repeated in all teaching themes. Under these conditions there can be no spaces for interpretation. The only "difficulty" of the student to give the correct answer is to find the appropriate paragraph with the relevant description.

Historical knowledge in the text is reflected as absolute truth by not allowing the emergence of different views on certain issues, and therefore no discussion is encouraged. This implies maintaining a passive attitude of students in the classroom, creating the wrong impression that history teaching is just a transmission of historical information. To embrace it is enough to memorize.

6.3 *Illustrations*

To mark the ratio between political, military and diplomatic aspects on the one hand, and social,

economic, on the other, reflected in texts in the form of illustrations, we decided to classify them into several sub-categories. The details are presented in the table below.

Classification of Illustrations

Categories of illustrations	"HISTORY" (1961), for V th grade, author F.P.Korovkin (163p.)	
	No.	%
Maps	7	9,1
Photos	-	-
Tables	1	1,3
Pictures	69	89,6
Total	77	100

Classification of Pictures

Categories of pictures	"HISTORY" (1961), for V th grade, author F.P.Korovkin (163p.)	
	No.	%
War scenes	12	17,4
Scenes of violence from daily life	5	7,2
Portraits of rulers	7	10,2
Daily life	15	21,7
Science and arts	30	43,5
Total	69	100

Ratio illustrations / book pages

Categories	"HISTORY", (1961), for V th grade, author F.P.Korovkin
General illustration numbers	77
The total number of book pages	163
Ratio (per page)	0,47

From the analysis of the tables presented with the categories of illustrations we have come to the following conclusions:

- ✓ If we consider the age of the children for whom this text is drafted, we can assert that the illustrations are few compared to the written material. Ratio 0,47 illustrations for each page the book supports this conclusion.
- ✓ All illustrations are free of color;
- ✓ Photos are completely missing;
- ✓ In the category of figures used for illustration, as specified by the content, we find that around 34.8% of them are scenes of war and violence from daily life;
- ✓ While daily life figures and those belonging to the "science and art" category account for about 65% of the total number, the quality of their coverage in the text is poor. In many cases content is understood with difficulty. This weakness the author tries to compensate with a detailed description of the content in some of them;
- ✓ Maps, compared to the number of illustrations and the volume of text pages are scarce, 7 in total. They are of small size. Only in two cases lie in the space of a page book: "Greek colonies in the XIXth Century B.C. and "The Conquests of Alexander of Macedonia" (Korovkin, 1961, p. 112, p. 156).
- ✓ The maps are free of color, drawn with a poor texture and consequently legends are readily read. They represent mainly combat actions of the empires of the time and not aspects of economic and social development. Maps on Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia are missing.

The complete lack of questions regarding the images presented and the content of the maps makes them considered as accompanying decorative texts but not historical sources. Maps do not serve to develop critical thinking, gain additional information or even stimulate curiosity. In this way the figures do not affect the performance of students or the acquisition of historical concepts.

6.4 *The size of the book*

The text is size (218 x 147 mm). Although these dimensions may be suitable for children ages 9-11, when it comes to presenting illustrations, especially maps, this format is not appropriate.

6.5 *Typographical technology*

The typographical technology used for producing the text belongs to the high typographical press which means that the press elements are in relief and at the same height, while the empty elements (spaces between the characters) are in-depth. The printing press is the oldest type of press and the evolution base of all typographical technology.

6.6 *Design of written material*

The written material is organized in a single column. According to experts this is an easy and simple design because it is uniform throughout the book. Through this model can be easily corrected any defects found during the technological process without repeating it from scratch, such as page layout (Kabapinar, 1998).

However functional it is not attractive to students of this age. During reading, they are faced with a bit of written material and with little resting space, which affects fatigue and consequently their demotivation in the process of acquiring knowledge. The small number of illustrations used in the text affects even more in this regard.

6.7 *Character size*

The size of the characters used is 10 points for the illustration skills and questions at the end of the lesson and 12 points for the teaching material. Such a size is considered normal. To highlight important textual conclusions are used italic style characters. Bold characters are used only in case titles and subject areas. Researchers today suggest that such italic style is disliked by most readers because it requires greater focus to read (Hartley).

6.8 *Unused space in the text*

It is not in balance with the page format. On different text pages this space is different, making it difficult to read the teaching material.

6.9 *Paper quality*

The paper for the books comes from a paper factory designed in standard formats. In Albania, the first paper production press factory was set up in Kavaja in 1965.

Since the text was published in 1961, the raw material for its production came from the import. The paper for the production of textbooks had to resist the action of external factors, thus affecting their longevity.

In our case the paper is not of a poor quality. If so, we will find out the phenomenon of the so-called "curtains" of the page that is related to its transparency (Kabapinar, 1998). Printed material on the one hand would be reflected to the other side of the page, thus making it difficult for students to read the text. On the other hand, we can not say it is of a high quality. This is noticed in the poor presentation of the illustrations.

6.10 *Binding and book cover*

The binding determines the book's longevity. The importance of this process is even greater when it comes to textbooks that are subject to everyday use.

In our case, the text bind is strong. It is connected with stitching, wire-side and reinforced with

gluing. Then a plain cover is attached to the sewing block, which contains only a little text and no picture. The use of such technology has to do with:

- Quantity of book pages. According to experts such link technology is mainly used for books up to 200 pages (Xhamaj, 2013);
- Ensure a strong binding in the function of its frequent use as textbook. The wire sewing provides a strong connection but worsens the opening of the book (Xhamaj, 2013)
- Cost of the book production, where a considerable part of it is spent on its binding.
- Customer purchasing power which can not afford high costs and consequently high prizes for textbooks.

7. "HISTORY 5" (1971), Faik Lama, Xhevat Repishti (authors)

7.1 *The content*

The text includes the period of Ancient History and the Middle Ages to the 16th Century. From a structural point of view, the material is treated in accordance with the chronological order. Some of the brief history of Albania mentioned just in 3 paragraphs, belong to the Middle Age. On the theme of "Establishing the Feudal Order in Byzantine", the authors cite the fact that with the division of the Roman Empire into two parts Arbëria remained under the Byzantium rule, the collapse of the village communities and the beginning of the establishment of the feudal order in Arberia in the VIIIth Century and a sentence on the struggle of our ancestors against invaders and feudal lords to protect freedom and land (Lama & Repishti, 1971).

A combined treatment of our national and regional history would imply the development of specific topics when dealing with the Balkan region since Antiquity.

The text contains 57 teaching topics on 163 pages organized as follows:

- Introduction (1 topic);
- Primitive Community (2 topics);
- Ancient East (Ancient Egypt, Ancient China) (7 topics);
- Ancient Greece (13 topics);
- Ancient (16 topics);
- The Middle Age (16th-16th centuries) (18 topics).

In the text, 71.4% of teaching topics deal with political and military history, while 28.6% of them deal with aspects of social, economic, cultural and religious history of everyday life. In different chapters this indicator ranges from 57% to 87% as follows:

- ✓ " Ancient East " from 7 topics 4 or 57% of them treat political and military history;
- ✓ " Ancient East Greece" from 13 topics 9 or 69% of them treat political and military history.
- ✓ " Ancient East Italy" from 16 topics 14 or 87.5% of them deal with political and military history.
- ✓ In the Middle Ages from 18 topics 13 or 72.2% of them deal with political and military history.

7.2 *Pedagogical overview*

The material is written in narrative form by transmitting information considered as "absolute truth".

The pedagogical apparatus is represented by the sections "Summary", "Questions and Tasks", "Readings" and explanations of terms.

The "Summary" section reflects the most important issues and the most important lessons to be learned from the students.

The box "Questions and Tasks" consists of low-level questions of reproductive character, such as " *Why do the Greek traditions speak?* "? (F.Lama, Xh.Repishti 1971, p. 41) Comparative, "*Compare the nature of Greece with that of Egypt*" (ibid., P. 41), but there is also conceptual question as "*What is the difference between the republic aristocratic skllavopronar and skllavopronar democracy* "? (ibid, p.47)

Questions on the illustrations presented, including the maps, but also the readings at the end

of the subject are completely missing.

7.3 Illustrations

The following tables show in detail the illustrations reflected in the text, classified by type and content.

Categories of illustrations

Categories of illustrations	"HISTORY 5", (1971), authors F.Lama, Xh.Repishti (163p.)	
	No.	%
Maps	24	15,9
Tables	-	-
Schemes and sketches created by the author	11	7,3
Photos	12	7,9
Pictures	104	68,9
Total	151	100

Categories of pictures

Categories of pictures	HISTORY 5", (1971), authors F.Lama, Xh.Repishti (163p.)	
	No.	%
War scenes	22	19
Scenes of violence from daily life	12	10,3
Portraits of rulers	1	0,8
Daily life	51	44
Science and arts	30	25,9
Total	116	100

Ratio illustrations / book pages

Categories	HISTORY 5", (1971), authors F.Lama, Xh.Repishti (163p.)
General illustration numbers	151
The total number of book pages	163
Ratio (per page)	0,93

From the analysis of the data on the categories of illustrations used we reach the following conclusions:

- ✓ Illustrations in the text are in a small number compared to the written material (0,93 per page);
- ✓ They are colorless and in a poor quality;
- ✓ Scenes of everyday life and violence as well as portraits of rulers represent about 30.1% of their total number.
- ✓ Maps are few (24). They are small in size, only reflect combat actions, are colorless, drawn with poor quality and are therefore readily read because of poor print quality.

7.4 The size of the book

The text is of a size (247x190mm) which is considered appropriate for children ages 9-11 years old.

7.5 Typographical Technology

Typographical technology belongs to the high typographic press. This type of press in Albania has been used for a long time, until the early 1990s.

7.6 Design of written material

The written material is organized in two columns. According to experts, a two-column design is

more difficult than one with a column because it needs to be careful with the layout on each page in accordance with the illustrations it will contain, but on the other hand, compared to the one-column design, includes more words as well as largely circumvent the routing of words at the end of the line (Kabapinar, 1998). It is more appealing to students than the one-column design.

7.7 Character size

Illustrations and questions at the end of the lesson consist of 10-point characters. The same size has the reading characters but are of Italic style, while the size of the characters of the teaching material is 12 points, that is, a normal size.

To emphasize important textual conclusions are used bold characters and Italic style.

7.8 Unused space in the text

It is in balance with the format of the page, enabling normal learning of the teaching material.

7.9 Paper quality

The press letter was produced at the Kavaja paper factory. It is of average quality. We do not have the phenomenon of the so-called "curtains" of the site.

7.10 Binding and book cover

The text binding is solid. It is realized with sewing and reinforced with gluing.

The connection provides a normal opening of the internal pages and does not prevent the reading of the written material. The book cover is plain color. The technology used fits the number of pages that is smaller than 200.

8. "HISTORY 5" (1984), Faik Lama, Todi Dhama, Bajram Xhafa

8.1 The content

Text includes the Ancient History and the Middle Age periods to the XI Century. The material is structured according to the chronological order. In accordance with this line, there is an attempt by authors to combine Albania's history with that of the region into two themes, one for each period. However, this effort is insufficient.

The text contains 56 teaching topics on 204 pages organized as follows:

- Introduction (2 topics);
- Primitive Community (4 topics);
- Ancient East (Ancient Egypt, Ancient Mesopotamia) (8 topics);
- Ancient Greece (14 topics)
- Ancient Rome (16 topics)
- The Middle Ages (V-IX Centuries) (12 topics)

The balance between social, economic, cultural and religious history on the one hand, and political, military, on the other hand is in favour of the latter on an average of 51%.

In different chapters it varies from 41.6% to 62.5% as follows:

- In the "Ancient East " chapter, of 8 topics 4 or 50% of them deal with political and military history;
- In "Ancient Greece" chapter, of 14 topics 7 or 50% of them treat political and military history.
- In the "Ancient Rome" chapter of 16 topics 10 or 62.5% of them deal with political and military history.
- In the Middle Ages from 12 topics 5 or 41.6% of them deal with political and military history.

8.2 Pedagogical overview

The material in the text has a narrative character and no discussion space is created. The pedagogical apparatus is represented by the "Questions and Tasks", "Readings", "Repeat" and "Dictionary" sections.

Questions are of a low level. They have reproductive, comparative but also conceptual character. The questions focus solely on the theoretical material of the subject, excluding the "Readings" section as well as illustrations and maps. In this way, the process of learning through interpretations is impossible.

8.3 Illustrations

The following tables present in detail the illustrations reflected in the text, categorized by type and content.

Categories of illustrations

Categories of illustrations	"HISTORY 5", (1984), authors F.Lama, Xh. Repishti, (204 p.)	
	No.	%
Maps	20	16,5
Photos	21	17,4
Tables	-	-
Schemes and sketches created by the author	10	8,3
Pictures	70	57,8
Total	121	100

Categories of pictures

Categories of pictures and photos	"HISTORY 5", (1984), authors F.Lama, Xh. Repishti (204 p.)	
	No.	%
War scenes	11	10,9
Scenes of violence from daily life	9	8,9
Portraits of rulers	1	1
Daily life	57	56,4
Science and arts	23	22,8
Total	101	100

Ratio illustrations / book pages

Categories	"HISTORY 5", (1984), authors F.Lama, Xh. Repishti, (204 p.)
General illustration numbers	121
The total number of book pages	204
Ratio (per page)	0,59

From the data analysis we reach the following conclusions:

- ✓ Textual illustrations are 0.59 per 1 page. This is insufficient for a history textbook.
- ✓ They are colorless and in a poor quality;
- ✓ Scenes of war and daily life violence as well as portraits of rulers represent about 20.8% of the total number of figures in that category.
- ✓ 88.1% of the illustrations and 90% of the maps used in the text are the same as those of the 1971 edition.
- ✓ There are a small amount of maps relative to the number of book pages. The characteristics of their appearance and content are the same as those of previous editions: small, black and white, (without color), drawn with a poor texture and are therefore readily read. The maps reflect military actions only.

8.4 *The size of the book*

The text size (258 x 160mm) is considered appropriate for children ages 9-11.

8.5 *Typographical Technology*

As in other texts, the technology used to produce text is a high typographic press.

8.6 *Design of written material*

The written material is organized in a column, an easy and simple way of technical presentation but not attractive to students.

8.7 *Character size*

The characters of the teaching material, including all the sections, are 12 points. Characteristics of the readings are Italic style. Illustrations are composed of 10-point characters. The conclusions reached in the teaching material are presented in bold characters.

8.8 *Unused space in text*

It is in balance with the format of the page, enabling normal learning of the teaching material.

8.9 *Paper quality*

The press letter is domestic production. It is of average quality. As in other texts we do not have the phenomenon of the so-called "curtains" of the page.

8.10 *Binding and book cover*

The text binding is good and stable. It is realized with sewing and reinforced with gluing. It allows normal opening of internal pages and does not prevent reading of the written material. The cover is plain color.

9. **Conclusions**

9.1 *Ideological influence*

Until 1991, history was one of the most politicized subjects in school. In the educational system of that time there was no concept of alternative texts. The text of history was the central source of knowledge. It was considered an important instrument to carry out the education of the younger generation with communist ideology with the aim of creating the so-called "young man."

In function of this goal, subject programs and history textbooks were subjected to changes of the scientific, educational and especially of the ideological character of communist education of the younger generation in school.

Through the chronological study of so called the "class struggle" in history, the aim was to train students to understand historical laws about revolutionary transition from one economic-social formation to another.

In the study of Ancient and Medieval History, students had to establish solid beliefs on the decisive role of popular masses in history as a major form for its progressive development against "bourgeois" and "revisionist" historians who "mislead" peoples and to justify imperialist and social-imperialist politics considered their role as a clumsy clash of casual events and products.

History knowledge was also used for atheistic education of students. They had to be clear about the reactionary character of the Catholic Church which "deformed science and art by

subjecting every free scientific opinion" (High School Syllabus for School Year 1958-59 (grades V-XI), 1958) while Islamization calling for war against the "faithless" required the simple submission of the people" (Lama *et.al.*, 1984).

9.2 Authors of textbooks

In the 1946s - the beginning of the 1960s, the Albanian government decided that textbooks were translations by Soviet authors adapting to our school programs. The interruption of relations between Albania and the Soviet Union in 1961 was accompanied by a gradual transition of authorship to Albanian authors.

9.3 Text content

In all cases the extent of the historical period involved in the study is not the same.

In the history textbook of 1961, students of the 5th grade studied only a part of the Ancient History (Primitive Community – IIIrd Century B.C. (Alexander the Great).) The exclusion of Ancient Rome created a gap in the study of our region, though with one small margin, only 3 topics, the balance of the latter.

In the textbook of 1971 is studied Ancient World History (including Ancient Rome) and the Middle Age to the XIVth Century.

In 1984, Ancient World History (including Ancient Rome) and the Middle Age to the middle of the XIth Century were studied.

This change is related to the content of history programs that have undergone changes in different periods of time.

The content of the written material in the three texts is slightly different from each other.

Historical texts have a narrative character. They are dominated by chronologically structured written material.

Historical knowledge in the text is reflected as absolute truth and consequently no discussion is encouraged. This influences the passive attitude of students in the classroom.

There is a lack of integrated treatment of our national and regional history. The authors' efforts in this regard are insufficient.

The pedagogical apparatus for the most part is characterized by low level questions of reproductive character and fewer comparative and conceptual questions. The questions focus solely on the theoretical material of the subject, excluding the "Read" section. Questions on the illustrations presented, including the maps, are completely missing.

Social, economic, cultural and religious aspects have a very small space in history texts. The largest area belongs to political and military history and ranges from 51% to 71.4% of the written material.

The most used illustrations in the texts are different figures, photos, maps, and some sketches and schemes created by the authors. The latter are scarce and find only the texts of 1971 and 1984.

Illustrations in history textbooks should provide information on the past, spark debate in the classroom through the interpretation of events from different angles, including critical thinking. In fact, they do not play that role. The illustrations are characterized by poor appearance and are without color, serving as decorative elements rather than as historical sources.

In the poor pedagogical apparatus of each subject, the questions about the interpretation of the presented illustrations are completely absent. Bearing in mind the age of the students for whom the texts are designed, the illustrations are few compared to the written material. The ratio of 0.47 to 0.93 illustrations for each page book written supports this conclusion.

The figures from everyday life and those belonging to the "science and art" category account for 65-79,2% of their total number. Such a report is pleasing, but the poor quality of reflection in the text illustrations often makes them difficult to understand.

Authors try to offset this vulnerability with a detailed description of the content in some of them.

If we compare the illustrations used in all three textbooks, including maps, as well even in the written material we conclude that they are the same, at about 89%. In our opinion this can happen for two reasons:

First, authors may have had limited resources for their use;

Secondly, the role and importance of illustrations in the teaching process has not been evaluated.

We support the second possibility for the fact that in all cases of use, as we have mentioned above, the illustrations were not considered historical sources but as accompanying decor, which is also noticed by the lack of questions on them in the pedagogical apparatus.

Maps, compared to the number of illustrations and the amount of text pages are few. Their number varies from 7 to 24 for each text and are small in size.

The maps are free of color, drawn with a poor texture and consequently legends are readily read. They represent mainly combat actions of the empires of the time and not aspects of economic and social development.

In the textbook of 1961 though the maps on ancient Egypt and Assyria are missing, students are required to show the extent of these countries on the map (Find the map of the Sinai Peninsula, p.21, Which countries occupied the Assyrian army?p.57).

Given the above characteristics we can say that history textbooks though considered as a very important instrument in the teaching process and the central source of knowledge gained in school, did not actually play this role because they had a theoretical character. These textbooks did not develop into critical thinking students, the ability to argue, evaluate, and form reasonable and rational opinions, to gain additional information or even to encourage curiosity, which would lead to increased performance.

9.4 *The physical features of the textbooks*

9.4.1 *Dimensions*

Based on the suggestions of foreign experts on the size of the school textbooks according to the age of the students, we can say that our texts generally meet the criteria to be classified as such. However, these data are only suggested for the written material. Bearing in mind the fact that very important parts of the history textbooks are illustrations, we can say that the 1961 edition of which has the smallest format compared to the other two editions is not suitable for presenting the latter, especially maps.

9.4.2 *Typographical Technology*

The production of texts is carried out with a high typographic press which means that the elements of the press are in relief and at the same height, while the empty elements (space between the characters) are in depth. The top press is the oldest type. It uses bullet-based printing forms. This kind of press in our country was used until the early 1990s.

From a typographic point of view, readability (ease of reading) of the text is clear and simple because the letters are easily identified as well, with respect to the readability of other elements of the pages such as figures and ornaments.

9.4.3 *Design of written material*

The material written in the texts is organized in a single column in the publications of 1961 and 1984 and in two columns in the 1971 edition. These are two different designing ways that are related to the technological process, but on the other hand affect the the process of acquiring knowledge from students.

Designing a single column of printed material is easier to carry out from a technical point of view, but is not appealing to the students because of the density of the written material and the low vacancy space.

Two-column design is more difficult to accomplish compared to column design, but it includes more words on a page and largely avoids end-of-line routing becoming more attractive to students.

9.4.4 Character size

The size of the characters used is 10 points for the illustration skills and questions at the end of the lesson and 12 points for the teaching material. Such a size is considered normal. To highlight important textual conclusions are used italic style characters. Bold characters are used in case titles and the conclusions reached in the teaching material. According to the researchers, italic style is disliked by most readers because it requires greater concentration to read.

9.4.5 Space not used in texts

In the 1961 edition, unused space is not in balance with the page format. On different pages of this publication, this space is different, making it difficult to read the teaching material somewhat.

This report is improving in the 1971 and 1984 editions. Placing a fairer relationship between unused space with the page format makes it possible to read the normal course material.

9.4.6 Paper quality

The paper used for the production of texts was originally imported (1961 edition) and then, starting in 1965, began to be produced in the country. It was designed in standard formats. The degree of coping with the action of external factors influenced the life span of texts.

In our case the paper is not of a poor quality. If so, we will find out the phenomenon of the so-called "curtains" of the page that is related to its transparency. The printed material on the one hand would be reflected to the other side of the page, making it difficult to read the text from the students, but on the other hand, it can not be said to be of a high quality due to the poor presentation of the illustrations.

9.4.7 Binding and book cover

The importance of this process is very important when it comes to school textbooks that are subject to daily use. The binding affects its longevity. In all texts it is strong and durable.

In the 1961 edition, the binding was made with stitches with thread, wire-side and reinforced with gluing. The wire sewing provides a strong connection but the opening of the inside pages is difficult to prevent reading the written material. Other texts do not use wire sewing. The binding is realized only with suture and then reinforced with gluing. This way ensures normal page opening. Book covers are plain color.

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Appendix

Evaluative Questions about History Textbook

Content

1. Which historical period or periods are covered? Do these periods exactly match those covered in the relevant curriculum guidelines or syllabuses? Are there any gaps which would need to be filled by other textbooks or teaching materials?
2. How is the content organised in terms of structure and sequence? Does the textbook present a fairly comprehensive chronological survey of an extended period of time?
3. Is the structure of the content in the textbook in line with the structure or framework used in the history curriculum?
4. How much emphasis is given to political, diplomatic, economic, social and cultural history within the contents of the textbook? Does the emphasis or balance between these different dimensions vary significantly according to the period covered? Does the emphasis in the textbook match or complement the emphasis in the official history curriculum?
5. Does the textbook focus predominantly on national history, regional history, European history or global history or some combination of these?
6. If the textbook includes some coverage of regional, European or world history, what is the perspective? For example, does the textbook tend to offer a national perspective on European or regional history? Does it tend to offer a predominantly Eurocentric perspective on global history? Does it tend to present a western perspective on events and developments in eastern Europe, or vice versa?
7. If the textbook is essentially about European history then how is Europe defined explicitly or implicitly in the text? Does it include western, central and eastern Europe or only one region? Does it focus on the common cultural heritage or those factors which highlight diversity?
8. Can any patterns be discerned in those topics, events, groups, dimensions and perspectives, which are omitted from the text, illustrations, source material or assessment tasks? Are there any implicit messages in these omissions?

Pedagogical approaches

9. What prerequisite skills and understanding, if any, are required for the student to interpret any source material, and attempt any activities and assessment tasks contained in the opening sections of the textbook?
10. Does it function as a workbook as well as a "text" book? (Does it include source material, activities and tasks as well as narrative text?) If it does where are the other elements located in the book and how are they organised? For example, is there source material and/or other learning activities at the end of each chapter or are these all located at the back of the book? (Location of the different elements can have implications for how the teacher and the student will use the textbook.)
11. If the textbook includes assignments, questions, tasks and assessment exercises, what appears to be their function? Do they seem to be mainly concerned with the student's recall of information supplied in the text or do they provide the student with opportunities to critically examine historical evidence, recognise how the same evidence can be open to more Sources and resources than one interpretation, evaluate the likely biases of different sources of historical evidence, provide the tools and the encouragement to undertake some independent historical research, and so forth?
12. How do any illustrations, photographs, maps and diagrams relate to the text? Do they provide links between points made in one chapter and something that the student would have read in an earlier chapter? Or, does their main function appear to be to "break up"

- the text and make the individual page look more interesting?
13. Does the textbook seek to introduce the student to key historical concepts, for example continuity and change, centralisation and fragmentation, development and decay, evolution and revolution, etc.?
 14. Does the textbook attempt to involve the student in the historical events, issues and developments which it covers? For example, does it seek to show how people would have perceived not only the events and developments they were living through but also the options and alternatives open to them at any given time and how they were shaped by their own past?
 15. Does the textbook provide opportunities for the student to develop a comparative perspective by, for example, contrasting events or developments in two or more countries or regions? Or, by showing similarities in the historical developments of two or more countries or regions? Or by showing how events at a national level were influenced by what was happening elsewhere? Or, by showing how different cultures have influenced each other?

Intrinsic qualities of history textbooks

16. Is the balance between text and the other elements (illustrations, maps, statistical tables, extracts from official documents, letters, pictures of artefacts, assignments, questions, assessment exercises, etc.) appropriate to the age range or ability level for whom it is produced? While it is certainly the case that younger and less able students prefer textbooks with less text and more illustrations, it is also the case that the more source material they are required to make use of the more difficult they find it.
17. Are there any examples of monocausal, over-simplistic or reductionist explanations of historical events and developments?
18. Does it offer a plurality of interpretations of the past (i.e. multiple perspectives)?
19. How is the past portrayed? Is the present perceived as the inevitable outcome of past events? Is history portrayed as “the triumphal march of progress”?
20. Is it likely that this textbook will arouse their interest in the subject and their curiosity about the past?
21. Does the material in the textbook reflect recent research or current thinking amongst historians?
22. Is the text written in a style which is suitable for the age range and ability level for whom the textbook has been produced? It should be neither condescending nor written “above the heads” of the students. It should be readable but it should also help the student to develop a style of writing appropriate to the discipline of history.

Extrinsic factors in evaluating history textbooks

23. When was the textbook first published? This provides some indication of the political context in which it was written and authorised. It also gives some indication of how up-to-date it is likely to be in approach and content. This can be particularly important if the textbook covers recent national and regional developments.
24. Does the author show clear evidence that she or he is aware of current practice in classrooms? Note that this is not quite the same thing as asking whether the author was or is a history teacher. Some academic historians, with the help of their publishers, have done their homework and are up-to-date with modern classroom practices; some history teachers who write textbooks can be out-of-step with current practice.
25. Has the book (or parts of it) been field tested or trialled with teachers and students?
26. Does it specify a particular target readership (for example age range, ability range, type of school, type of course or examination for which it is produced)?
27. Does the preface or introduction give an indication of the writer’s approach, aims and objectives?

28. Is the quality of design (layout, colour scheme, typography, etc.) consistent throughout?
29. Will it survive everyday classroom use for a reasonable period of time?
30. Is it well-designed for the price? Does it compare well with other textbooks currently available on the market within the same price range? Is it good value for the money?