

AN ANALYSIS OF READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS IN THE “BAHASA INGGRIS WORK IN PROGRESS” TEXTBOOK FOR TENTH GRADE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is crucial in language learning as it improves vocabulary, grammar, and general language proficiency. However, a report points out that Indonesian students' English proficiency remains lacking, partly because the proportion of Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) distribution in textbooks is low. This study attempts to analyze the dominant categories of cognitive process dimensions and examines the proportion of cognitive process dimensions between Lower-order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in the textbook “BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress” for grade 10 senior high school. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative method and Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, 67 questions from 6 chapters in the textbook were explored. The results show that 59.7% of the reading questions focused on HOTS, with the Analyzing being dominant at 45.58%, Understanding at 22.05%, Evaluating at 17.65%, Remembering at 10.29%, and Creating at 4.48%, with no representation in the Applying. The study concludes that the textbook effectively integrates HOTS, aligning with the educational principle and addressing the need for balanced cognitive skill development in Indonesian senior high schools, primarily in English education. Future research could explore how teachers utilize and improve these materials to enhance HOTS in classroom settings by involving classroom observations and interviews.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension; English Textbook; Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS); Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS); Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension skills are important in language learning as it is useful for enabling students to understand and elucidate written texts accurately. Reading comprehension performance is closely connected to the extent and complexity of vocabulary knowledge, where greater vocabulary sizes portray deeper knowledge of words (Qunayeer, 2021). By utilizing reading comprehension, learners can enhance their grammar, enrich their vocabulary, and improve their language skills. Medranda-Morales et al. (2023) emphasized that reading comprehension is crucial for developing critical thinking skills and promoting a deeper understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives. It also assists learners in effectively expressing their thoughts and ideas through both writing and speaking (Pulatova, S., 2023). Lacking reading comprehension skills leads to struggles that might happen to students, such as hindering higher-level understanding, weakening verbal working memory, reducing learning achievement, and impeding problem-solving (Kelso et al., 2021; Nanda & Azmy, 2020). Thus, it is important for language learners aiming to achieve fluency and proficiency in a new language to enhance their reading comprehension skills. Regularly practicing reading comprehension can help learners enhance their skills in understanding complex texts and influence English skills such as reading fluency, writing, and speaking skills (Barnwal, 2021).

Despite being exposed to various types of text, Indonesian students' English proficiency remains low. This statement was announced in 2023 by English First's English Proficiency Index. Indonesia ranked 79th among the 113 countries surveyed in the research (EF EPI | EF English Proficiency Index | EF Global Site (English), n.d.). The outcome of this statement could be influenced by the reading complexity. Hattan et al (2023) suggested that to improve comprehension and learning, readers should acknowledge reading as a method of exploration and stimulate their prior understanding through discussions, pre-reading questions, or related tasks. The following tasks seek to accomplish the reading goal, which includes discovering the primary idea and any supporting details. If students lack Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS), reading may become complicated (Atiullah et al., 2019).

An analysis can be conducted on a textbook's structure, exercises, contents, guidelines, and instructional materials (Pratiwi, 2014). According to Handayani and Wirza (2021), good quality English textbooks have a connection to particular topics, contain commonly used vocabulary, and have an appropriate readability level. The emergence of these characteristics fosters students' critical thinking skills development. Regarding the readability level, Dewayani et al. (2020) declare that English language textbooks should incorporate higher-order thinking questions to enhance Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) among students.

The higher the proportion of cognitive dimensions in reading questions in a textbook, the more it can increase students' Higher-order Thinking Skills (Erdiana & Panjaitan, 2023). Textbooks on critical reading that are based on HOTS help teachers foster creativity and develop students' critical thinking skills, which makes learning and teaching more engaging and dynamic (Sitorus et al., 2021). Research conducted by Gultom & Gultom (2021) found that critical thinking requires questioning, drawing conclusions, challenging assumptions and perceptions, and reflecting on what has been learned while drawing on one's knowledge and sense of intuition. Students who are creative thinkers actively seek out, use, apply, and create knowledge. (Gultom & Gultom, 2021). On the other hand, students who lack critical thinking find it difficult to deal with challenging problems. This results in works that frequently miss relevance and fail to significantly advance global knowledge and solve local issues (Nauman, 2017).

In terms of reading comprehension questions based on the composition of HOTS contents, there have been several studies over the past four years of English textbooks in Indonesia and across the different EFL nations. These studies have investigated the alignment of reading comprehension questions in English textbooks using Bloom's Taxonomy, emphasizing the need to balance Lower-order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Among ten papers that were reviewed, six works were conducted in Indonesia, two in Ethiopia, and the others were done in Morocco and Palestine.

According to research by Matthews (2023), the majority of the questions in Ethiopian Grade 12 English textbooks are fact-based, underscoring the need for more inference, generalization, and extension questions to improve students' linguistic and intellectual abilities. Aligning with this, Laila and Fitriyah (2022) found that Indonesian English textbooks for the 12th-grade place a lot of emphasis on Remembering questions, suggesting that LOTS are preferred over HOTS. Stevani and Tarigan's (2022) research, which covered multiple Bloom's Taxonomy levels in Indonesian textbook comprehension questions, provides more evidence for this pattern. The researchers observed that comprehension and knowledge levels continue to be prioritized, with little focus on Creating and Evaluating.

The lack of Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in English textbooks is not limited to Indonesia and Ethiopia. Nakkam and Khamoja (2020) examined Moroccan ELT textbooks and found a similar pattern in two different EFL textbooks, which shows most of the questions were low-order, 77% and 84.12%. This imbalance is complicated, as research by Gultom and Gultom (2021), discovered that Indonesian textbooks for Grade XII show the domination of LOTS,

which shows a significant inconsistency between the cognitive levels distribution and the recommendations of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. Moreover, Erdiana and Panjaitan (2023) identified that a pedagogical shift towards fostering critical thinking skills is urgently needed, as evidenced by the fact that only 19.4% of the questions in an Indonesian senior high school English textbook were classified as HOTS (Erdan and Panjaitan, 2023). These findings are concurred by Qasrawi and Beniabdelrahman (2020), pointing out that although the first edition of the "Unlock English" textbook concentrated primarily on comprehension and analysis, the second edition includes both LOTS and HOTS. Collectively, these studies highlight a pervasive trend in English education, where the development of higher-order cognitive skills is not given enough attention thereby limiting students' ability to think creatively and critically.

The significance of the current research lies in the need to determine the value of a textbook in line with the structure of reading comprehension questions with high and low levels of the revised Bloom's taxonomy as the theory. Furthermore, it might also serve as a guide for the teachers on how to apply HOTS in a way that enhances the comprehension of the text by the students. Therefore, since the analysis of such a level is still underrepresented in Indonesia, the researcher aims to fill the gap by analyzing the cognitive process dimension categories contained in the textbook "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" used by the Indonesian 10th-grade senior high school. Additionally, using the Revised Bloom Taxonomy, this study attempts to determine the proportion of cognitive process dimensions between LOTS and HOTS in the textbook.

METHOD

This present study used the "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" textbook as the object used for grade 10 senior high school in the Merdeka Curriculum and was published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The textbook chosen contains 6 chapters and 182 pages. There is a reading session in the textbook that contains reading questions used to students practice with 13 reading texts along with 67 reading questions in the textbook. All the reading questions in the textbook were examined by the researchers.

This study uses descriptive quantitative research which refers to research that requires using numerical data to describe data in the form of numbers or statistics. Tote et al. (2023) stated that descriptive research refers to a method used to investigate an object, status, or group of people to offer a systematic description of the data gathered. To support evidence-based practice, descriptive methods are used in research to provide descriptive information about a particular topic (Kamper, 2020). Thus, results are shown in the form of a percentage and are described afterward. To analyze the reading questions in the chosen textbook, the researcher attempted to explore cognitive process dimensions by using a taxonomy approach.

Multiple educational experts have presented various taxonomies. Bloom's taxonomy which was created by Benjamin S. Bloom in 1956, is widely acknowledged as the most well-known taxonomy in the educational field. This taxonomy describes various levels of cognitive processes. At first, Bloom explained six cognitive process dimensions which were Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation, and Application (Krathwohl, 2002). These dimensions are beneficial for assessing students' behavior in the teaching and learning process (Kurukwar, 2022). However, in this present study, the researchers used the revised taxonomy version introduced by Krathwohl in 2002, to redefine and clarify these categories to reflect more accurately the processes of thinking and learning. Revised Bloom's Taxonomy theory divides the cognitive process levels into 6, namely C1 (Remembering), C2 (Understanding), C3 (Applying) which fall into the Lower-order Thinking Skill (LOTS)

category, C4 (Analyzing), C5 (Evaluating), and C6 (Creating) which fall into the Higher-order Thinking Skill (HOTS) category (Sari et al., 2023; Hasyim et al., 2019). According to the State of Minnesota's Language Arts Standards for Grade 12 cited by Krathwohl (2002), Remembering refers to obtaining related information from long-term brain memory; Understanding refers to identifying the meaning of instructional messages; Applying refers to conducting or utilizing a process in particular circumstances; Analyzing refers to the process of dividing an element into its parts and determining how those elements relate to a larger structure or goal; Evaluating refers to making decisions that adhere to standards and criteria; and Creating is the process of gathering components to generate a unique, integrated whole, and original work.

To analyze the cognitive process dimensions in the EFL textbook, several steps were taken by the researchers. First, all the reading questions from the chosen textbook were gathered. Second, the researcher presented a table with the cognitive level of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy's cognitive dimensions. Here, a checklist table that was adopted from a study by Pratiwi, (2019) was used to collect all of the reading questions from the textbook. The checklist table has been created to accomplish and simplify the objectives of this study. The writer also provides the 6 cognitive domains in the checklist table to check the distribution of each reading question. Third, the researchers would give a mark (✓) in the column of the checklist table according to the reading questions. Fourth, the researchers used codes for every classification in the table based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Fifth, after the data had been classified, the researchers counted the total of every cognitive skill from the reading questions and compared it to every level to identify the proportion of cognitive process dimension between High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) in the textbook. Finally, the researchers interpret the result of the data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

There are two sections explained in this section. First, the finding of cognitive process dimensions categories of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy found in the reading questions in the "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" textbook. Second, the cognitive process dimensions proportion between HOTS and LOTS based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy in the textbook "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress". This present study examined the data gathered from the reading questions in each chapter in the chosen textbook.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of cognitive process dimension in the textbook

Chapters	Cognitive Process Dimension					
	Remembering	Understanding	Applying	Analyzing	Evaluating	Creating
Chapter 1	5	3	0	6	3	0
Chapter 2	0	0	0	2	2	0
Chapter 3	1	5	0	1	2	1
Chapter 4	0	8	0	1	1	0
Chapter 5	0	0	0	5	3	1
Chapter 6	1	4	0	11	0	1

Total	7	20	0	26	11	3
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The data collected totaled 67 reading questions from 13 reading texts covered in the textbook. According to the data analyzed, results show that the Analyzing category of 31 reading questions yielded a percentage of 45.58%, indicating that this category represents the most cognitive process dimension. The second is Understanding with 15 reading questions with a percentage of 22.05 %, the third is Evaluating with 12 reading questions with a percentage of 17.65 %, the fourth is Remembering with 7 reading questions with a percentage of 10.29%, and the fifth is Creating with 3 reading questions. There was no representation of Applying category with a percentage of 0% in the textbook. Then the six cognitive process dimensions will be coded as Remembering (C1), Understanding (C2), Analyzing (C3), Applying (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6).

Chapter 1: Great Athletes

There are 2 reading texts with 17 reading questions located in the “Let’s Read” and “Let’s Dig Deeper” sections on pages 11, 12, 13, 27, and 28. The 6 reading questions are about Analyzing (C4), 5 are Remembering (C1), 3 are Understanding (C2), 3 are Evaluating (C5), and there were no questions representing the categories of Applying (C3) and Creating (C6). However, due to the limitation of space, this section only shows one question for each category.

Table 2. The examples of reading questions in Chapter 1: Great Athletes

Reading Questions	Categories
“How did he get known as a rocket man?”	C1
“What is the main idea of the text?”	C2
“What obstacles do they need to overcome?”	C4
“How does their story affect you personally?”	C5

Chapter 2: Sports Events

In this chapter, there is 1 reading text and 4 reading questions found in the “Discuss and Answer” section on pages 35, 36, and 37. The 2 reading questions are about Analyzing (C4), 2 are Evaluating (C5), and no reading questions represent other categories. In this part, the researchers reveal one question for each category.

Table 3. The examples of reading questions in Chapter 2: Sports Events

Reading Questions	Categories
“Why do you think the writer stated that the winner was unpredictable?”	C4
“Are there any parts of the writer’s experience in watching the game that are similar to yours?”	C5

Chapter 3: Sports and Health

This chapter contains 2 reading texts with 10 reading questions located in the “Read and Decide”, “Let’s Complete It”, and “Discuss and Decide” sections on pages 62, 63, 64, and 65. The 5 reading questions are categorized as Understanding (C2), 2 are Evaluating (C5), 1 is

Remembering (C1), 1 is Creating (C6), 1 is Analyzing (C4), and no reading questions represent Applying (C3). In this part, the researchers reveal one question for each category.

Table 4. The examples of reading questions in Chapter 3: Sports and Health

Reading Questions	Categories
“Have you tried any weight loss habits mentioned in the infographic? Which one/s?”	C1
“Talking about your problem may help you with mental health only if you the person you talk to.”	C2
“Why do you think people feel the need to lose weight?”	C4
“Which of the tips from the mental health infographic that you want to try? Why?”	C5
“Do you have other tips for weight loss?”	C6

Chapter 4: Graffiti

There are 2 reading texts and 10 reading questions found in this chapter which are located in the “Read and Answer” and “Let’s Compare” sections on pages 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, and 153. The 8 reading questions are about Understanding (C2), 1 is Analyzing (C4), 1 is Evaluating (C5), and no reading questions represent other categories. The researchers show only one question for each category in this part due to its limited space.

Table 5. The examples of reading questions in Chapter 4: Graffiti

Reading Questions	Categories
“Who will find the information in the text useful?”	C2
“In Rule number 5, ‘Eat at the Dining Table, Not in Your Car or at Your Desk,’ the word ‘this’ in the sentence ‘Following this rule also reduces the chances of eating when you are bored,’ refers to ...”	C4
“Which tip/s that is easiest for you to follow? Why?”	C5

Chapter 5: Fractured Stories

This chapter contains 4 reading texts with 9 reading questions placed in the “Let’s Read” and “Let’s Compare” sections on pages 109, 110, 111, 112, 114, 116, and 117. The 5 reading questions are considered in the category of Analyzing (C4), 3 are Evaluating (C5), 1 is Creating (C6), and no reading questions represent other categories. Due to space limitations, this part only attaches one reading question that implies each category appears in this chapter.

Table 6. The examples of reading questions in Chapter 5: Fractured Stories

Reading Questions	Categories
“What reasons does the author use to support the claim?”	C4

“Who owns the graffiti? If somebody paints on your property, can you legally claim the artwork as your own?”	C5
“In your opinion, what would the world be like without graffiti?”	C6

Chapter 6: Healthy Foods

This last chapter of the textbook contains 2 reading texts with 17 reading questions located in the “Let’s Read” and “Let’s Compare” sections on pages 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, and 141. The 11 reading questions are regarding the category of Understanding (C2), 4 are Analyzing (C4), 1 is Remembering (C1), 1 is Creating (C6) and no reading questions represent other categories. Because of the space limitations, this part only shows one reading question that implies each category that appears in this chapter.

Table 7. The examples of reading questions in Chapter 6: Healthy Foods

Reading Questions	Categories
“Who told the story?”	C1
“Why did Little Red Riding Hood walk through the forest?”	C2
“What made the girl realize that it was not her grandma who take the goodies?”	C4
“What would happen if the grandma did not jump into the wolf’s mouth?”	C6

This study also discovered a comparison between the representation of Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Lower-order Thinking Skills (LOTS) in reading questions from the textbook. It shows that the category of Analyzing which is known as HOTS is the dominant proportion of the cognitive process dimension found in the textbook “BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress”.

Table 8. The proportion of LOTS and HOTS from 67 reading questions in the textbook

Cognitive Process	Lower-order Thinking Skills (LOTS)			Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS)		
	Remembering	Understanding	Applying	Analyzing	Evaluating	Creating
Questions	7	20	0	26	11	3
Percentage	10.45%	29.85%	0%	38.80%	16.42%	4.48%
Total	40.3%			59.7%		

Results in Table 8 above show that 59.7% of reading questions in the textbook “BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress” are considered Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and 40.3% of reading questions are Lower-order Thinking Skills (LOTS). The researchers can infer that the reading questions in the textbook are dominant in the Higher-order Thinking Skills (LOTS), while the least prevalent are in the Lower-order Thinking Skills (LOTS).

Discussion

The analysis of reading comprehension questions in the "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" textbook for Grade X senior high school students discovers a strategic proportionality in cognitive skills dimensions. In particular, the reading questions are analyzed and categorized into Lower-order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) using Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. From the total reading questions analyzed, the distribution by the knowledge acquisition level is as follows: 7 (10.45%) are focused on Remembering, 20 (29.85%) on Understanding, 26 (38.80%) on Analyzing, 11 questions (16.42%) on Evaluating, 3 questions (4.48%) on Creating, and no reading questions represents the category of Applying. This result points out a balanced approach, where HOTS questions (59.7%) are slightly more frequent than LOTS questions (40.3%), which also signifies a pedagogical aim to foster students' critical thinking and analytical skills.

The focus on HOTS in the "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" textbook reflects the research suggestions found in the previous studies. For instance, research by Erdiana and Panjaitan (2023) underscored the need to incorporate more HOTS questions in Indonesian high school English textbooks, revealing that the study found only 19.4% of questions were at the HOTS level. Likewise, Gultom and Gultom (2021) highlighted the imbalance in the cognitive level distribution in English textbooks, emphasizing a majority of LOTS questions. The findings of these two studies contrast with the balanced LOTS-HOTS approach in the "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" textbook in this present study.

Moreover, studies by Laila and Fitriyah (2022) and Stevani and Tarigan (2022) also found that LOTS dominated in the textbooks they analyzed, with a significant part of questions categorized as Remembering and Understanding levels. For instance, Laila and Fitriyah (2022) noted that most questions were focused on Remembering, the same as the 10.45% in the present analysis, but with a lesser proportion dedicated to HOTS. The finding on Understanding (29.85%) and Analyzing (38.80%) in the "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" textbook shows an advanced pedagogical strategy which beneficial to enhance higher-order cognitive abilities among students. Further, Qasrawi and Beniabdelrahman (2020) emphasized the importance of presenting both LOTS and HOTS in English textbooks to improve students' problem-solving and critical thinking skills. This balanced approach is important to help students develop comprehensive language skills and prepare for challenging real-world situations in the future. The researchers of this study found that the "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" textbook shows a well-designed and strategic integration of both LOTS and HOTS reading questions, with a more frequent proportion of higher-order cognitive skills. This approach is in line with the principles of education as well as addresses the gaps defined in previous studies, by ensuring that students are provided with the useful skills to enrich their academic and support their future professional eagerness. The well-designed and strategic integration of a higher proportion of HOTS reading questions implies an advanced development toward improving analytical and critical thinking skills among senior high school students in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This present study aims to analyze the dominant categories of cognitive process dimensions and examine the proportion of cognitive process dimensions between Lower-order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in the "BAHASA INGGRIS Work in Progress" textbook for grade 10 senior high school students in Indonesia. The findings revealed that the most frequent cognitive process dimension appearing in the 67 reading questions in the textbook was Analyzing (45.58%), followed by Understanding (22.05%), Evaluating (17.65%), Remembering (10.29%), and Creating (4.48%), and no questions were identified as the Applying category. In addition, this study pointed out that 59.7% of the questions were

categorized as HOTS and 40.3% were LOTS, which showed that there is a significant focus on the implementation of higher-order cognitive skills. By considering this distribution, it can be said that this textbook aims at providing the students with critical thinking and analytical skills, aligning with principles of education along with addressing the need for balanced cognitive skill development in Indonesian high school English education. Future research is suggested to conduct a study by investigating how teachers utilize and improve the textbook to promote Higher-order Thinking Skills (HOTS) through classroom observations and teacher interviews.

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