

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the research, statements of the research problem, objectives of the research, significance of the research, scope and limitations of the research, and definition of key terms.

A Background of The Research

Numerous learning resources are accessible, such as textbooks, e-books, websites, YouTube, journals, newspapers, educational apps, and many more. However, among other learning resources, textbooks become a main resource for subject learning in most Indonesian schools.¹ Moreover, as primary learning resources, textbooks hold important aspects for students and teachers. Textbooks might offer a clear framework and support to accomplish the learning objective by providing learning materials, tasks, exercises, and instructions.²

The textbook must be arranged based on the national education standard and present curriculum as stated in the Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's Regulation Number 21/2023 on the Development, Provision, Distribution, and Use of Educational Books.³

¹ Anne Irawan and Veronica Listyani Diptoadi, "Using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to Analyze the Reading Comprehension Questions in EFL Textbook for Year X of High School," *Magister Scientiae* 50, no. 1 (2022): 59.

² Paulus Sainyakit et al., "An Analysis of Higher Order Thinking Skills on Three English Textbooks for Senior High School," *Journal of English Language and Pedagogy* 3, no. 2 (2020): 63.

³ Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia, Regulation No. 21 of 2023 on the Development, Provision, Distribution, and Use of Educational Books, accessed June 25, 2024, <https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id>.

Consequently, the textbooks in the classroom must be designed to align with the curriculum to achieve the objective of the curriculum. Merdeka curriculum is the current curriculum being implemented in Indonesia. Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes students as Pancasila student profiles to have 6 essential dimensions, one of which is critical thinking.⁴ Thus, it's crucial to arrange textbooks to foster critical thinking for students for classroom instruction.

Most people correlated the terms of critical thinking with higher-order thinking skills (HOTS).⁵ Higher-order thinking skills consist of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are the top three levels of the cognitive domain from Bloom's taxonomy. Bloom's taxonomy was one of the most popular and influential in the educational field, created by Benjamin S. Bloom. Seaman claims that more than 50 years after its publication in 1956, the handbook remains widely utilized in various fields.⁶ Therefore, Bloom's taxonomy continues to be recognized as a valuable tool in teaching today.

However, this research employed higher-order thinking skills that consist of analyze, evaluate, and create based on the revised Bloom's taxonomy theory by Anderson and Krathwohl. This revised edition was an updated version of Bloom's taxonomy. Anderson and Krathwohl claim that "This

⁴ Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, Dimensi, Elemen, dan Subelemen Profil Pelajar Pancasila pada Kurikulum Merdeka (Jakarta: Kemendikbudristek, 2022), 1–37, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id>.

⁵ Wendy Conklin, *Higher-Order Thinking Skills to Develop 21st Century Learners* (Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Education, 2012), 157.

⁶ Mark Seaman, "Bloom's Taxonomy," in *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, vol. 13, nos. 1 & 2, ed. David J. Flinders (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2012), 29.

revision not only demonstrates that his perceptions were realistic but also modifies the taxonomy in ways intended to make it increasingly and more broadly effective”.⁷ In other words, this revision aims to make the taxonomy more relevant and useful for developing the world of education.

Higher-order thinking has become one of the most necessary skills that must be mastered by students in the 21st-century “information age”. It is required by people to analyze and make smart choices about the large amounts, of information they encounter daily. It also encourages students to be able to analyze, evaluate, and create an idea related to faced problems at school or in their social lives.⁸ Therefore, students must be familiar with HOTS material, if textbooks do not formulate higher-order thinking skills, students won't receive enough chances to enhance their critical which are important elements of the curriculum.

Knowing about the importance of HOTS for students, the teacher must in-depth evaluate the textbooks before utilizing them in the classroom instruction. Many features of textbooks can be evaluated, such as learning material, tasks, learning objectives, and many more. Moreover, it is important to evaluate tasks that appeared in the textbook. One of the tasks that is crucial to evaluate is questions in reading comprehension. Critical thinking has a

⁷ Lorin W. Anderson et al., *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (New York: Longman, 2001), 264.

⁸ Maziyyatus Shalihah et al., “Analyzing Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) Questions of Reading Essay Task in Senior High School English Textbook,” *English Education Journal*, 13 (1), (2022), 106-121.

significant positive relationship with reading comprehension.⁹ In other words, the more developed the students' critical thinking, the better their ability to understand reading.¹⁰

However, in reality, Abdul Mu'ti, the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education (Mendikdasmen), revealed that approximately 75% of 15-year-old Indonesian students can read but are unable to comprehend the meaning or the content of what they read.¹¹ It shows that the current literacy condition in Indonesia is deeply concerning. Therefore, as one of the sources of learning, textbooks should be designed with an emphasis on HOTS so students become familiar with critical thinking. Focusing on the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in textbooks and learning is relevant because HOTS encourages students not only to memorize but also to analyze, evaluate, and create a deep understanding of the material, which aligns with Mu'ti's vision to enhance literacy quality and critical thinking skills among Indonesian students.

Improving the quality of reading comprehension questions in textbooks can serve as an initial step toward enhancing the literacy skills of Indonesia's young generation. Thus, through evaluation, teachers can ensure that textbooks effectively develop students' critical thinking skills by presenting reading

⁹ Erni Wijayanti et al., "The Correlation Between Students' Critical Thinking and Their Reading Comprehension Ability" *UNILA Journal of English Teaching* (2015), 274–282.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah: 75 Persen Anak Indonesia Bisa Baca tapi Tak Paham yang Dibaca," *Tempo*, April 29, 2025, accessed May 1, 2025, <https://www.tempo.co/politik/menteri-abdul-mu-ti-75-persen-anak-indonesia-bisa-baca-tapi-tak-paham-yang-dibaca-1284724>.

comprehension questions that encourage students to analyze, evaluate, and create from the text.

However, many previous studies show that some textbooks still arrange HOTS in reading comprehension questions unequally, and it is still dominated by lower-order thinking skills (LOTS). The research conducted by Irawan & Diptoadi shows that the proportion of HOTS in reading comprehension questions in the 2013 EFL textbook is lower than LOTS.¹² This result is also in line with separate studies conducted by Laila & Fitriyah and Erdiana & Panjaitan that found the proportion of LOTS is also higher than HOTS in reading comprehension questions in 2013 EFL textbooks for grade 12th.^{13 14} A similar research was conducted by Arlansyah et al., who also found that LOTS was dominant than HOTS in reading questions in the ‘English for Nusantara’ textbook for grade seven.¹⁵

Some previous studies show that some textbooks still arrange HOTS in reading comprehension questions unequally, and it is still dominated by lower-order thinking skills (LOTS). Therefore, the researcher feels it must check the distribution of HOTS in reading comprehension questions, especially in the latest edition of the English textbook. The researcher addresses this gap by specifically analyzing the reading comprehension questions in the English

¹² Anne Irawan and Veronica Listyani Diptoadi, “Using the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy,” 59.

¹³ Laila Izzatul and Fitriyah Ima, “An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions in English Textbook Based on Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy,” *Journal of English Teaching* 8 (2022), 71.

¹⁴ Nira Erdiana and Sulastris Panjaitan, “How Is HOTS Integrated into the Indonesian High School English Textbook?,” *Studies in English Language and Education* 10, no. 1 (2023), 60.

¹⁵ Anggrianto Arlansyah, Hilda Puspita, and Eko Saputra, “Reading Questions in ‘English for Nusantara’ Textbook by Using Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy Corresponding Email,” *Journal of English Education and Teaching* 7 (2023).

textbook for twelfth-grade students in senior high school entitled *Bahasa Inggris SMA-MA/SMK-MAK* for 12th-grade students, published by *Yrama Widya* publisher, that never been analyzed before.

This textbook was published in 2024, and the latest version of the Merdeka curriculum textbook is among other textbooks. Further, the government policies that provide opportunities for non-central book publishers to contribute to the provision of curriculum-supporting materials reinforce the importance of this research. By studying the cognitive level of tasks, which are reading comprehension questions in the English textbook for twelfth-grade students in senior high school, the researcher aims to contribute to the broader understanding of the cognitive level in the textbook, especially the integration of HOTS in the textbook. This textbook is important to analyze since it tends to be designed to bridge the needs of students to move up to post-secondary or higher education levels. This research provided valuable insight to enrich the literature of HOTS and future studies related to the issue of HOTS developments, and the findings of this present research on the latest versions of the textbook can be used to improve the next version of the textbook.

B Statements of Research Problem

According to the previous studies and background of the research above, the researcher formulated research questions as follows:

1. How are Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in reading comprehension questions distributed in the *Bahasa Inggris SMA-MA/SMK-MAK* for the 12th-grade textbook?

2. What are the characteristics of Higher-Order Thinking Skills in the reading comprehension questions in the *Bahasa Inggris SMA-MA/SMK-MAK* for the 12th-grade textbook?

C Objectives of The Research

According to the research problem above, the aims of this research were:

1. To analyze the distribution of Higher-Order Thinking Skills in the reading comprehension questions in the *Bahasa Inggris SMA-MA/SMK-MAK* for the 12th grade textbook,
2. To analyze the characteristics of Higher-Order Thinking Skills in the reading comprehension questions in the *Bahasa Inggris SMA-MA/SMK-MAK* for the 12th grade textbook.

D Significance of the Research

This research is expected to provide several contributions theoretically and practically for various stakeholders in education.

1. Theoretically

The results of this research are expected to complement previous theories on the quality of English textbooks, especially at the cognitive level in the reading comprehension context.

2. Practically

- a. For educators, this research gives an in-depth understanding of the cognitive level, and selects appropriate reading comprehension questions to implement in classroom activities.

- b. For textbook authors and publishers, this research assists authors and publishers in selecting appropriate reading comprehension questions to develop students' thinking skills.
- c. For future research, this research serves as a reference for analyzing other textbooks in developing similar studies.

E Scopes and Limitations of The Research

This research is limited to analyzing reading comprehension questions from the English textbook entitled *Bahasa Inggris SMA-MA/SMK-MAK* for 12th-grade students, published by *Yrama Widya*. The researcher focused on analyzing HOTS in reading comprehension questions.

The researcher only analyzed the questions that are written after every reading text or namely the reading comprehension questions, according to the levels of six cognitive domains from the revised edition of Bloom's taxonomy, which include remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

F Definition of Key Terms

1. Textbook

A textbook is a learning resource used by teachers as an instructional tool during the learning process in the classroom. The textbook here is the first edition published by *Yrama Widya* in 2024, entitled *Bahasa Inggris SMA-MA/SMK-MAK* for 12th-grade students.

2. Reading Comprehension Question

Reading comprehension questions here mean all questions that appear after reading the text in the *Bahasa Inggris SMA-MA/SMK-MAK* for the 12th-grade textbook. The questions here are in the form of multiple-choice, complex multiple-choice, true and false, and essay questions. It measures students' cognitive skills through questions that demand critical thinking and complex analytical processes.

3. Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) is a higher-level cognitive process reform based on revised Bloom's taxonomy that involves as levels C4 (analyze), C5 (evaluate), and C6 (create), which require deeper cognitive engagement rather than memorization. Through this means, all the reading comprehension questions in the textbook should contain critical questions that encourage students to think critically.