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EVALUATING HIGHER-ORDER THINKING SKILLS IN READING EXERCISES OF EFL TEXTBOOK

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to examine the distribution of higher-order thinking skills in the reading exercises of the Pathway to English textbook and to identify the HOTS categories included in these exercises for Grade 10 students. The writer employed an analytical approach to identify the specific characteristics of the material in the textbook. This study uses qualitative data because the data is in the form of words. The subject of this study is the reading exercises in the Pathway to English textbook for tenth-grade students in senior high school. Data were collected using a variety of instruments, namely the Pathway to English textbook, document analysis, and checklists. The results showed that the higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in the Pathway to English textbook had a lower distribution compared to the lower-order thinking skills (LOTS).

Keywords: Bloom's Taxonomy, HOTS, Pathway to English Textbook, Reading Exercises

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English textbooks have been used as the primary material for English teaching and learning. Almost all schools utilize textbooks as the main reference for all subjects. Textbooks are widely recognized as an important resource for teaching management globally, especially in Indonesia. In addition, textbooks help teachers develop tests to evaluate existing teaching materials because textbooks not only consist of learning materials but also contain different types of tests that are valuable for teachers to measure students' abilities.

The textbook is an integral part of any English language classroom, serving as either a primary or supplementary learning tool. According to Penny (2009), a course book can provide both teachers and students with a sense of direction and progression because it lays out a clear framework for the entire learning process. Penny further explains that the textbook includes readings and exercises that will be accessible to the vast majority of students. The instructor will not need to spend time creating their own materials, which represents a significant time saving. As can be seen from the explanations above, the textbook serves as an invaluable resource for both teachers and students during the English language learning process by providing necessary frameworks, texts, and tasks.

The textbook exercises play an important role in the English language learning process because they give students an opportunity to practice what they have learned and improve their performance. Therefore, practice is the activity through which language skills and knowledge are consolidated and thoroughly mastered, as emphasized by Penny (2009). As such, it is undeniably the most crucial of all learning phases. Consequently, the exercise is helpful for educators in gauging students' knowledge of course material and their proficiency in the four language skills.

The Ministry of Education and Culture, acting through the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel, has created a program called Higher-Order Thinking Skills to enhance and advance educational practices. The Ministry of Education and Culture's 2018

policy direction prioritized the integration of Strengthening Character Education and learning oriented to HOTS, which informed the design of this program. Improving the quality of students is often hindered by teachers who focus on quality learning improvement in the classroom without being oriented toward HOTS. The map to enhance the quality of education in Indonesia is based on the belief that producing better students will yield better results. In line with this, it is necessary to have a teacher handbook that provides guidance for developing learning-oriented higher thinking skills. The aim is to improve the quality of learning, which in turn will improve the quality of graduate students.

Therefore, this study was conducted to analyze a book that is dominantly used in schools. In this case, the researcher chose the Pathway to English textbook. Based on preliminary findings, this learning book is widely used as a student and teacher handbook for learning English. In addition, the author selected this particular textbook because of its relevance to the current curriculum. The curriculum places an emphasis on the following five scientific methods as integral to the educational process: observation, inquiry, association, experimentation, and collaboration. Students may benefit from practicing critical thinking through the use of a logical and systematic approach by questioning the association. Students may find solutions to real-world issues through experimentation. After that, the networking phase opens up opportunities for shared learning as students confront new situations and challenges. Thus, it is clear that these scientific methods are also linked to the capacity for higher-order thought. This view is supported by the claim made by Brookhart (2010), who stated that higher-order thinking requires the use of both problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities.

The textbook also helps students hone their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, as the author explains. The goal of the author is to equip students with the necessary skills to thrive in the English-speaking communication environment, including the ability to read and write a variety of texts. In conclusion, the author believes it is crucial to examine the textbook's reading exercises for evidence of higher-order thinking skills, as this could help students become more critical readers and thrive in a globalized world where English is the primary language of business and government.

Moreover, according to Yang (2012), the textbook can be enhanced by placing a greater emphasis on problem-solving and higher-order cognitive processes. To ensure that the Pathway to English textbook for tenth-grade students has supported students in encouraging their competence to survive in the English communication environment by providing higher-order thinking skills in the reading exercises, the writer opted to analyze the distribution of such skills in the textbook.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Higher-Order Thinking Skills

Higher-order thinking skills, commonly abbreviated as HOTS, represent a critical component in contemporary education. The concept originates from Bloom's Taxonomy, which was later revised by Anderson and Krathwohl. According to Krathwohl (2002), the revised Bloom's Taxonomy categorizes cognitive processes into six levels: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The first three levels are generally considered lower-order thinking skills (LOTS), while the last three levels are classified as higher-order thinking skills (HOTS).

Brookhart (2010) defines higher-order thinking as thinking that occurs when students are required to interpret, analyze, or manipulate information in

new ways. It involves complex judgment skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. HOTS requires students to go beyond simple recall of facts and instead engage with content in meaningful and challenging ways. Paul and Elder (2006) similarly emphasize that critical thinking, a key component of HOTS, involves the ability to analyze and evaluate information and arguments, to see alternative perspectives, and to reach sound conclusions based on evidence and reason.

The importance of HOTS in education cannot be overstated. In an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, students need to develop the ability to think critically and creatively to solve problems they will encounter in their personal and professional lives. Zohar and Dori (2003) argue that higher-order thinking should not be reserved for high-achieving students alone; rather, all students can and should develop these skills with appropriate instruction and support.

To achieve higher-order thinking skills in language learning, students must move beyond memorization and engage in analysis, evaluation, and creation by debating real-world issues or composing original stories. The ability to think critically can be developed and refined within an environment that encourages debate (Zulkhairi & Hajar, 2023a). This deeper cognitive engagement becomes enjoyable when teachers incorporate playful "ice-breaking" activities that lower the affective filter, making students feel safe enough to take intellectual risks with the new language. Ice breaking facilitates collaboration and communication, enhances learning efficiency and enjoyment, reduces boredom and distraction, fosters creativity and critical thinking, supports direct and focused learning, and addresses non-academic issues (Mawardi et al., 2024).

A positive and supportive learning atmosphere, fostered through collaboration and mutual respect, encourages learners to challenge assumptions and justify their opinions without fear of embarrassment. Ultimately, when students feel comfortable and connected, they are more willing to grapple with complex linguistic tasks, transforming language acquisition into a stimulating and rewarding intellectual pursuit.

HOTS in Language Learning and Textbook Analysis

In the context of language learning, higher-order thinking skills play a crucial role in developing communicative competence. Reading comprehension, in particular, requires learners to engage in complex cognitive processes. Critical thinking skills aid in comprehending and evaluating the truthfulness of a text (Zulkhairi & Hajar, 2023a). Reading skills and strategies involve both lower-level automatic processes and higher-level conscious processes (Afflerbach et al., 2008). While lower-level skills may include word recognition and literal comprehension, higher-level skills involve making inferences, evaluating arguments, and synthesizing information from multiple sources.

The influence of textbooks on enhancing thinking skills is acknowledged in numerous studies. Textbooks can shape attitudes, which subsequently affect an individual's thinking, preferences, and assessments of new issues (Zulkhairi & Hajar, 2023b). Textbooks, as primary instructional materials, for instance, need to incorporate exercises that promote the development of these higher-order thinking skills. Cunningsworth (1995) emphasizes that textbooks should provide opportunities for learners to use language creatively and to develop thinking skills alongside language skills. The inclusion of HOTS-oriented exercises in textbooks is essential for preparing students to function effectively in real-world communication situations where they must analyze, evaluate, and create meaning.

Several studies have examined the distribution of HOTS in English textbooks. Laili et al. (2020) conducted research on HOTS in English language assessment for senior high school students and found that the incorporation of higher-order thinking skills in textbooks varied considerably. Similarly, Prastikawati et al. (2021) investigated teachers' training in developing HOTS-based English questions and highlighted the importance of textbooks that support HOTS-oriented instruction.

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy as an Analytical Framework

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy provides a useful framework for analyzing the cognitive demands of textbook exercises. Anderson and Krathwohl's revision of the original taxonomy updated both the terminology and the structure to make it more relevant for contemporary educational contexts. The six cognitive process dimensions are as follows:

The first dimension, remembering, involves retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory. This includes recognizing and recalling information. The second dimension, understanding, requires constructing meaning from instructional messages, including interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining. The third dimension, applying, involves carrying out or using a procedure in a given situation.

The fourth dimension, analyzing, requires breaking material into its constituent parts and determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure. This includes differentiating, organizing, and attributing. The fifth dimension, evaluating, involves making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing. The sixth dimension, creating, requires putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole and reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, and producing.

This framework has been widely used in textbook analysis research. Seif (2012) employed Bloom's Taxonomy to evaluate higher-order thinking skills in reading exercises in Palestinian textbooks. The study found that lower-order thinking skills dominated the exercises, with limited opportunities for students to engage in analysis, evaluation, and creation.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with content analysis as the primary method. Content analysis is a research technique used to make replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual material. According to Anderson (2007), thematic content analysis allows researchers to systematically analyze the content of communication, including textbooks, to identify patterns and themes. In this research, the writer used content analysis because the aim was to analyze the content of the textbook, particularly the reading comprehension exercises in the Pathway to English textbook for tenth-grade senior high school students.

Subject of the Study

The subject of this study was the reading exercises in the Pathway to English textbook for tenth-grade students in senior high school. This textbook was written by Eudia Grace and Th. M. Sudarwati, with Raymond S. and Dwi Wahyu Priyanto serving as editors. The textbook was published by Erlangga Publisher in 2014 and is designed for Grade X senior high school students following the General Programme. The textbook follows the English curriculum and contains twelve chapters with various themes and topics for students to explore. The reading exercises within this textbook became the specific focus of analysis.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using multiple instruments to ensure comprehensiveness and accuracy. The primary instrument was the Pathway to English textbook itself. Additionally, the researcher utilized document analysis sheets and checklist tables. All reading exercise questions from the textbook, specifically the essay questions that follow each reading passage, were gathered and listed by the author. Based on the chapters in the textbook, the author categorized all of the reading assignments.

The checklist table served as the main tool for classifying the questions according to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. In the checklist table, the author included the six cognitive domains: remembering (C1), understanding (C2), applying (C3), analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6). This allowed for the verification of how each reading question was distributed depending on these cognitive domains.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis procedure followed several systematic steps. First, the researcher read the entire textbook to gain familiarity with its content and structure. Second, all reading comprehension exercises, specifically the essay questions, were identified and listed chapter by chapter. Third, each question was analyzed and classified according to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy cognitive domains. The classification was based on the cognitive demand required to answer each question, as indicated by the question's wording and the nature of the task.

To ensure the reliability of the classification, the researcher consulted with colleagues and referred to established guidelines for applying Bloom's Taxonomy to textbook analysis. Questions that required recall of information were classified as remembering. Those requiring explanation or summarization were classified as understanding. Questions asking students to use information in new situations were classified as applying. Questions requiring students to break down information into parts and identify relationships were classified as analyzing. Questions asking for judgments based on criteria were classified as evaluating. Questions requiring the creation of new products or ideas were classified as creating.

After classification, the frequency and percentage of questions in each cognitive domain were calculated. The results were then interpreted to determine the distribution of higher-order thinking skills compared to lower-order thinking skills in the reading exercises.

FINDINGS

Overview of the Textbook

The Pathway to English textbook for tenth-grade senior high school students contains twelve chapters with various themes and topics. The textbook is designed to facilitate students' mastery of English grammar and vocabulary as well as the four fundamental language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Each chapter includes a variety of exercises targeting these skills, with reading exercises being a consistent component throughout the book.

The reading materials in the textbook encompass seven different types of texts, including letters, reports, analytical expositions, biographies, songs, dialogues, and procedural or manual instruction texts. These varied text types provide students with exposure to different genres and purposes of written English, which is important for developing comprehensive reading abilities.

Distribution of Cognitive Levels in Reading Exercises

The analysis of reading exercises in the Pathway to English textbook revealed that the total number of essay reading questions across all twelve chapters was 156. These questions were

classified according to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy cognitive domains, with the following results.

Questions classified as remembering (C1) required students to recall specific information from the reading texts. These questions typically began with prompts such as "what," "who," "when," or "where" and asked for factual information explicitly stated in the text. Examples included questions about character names, dates, locations, or specific events mentioned in the readings.

Questions classified as understanding (C2) required students to demonstrate comprehension by explaining concepts, summarizing information, or providing examples. These questions often used prompts such as "explain," "summarize," or "describe in your own words." Students needed to process the information and express it in a different form, but the cognitive demand remained at the level of understanding rather than higher-order thinking.

Questions classified as applying (C3) required students to use information or concepts from the reading in new situations. These questions might ask students to apply a principle discussed in the text to a different context or to use information from the text to solve a problem.

Questions classified as analyzing (C4) required students to break down information into components and identify relationships. These questions used prompts such as "analyze," "compare," "contrast," "differentiate," or "organize." Students needed to examine the structure of the text or argument and identify how parts related to the whole.

Questions classified as evaluating (C5) required students to make judgments based on criteria and standards. These questions used prompts such as "evaluate," "critique," "judge," or "defend." Students needed to assess the quality, credibility, or effectiveness of arguments or ideas presented in the texts.

Questions classified as creating (C6) required students to put elements together to form a new whole or generate original products. These questions used prompts such as "create," "design," "develop," or "formulate." Students needed to synthesize information and produce something new based on their understanding and analysis.

Quantitative Distribution of HOTS and LOTS

The analysis revealed that out of 156 total reading questions, 141 questions (90.4%) were classified as lower-order thinking skills (C1, C2, and C3), while only 15 questions (9.6%) were classified as higher-order thinking skills (C4, C5, and C6). Within the HOTS category, the distribution was as follows: analyzing skills (C4) accounted for 12 questions or 7.7% of the total, evaluating skills (C5) accounted for 3 questions or 1.9% of the total, and creating skills (C6) accounted for 0 questions or 0% of the total.

These figures clearly demonstrate that the distribution of higher-order thinking skills in the reading exercises is substantially lower than that of lower-order thinking skills. The overwhelming majority of questions require students to remember, understand, or apply information, with very few opportunities for analysis and evaluation, and no opportunities for creation.

Analysis of HOTS Questions by Category

The analyzing skills category (C4) comprised the largest portion of HOTS questions. These 12 questions were distributed across several chapters in the textbook. Analyzing questions typically required students to compare and contrast information, identify causes and effects, or examine the structure of arguments in the reading texts. For example, some questions asked students to analyze the organizational structure of a text or to identify the main arguments presented by the author. These questions required students to

move beyond simple comprehension and engage with the text at a deeper level by examining how its components worked together.

The evaluating skills category (C5) included only 3 questions out of the total 156. These questions were found in two chapters of the textbook: chapter 5 and chapter 12. Chapter 5 contained two evaluating questions, while chapter 12 contained one evaluating question. The evaluation questions tended to ask students for their opinions about characters or situations presented in the texts. For instance, one question from chapter 12 asked, "Am I in the first song a pessimistic or optimistic person? How do you know?" This question requires students to make a judgment about a character's disposition based on evidence from the text.

The limited number and variation of evaluation questions represent a significant gap in the textbook's coverage of higher-order thinking skills. As noted by Brookhart (2010), evaluation skills are crucial for developing critical thinking because they require students to apply criteria and standards in making reasoned judgments. The monotonous type of evaluation questions found in the textbook, which mostly asked for readers' assessments of character traits, could be enriched with more diverse evaluation tasks. For example, questions could be modified to ask, "What is the most important moment in the story and why?" Such questions still incorporate evaluative skills by soliciting the reader's opinion about the story, but they allow for more varied and complex responses.

The creating skills category (C6) received no distribution in the reading exercises analyzed. No questions required students to generate new ideas, design original products, or synthesize information in creative ways. This absence is notable, as creating represents the highest level of cognitive demand in Bloom's Taxonomy and is essential for developing students' ability to think innovatively and produce original work. The lack of creating-level questions may be attributed to the perception that such tasks are too demanding for tenth-grade students or that they are more appropriate for assessment through other language skills such as writing or speaking rather than reading comprehension exercises.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study reveal a significant imbalance in the distribution of higher-order thinking skills in the reading exercises of the Pathway to English textbook. With only 9.6% of questions targeting HOTS, the textbook provides limited opportunities for students to develop and practice critical thinking skills through reading comprehension tasks. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Laili, Aini, and Christanti (2020), Prastikawati, Wiyaka, and Budiman (2021), and Sholichatun (2011), who similarly found that higher-order thinking skills were underrepresented in English textbooks and assessments.

The predominance of lower-order thinking skills in textbook exercises reflects a traditional approach to language teaching that prioritizes comprehension of factual information over critical engagement with texts. While remembering, understanding, and applying are undoubtedly important foundational skills, an overreliance on these lower-level cognitive processes may not adequately prepare students for the complex reading demands they will encounter in academic and professional contexts. As Linderholm (2006) notes, reading with purpose in real-world situations often requires readers to analyze arguments, evaluate evidence, and synthesize information from multiple sources.

The finding that analytical skills received the highest distribution among HOTS categories suggests that the textbook does make some attempt to engage students in deeper processing

of texts. Analysis questions require students to examine relationships, identify patterns, and understand how texts are structured. These are valuable skills for critical reading. However, the relatively low number of such questions indicates that analysis is not consistently emphasized across the textbook.

The very limited number of evaluation questions and the complete absence of creation questions represent more significant concerns. Evaluation requires students to make reasoned judgments based on criteria, which is essential for developing critical thinking and the ability to assess the quality and credibility of information sources. In an era of widespread misinformation, the ability to evaluate texts critically is more important than ever. Creation, as the highest level of cognitive processing, is equally important for developing students' ability to generate new ideas and express themselves creatively in response to texts they have read.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

The findings of this study have several implications for English language teaching and learning. First, teachers who use the Pathway to English textbook need to be aware of the limited distribution of higher-order thinking skills in the reading exercises. Rather than simply adopting the textbook as provided, teachers should adapt the materials to incorporate more HOTS-oriented tasks. This adaptation may involve modifying existing questions to increase cognitive demand, supplementing textbook exercises with additional questions that target analysis, evaluation, and creation, or designing complementary activities that require students to engage with texts at deeper levels.

As noted by Fan and Kaeley (2000), textbooks influence teaching strategies, and teachers often rely heavily on textbook exercises for assessment and practice. Therefore, when textbooks lack HOTS-oriented tasks, students may miss valuable opportunities to develop critical thinking skills unless teachers actively compensate for this gap. English teachers must examine textbook contents critically and be prepared to adapt rather than simply adopt. In fact, teachers often possess knowledge of materials and exercises that are appropriate for their students beyond what is contained in a single textbook. Teachers can combine multiple books and learning resources to provide students with a richer and more balanced set of learning experiences.

Second, textbook authors and publishers should consider the findings of this study when developing future editions or new textbooks. The curriculum in Indonesia emphasizes scientific approaches to learning that are linked to higher-order thinking. Textbooks that align with this curriculum should provide adequate opportunities for students to practice all levels of cognitive processing, including the higher levels. The near absence of evaluation questions and the complete absence of creation questions in the reading exercises suggest a need for revision to better align with curriculum goals and contemporary understandings of effective language teaching.

Third, teacher training programs should emphasize the importance of higher-order thinking in language teaching and provide teachers with strategies for developing and implementing HOTS-oriented tasks. Research by Retnawati, Djidu, Kartianom, and Anazifa (2018) and Suwarma and Apriyani (2022) has examined teachers' knowledge about HOTS and their skills in developing HOTS-oriented lesson plans and assessments. These studies suggest that teachers need ongoing professional development to effectively integrate higher-order thinking into their teaching practice. Training students to think critically requires enhancing classroom activities, and teachers must design more comprehensive educational goals

involving cognitive processes that exceed lower-order thinking skills.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of how higher-order thinking skills are represented in EFL textbooks. By applying Bloom's Revised Taxonomy as an analytical framework, the study provides empirical evidence of the distribution of cognitive demands in reading exercises. The findings support the observation made by Seif (2012) and others that textbooks tend to emphasize lower-order thinking skills at the expense of higher-order ones.

The study also highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of how different text types and exercise formats relate to cognitive demand. Some reading text types may naturally lend themselves to particular cognitive levels. For example, analytical exposition texts may provide rich opportunities for analysis and evaluation questions, while procedural texts may be more suited to application questions. Textbook authors could leverage these relationships to ensure balanced coverage of cognitive levels across different text types.

Furthermore, the study raises questions about the relationship between language proficiency and higher-order thinking. Some educators may assume that students need to achieve a certain level of language proficiency before they can engage in higher-order thinking in the target language. However, Zohar and Dori (2003) argue that higher-order thinking can and should be developed alongside language skills, with tasks appropriately scaffolded to support students' linguistic and cognitive development simultaneously.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis focused exclusively on reading exercises in a single textbook for tenth-grade students. The findings may not be generalizable to other textbooks, other grade levels, or other language skills. Future research could examine multiple textbooks, compare textbooks across grade levels, or analyze exercises targeting listening, speaking, and writing skills.

Second, the classification of questions according to Bloom's Taxonomy involves some degree of subjective judgment. Different analysts might interpret the same question differently. To enhance reliability, future studies could involve multiple analysts and calculate inter-rater reliability. Additionally, researchers could employ more detailed analytical frameworks that consider not only the cognitive level of questions but also other dimensions such as text complexity, question format, and alignment with learning objectives.

Third, this study analyzed only the presence of HOTS in textbook exercises, not how teachers actually use these exercises in the classroom or how students respond to them. Future research could employ classroom observations and student interviews to understand how HOTS-oriented tasks are implemented in practice and what effects they have on student learning and thinking development.

Fourth, the study did not examine the relationship between reading text types and the cognitive demands of accompanying questions. Different text types may offer different affordances for higher-order thinking, and understanding these relationships could inform both textbook design and instructional practice.

Finally, comparative studies could examine how HOTS distribution in Indonesian textbooks compares with that in textbooks from other countries, providing insights into cross-cultural differences in expectations for student thinking and learning.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to understand the distribution of higher-order thinking skills

in the reading exercises of the Pathway to English textbook for tenth-grade senior high school students and to identify the HOTS categories included in these exercises. Through content analysis using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy as an analytical framework, the study found that the distribution of higher-order thinking skills in the textbook's reading exercises is significantly lower than that of lower-order thinking skills.

Of the 156 reading questions analyzed, 141 questions or 90.4% were classified as lower-order thinking skills requiring remembering, understanding, or applying information. Only 15 questions or 9.6% were classified as higher-order thinking skills. Within the HOTS category, analyzing skills received the highest distribution with 12 questions or 7.7%, evaluating skills received 3 questions or 1.9%, and creating skills received no questions at all.

These findings indicate that while the textbook provides ample practice for foundational comprehension skills, it offers limited opportunities for students to engage in the critical and creative thinking that characterizes higher-order cognitive processing. The near absence of evaluation questions and the complete absence of creation questions are particularly concerning, as these skills are essential for developing students' ability to think critically, make reasoned judgments, and generate original ideas in response to texts.

The researcher acknowledges that the Pathway to English textbook is generally well-written and provides effective exercises for students in many respects. The textbook covers a variety of text types and language skills and aligns with the curriculum. However, the limited distribution of HOTS suggests that the textbook could be improved by incorporating more exercises that target analysis, evaluation, and creation. This finding is consistent with previous research and highlights an ongoing challenge in textbook design: balancing the need for foundational skill development with the equally important need for higher-order thinking development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are offered for different stakeholders involved in English language teaching and learning.

For textbook authors and publishers, it is recommended that future editions of the Pathway to English textbook and other EFL textbooks incorporate a more balanced distribution of cognitive levels in reading exercises. Specifically, authors should increase the number of questions requiring evaluation and creation to provide students with opportunities to practice these higher-order thinking skills. This could involve designing questions that ask students to evaluate arguments, critique texts, synthesize information from multiple sources, and create new texts or ideas in response to reading. A wider range of HOTS theory and practice should be integrated into textbook design.

For English teachers who use the Pathway to English textbook, it is recommended that they critically examine the textbook's exercises and supplement them with additional HOTS-oriented tasks. Teachers can modify existing questions to increase cognitive demand, develop their own HOTS questions aligned with reading texts, and design activities that require students to analyze, evaluate, and create in response to their reading. Teachers can also help students develop their higher-order thinking skills by encouraging them to engage in critical thinking activities outside of school, such as analyzing media texts or evaluating information from various sources. As noted earlier, teachers must be able to adapt, not simply adopt.

For teacher trainers and professional development providers, it is recommended that training programs

include modules on integrating higher-order thinking skills into language teaching. Teachers need both theoretical understanding of HOTS and practical strategies for designing and implementing HOTS-oriented tasks. Professional development should also address the importance of textbook evaluation and adaptation skills.

For curriculum developers and policymakers, it is recommended that guidelines for textbook development and evaluation include explicit criteria related to the distribution of higher-order thinking skills. The emphasis on HOTS in the curriculum should be reflected in the textbooks approved for use in schools. Regular textbook reviews could ensure that materials adequately address all levels of cognitive processing.

For future researchers, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted on other textbooks, other grade levels, and other language skills. Comparative studies could examine how HOTS distribution varies across textbooks from different publishers or across different educational contexts. Research could also investigate the relationship between HOTS in textbooks and student outcomes, exploring whether textbooks with a more balanced HOTS distribution lead to better development of critical thinking skills.

In conclusion, textbooks play a crucial role in achieving educational goals, and the incorporation of higher-order thinking skills in textbook exercises is essential for preparing students to think critically and creatively in the twenty-first century. While the Pathway to English textbook provides a solid foundation for developing reading skills, its limited distribution of HOTS suggests room for improvement. With conscious effort from textbook authors, teachers, and other stakeholders, textbooks can better serve as tools for developing not only language proficiency but also the higher-order thinking skills that students need to succeed in academic, professional, and personal contexts. The researcher appreciates the author's creation in this English Pathway book and hopes that future editions will build on its strengths while addressing the gaps identified in this study.

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