



Distribution of Cognitive Levels Analysis in Reading Exercises of English for Nusantara Textbook

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ABSTRACT

Reading exercises in textbooks play an important role in shaping students' cognitive experiences, particularly in English language learning. However, the levels of cognitive processes required by textbook reading exercises need to be systematically analyzed to identify the cognitive orientation being developed. This study aims to analyze the distribution of cognitive process levels in reading exercises in the English for Nusantara Grade VIII textbook based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy framework. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using content analysis techniques. The data consisted of reading tasks found in the textbook, with a total of 140 tasks identified. Seventeen tasks were excluded because they did not meet the criteria of the Cognitive Process Dimension (CPD), resulting in 123 specific reading tasks being analyzed. Each task was classified into the six levels of cognitive processes in the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy through verbatim tabulation and theory-based judgment, which were verified through expert judgment by English teachers. The results indicate that the distribution of cognitive process levels is dominated by Remembering (43.09%) and Understanding (36.59%). Applying (2.44%), Analyzing (10.57%), and Evaluating (7.32%) appear in smaller proportions, while no reading tasks were found at the Creating level (0.00%). In conclusion, the reading exercises in the English for Nusantara Grade VIII textbook are oriented toward low- to mid-level cognitive processes, with limited opportunities for the development of higher-order thinking skills. Therefore, more cognitively balanced reading exercises are needed to optimize the role of reading activities in learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is one of the fundamental skills in English language learning that plays an important role in the development of students' linguistic and cognitive competencies (Suhud & Puspita, 2024). Through reading activities, students are not only expected to understand the literal content of texts but also to process information, interpret meaning, and develop more complex thinking skills (Kembaren et al., 2018). Therefore, reading exercises that accompany reading texts in textbooks hold a strategic role in shaping students' cognitive experiences during the learning process (Budiharso, 2014; Pertiwi & Iftanti, 2024).

In the learning context, textbooks remain a primary source widely used by teachers and students. Textbooks function not only as providers of learning materials but also as determinants of the direction of learning activities through the types and characteristics of tasks presented (Li & Wang, 2024). Several studies indicate that the design of exercises in textbooks influences students' levels of cognitive engagement, particularly in reading skills (Fitri et al., 2022). An analysis of reading exercises in textbooks can provide an overview of the extent to which reading activities are directed toward developing lower-order and higher-order thinking skills (Arsana et al., 2025; Krathwohl, 2002).

One theoretical framework widely used to analyze cognitive demands in learning activities is Bloom's Taxonomy (Arsana et al., 2025). The original version of Bloom's Taxonomy developed by Bloom and colleagues classified learning objectives into six noun-based categories: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This taxonomy made an important contribution to understanding the hierarchy of learning objectives; however, it has been criticized for conceptual ambiguity, particularly in the knowledge category, which can refer to both knowledge content and cognitive processes. In response to these limitations, Anderson and Krathwohl revised Bloom's Taxonomy by more clearly distinguishing between types of knowledge and cognitive processes. In A "Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing", learning objective categories were reformulated into verbs representing mental processes: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. Revised Bloom's Taxonomy emphasizes that the classification of a learning task should be based on the mental operations performed by learners on knowledge, rather than merely on the linguistic form or surface verbs used in task instructions (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Krathwohl, 2002).

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy has been widely used in educational research to analyze cognitive demands in test items, classroom activities, and textbook exercises (Krathwohl, 2002). This framework enables researchers to systematically and objectively map the distribution of cognitive process levels, thereby revealing the tendency of cognitive orientation within learning materials or instructional instruments (Adams, 2015). In the context of reading instruction, the use of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy is relevant because reading activities involve a broad spectrum of

cognitive processes, ranging from retrieving explicit information to analyzing, evaluating, and producing new text-based meaning (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Ruscandi, 2023).

Nevertheless, several studies indicate that reading exercises in textbooks tend to emphasize lower- and mid-level cognitive processes, such as remembering and understanding, rather than higher-order cognitive processes (Fitri et al., 2022; Muzairita, 2020). This raises questions regarding the extent to which textbooks provide opportunities for the development of critical and creative thinking skills through reading activities (Arsana et al., 2025). Therefore, analyzing the distribution of cognitive process levels in reading exercises is important for understanding the cognitive characteristics of reading instruction offered by textbooks. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the distribution of cognitive process levels in reading exercises in the “English for Nusantara” Grade VIII textbook based on the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy framework. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the distribution of cognitive process levels in reading exercises in the “English for Nusantara” Grade VIII textbook based on the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy framework. Accordingly, the research question guiding this study is: What is the distribution of cognitive process levels in the reading exercises of the “English for Nusantara” Grade VIII textbook based on the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy framework?.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive with content analysis techniques to analyze the levels of cognitive processes contained in reading exercises in the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VIII junior high school. The descriptive approach was selected because this study aimed to describe and map the distribution of cognitive levels in reading tasks without applying any treatment or manipulation to the data. Content analysis was used to examine written documents systematically and objectively by interpreting the meanings contained in the text based on a particular theoretical framework (Sandelowski, 2000).

Data Sources

The data source of this study was the English for Nusantara Grade VIII textbook used nationally. The research data consisted of reading tasks that accompany reading texts in each unit of the textbook. The reading texts in this book cover various genres, such as captions, news items, procedures, and narrative texts, each of which is followed by reading exercises in the form of questions or text-based tasks.

Identification and Selection of Reading Tasks

At the initial stage, all tasks related to reading activities were comprehensively identified, resulting in 140 reading-related tasks. Subsequently, a data selection process was conducted based on the criteria of the Cognitive Process Dimension (CPD) in Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. In this study, only reading tasks that required explicit cognitive processes toward knowledge were analyzed. Tasks that merely consisted of reading instructions, such as commands to read texts, stories, dialogues, posters, or tables without requiring any cognitive response, were excluded from the analysis. Based on these criteria, 17 tasks were excluded, resulting in a final total of 123 specific reading tasks analyzed.

Data Tabulation and Analysis Procedures

Each selected reading task was tabulated verbatim by recording the instructional text and questions in their entirety as presented in the textbook. This tabulation aimed to maintain data accuracy and avoid the loss of linguistic context that could influence cognitive interpretation. Subsequently, each task was analyzed individually to determine the primary cognitive process required for students to answer the task correctly (Sandelowski, 2000).

Analytical Framework: Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

The classification of reading tasks was conducted using Revised Bloom's Taxonomy developed by Anderson and Krathwohl. Within this framework, learning objectives are classified based on the Cognitive Process Dimension, which consists of six levels of cognitive processes: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. Unlike the original version of Bloom's Taxonomy, which used noun-based categories, this revision emphasizes cognitive processes as mental operations performed by learners on knowledge (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Kasimi, 2022). In this study, the classification of reading tasks was not based solely on the surface verbs used in the questions but on the minimal mental operations required for the correct answer to be obtained. This principle is consistent with the fundamental concept of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which emphasizes that a task is classified based on what learners must do cognitively rather than merely on the linguistic form of the instruction (Adams, 2015).

Criteria for Classifying Cognitive Levels

Reading tasks were classified into the Remembering category when the tasks required students only to retrieve explicit factual information stated in the text, such as naming characters, places, times, or other specific details. Tasks were categorized as Understanding when students were required to interpret meaning, explain reasons, identify main ideas, or infer simple relationships that were not explicitly stated in a single sentence. The Applying category was assigned to tasks that

required students to use information from the text in another form or context, such as completing tables or creating visual representations based on descriptions. Tasks were classified as Analyzing when students needed to break the text into functional parts, identify text structure, or determine relationships among text elements. Furthermore, the Evaluating category included tasks that required students to make judgments, decisions, or justifications based on certain criteria, whether personal or rational. Meanwhile, the Creating category was assigned when tasks required students to produce new products, ideas, or solutions that were structured based on the reading text (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Judgement Procedures and Analytical Trustworthiness

The process of classifying reading tasks into Cognitive Process Dimension (CPD) categories was conducted through two main stages. In the first stage, each reading task was classified by the researcher based on the theoretical framework of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, taking into account the primary cognitive operation required for students to answer the task correctly (KULOĞLU & TUTUŞ, 2024). The classification was not based on surface verbs in the task instructions but on the minimal mental processes performed by learners on knowledge, as emphasized in the core concept of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Ekalia et al., 2022).

In the second stage, the classification results were verified through expert judgement by involving a junior high school English teacher who had an understanding of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and its application in reading instruction. The teacher reviewed each reading task along with the assigned cognitive category to ensure alignment between the task characteristics and the designated cognitive process level. This verification process aimed to enhance conceptual validity (content validity) and interpretive credibility, ensuring that classification decisions were not merely subjective but were supported by the perspective of an experienced practitioner in English language teaching. When differences in perspective arose between the researcher and the expert in determining the cognitive category of a task, discussions based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy framework were conducted until agreement was reached. Thus, the final classification of reading tasks represents collaborative, theoretical, and verified judgement outcomes (Kuloğlu & Tutuş, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Of the 140 reading tasks identified in the textbook, 17 tasks were excluded from further analysis because they could not be classified into the Cognitive Process Dimension (CPD). These tasks functioned merely as reading instructions, such as directing students to read texts, stories, dialogues, posters, or tables, without

eliciting any observable cognitive processes. As these instructions did not require students to demonstrate remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, or creating, they were not compatible with classification under the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy framework. Consequently, a total of 123 reading tasks were included in the analysis.

Overall, the distribution of cognitive levels across the analyzed reading tasks is uneven, with a strong concentration at lower cognitive levels. The results indicate a clear predominance of tasks targeting basic cognitive processes, particularly those related to information retrieval and comprehension, while tasks requiring higher-order cognitive engagement appear considerably less frequently (Figure 1). At the Remembering level, reading tasks primarily require students to recall explicit factual information directly stated in the text. These tasks typically focus on identifying specific details such as characters, activities, locations, or events, and do not demand interpretation or inference beyond surface-level retrieval. Even when interrogative forms such as why are used, the expected responses remain confined to information explicitly provided in the text, thus maintaining a low cognitive demand.

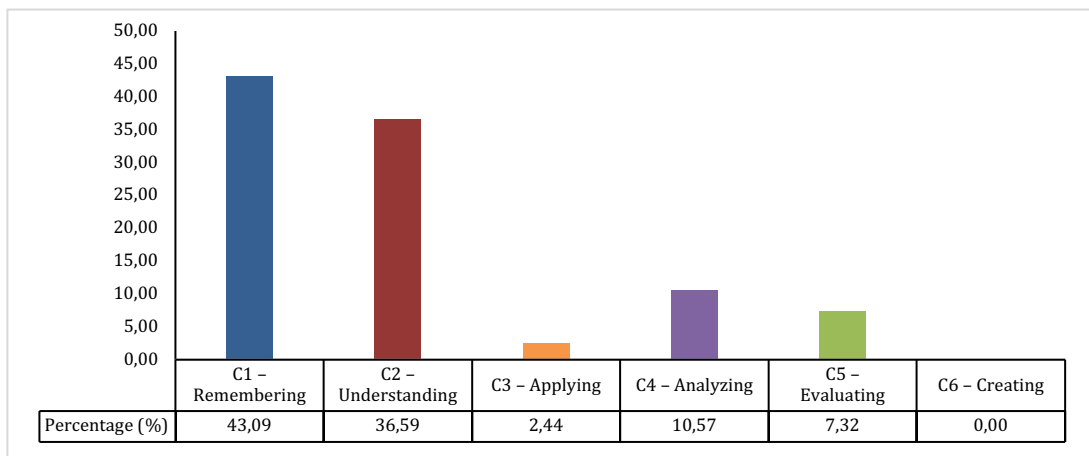


Figure 1. Distribution of Cognitive Process Dimensions (CPD) in the English for Nusantara Textbook

Reading tasks classified at the Understanding level extend beyond simple recall by requiring students to demonstrate comprehension of meaning, relationships, or communicative intent. These tasks often involve explaining causes, identifying main ideas, or interpreting the purpose of texts and visual materials. While cognitively more demanding than remembering tasks, they largely remain within interpretive comprehension and do not require students to apply knowledge in novel contexts. Opportunities for cognitive application are notably limited. Tasks at the Applying level require students to transform information from the text into another form, such as completing tables or producing drawings based on textual descriptions. Although these tasks involve the use of acquired information, the

application is highly structured and does not involve problem-solving in unfamiliar or open-ended situations.

Tasks at the Analyzing level require students to examine the internal structure of texts and identify relationships among textual elements. These tasks include identifying narrative components or distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information. While the presence of such tasks indicates an attempt to engage students in analytical reading, their proportion remains modest compared to lower-level cognitive demands. Evaluating tasks require students to make judgments or express opinions supported by reasons. Unlike lower-level tasks, these activities do not rely on a single correct answer explicitly stated in the text, but instead require reflection and justification based on personal or rational criteria. However, such evaluative engagement appears only to a limited extent in the reading exercises.

Notably, no reading tasks were identified at the Creating level. This absence suggests that the reading exercises do not provide opportunities for students to independently generate new ideas, alternative interpretations, or original products based on the texts. As a result, reading activities in the textbook remain largely focused on comprehension and limited evaluation, without progressing toward creative or generative cognitive processes. The results demonstrate that reading exercises in the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VIII predominantly emphasize lower-order cognitive skills, particularly remembering and understanding. Higher-order cognitive processes, especially applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating, are comparatively underrepresented, indicating a cognitive orientation that prioritizes comprehension over deeper critical and creative engagement with texts.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the distribution of cognitive process levels in reading exercises in the English for Nusantara Grade VIII textbook is dominated by the Remembering and Understanding levels, while higher-level cognitive processes appear in more limited proportions (Kasimi, 2022). This pattern reflects an instructional orientation that prioritizes foundational comprehension skills over more complex cognitive engagement. This distribution needs to be understood within the framework of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which conceptually distinguishes lower-, middle-, and higher-order cognitive processes based on the types of mental operations performed by learners on knowledge (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

The strong dominance of the Remembering level can be interpreted as an indication that the reading exercises in this textbook are still strongly oriented toward the retrieval of factual information. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), the Remembering level includes processes of recognizing and recalling information that has been explicitly presented, without requiring further processing

or transformation of meaning. In this respect, the findings suggest that reading is positioned primarily as an activity of accessing literal textual content, rather than engaging students in deeper meaning-making processes (Krathwohl, 2002). In the context of junior high school English language learning, this emphasis may serve as an initial foundation for reading comprehension; however, it simultaneously reveals limitations in fostering deeper cognitive engagement and critical literacy skills (Kasimi, 2022).

The relatively high proportion of Understanding (36.59%) also indicates that the textbook does not solely remain at the recall level but has attempted to guide students to construct meaning, for example through explaining reasons, interpreting messages, or identifying main ideas. In Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Understanding is defined as the ability to interpret, explain, and infer meaning from information, rather than merely remembering it (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). However, although this level goes beyond Remembering, the cognitive processes involved are still within the domain of basic comprehension and do not yet require the application of knowledge in new contexts or the analysis of complex relationships among ideas (Zebua et al., 2025).

The relatively high proportion of tasks categorized at the Understanding level also indicates that the textbook does not solely remain at the recall stage but has attempted to guide students toward constructing meaning through comprehension-based activities. These include explaining reasons, interpreting messages, or identifying main ideas. In Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Understanding is defined as the ability to interpret, explain, and infer meaning from information, rather than merely remembering it (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Li & Wang, 2024). Nevertheless, although this level represents a progression beyond factual recall, the cognitive demands remain largely confined to basic comprehension, without requiring students to apply knowledge in new contexts or analyze complex relationships among ideas (Zebua et al., 2025).

In contrast, the marginal presence of Applying-level tasks indicates that the reading exercises have not consistently encouraged knowledge transfer. Within the framework of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Applying functions as a critical transitional stage linking comprehension to higher-order thinking skills, as learners begin to operationalize acquired knowledge in different formats or situations (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The limited integration of this level suggests that students are rarely prompted to use textual information beyond understanding its content, thereby restricting opportunities for developing procedural and transferable reading skills (Li & Wang, 2024).

The presence of tasks at the Analyzing and Evaluating levels, although limited, indicates initial but constrained efforts to promote higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) through reading exercises (Krathwohl, 2002). Tasks that involve identifying text structure, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, or

providing judgments supported by reasons align with the characteristics of higher-level cognitive processes outlined in Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) emphasize that at these levels, learners must understand relationships among elements and apply specific criteria in decision-making. Thus, while these tasks demonstrate potential for fostering critical reading skills, their limited proportion suggests that such cognitive engagement has not yet become a central focus of the textbook's reading instruction.

The absence of reading tasks at the Creating level constitutes a particularly significant finding. Creating, as the highest level in Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, involves generating new ideas, designing products, or constructing alternative interpretations based on acquired knowledge (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The lack of tasks at this level indicates that reading activities are not yet positioned as a springboard for creative or generative meaning-making, but remain centered on comprehension and evaluative judgment (Krathwohl, 2002). This finding suggests that the potential of reading instruction to support text-based creativity and independent knowledge construction has not been fully utilized (Zebua et al., 2025).

the distribution of cognitive process levels in the English for Nusantara Grade VIII textbook reflects a stronger orientation toward lower- and mid-level cognitive processes. From the perspective of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, this pattern suggests that reading instruction remains focused on literal and interpretative comprehension, while the systematic development of higher-order thinking skills through reading activities has yet to become a dominant instructional goal (Zebua et al., 2025). These findings provide a conceptual basis for reflecting on the need for more cognitively balanced reading exercise designs, particularly those that progressively integrate higher-order cognitive demands in junior high school English language learning.

Despite providing a foundational basis for reading comprehension, this cognitive orientation suggests that the potential of reading instruction to support the development of higher-order thinking skills has not been fully realized. The limited presence of Applying, Analyzing, and Evaluating tasks indicates that students have relatively few opportunities to transfer knowledge, examine text structures critically, or make reasoned judgments based on textual information. This study is limited to the analysis of reading exercises in a single Grade VIII English textbook and focuses exclusively on the Cognitive Process Dimension of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent cognitive practices across different textbooks, grade levels, or classroom implementations. Future research is recommended to examine a broader range of textbooks, integrate the Knowledge Dimension of the taxonomy, or explore how teachers enact reading tasks in instructional settings. The contribution of this study lies in its systematic mapping of cognitive process levels embedded in textbook reading exercises,

offering empirical insight into the cognitive orientation of nationally used English learning materials. The findings provide a conceptual basis for textbook developers and educators to design more cognitively balanced reading exercises that progressively integrate higher-order cognitive demands to support critical and creative reading development at the junior high school level.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that reading exercises in the English for Nusantara Grade VIII textbook are predominantly oriented toward lower-order cognitive processes, positioning reading primarily as an activity of recalling and understanding textual information rather than as a cognitively transformative practice. The findings show a strong concentration at the Remembering and Understanding levels, while Applying, Analyzing, and Evaluating appear in limited proportions, and no tasks were identified at the Creating level. These results indicate that the cognitive demands embedded in the textbook emphasize comprehension over higher-order thinking development.

The implications of these findings are pedagogically significant. When reading tasks are largely confined to lower- and mid-level cognitive processes, opportunities for fostering critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and creative engagement with texts become restricted. As textbooks play a central role in shaping classroom instruction, the cognitive orientation reflected in reading exercises may influence how reading is conceptualized and practiced in English language learning. Therefore, a more balanced distribution of cognitive process levels is essential to support the systematic development of higher-order thinking skills at the junior high school level.

This study is limited to the analysis of reading exercises in a single Grade VIII textbook and focuses exclusively on the Cognitive Process Dimension of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. It does not examine the Knowledge Dimension of the taxonomy nor investigate how teachers implement or adapt these tasks in actual classroom settings. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent broader textbook practices or instructional realities across different contexts.

Future research is recommended to analyze multiple textbooks across grade levels, integrate both dimensions of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, and explore classroom enactment of reading tasks to understand how cognitive processes are mediated in practice. In addition, textbook developers and educators are encouraged to design and adapt reading exercises that progressively incorporate higher-order cognitive demands, enabling reading instruction to function not only as a tool for comprehension but also as a foundation for critical and creative literacy development.

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