

Evaluating English Textbooks by Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Analyze Reading Comprehension Question

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Abstract

The use of Bloom's taxonomy to form knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creation in choosing the type of reading test was to consider the role of higher and lower-order thinking skills in reading comprehension questions in English textbooks. The conceptual aspects of the reader's mental and visual response to the purpose of reading comprehension needs were the ability to generate new thoughts, separate ideas into parts, and judge the values of ideas by using appropriate criteria based on the text. This research contributed to the following questions: (1) the representation of Bloom's taxonomy levels in English textbooks, and (2) the calculation of reading comprehension questions in each level of Bloom's taxonomy. Using a qualitative approach with content analysis, the results showed that the types of reading comprehension questions could foster the student's critical thinking regarding acquiring learning objectives in the English curriculum. Most of the question was focused on comprehension level (26%), knowledge/remember level (17%), application level (16%), synthesis level (14%), analysis level (13%), evaluation level (11%), and creation level (3%). By applying Bloom's taxonomy, English teachers were suggested to classify their instructional objectives and learning goals.

Keywords: Bloom's taxonomy, reading comprehension question, English textbooks, cognitive process

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1. Introduction

In the eyes of the students, no textbook meant no objective. Without textbooks, the students felt their learning was not valued since a textbook could be used as a syllabus. A textbook provided ready-made teaching texts and learning tasks. In addition, the textbooks helped the teachers to provide an easier way to assign homework based on the activities (Ulum, 2022). Various English language tests were conducted to reveal the skill level of students around the world. The purpose of teaching general English was to develop students' communicative abilities and equip them to achieve different communication goals upon course completion. A majority of students were more concerned about passing exams and answering textbook-related questions. Based on this fact, the teachers should understand the test's purpose based on the Standard Proficiency (SK) and Basic Proficiency (KD) indicators. In addition, the teachers should ensure the questions are reliable and follow the question's structure to achieve the standard eligibility criteria (Krismadayanti & Zainil, 2022; Roohani et al., 2013).

Since a textbook could be a resource to reflect learning objectives and a source of ideas and activities in designing a lesson plan, thinking skills and reading comprehension were two interconnected skills since reading required the students to experience, predict, interpret, and evaluate information according to the reader's prior knowledge (Lopez-banuag, 2022). Most of the learning objectives in the textbook were to find main ideas, supporting ideas, hidden information, and specific information when the critical thinking and problem-solving skill were urgent to perform. Therefore, the teachers were responsible for equipping the students with reading assignments to clarify the meaning of written words (Fitriani & Kirana, 2021; Mae et al., 2022).

Regarding the importance of investigating cognitive knowledge and knowledge in English textbooks as a critical educational goal, the problems in this research were English teachers were generally not aware of different cognitive levels of reading comprehension questions. Most teachers were unfamiliar with the appropriate theoretical framework to generate questions at high levels of cognitions (Harun et al., 2022). On the other hand, the student's comprehension was not easily revealed and measured, so the teachers need to analyze English textbooks to acquire learning objectives in the curriculum. In other words, the students must be given high-order thinking levels in reading comprehension questions to enhance their comprehension of the reading texts (Dehham et al., 2022). Besides, the quality of reading comprehension outcomes could be seen from how well the students constructed, organized, and integrated the new information into their prior knowledge and experience as a mental process (Qodri et al., 2022).

There was a wealth of research (Ekalia et al., 2022; Qu Li-li, 2022; Koksai & Ulum, 2018; Nasir & Munawir, 2022) elaborating on the learning objectives and reading comprehension questions in the context of English language teaching in the view of Bloom's taxonomy since reading comprehension was interpreted as a process of complex skills such as making

predictions, criticizing questions, drawing a conclusion, synthesizing information, identifying the main idea of the text, and analyzing the information in the text. In the previous studies, some positive characteristics were identified as well as some negative ones. In addition to the positive attributes, the teacher's book provided guidelines on using the textbook to the students' best advantage, with activities that incorporated pair and group work that was realistic, interesting, challenging, and motivating. Among the negative characteristics of these textbooks were the reading parts, which were not arranged by difficulty level and did not consider the students' background knowledge. This was reflected in the first lesson of the first grade one English textbook, which had a lot of new vocabulary items and expressions and only used pair work with question-answer activities. This research was different from the previous research because, as a result of the evaluated textbook, the students will be able to develop cognitive skills, including the ability to use more complex and abstract language and logical reasoning in their learning. By identifying parts of the textbook that need adaptation, the teachers will be able to make their teaching more effective. As reflected in the learning activities presented in these textbooks, these textbooks placed a greater emphasis on applying knowledge than on higher-order, critical thinking skills. This research aimed to evaluate the application of appropriate cognitive processes to English textbooks to achieve learning objectives (Amali et al., 2022).

Bloom's taxonomy was a guideline to easily create English lessons with clear objectives by asking specific questions to test the student's comprehension at every level of the language thinking process, from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking skills. Besides, it allowed the teachers to see an integrative relationship between knowledge in the textbook and the cognitive process of learning objectives (Boeren & Iniguez-Berrozpe, 2022). The taxonomy could encourage the critical reading process by providing a framework for English teachers to plan various learning activities and strategies in using textbooks (Djallel, 2022). Below is the table of Bloom's taxonomy:

Table 1. Bloom's Taxonomy

The Cognitive Level	Definition	Action Verbs Representing Intellectual Activity in Reading Comprehension
Knowledge/remember	Focused on remembering and reciting learned information.	State, memorize, arrange, duplicate, list, reproduce, label, list, define, recognize, name, order, and repeat.
Comprehension	Focused on relating and organizing the information or the facts.	Restate, paraphrase, match, review, relate, locate, indicate,

The Cognitive Level	Definition	Action Verbs Representing Intellectual Activity in Reading Comprehension
		translate, discuss, describe, explain, report, express, and tell.
Application	Focused on applying information according to rules, methods, concepts, principles, or theories for a specific purpose.	Discover, interpret, illustrate, dramatize, apply, demonstrate, apply, report, use, and write.
Analysis	Focused on component parts of information, such as identifying the parts and analyzing the relationships between parts.	Criticize, subdivide, analyze, calculate, categorize, appraise, compare, discriminate and examine.
Synthesis	Focused on combining elements together to form a completely new and original to have unified composition.	Hypothesize, originate, generate, suppose, and combine.
Evaluation	Focused on judging and making judgments based on the value of information for a given purpose.	Compare, recommend, assess, evaluate, value, debate, defend, consider, and judge.
Creation	Focused on assembling parts together to form the formula of new models or structures.	Collect, construct, manage, plan, prepare, compose, design, and formulate.

The significance of this research was to increase English teachers' awareness of the different levels of cognition in reading comprehension questions that should be given to the students to develop their problem-solving skills for their future academics. It could construct the students' thinking as a guideline for English textbook developers to evaluate the content of English textbooks. A materials evaluation allowed the teachers to analyze their presuppositions about how language worked and to select teaching materials that met their needs.

Based on the research gap in learning objectives in reading comprehension and the effectiveness of the use of English textbooks, this research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How could the levels of Bloom's taxonomy be represented in English textbooks as

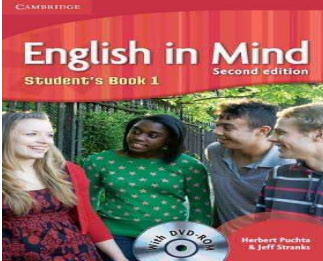
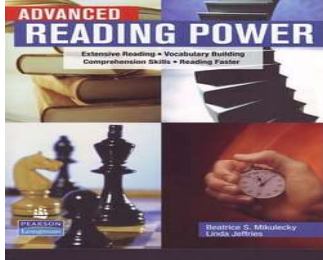
reading comprehension questions?

2. What was the percentage of reading comprehension questions in each level of Bloom's taxonomy?

2. Method

A qualitative approach with content analysis was determined to analyze the relationship between Bloom's taxonomy and reading comprehension in English textbooks. The content analysis focused on the analysis of certain words or concepts, meanings or relationships of formal aspects of communication, and basic meaning structures that had become the object of analysis (Ulum, 2016). Furthermore, content analysis was a systematic technique for analyzing the definitions and concepts found in the textbooks or issues mentioned in textbooks to form a body of knowledge related to subjects taught in a particular discipline (Karama, 2022). This research used reading comprehension questions based on seven cognitive knowledge of Bloom's taxonomy, such as knowledge/remember, comprehension, analysis, application, synthesis, evaluation, and creation. The materials used for data collection were the three English textbooks, such as:

Table 2. The Characteristics of English Textbook Analysis

Title of English Book	Explanation	Picture
Activate Reading	(Dole & Taggart, 2012) published by Cengage Learning.	
English in Mind	(Puchta & Stranks, 2015) published by Cambridge.	
Advanced Reading Power	(Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2007) published by Pearson Longman.	

The writers constructed a checklist based on the level of reading comprehension questions, from low-order to higher-order thinking skills, and presented the data using percentages to describe the result of the cognitive domain (Saidi, 2020). The procedures to collect the data were stated as follows: (1) Determined what materials should be analyzed by using content analysis, (2) Selected unit of analysis such as reading comprehension questions in the three English textbooks, (3) Developed coding categories based on the cognitive process of Bloom's taxonomy; (4) Coded the reading comprehension questions into several stages of Bloom's taxonomy; (5) Analyzed and interpreted the result by using classification column and calculated the number of questions at each category (Merieme & Bensafa, 2020).

3. Finding

The analysis of three English textbooks through the application of Bloom's taxonomy is shown in the table below:

Table 3. Reading Comprehension Questions by Using Bloom's Taxonomy

Thinking Skills	The Cognitive Level	Reading Comprehension Questions
Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS)	Knowledge/ Remember	a. What were the qualifications of a successful candidate? Which of the following would be the best headline for this information? What should students do to check a school's accreditation that may interest them?
	Comprehension	Which came first, the caterpillar or the butterfly? Why did the pitcher plant trap insects? According to the text, could you predict what happened to the bodies of the insects trapped in the plant?
Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)	Analysis	b. Did the children have any doubts about whether or not they should be locking Mikha in her room? How many stages were there in the life of a silkworm? Elaborate your answer based on the person's characteristic to seek a medical treatment given in the text!
	Application	c. What did it mean by 'in theory, there should be long-life learning?' Demonstrated the positive and negative effects of a good character based on the text! Steve described the role and responsibilities of a store manager. Which of the following task was he responsible for?

Thinking Skills	The Cognitive Level	Reading Comprehension Questions
	Synthesis	d. After reading about management, would you be able to set objectives, motivate, coordinate the staff, or manage a department store? Match some basic words used about company organization with the definition!
	Evaluation	Was the author giving a moral lesson according to the story above? If so, what was the lesson? Based on the text, which of the following statements would the author tend to agree with? Which of the following incidents at the haunted house would be considered an act of nature?
	Creation	Elaborated the alternate ending of this story! Gave a conclusion based on the evidence presented in the passage! Based on the information in this passage, what made it likely that the author would find it difficult to conduct an objective investigation? Why did you think so? Could you think of another way to solve the problems in paragraph 2? Talked with a partner about what each numbered section means and wrote down the ideas using your own words.

Table 4. English Syllabus in Reading Comprehension Activity

Units	Learning Objectives	Indicator	Bloom's Taxonomy Verbs	Recommended Activities	Use of Media
Unit 1: Before you read, take a look at the four actions	Able to identify the purpose of the reading selection.	Able to predict what was going on in the text.	Analyze	Students were required to read a text and list the information based on each paragraph's title, heading, and main idea.	Question games by using quizzes
		Able to use the prior knowledge	Comprehension	Students were required to tell a short description	Videos related to the reading activity

Units	Learning Objectives	Indicator	Bloom's Taxonomy Verbs	Recommended Activities	Use of Media
		of information from the text.		of an English movie.	
Unit 2: While you read or view, stay active and focused	Able to focus on the meaning of the words, sentences, and paragraphs you read.	Able to picture what the author was saying in a text.	Create	Students described the situation based on the story in a text.	Storytelling in youtube videos
		Able to search for connections between ideas in your opinion.	Synthesis	Students were required to survey a text, decide what reading strategy might work well for that paragraph, and write it on the line provided.	Filled in the blank by using Microsoft PowerPoint
Unit 3: After you read or view, thought, talk, and wrote.	Able to use before and during reading strategies on the reading selection.	Able to think about ideas in the reading selection.	Evaluation	Students were required to use 5W + 1H (Who, what, when, where, why, and how) to review and remember the basic information students read.	The text is based on the online magazine article.
		Able to write ideas in the	Comprehension	Students were required to list at least three things about the	Students submitted the text on

Units	Learning Objectives	Indicator	Bloom's Taxonomy Verbs	Recommended Activities	Use of Media
		reading selection.		reasons for the information in the text.	google classroom.
Unit 4: Before you read, use word parts to expand your vocabulary	Able to expand the most productive parts of the English language.	Able to look for meaning in word parts.	Synthesis	Students read across each line to combine the word parts to form a whole word.	Students arranged the meaning of words by using an online jigsaw puzzle.
		Able to look for prefixes and suffixes to see how words act in sentences.	Analyze	Students stated the meaning of the following words based on their word parts in a way that makes sense.	Students arranged the word part by using crossword labs.
Unit 5: While you read, defined words in context	Able to find context clues while reading.	Able to recognize the context clues in a text.	Comprehension	Students were required to briefly summarize the context in each paragraph.	Storytelling by using zoom meeting
		Able to verify signal words in a text.	Evaluation	Students were required to write signal words based on each sentence provided.	Choosing the words by using online card games

Table 5. Action Verbs to Build a Question in English Reading Comprehension

Level	Action Verbs	Example of Questions	Frequency
Knowledge/ Remember	Describe	Which was true or false based on this statement?	English Book 1: 8 (38%) English Book 2: 7 (33%) English Book 3: 6 (29%) Total: 21 questions
	Define	Defined the translation of words based on true or false statements.	English Book 1: 7 (26%) English Book 2: 11 (41%) English Book 3: 9 (33%) Total: 27 questions
	List and Match	The text matched the direct speech sentences in column 1 to the reported speech in column 2.	English Book 1: 8 (30%) English Book 2: 10 (40%) English Book 3: 8 (30%) Total: 26 questions
	Recite	Completed the crossword with appropriate meanings of expressions based on the text.	English Book 1: 8 (50%) English Book 2: 2 (13%) English Book 3: 6 (37%) Total: 16 questions
	Repeat	Did English quotes match the activity in the article? The answers were in the article.	English Book 1: 6 (28%) English Book 2: 7 (33%) English Book 3: 8 (39%) Total: 21 questions
Comprehen sion	Discuss	Could you group the characteristic skills you think productions and managers required the most?	English Book 1: 14 (41%) English Book 2: 12 (35%) English Book 3: 8 (24%) Total: 34 questions
	Explain	Six of the opinions expressed opposite were referred to in the following text. Explain which were based on the text!	English Book 1: 7 (26%) English Book 2: 11 (41%) English Book 3: 9 (33%) Total: 27 questions
	Interpret	Interpreted which of these arguments did you find most persuasive?	English Book 1: 8 (30%) English Book 2: 9 (33%) English Book 3: 10 (37%) Total: 27 questions

Level	Action Verbs	Example of Questions	Frequency
	Compare	Read the article once and compare your ideas from the pre-reading activity.	English Book 1: 5 (28%) English Book 2: 5 (28%) English Book 3: 8 (44%) Total: 18 questions
	Elaborate	Found the words in the text which mean the following.	English Book 1: 7 (33%) English Book 2: 5 (24%) English Book 3: 9 (43%) Total: 21 questions
	Express	There are some typical phrasal verbs that you could use in meetings. Completed the sentences with the words given based on the text.	English Book 1: 8 (47%) English Book 2: 6 (35%) English Book 3: 3 (18%) Total: 17 questions
	Summarize	Which of the following three paragraphs most accurately summarized the main idea of the text and why?	English Book 1: 9 (33%) English Book 2: 10 (37%) English Book 3: 8 (30%) Total: 27 questions
Application	Develop	From the information in the text, could you develop a set of instructions for a good teacher?	English Book 1: 5 (25%) English Book 2: 7 (35%) English Book 3: 8 (40%) Total: 20 questions
	Interpret	Could you provide an example of what the volunteers were expected to do in the picture?	English Book 1: 2 (17%) English Book 2: 4 (33%) English Book 3: 6 (50%) Total: 12 questions
	Demonstrate	Read a conversation between an insurance company and a man who had a claim for damage to his home. What happened to the man's house according to the events in the text?	English Book 1: 5 (25%) English Book 2: 6 (30%) English Book 3: 9 (45%) Total: 20 questions

Level	Action Verbs	Example of Questions	Frequency
	Discover	Found the synonymous sentence of the given sentence.	English Book 1: 4 (22%) English Book 2: 6 (33%) English Book 3: 8 (45%) Total: 18 questions
	Illustrate	Gave an example of a product line (a group of related products made by the same company) based on the text. Please think of clothes, cosmetics, food, and so on.	English Book 1: 6 (33%) English Book 2: 7 (39%) English Book 3: 5 (28%) Total: 18 questions
	Investigate	Looked at the following diagrams from Marketing Management by Phillip Kotler. Which of these sentences best investigated a company that applied the marketing concept?	English Book 1: 7 (39%) English Book 2: 4 (22%) English Book 3: 7 (39%) Total: 18 questions
Analysis	Analyze	Identified which events could have happened based on the logic of the following statements.	English Book 1: 9 (28%) English Book 2: 11 (34%) English Book 3: 12 (38%) Total: 32 questions
	Differentiate	Which of the following sources of information did you think could be the most useful and give your opinion?	English Book 1: 7 (33%) English Book 2: 5 (24%) English Book 3: 9 (43%) Total: 21 questions
	Examine	Examined the relationship between your ideas and the information presented in the text.	English Book 1: 3 (18%) English Book 2: 6 (35%) English Book 3: 8 (47%) Total: 17 questions
	Select	Read the text below and insert the words defined in a certain space.	English Book 1: 4 (26%) English Book 2: 6 (37%) English Book 3: 6 (37%) Total: 16 questions

Level	Action Verbs	Example of Questions	Frequency
Synthesis	Organize	Grouped the following items according to the classification.	English Book 1: 9 (37%) English Book 2: 10 (42%) English Book 3: 5 (21%) Total: 24 questions
	Formulate	Looked at this extract from the article, "I got one for Christmas last year..." The author used the simple past tense. Formulated these sentences in the simple past tense.	English Book 1: 7 (33%) English Book 2: 6 (24%) English Book 3: 8 (38%) Total: 21 questions
	Transform	Transformed these sentences from active to passive.	English Book 1: 6 (21%) English Book 2: 13 (45%) English Book 3: 10 (34%) Total: 29 questions
	Relate	Completed the following chart with the letters A-J from the text.	English Book 1: 6 (32%) English Book 2: 5 (26%) English Book 3: 8 (42%) Total: 19 questions
Evaluation	Evaluate	Which of the alternative answers was correct based on the text given?	English Book 1: 5 (33%) English Book 2: 3 (20%) English Book 3: 7 (47%) Total: 15 questions
	Criticize	Criticized or defended each of the following statements.	English Book 1: 4 (31%) English Book 2: 3 (23%) English Book 3: 6 (46%) Total: 13 questions
	Verify	Wrote a critical evaluation of the following statement based on the criteria developed in the text.	English Book 1: 6 (46%) English Book 2: 3 (23%) English Book 3: 4 (31%) Total: 13 questions
	Recommend	According to the text, what changes would you recommend based on the problems found in the text?	English Book 1: 6 (38%) English Book 2: 5 (31%) English Book 3: 5 (31%) Total: 16 questions

Level	Action Verbs	Example of Questions	Frequency
	Measure	How effective were the kind of questions that the interviewer might have asked to get the following information?	English Book 1: 4 (29%) English Book 2: 3 (21%) English Book 3: 7 (50%) Total: 14 questions
Creation	Create	Made up a story describing what would happen based on this situation.	English Book 1: 6 (32%) English Book 2: 5 (26%) English Book 3: 8 (42%) Total: 19 questions

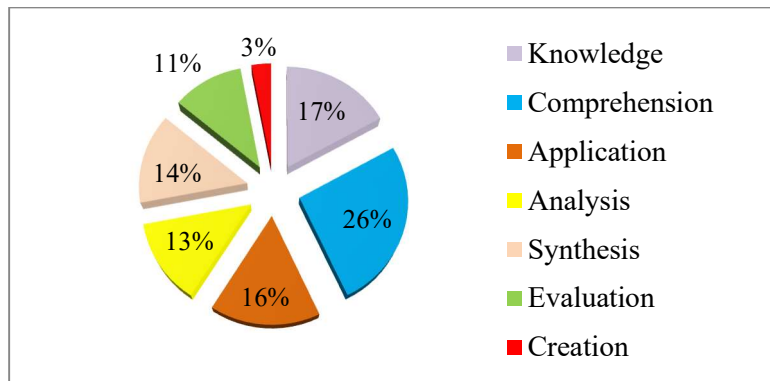


Figure 1. Analysis of Action Verbs According to Bloom's Taxonomy

4. Discussion

Based on the result of this study, the answer to the first research problem was proved with the seven dimensions of cognitive processes in the reading comprehension test. Action verbs were used to describe the cognitive tasks that the students should perform learning objectives in the reading comprehension activity. The cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy were: (1) Knowledge/remember: The students could recall their prior knowledge such as dates, events, places, and knowledge of major ideas; (2) Comprehension: The students could understand information by interpreting ideas, transferring knowledge into a new context, interpreting facts or events, inferring causes or predicting consequences; (3) Application: The students could apply critical thinking through the use of information or theory in new situations to establish their opinions or solve problems that found in the text. (4) Analysis: The students could see patterns and recognize the hidden meanings by relating, comparing, and checking the question on the reading comprehension test; (5) Synthesis: The students could identify

the parts and recognize the formulation of the information; (6) Evaluation: The students could differentiate ideas, evaluate the value of judgments, make choices based on arguments, and verify the value of evidence; (7) Creation: The students could use previous ideas to generate new ideas, generalize from given facts, make a prediction, and draw conclusions based on information. The answer to the second research problem revealed that the lower-order thinking skill of comprehension questions was very high, especially in terms of knowledge/remember and comprehension. The results also showed that understanding the levels of questions was necessary. It could lead the students to have a deep understanding of the questions presented so they could answer them more easily. Besides, they will be able to understand the classification of the levels of questions and the aim of the questions presented (Reflianto et al., 2022). Bloom's taxonomy allowed English teachers to make questions more challenging and test higher knowledge levels. The aim of taxonomy was not to crowd the students with low-level questions containing complex vocabulary and grammatical structures but to foster critical thinking and read the text in a way they felt an equal relationship with the author's purpose of the text (Goh et al., 2022).

This research finding evaluated the benefit of English textbooks through Bloom's taxonomy as follows: (1) focusing language learning on real communication; (2) providing learners with multiple opportunities to practice their language knowledge, and (3) accepting learners' errors when they practice their language, (4) providing learners with both the opportunity to improve their accuracy and fluency, (5) incorporating different skills such as reading, listening, and speaking; and (6) providing learners with the opportunity to discover grammar rules. Furthermore, this research found that adapting professional development materials to accommodate learners of low ability was one aspect of professional development. An English textbook could provide teachers with the skills and knowledge to design thematically linked tasks and activities that simultaneously develop language and adapt the materials to meet critical thinking students' needs.

This result of the research was consistent with Khodabandeh & Mombini (2018) investigated the effect of question classification training on the cognitive level of questions. Their findings suggested that training in Bloom's taxonomy significantly affects the cognitive level of questions used by English teachers. Another previous research conducted by Abalkheel (2021) examined the high and the low order of thinking in reading comprehension questions in English language textbooks used by Forestry Vocational School. The outcomes revealed that most of these questions focused on knowledge level at 58%, comprehension level at 15%, application level at 4.5 %, analysis level at 6%, synthesis level at 12%, and evaluation level was 4.5%. The results of another study showed the three different English textbooks from Junior High School, and the most dominant level was the remembering level which was 71.15%, the understanding level was 16.83%, applying level was 3.37%, analyzing level was 3.13%, evaluating level was 5.05%, and creating level which

had the lowest distribution with 0.48% (Saidi et al., 2022). Based on empirical research and related studies that evaluated higher thinking levels of reading comprehension, it was expected that teachers should incorporate Bloom's taxonomy into English lessons in many ways, such as mini-quizzes, videos, discussions, portfolios, presentations, and so on. It was important to state that Bloom's taxonomy might not create the perfect classroom atmosphere, but it could create a higher standard to achieve learning objectives by breaking down complex tasks into activities to challenge the students cognitively and facilitate the acquisition of language skills.

5. Conclusion

The findings demonstrated the relevance of Bloom's taxonomy in reading comprehension materials to improve the learning process. The alignment could be taken from the relevance of objectives, activities, and questions. This research could be the best guideline to decrease the gap between teachers' goals and the objectives they used in a reading comprehension test. It could help teachers to design more effective questions. Several suggestions were drawn regarding the use of Bloom's taxonomy. First, it was important for English teachers to consider all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, such as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creation. Second, wh-questions that only dealt with factual information should be modified and developed to organize, integrate, and evaluate ideas. Third, it was suggested that English teachers measure higher-order thinking skills and facilitate students' metacognition using various questions. Fourth, Bloom's taxonomy could be used to classify instructional objectives and goals. Future research should revise the available materials and take a wide range of reading comprehension questions into high-order thinking skills. Future studies should evaluate the presentation of Bloom's taxonomy in English language teaching materials, such as speaking, listening, or writing to demonstrate the value of revision in English textbooks when it could be used on a larger national scale in teaching and learning process. Moreover, the students' perspectives could be elicited and reviewed for revising the existing English language materials.

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