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Revised Bloom's Taxonomy in Reading Texts in EFL/ESL Settings

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Abstract:

Introduction: Among its contemporaries, the updated Bloom's taxonomy is perhaps the most widely used cognitive process model. It is a categorization paradigm that emphasizes the cognitive levels beginning with remembering the information and progressing to more complicated levels such as producing the knowledge. Education psychologists want to assist instructors, policymakers, and curriculum creators in designing education that enables students to effectively retain, retrieve, and apply the selected content. Classifying information in a precise sequence that is durable in a person's memory can aid learners in effectively storing, retrieving, retrieving, and using facts; otherwise, the whole learning process may be impeded. Thus, it is imperative that students acquire the fundamental knowledge prior to attempting to interpret current information to develop meaningful knowledge (Darwazeh, 2017). The purpose of this research was to determine the degree to which the updated Bloom's taxonomy is included into the reading sections of EFL textbooks developed for Turkish high school students. According to the results of the research, the evaluated textbooks lacked the higher level cognitive abilities outlined in the updated Bloom's taxonomy. Consequently, based on the results, certain hypotheses have been formulated to indicate how reading sections of textbooks now being written or to be published might reference the updated Bloom's taxonomy.

Methods: The objective of this research is to determine the degree to which EFL textbooks incorporate higher and lower level questions based on the updated Bloom's taxonomy. In the study, the overall reading sections of the EFL textbooks were examined. In other words, the cognitive level of the reading passages was determined using the updated Bloom's taxonomy. Consequently, the approach used in this study is descriptive content analysis in qualitative research. The updated cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy were referenced in the classification of reading questions in EFL textbooks.

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Results: The data indicate that the reading text questions did not target higher cognitive levels. Given that remembering is associated with working memory and short-term memory, it is doubtful that it can assess long-term memory. To reinforce knowledge in the long-term memory, it is necessary to engage higher cognitive processes. It is rare that learners of a foreign language would reinforce lexical, syntactical, and contextual knowledge unless they analyze or assess the corresponding information in the texts. Measuring mainly lower levels of cognition gives them with little data. Additionally, it is crucial to apply integrated activities while reading texts. Reading and writing, or speaking and listening, are examples of integrated tasks. Thus, reading text queries were unable to assist students in producing meaningful texts. Pure and concrete inquiries have just a superficial relationship to understanding.

Discussion: The revised Bloom's taxonomy is a useful and successful tool for reading classes. Therefore, EFL and ESL instructors, researchers, and textbook authors must use Bloom's higher cognitive aspects so that EFL students can reinforce texts at the lexical, syntactic, and contextual levels. Taking into account lower cognitive abilities, the most often utilized inquiry type concerned remembering, which includes definition, listing, memorization, recalling, and expressing the pertinent language and material. However, there are significant limits to memorizing dimension for language learners. This constraint may be overcome by including more cognitive elements. It is glaringly obvious that English instructors and textbook authors should include extra questions into reading texts so that foreign and second language English learners may build more productive abilities via reading text questions in line with the updated Bloom's taxonomy. Due to the relationship between Bloom's taxonomy and critical syllabus, it is possible to design a critical syllabus to obtain these competencies (Ordem, 2021).

Limitations: This research is confined to the free EFL textbooks issued by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. In other words, only locally authored EFL textbooks are included in the research, as opposed to both locally and internationally published EFL textbooks. Consequently, future research should concentrate on a larger scope. Such an approach should consider the impact of locally authored textbooks and their comparison to textbooks published by international organizations, such as the British Council or Cambridge University Press. This is an important point to consider, as international publishers are likely to bring different perspectives on language learning, which may differ from that found in locally authored textbooks. Further, the research is exclusively confined to the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Therefore, alternative cognitive categorization models should also be applied to assess course contents. This would provide a more comprehensive picture of the students' learning outcomes, and enable the researchers to evaluate course effectiveness from multiple perspectives. Moreover, the utilization of other cognitive categorization models, such as Anderson and Krathwohl's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives and SOLO Taxonomy, would help to provide a broader context of comparison to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of course.

Conclusions: Revised Bloom's taxonomy provides helpful and productive stages for EFL students to be creative while reading materials. Creatively approaching a text and its questions requires assembling, creating, designing, articulating, and writing. Evaluation, which involves assessing, debating, defending, judging, choosing, supporting, valuing, and evaluating, is a further step that must be examined. Analyzing is another aspect that requires discriminating between various portions of the text, evaluating, comparing, contrasting, critiquing, differentiating, scrutinizing, and asking. These higher cognitive characteristics were not detected in the assessed reading text questions from textbooks. This lack of higher-order thinking skills presented in the text questions of the assessed textbooks suggests that students are not being adequately prepared to engage in thoughtful dialogue or comprehensive analysis when responding to texts. This is an alarming discovery as these skills are essential for students to demonstrate competency in language arts, develop effective reading strategies, and build critical thinking. This trend highlights the need for teachers to supplement reading material with activities that promote higher-order thinking, such as open-ended questions, research assignments, and group discussions. By incorporating these activities into the classroom, teachers will be able to ensure that students are exposed to the kinds of higher-order thinking that can help them to become engaged, competent readers and critical thinkers.

Key words: revised Bloom's taxonomy, reading skills, reading comprehension questions.

Introduction

Due to their restricted time and excessive workloads, teachers are unable to produce educational materials for their classes. Therefore, they mostly use course books in their classrooms and refer to these course books as the primary instructional tools (Ulum, 2016). In the late 1930s, information processing emerged as an important aspect of cognitive study. Recent learning and teaching methods, research investigations, and disciplines such as psychology indicate that the mind utilizes a variety of cognitive processes for manipulating, describing, storing, and retrieving information (Darwazeh, 2017). These cognitive processes include memory, understanding, discrimination, and analysis, among others. Moreover, the degree of difficulty of these cognitive processes varies, since they may be of low, medium, or high complexity. Thus, the degree of difficulty may be seen as a component of any cognitive-based classification system. Consequently, a number of scholars in the relevant field of study have applied cognitive science ideas to the subject of education (West, Farmer, & Wolff, 1991). Education psychologists want to assist instructors, policymakers, and curriculum creators in designing education that enables

students to effectively retain, retrieve, and apply the selected content. Classifying information in a precise sequence that is durable in a person's memory can aid learners in effectively storing, retrieving, retrieving, and using facts; otherwise, the whole learning process may be impeded. Thus, it is imperative that students acquire the fundamental knowledge prior to attempting to interpret current information to develop meaningful knowledge (Darwazeh, 2017). The initial Taxonomy provided peculiar definitions for the six main cognitive domain dimensions, namely knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, whereas the revised Taxonomy included the levels of remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create respectively (Armstrong, 2010). Wilson (2016) created the following diagram to illustrate the difference between the original and amended taxonomies.

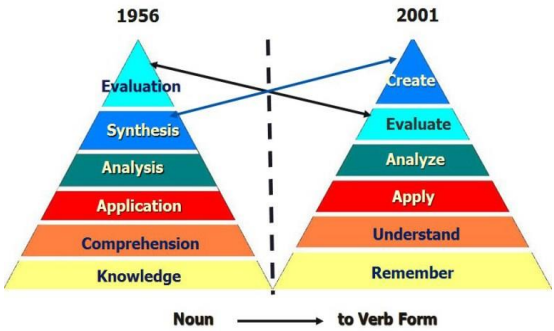

Figure 1. Bloom's Taxonomy Revised (Wilson, 2016).

The stages are arranged from easy to difficult, basic to complicated, and tangible to abstract to illustrate a hierarchical structure. Thus, the competence at a lower level is a requirement for competence at a higher one (Krathwohl, 2002). Bloom et al. (1956) developed a categorization model based on critical thought and cognitive processes. In addition, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy proposed by Anderson et al. (2001) included student prototypes into the original taxonomy in an effort to improve student understanding. The cognitive process is comprised of six aspects that undergo major alterations. Primarily, the noun forms of Bloom's six dimensions were changed to verb forms to emphasize the significance of student activity. In addition, the old taxonomy's knowledge level was renamed remembering in the new version. In addition, the comprehension level of the original taxonomy was changed to understanding, while the application/applying, analysis/applying, and evaluation/evaluating levels remained the same. Last but not least, the synthesis level was renamed creating,

and the order of synthesis/creating and evaluation/evaluating was reversed in the new taxonomy. In contrast to the original taxonomy, the new taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001) allows the levels to intertwine (Krathwohl, 2002). In the 1960s, Bloom's original taxonomy was described as a hierarchical framework of the cognitive domain (Bloom et al. 1956). In the year 2001, Anderson and his colleagues changed the model. As a result, significant changes were made to the structure and vocabulary of the model. Original (Bloom et al. 1956) or amended (Anderson et al. 2001) taxonomy refer to a categorization model that hints to cognitive stages ranging from simple remembering to more complex actions such as producing (Ulum, 2016). Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives plays an important role in developing learning tasks, assessment tools, and course materials with respect to higher and lower level cognitive skills because it is necessary to assess how well learners comprehend and apply information for meaningful learning (Köksal & Ulum, 2018).

1 The research problem

Teachers in both public and private schools lack the time and opportunity to create instructional materials for their courses. Thus, they rely heavily on textbooks as the primary course materials and employ them extensively in their classes. The EFL textbooks chosen for examination in this study work are those used in high schools across Turkey. The objective of this research is to determine the degree to which EFL textbooks incorporate higher and lower level questions based on the updated Bloom's taxonomy. In the study, the overall reading sections of the EFL textbooks were examined. In other words, the cognitive level of the reading passages was determined using the updated Bloom's taxonomy. This content analysis will determine whether or not the reading questions in EFL textbooks include the higher-level thinking abilities outlined in the updated Bloom's taxonomy.

1.1 Purpose of the study

This research paper is to assess the cognitive levels of the reading questions in the EFL textbooks developed locally for students in Turkey's ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. With reference to the new Bloom's taxonomy, this research tries to determine if there is a lack of low or high order cognitive levels in the reading questions. Thus, the following study question was posed:

How much do the reading parts of the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade EFL textbooks include the lower and higher order cognitive levels outlined in the updated Bloom's taxonomy?

1.2 Significance of the study

This research paper investigates the reading questions in EFL textbooks written for Turkish students in order to determine the proportion of lower and higher cognitive levels outlined in the updated Bloom's taxonomy and to recommend techniques to aid textbook writers in the creation of reading questions. In addition, the conclusions of this study article will greatly assist teachers in crafting reading problems depending on the appropriate cognitive levels. This study paper's findings will also assist relevant authorities in selecting the necessary textbooks. This research will increase awareness of the needed cognitive levels that must also be included in textbooks. In addition, the outcomes of this research will be of considerable value for both global and local stakeholders in order to achieve the curricular goals.

1.3 Limitations of the study

Textbooks should provide a variety of reading questions based on both low and high order cognitive abilities so that students are equipped to answer to questions at any cognitive level (Assaly & Smadi, 2015). Only the updated Bloom's taxonomy was used to ask the reading comprehension questions in this article. In addition, this study work is confined to locally created EFL textbooks for the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Other local EFL textbooks from the elementary and secondary levels, as well as internationally authored EFL textbooks from various grade levels, were not included in the study's findings. Lastly, this research article solely investigates reading questions; consequently, the study's findings are confined to the examination of reading questions.

2 Methodology

This qualitative study use descriptive content analysis as its methodology. The updated cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy were referenced in the classification of reading questions in EFL textbooks. Initially, two study questions pertaining to lower and higher order cognitive levels, respectively, were formulated. The former refers to tangible phases of cognition, whereas the later is concerned with abstract states of cognition.

1. To what extent do the reading sections of the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th class EFL textbooks involve the lower higher order cognition levels specified in the revised Bloom’s taxonomy?
2. To what extent do the reading sections of the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th class EFL textbooks involve higher order cognition levels specified in the revised Bloom’s taxonomy?

Key words and verbs exemplifying the taxonomy stages, example question stems, and prospective activities concentrating on each level were used to indicate which levels of thinking order were noticed in the total assessed

reading passages. In addition, the key terms and verbs illustrative of the taxonomy's phases, example question stems, and prospective actions were derived from Tarlinton (2003) and Pohl (2005, 2000). As the obtained data are evaluated and analyzed, this study is based on qualitative research. In addition, frequencies and percentages are provided in the study as a quantitative research design, whilst the relevant samples from the reading comprehension questions reflect the qualitative investigation. The following EFL textbooks are included in the study:

- High School Relearn Student's Book Grade 9 designed and delivered by the Ministry of Turkish National Education, 2019
- Count me in Student's Book Grade 10 designed and delivered by the Ministry of Turkish National Education, 2019
- Sunshine English Student's Book Grade 11 designed and delivered by the Ministry of Turkish National Education, 2019
- Count me in Student's Book Grade 12 designed and delivered by the Ministry of Turkish National Education, 2019.

Reading passages of the studied textbooks were evaluated in light of the cognitive levels of the updated Bloom's taxonomy. For this purpose, descriptive content analysis was used to the reading sections of each unit of EFL textbooks. Low order cognitive skills: remembering, comprehending, and applying; and high order cognitive skills: analyzing, assessing, and inventing. The frequencies and proportions of each level of thinking were then computed. Several models, such as Piagetian and Vygotskian, are used to evaluate assessment tasks and questions (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), but the revised Bloom's taxonomy can be viewed as a cornerstone for investigating assessment tools based on the cognitive domains of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (as cited in Zareian at al., 2015). In order to provide a clearer illustration of the data in the current research, the percentages and frequencies of each cognitive level have been provided in tables. Briefly, the updated Bloom's taxonomy served as the conceptual underpinning for this investigation. Accordingly, the results were tallied, and relevant examples were presented to illustrate each cognitive level of the new Bloom's taxonomy.

3 Data analysis and results

The scope of the updated Bloom's taxonomy incorporated in the reading sections of the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade EFL textbooks published locally constitutes the study's conclusions. In addition, the total number of such instances in the EFL textbooks included in the research is shown below. Under each table, sample passages for each category are shown.

Table 1

The extent of the revised Bloom's taxonomy in the reading parts of the locally written 9th class EFL textbook

Level	*f*	*%*
Remembering	74	81.32
Understanding	17	18.68
Applying	–	–
Analyzing	–	–
Evaluating	–	–
Creating	–	–
Total	91	100.00

Table 1 clearly demonstrates that 81.32 percent of the questions in the reading sections of the 9th grade EFL textbooks created locally are of the remembering level. In addition, a minor fraction of occurrences were found at the level of comprehension (18.68%). However, no occurrences were noted at the levels of applying, analyzing, assessing, and generating. The following examples illustrate the specified levels:

- Read the text on the next page and answer: Is there traffic on the Castle Street? (Remembering level, p. 24)
- Why did more than 30000 people become homeless? (Understanding level, p. 54)

Table 2

The extent of the revised Bloom's taxonomy in the reading parts of the locally written 10th class EFL textbook

Level	*f*	*%*
Remembering	118	71.52
Understanding	43	26.06
Applying	–	–
Analyzing	–	–
Evaluating	–	–
Creating	4	2.42
Total	165	100.00

As it is plainly evident in Table 2, remembering level (71.52%) is significantly dominating in the reading sections of the locally authored 10th class EFL textbook. Additionally, several instances were found at the level of comprehension (26.06%). In addition, a bare emergence was noticed at the level of creation (2.42%). In contrast, no change was detected at the levels of application, analysis, or evaluation. Below are examples of data samples:

- Read the text on icebreaker activities and answer the questions.
  1. Why do teachers use ice-breakers? (Understanding level, p. 13)
  2. What are some ice-breaker activities? (Remembering level, p. 13)
  3. Why are ice-breakers important? (Understanding level, p. 13)
- Below is the template of a digital collaborative story. Its first sentence has been given for you. Each time before a group, pair or student adds a sentence, discuss it and make changes if necessary to create a collaborative story which shows the advantages of technology. Then, arrange it online (Creating level, p. 105).
- Now, write a 'cause and effect paragraph' on the importance of netiquette (Creating level, p. 102).

Table 3

The extent of the revised Bloom's taxonomy in the reading parts of the locally written 11th class EFL textbook

Level	*f*	*%*
Remembering	123	56.16
Understanding	82	37.45
Applying	–	–
Analyzing	–	–
Evaluating	–	–
Creating	14	6.39
Total	219	100.00

The most prevalent level noticed in the reading sections of the locally authored EFL textbook for 11th graders is the remembering level (56.16%) as shown in Table 3. In addition, the degree of comprehension was encountered at a modest rate (37.45%). Moreover, a minor fraction of occurrences (6.39%) were also observed at the level of creation. There was no incident throughout the application, analysis, and evaluation phases. The following are excerpts from the research:

- Read the speech bubbles about the professions below and write similar sentences (Remembering level, p. 10).
- Work in pairs. Look at the CV below and make predictions about the future career of this person. Use the prompts (Understanding level, p. 15).
- Work in groups of four. Write some texts about your teachers or friends and prepare your own class magazine. Then, share it with the class (Creating level, p. 119).

Table 4

The extent of the revised Bloom's taxonomy in the reading parts of the locally written 12th class EFL textbook

Level	*f*	*%*
Remembering	112	65.37
Understanding	56	32.17
Applying	2	1.15
Analyzing	–	–
Evaluating	–	–
Creating	4	2.30
Total	174	100.00

As is evident from Table 4, the degree of memory retention (65.12%) happened with the greatest frequency. The degree of comprehension (32.56%) has been seen to follow the level of recalling. In addition, a rare incidence was seen at both the creating (2.32%) and applying (1.15%) levels, however neither the analyzing nor the evaluating levels presented any instances. Examples of samples illustrating the aforementioned levels are shown below:

- Read the dialogue and find out what impacts Alex and Luke's choices in music (Remembering level, p. 13).
- Read the passage and discuss the predictions and plans (Understanding level, p. 46).
- The length of the lines in the below diagram shows the progress human beings made. How would you interpret the speed of change according to the diagram? (Applying level, p. 46)
- Write a letter of complaint about an environmental problem to a local or national authority and suggest solutions in your letter (Creating level, p. 81).

Table 5

The extent of the revised Bloom's taxonomy in the reading parts of the overall EFL textbooks included in the study

Level	*f*	*%*
Remembering	427	65.79
Understanding	198	30.51
Applying	2	0.31
Analyzing	–	–
Evaluating	–	–
Creating	22	3.39
Total	649	100.00

Table 5 demonstrates that the remembering level (65.79%) occurs most often in the reading sections of the EFL textbooks (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade textbooks) included in the research. In addition, a percentage of 30.51 was found for the degree of comprehension. While just a few occurrences were seen at the level of creation (3.39%), a single event was found at the level of application (0.31%).

4 Discussion and conclusion

This research aims to evaluate the lower and higher cognitive levels of reading questions in Turkish EFL textbooks. Overall, the reading questions evaluated lower levels of cognitive ability at a higher level. However, the advanced level of intellect was hardly addressed. Memory, comprehension, and application, which are tangible stages of cognition, were stored in the reading texts, however analyzing, evaluating, and producing, which are higher and more abstract stages of cognition, were not adequately examined. The data indicate that the reading text questions did not target higher cognitive levels. Given that remembering is associated with working memory and short-term memory, it is doubtful that it can assess long-term memory. To reinforce knowledge in the long-term memory, it is necessary to engage higher cognitive processes. It is rare that learners of a foreign language would reinforce lexical, syntactical, and contextual knowledge unless they analyze or assess the corresponding information in the texts. Measuring mainly lower levels of cognition gives them with little data. Additionally, it is crucial to apply integrated activities while reading texts. Reading and writing, or speaking and listening, are examples of integrated tasks. Thus, reading text queries were unable to assist students in producing meaningful texts. Pure and concrete inquiries have just a superficial relationship to understanding.

It is essential for EFL textbook authors and researchers to incorporate the updated Bloom's taxonomy in order to teach learners who can effectively analyze, evaluate, and produce texts. The revised Bloom's taxonomy provides useful and productive stages for EFL students to be creative while reading texts. Creatively approaching a text and its questions requires assembling, creating, designing, articulating, and writing. Evaluation, which involves assessing, debating, defending, judging, choosing, supporting, valuing, and evaluating, is a further step that must be examined. Analyzing is another aspect that requires discriminating between various portions of the text, evaluating, comparing, contrasting, critiquing, differentiating, scrutinizing, and asking. These higher cognitive characteristics were not detected in the assessed reading text questions from textbooks. The revised Bloom's taxonomy is a useful and successful tool for reading classes. Therefore, EFL and ESL instructors, researchers, and textbook authors must use Bloom's higher cognitive aspects so that EFL students

can reinforce texts at the lexical, syntactic, and contextual levels. Taking into account lower cognitive abilities, the most often utilized inquiry type concerned remembering, which includes definition, listing, memorization, recalling, and expressing the pertinent language and material. However, there are significant limits to memorizing dimension for language learners. This constraint may be overcome by including more cognitive elements. It is glaringly obvious that English instructors and textbook authors should include extra questions into reading texts so that foreign and second language English learners may build more productive abilities via reading text questions in line with the updated Bloom's taxonomy. Due to the relationship between Bloom's taxonomy and critical syllabus, it is possible to design a critical syllabus to obtain these competencies (Ordem, 2021).

Future research should include the new Bloom's taxonomy. The reading text questions in textbooks should be updated to accommodate and embrace higher cognitive capabilities. In addition, the Ministry of Education, English language teaching departments, and textbook authors must work to reformulate reading text problems so that second and foreign language learners may gain more abstract and productive abilities. Teachers of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are able to question themselves about EFL texts (Ordem, 2017c). Adding integrated assignments to reading materials continues to be a significant concern for EFL textbook authors. In addition, foreign textbooks may be evaluated to generate reading text questions. Remember that taxonomy thinking adds to the adaptability of learners. Limiting students to lower cognitive levels offers significant challenges for language instruction and learning. Therefore, reading text queries restricted to lower cognitive levels and dimensions should be increased in order to strengthen higher cognition levels. In addition, task-based language teaching can be incorporated into EFL classroom activities so that foreign language learners can complete differentiated tasks. This is possible because task-based language teaching prioritizes the revised Bloom's taxonomy, the communicative approach, and the content-based language teaching method. Consequently, the updated Bloom's taxonomy may be related with the integration of several methodologies and approaches in language instruction. This advanced taxonomic thinking presents considerable chances for language learners, since EFL students may be endowed with higher cognitive levels when reading and examining an English book if they engage in it. Reading questions are an excellent indicator of what EFL students should consider while they read and skim a material. In addition, by incorporating higher levels of cognition, critical thinking abilities may be enhanced (Ordem, 2017a). Ordem (2017b) further highlights that motivation may be increased if students believe they can acquire certain abilities.

It is strongly suggested that authors of EFL textbooks and academics use the updated Bloom's taxonomy into reading comprehension questions. Consequently, the reading text questions must be altered to align with the taxonomically classed higher cognitive levels. Thus, learners of foreign and second languages may study and evaluate texts by generating a new point of view product. Language learners must continue to be asked reading comprehension tasks that go beyond lower cognitive levels and promote higher cognitive levels. This hopeful outlook may be reached via partnership with departments of English language instruction, English instructors, and textbook authors.

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