

Hots Content of Reading Skills Assessments in Student Books To Promote Critical Thinking Skills

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Abstract

This study was to analyze the HOTS content in the reading skills section of the Student Book of the Junior High School (SMP) of the Indonesia language subject based on the revised Bloom's taxonomy. The source of data was the 2013 Curriculum of the Junior High School's the Indonesia language Student Book published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. The data were in the form of words, sentences, and texts as found in the assessment of the reading skills. The research instrument was the researchers themselves equipped with an analytical framework. The data collection was carried out by documentation, reading, and note-taking. The data analysis was conducted by determining the Operational Verbs (OVs) for each item, categorizing data for LOTS and HOTS, coding and selecting data categories, presenting data, and making inferences. The data validity was attained based on the data validity and reliability determined by experts. The test validity of the data was determined using the credibility test triangulation of sources with intra-rater and inter-rater. The results show that the total number of reading skills assessments in the SMP Student Books was 173 with 71 of them carrying HOTS content. The assessment in the Student's Book consists of an assessment of knowledge and skills. The Operational Verbs (OVs) with the levels of C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, and C6 are 101 in each reading skills assessment. When analyzed using the revised Bloom's taxonomy, there are 17 OVs of analyzing, evaluating, and creating for the class VII Student Book; 21 OVs for the class VIII Student Book; and 16 OVs for the class IX Student Book. In conclusion, the questions in the assessment in the student books of the reading skills for class IX contain HOTS. This indicates that the book can help students to increase their critical thinking skills through reading.

Keywords: HOTS, student book, revised Bloom's taxonomy, critical thinking ability

Introduction

The era of globalization has brought a broad impact on various aspects of life, including on the high demands of the quality of education administration. Currently, education has been intended to grow all students' abilities of the 4 competencies (4Cs) of the 21st century learning. The 4Cs are critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaborative competencies. Educators have to understand that their professionalism as required in the 21st century is not merely about expertise in a particular topic. Rather, they must become experts in finding out

knowledge with students, in learning ways to collaborate, and in aiding students to seek for new discoveries in every learning activity.

Improving the 4Cs is strategic to help students prepare for their future. Teachers can help improve students' critical thinking abilities by providing readings of various texts and letting students work on various forms of assessments. The Student Book of the the Indonesia language subject which is used as the main reference is published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. They contain various forms of assessment in the reading parts. The Student Book in the form of e-books can help overcome the limitations of traditional paper-based textbooks, for they already use a combination of text and pictures and even pictures and audio to convey both dynamic and static information. Electronic books adopt a multi-angle and multidimensional approach to conveying information such as sound, images, and animation (Li, 2021). This type of book carries learning activities and various assessments. Assessment is needed to see how far students have mastered the material. Student books are required to get learners to attend to the existing findings. This way, they will become avid readers. For this reason, this study would then conduct an in-depth analysis of the HOTS content of the assessment questions in the Junior High school the Indonesia language Student Book concerning reading skills development.

Reading is not just spelling letters, words, and sentences; rather, it is the interaction process of the writers and the readers to build meaning (Abu-Hardan et al., 2019; Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2020). There are various goals of reading activities, namely seeking information, increasing knowledge, as entertainment, or finding out things for their truth. However, in reality, interest in reading in Indonesia is still relatively low (Nuryani & Suyadnya, 2020). This is also evident as found in the results of the PISA (Program of International Student Assessment) research. In 2018, compared to other Southeast Asian countries, ranks sixth from the bottom. The results of PISA suggest that students could not yet successfully understand the reading. They could not manage to complete the most basic objective of reading (Scheleicher, 2019). PISA results affect education policy reforms in most of the participating countries (Froese-Germain & Federation, 2013). This means that improving reading skills is every related party's responsibility. Education is demanded to help cultivate interest in reading through, for instance, habituation.

Currently, education has been challenged to prepare students to be superior human resources. Students who currently live in an uncertain era need to be facilitated to increase their critical thinking skills to be able to change the world (Stanovich, 2014; Dwee et al., 2016)). They must be able to communicate to interact, especially to use verbal communication that can be understood by other parties. One can become a reader to be then able to interact through writing. By reading one will learn many things about science and other information. This can help broaden people's insights developed based on strong references. However, all of that will not give a strong impact when it is not balanced with improving their writing skills. Sociologically, communication is effective if the message conveyed by the sender is interpreted the same by the recipient of the message. Preparing students to get used to doing reading activities can help improve students critical thinking skills. This is an important educational goal and is a critical issue to be addressed and developed (D'Alessio et al., 2019; Mitarlis et al., 2020). Teachers are required to run classes with clear objectives.

Literature Review

Learning is an educational activity in schools that aims to help the growth and development of the students so that they will keep walking in a positive direction. The way students learn (learning subjects) at school should be well-directed to prevent it from running aimlessly. Students expect that there will be positive changes in them toward maturity as directed by the school learning system. Teachers, in carrying out learning, are required to set up a learning environment that can facilitate positive behavior changes among the students. Teachers can achieve this by using textbooks as learning resources to support the learning process to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

In Indonesia, the 2013 curriculum is student-centered. The renewed curriculum promotes higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). The government requires teachers to focus on improving students' critical thinking skills over other skills. However, many assignments that involve higher-order thinking skills may still be problematic when intended to improve higher-order thinking skills (Febriyani, Yunita, & Damayanti, 2020)). The ability to master the language and use it correctly and fluently is directly proportional to the development of all language skills. There are such language skills as reading and writing which are used in all aspects of life. Reading and writing skills develop together and build general skills (Bennett, Deane, & W. van Rijn, 2016). People who cannot read and understand what they read are unlikely to accomplish much when they write. People who have little knowledge will have difficulties generating ideas for writing (O'Reilly et al., 2019)

Reading is a cognitive process that combines various sources of knowledge and it requires cognitive and comprehensive abilities, both linguistic and non-linguistic (Alarfaj & Alshumaimeri, 2012)). Reading uses logic to interpret the contents of the printed text (Brown, 2001). Doing reading activities can increase vocabulary mastery and knowledge and it then can help students deal with words of varied usage (Nation, 2015; Käsper et al., 2018)). With a good mastery of vocabulary, students will not find difficulties to read texts. If students' reading comprehension skill is low, there is a possibility that they will fail in learning or at least they will experience difficulties in making progress (Ardhian, Ummah, Anafiah, & Rachmadtullah, 2020). This is because students need to obtain various information, including content, and understand the meaning of texts through reading activities. The ability to read and understand is not hereditary. It is the result of a teaching and learning process carried out diligently and properly. The more skilled a person at understanding a text is, the clearer his thoughts will be.

When learning Indonesia language, it is necessary for students to have a textbook to facilitate learning and to accord to the learning objectives. Textbooks are one of the learning resources that can be used to improve students' critical thinking skills. A textbook is important to serve as a guide for students and teachers of every level of education to be actively involved in classroom practice (Margana & Widyantoro, 2017). Textbooks make learning easier when to achieve the maximum targeted learning objectives (Iqbal, 2013). In addition, they serve as the core of practical education, providing students with a large number of new and potentially interesting facts and opening doors to a world of "fantastic experiences" (Dávila & Talanquer, 2010). Textbooks are important for student learning activities in the classroom. They are often the main resource for students in learning the Indonesian language outside the classroom. Students can read their textbooks before a learning process in class. Students can work on the assessment questions in the textbook to sharpen their skills. Along with the rapid development

of information and technology in the last few decades, a shift in what and how students learn the Indonesia language in class is urgently addressed.

A Student Book of an electronic textbook is an important component used in the learning process to provide clarity to the teaching materials. It helps teachers and students in implementing the curriculum. It helps teachers choose the right method for a class activity. A Student Book serves as a guide for students and teachers of any level of education to actively engage in classroom practice. As a source of teaching, textbooks are usually the main source of materials that will be given by teachers to their students, especially assignments.

In helping learn the Indonesia language, Student Books must then carry HOTS. Students are required to be able to read well and capture meaning critically. Critical thinking skills are considered one of the most important learning skills for 21st-century learners as they live in an ever-changing society with increasing access to news and information from every corner of the world. Students must be able to differentiate, analyze, and evaluate the reliability of the data received to avoid being manipulated by others (Kaowiwattanukul, 2021). Critical thinking is also said to be a reflective and logical way of thinking focusing on determining what to believe and to do (Asyari et al., 2016; Fuad et al., 2017). Critical thinking in reading skills is described as a process of analyzing language, style, and influence while recognizing that one's reading is determined by it.

There needs to be constant attention to textbooks because they are the main learning resource for students. Students can learn various language skills through the book. The HOTS content in the reading skill assessment questions in Student Books can be studied using the revised Bloom's taxonomy. Bloom divides this area into six levels, ranging from simple to complex. This taxonomy was made by Benjamin Bloom in 1956 and revised by Anderson in 2001 and it consists of six levels of cognitive domains. As for LOTS, its content categories are remembering (C1), understanding (C2), and applying (C3); and for HOTS content categories, they are analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating/creating (C6) (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The cognitive level of remembering, for example, is the level of thinking that can lead to acquiring and demanding information. The understanding level involves extracting information and interpreting facts. As for the application level, students are asked to register and use the information they get. In addition, at the analyzing stage, students should analyze, investigate, and conclude. At the level of evaluating, students are required to induce theory, prediction, and evaluation. Students at the creative level can carry out various creative activities to become more critical and creative (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Brookhart, 2010; Facione, 2011). The characteristics of HOTS-based assessments are (1) measuring higher-order thinking skills, (2) using problems of everyday life, and (3) using various types of assessments.

Methodology

This research is quantitative-descriptive. This study intends to describe the assessment questions on the reading and writing skills in the Indonesia language, Junior High School textbooks published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia as observed from the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The source of data in this study was the Revised Edition of Student Books of the the Indonesia language, subject for Junior High School published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Titik Harsiati, Agus Trianto, 2017; Kosasih, 2018; Agus Trianto, Titik Harsiati, 2018). The research instrument used data cards and the revised Bloom's taxonomy HOTS content guidelines. The guidelines contain outlines or categories of data to be searched for, and also tables from which lists of variables of data

can be obtained. The data collection techniques used in this study were reading and note-taking. The data analysis techniques were composed of categorizing assessments based on the revised Bloom's taxonomy table, calculating percentages, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data is carried out inter-rater and intra-rater.

Discussion

The 2013 curriculum developers expect that the student-centered integrative thematic learning can help students to be active, creative, think critically, work together, and compete in the global arena. Textbooks can be referred to as published materials especially designed to help language learners to improve their linguistic and communicative abilities (Fatima & Kazim Shah, 2015). One of the factors of academic success in learning is reading. That is because by reading, one can understand what is read to find out the needed information (Arslan & Al, 2017). Education is important to help a nation develop (Rahayu, Sarmini, & Martadi, 2020). It is necessary to have appropriate learning resources so that students can learn both in class and outside the classroom. The Ministry of Education and Culture published Student Books for students to make learning easier. Student books for the Indonesia language, subjects with their reading skill objectives can be useful for increasing students' critical thinking abilities. Therefore, the LOTS and HOTS elements in the student books must be fine-tuned to the competence level of each student.

Various types of assessment are presented in the Junior High School Student Books. Assessment is the process of gathering information about students (through various sources of evidence), about what they know, and what they can do. This information is used as a basis for making a decision (Nurgiyantoro, 2016). The assessment must meet two requirements, namely 1) it measures competency and 2) it must have a beneficial effect on the learning process.

Table 1. *The Distribution of Assessments on the Reading Skills in the Student Books of Indonesia Language Subjects of Grade VII, VIII, and IX*

Language skills	Forms of Assessment	Assessment of Reading Skills in Student Books					
		Grade VII		Grade VIII		Grade IX	
		Total	Total (%)	Total	Total (%)	Total	Total (%)
Assessment on knowledge	MC	-	0%	2	2%	2	8%
	M	2	3%	2	2%	-	0%
	I	3	5%	1	1%	1	4%
	~	-	0%	1	1%	-	0%
	TF	-	0%	4	5%	-	0%
	WD	29	47%	22	26%	14	53%
	FE	14	23%	18	21%	9	35%
Assessment on Skills	OP	9	15%	16	19%	-	0%
	PP	-	0%	1	1%	-	0%
	Pj	3	5%	17	20%	-	0%
	PdA	-	0%	0	0%	-	0%
	SE	1	2%	0	0%	-	0%
	PE	-	0%	2	2%	-	0%
Total		61		86		26	
Percent		68%	100%	65%	100%	62%	100%

Table 1 shows two kinds of assessment, assessment of knowledge and skills. The knowledge assessment consists of multiple choices (MC), matching (M), filling in (F), yes-correct (Y-C), true-false (T-F), written descriptions (WD), and free essays (FE). The most dominant form of assessment is written description. In the Student Book, this form presents a text then students are required to compose another text based on the provided text. The skills assessment in the Student Book is in the form of oral performance (OP), Practical performance (PP), projects (Pj), product assessment (PdA), Self-evaluation (SE), and peer evaluation (PE). The most dominant form of assessment for class VII Student Books is oral performance, while for class VIII books, it is project-based. The following is the distribution of OV's on Language Skills (Reading and Writing) in the Student Course Books of the Indonesia language, for Grades VII, VIII, and IX Junior High Schools.

Table 2. *The distribution of OV's in the Reading Skills with the Category of HOTS content in the Student Book of the Indonesian Language Subject of Junior High School of Grade VII, VIII, and IX*

Student Book	Cognitive Levels	OVs	Total	Total	Percent	Dominant OV's
Grade VII	C4	Understanding	6	25	40%	Analyzing (C4)
		Finding	1			
		Analyzing	14			
		Correcting	1			
	C5	Concluding	3	4	7%	
		Proving	2			
		Correcting	1			
Grade VIII	C6	Showing	1	1	2%	Evaluating (C5)
		Understanding	3			
		Finding	3			
	C4	Analyzing	4	13	15%	
		Concluding	3			
		Proving	3			
		Choosing	1			
C5	Interpreting	1	11	13%		
	Evaluating	5				
	Considering	1				
Grade IX	C6	Showing	1	1	1%	Analyzing (C4)
		Understanding	6			
	C4	Analyzing	4	13	49%	
		Concluding	3			
	C5	Comparing	2	3	12%	
		Evaluating	1			
C6	-	0	0	0%		

The results of the analysis showed that there were 51 OV's in the assessment of the analyzing category (C4). The assessment included 18 OV's of the evaluating category (C5) and 2 OV's of the creating/creating category based on the revised Bloom's taxonomy. The objectives of the assessments are identifying the content or information of the text, choosing statements that are appropriate to the text, analyzing the text, and comparing several texts based on their contents. Analytical questions are questions that require students to identify relevant or important pieces of information, organize these pieces of information, and determine their

purpose. In discriminating, students are to look for differences between important and unimportant or relevant and irrelevant information (determining the main points in a text).

It can be seen in the Class VII Student Book on page 67 with a short essay assessment form, namely "Make a fantasy text study by completing the following explanation". Students are required to think at a higher level because they have to study fantasy texts. OV's for assessment are related to "reviewing". The students' activities begin with reading the text and then studying the structure of the text. To succeed, students must have an understanding of the structure of fantasy texts to make the results of their work clear and valid.

The assessment on page 50 of the Class VIII Student Book has carried HOTS elements. Students are required to write reasons for mentioning parts of the text, those that consist of a series of arguments and restatements. Students then report their findings by filling out a table. This is a form of assessment that stimulates students to think critically. The higher the cognitive level is, the higher the quality of the questions will be. As a cognitive process, competency tests should cover all types of cognitive processes, from LOTS (remember, understand, and apply) to HOTS (analyze and evaluate, and create). However, the HOTS content in the Student Books for class VII and VIII is still low, less than 50%. In fact, the 2013 curriculum as already revised in 2017, requires students to be more directed to higher-order thinking patterns using a reasoning type of assessment to encourage students to be more creative, innovative, and critical in solving various assessments and challenging problems (McFeetors, Marynowski, & Candler, 2021). The HOTS content for junior high school student books for the Indonesia language, subject can be identified based on the revised Bloom's taxonomy as visualized in Figure 1 below.

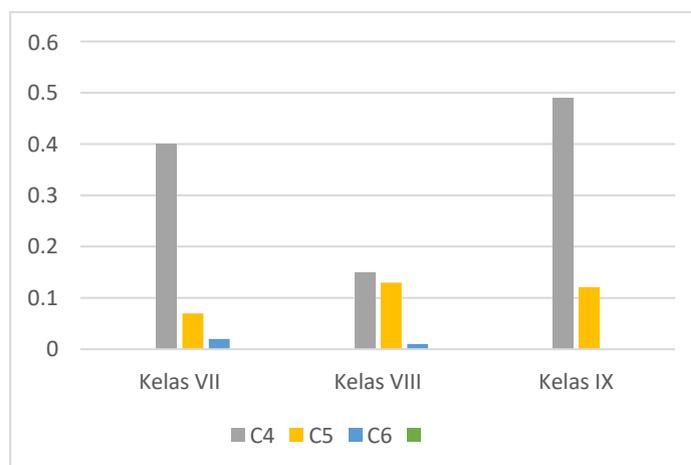


Fig 1. *Distribution of OV's in the Reading Skills Assessments with HOTS Content Found in the Student Books of the Indonesia language, Subject of Junior High School Grade VII, VIII, and IX*

There are three ways to implement HOTS in learning activities: giving high-order questions to students during reading lessons, asking students to make conclusions from what they have read, and maximizing the role of the teacher. The most effective method among the three is asking students high-order questions during reading lessons (Dwee et al., 2016; Verdina et al., 2018); Singh & Kasim, 2019). This technique can be applied by giving students HOTS assessment questions made by students themselves or they can use questions from various textbooks. Therefore, textbook authors should consider balancing the frequency of appearance of questions of the 3 upper and lower cognitive domain levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Febriyani et al., 2020). HOTS can improve critical thinking through several stages until the

students can create ideas independently (Aljojo et al., 2019). For this reason, textbooks are expected to meet the needs for providing HOTS questions. However, not all textbooks have met the criteria.

An analysis of textbooks using the revised Bloom's taxonomy as a theoretical framework was also carried out. Namaziandost et al. (2018) compared the reading comprehension questions found in Iranian School English Textbooks and the IELTS test and found that most of the questions from both documents were at the level of low-level thinking. Another study by Mizbani et al., (2020) showed that all English skills questions in the textbooks for Grade 1 high school students in Iran were not questions intended for the higher-order thinking level. Subsequent research from (Laila, 2022) noted that among the 158 reading comprehension assessments found in the textbooks for grade 1 high school students in Indonesia, only 24 of them carried the higher order thinking level.

Conclusion

This research found out that various operational verbs (OVs) that indicate HOTS content have been used in the assessment sections. Assessments to identify the progress and success of students in achieving a learning goal have become an important element in the learning process. Student books that have been properly developed should be composed of learning materials, exercises, activities, and assignments that can help students improve their critical thinking abilities. The research also found out that the Student Books, those that have supported active and collaborative learning, have incorporated the goals of 21st-century skills. Students are required to solve both LOTS and HOTS assessment questions. The revised edition of the 2013 Curriculum, which was published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, has more HOTS than LOTS content as found in the student book of grade IX. The assessment of open descriptions that dominate the Student Book is important to make students active and think critically. This is because students do not only select one answer, but they also must remember the message in the reading, and understand it, to the stage that they are required to make innovation beneficial to others. The results of this research are expected to be useful for students, educators, and writers to improve students' critical thinking abilities and develop various assessments with HOTS content. This will increase the quality of education to be more qualified.

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