

Higher Order Thinking Skills in Reading Questions on the “My Next Words” English Textbook

Hafsha Fadhlha Maghfira*, Agus Gunawan, Muhammad Rizky Fadhl
Universitas Islam As-Syafi'iyah, Jakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: hafshafadhlamaghfira@gmail.com

Dikirim: 15-06-2026; Direvisi: 12-07-2026; Diterima: 15-07-2026

Abstract: In the application of the Merdeka Curriculum, Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) serve as a benchmark for learning competency standards in the classroom, particularly in reading skills. Therefore, this research aims to determine the distribution of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) in reading comprehension questions in the “My Next Words” textbook for 6th grade elementary school under the Merdeka Curriculum, based on the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy. This research employs a qualitative research approach with data analysis using content analysis; the data collected consist of reading questions. Data were collected through document analysis; each reading question identified was then categorized based on the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, namely: Recall (C1), Understand (C2), Apply (C3), Analyze (C4), Evaluate (C5), and Create (C6). The data were then categorized based on a checklist analysis table, the frequency and percentage of cognitive levels for each test item were then calculated. The results of this analysis show that out of 36 reading questions, 33 were categorized at level C1 (91.67%), while 3 were classified at level C2 (8.33%). No questions were found at levels C3 through C6. Accordingly, 100% of the reading questions in the book were classified as Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). The results of this research show that the reading questions in the “My Next Words” book under the Merdeka Curriculum focus only on the levels of recalling and explicitly understanding information. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the questions in the book to be Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-based in order to support the development of HOTS. So that in the future, it will be clear that HOTS-based questions can help students engage in higher-order thinking.

Keywords: Higher Order Thinking Skills; Reading Questions; Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Abstrak: Dalam pengaplikasian Kurikulum Merdeka, Higher Order Thinking Skill termasuk hal yang menjadi acuan standar kompetensi pembelajaran di dalam kelas, terutama pada kemampuan membaca. Sehingga penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pendistribusian Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) dan Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) pada soal kemampuan membaca dalam buku “My Next Words” Kurikulum Merdeka kelas 6 sekolah dasar berdasarkan teori Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis data menggunakan content analysis, data yang dikumpulkan berupa pertanyaan-pertanyaan membaca. Pengumpulan data dikumpulkan melalui analisis dokumen, setiap pertanyaan membaca yang ditemukan kemudian di kategorikan berdasarkan teori Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, yaitu: Mengingat (C1), Memahami (C2), Mengaplikasikan (C3), Menganalisis (C4), Mengevaluasi (C5), dan Membuat (C6). Kemudian data dikategorikan menggunakan tabel checklist analysis, lalu dihitung frekuensi dan persentase kognitif level pada setiap butir soal. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ditemukan sebanyak 36 pertanyaan membaca, 33 pertanyaan dikategorikan pada level C1 dengan persentase 91,67%, kemudian 3 pertanyaan diklasifikasikan menjadi level C2 dengan persentase 8,33%. Sedangkan, pada level C3 sampai C6 tidak dapat ditemukan. Dengan demikian, pertanyaan membaca pada buku 100% termasuk ke dalam Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan

bahwa pertanyaan-pertanyaan membaca pada buku “My Next Words” Kurikulum Merdeka hanya berfokus pada level mengingat dan memahami informasi secara eksplisit. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan adanya pengembangan pada pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang terdapat pada buku untuk berbasis HOTS guna mendukung pengembangan keterampilan berpikir tingkat tinggi. Sehingga di masa yang akan datang, dapat diketahui upaya pertanyaan berbasis HOTS dapat membantu siswa untuk berfikir tingkat tinggi.

Kata Kunci: HOTS; Pertanyaan Membaca; Bloom’s Taxonomy Revisi.

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the subjects taught at the elementary school level as a foundation for students’ language development and global communication skills. One of the essential language skills in English learning is reading, as it enables students to understand information, develop vocabulary, and build critical thinking abilities. In line with current educational demands, the Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the integration of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to prepare students to think critically, analytically, and creatively from an early age. According to (Fatoni, 2023) thus, skilled reading comprehension may help with intellectual development and analytical skills. Reading on a regular basis allows you to critically assess information presented in a variety of circumstances, both professional and academic. Without reading, it is impossible to develop critical thinking skills and make fair and persuasive arguments. Despite the importance of HOTS in English learning, several indications show that the implementation of higher level thinking in elementary school reading activities has not been optimal. In classroom practices, English reading questions provided in textbooks are often limited to identifying explicit information, matching words, or answering factual questions.

These types of questions mainly assess Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS), such as remembering and understanding, rather than encouraging students to analyze, evaluate, or interpret texts critically. Although English textbooks contain various reading passages and learning activities that have the potential to promote both HOTS and LOTS, teachers and practitioners must carefully focus on the development of students’ cognitive thinking skills, particularly HOTS, because students are expected to apply, analyse, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than simply remember it (Rania Qaswari, 2020). However, in fact, the emphasis on higher-order thinking abilities in reading activities remains limited, since lower-order thinking skills continue to be more regularly used.

This condition may lead to broader educational impacts. When students are rarely exposed to HOTS based reading questions, they tend to become passive learners who rely on memorization rather than reasoning. As a result, students’ reading comprehension skills, critical thinking abilities, and problem-solving skills are not well developed. In the long term, this situation can affect students’ readiness to face higher levels of education that demand independent and analytical thinking. (Abd. Rahim, 2025) stated that Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) are still emphasized by many Indonesian educators, especially in textbook-based instruction and evaluations. As it turned out, children frequently find it difficult to acquire critical reading and problem-solving abilities. Therefore, the implementation of



HOTS questions is needed to enhance students' thinking skills so that they can solve problems easily and think critically.

According to (Dr. Farida Repelitawaty Br. Kembaren et al., 2018) Reading is an engaging activity for obtaining and comprehending the meaning included in the board material. Reading is a communication activity that necessitates a variety of skills. As a result, reading is a cognitive process rather than a visual exercise. Reading is the action of obtaining information from a book or text (Hadira, 2023) Reading is a complex action that includes not just receiving text but also visual activities such as thinking. Reading, like the visual process, is the process of turning written symbols (letters) into spoken words. Reading activities involve thinking processes such as word recognition, literal understanding, interpretation, critical reading, creative reading, and creative insight. Moreover, according to (Chandra Ramesh, 2021) reading is a methodical process. It entails the precise, thorough, sequential perception and identification of words, letters, spelling patterns, and more comprehensive language units. Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that Reading is a cognitive and communicative process in which people use systematic skills to generate meaning from written symbols. This process includes not just visual recognition but also thinking and comprehension.

Based on (Siti Rohmi Yuliati, 2018) HOTS is more of an activity that involves making inferences, making connections with other facts and ideas, manipulating, classifying, combining in different ways, and using them to solve new obstacles. Moreover, based on (Mardiana, 2023) HOTS is the capacity for critical and creative problem-solving is known as higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Another definition of HOTS according to (Fitriani et al., 2023) The process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information derived from observation, experience, reasoning, reflection, or communication and using it as a guide for belief and action is known as HOTS. Based on the definition above, HOTS is a person's ability to think at a high level, not just remembering information, but the ability to analyze and evaluate information so that from that ability, the ability to solve problems and find solutions to achieve certain goals is created.

According to (Mahmudati, 2023) Higher Order Thinking Skills include three higher cognitive levels: analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and producing (C6). At the analyzing level (C4), students are expected to break down newly acquired knowledge into smaller components in order to detect patterns or relationships, spot differences, determine cause-and-effect relationships, and construct problems in the form of questions. The evaluating level (C5) requires the capacity to evaluate problem-solving procedures, concepts, and approaches using acceptable criteria or existing standards to judge their efficacy, as well as to generate, test, and accept or reject assumptions based on predefined criteria. C6/creating, make a general conclusion from an idea or ideal point of view to anything; design an alternative solution to solve the problem, classify the element or portion, and construct a new structure that has never existed before.

On the other hand, (Prasetyo et al., 2021) said that Bloom's Taxonomy's cognitive levels are divided into six levels of order, numbered C1 through C6. According to the original Bloom's Taxonomy, these levels are knowledge (C1), understanding (C2), application (C3), analysis (C4), synthesis (C5), and assessment (C6). Meanwhile, the revised Bloom's Taxonomy substitutes these categories with



remembering (C1), understanding (C2), applying (C3), analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6), highlighting the importance of active cognitive processes in learning. Furthermore, according to (Setyowati & Munir, 2022) the cognitive domain of the new Bloom's Taxonomy continues to have six levels. These levels begin with remembering (C1), which is the ability to retain information, then understanding (C2), which is the ability to comprehend meaning, and finally applying (C3), which is the ability to employ knowledge in specific situations. Higher-order thinking skills are represented in the upper levels, including analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6), which demand learners to think critically, reflectively, and creatively. Moreover, (Krathwohl, 2010) divides the cognitive levels in Bloom's Taxonomy into two basic frameworks: the original Bloom's Taxonomy and the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The original taxonomy consists of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Meanwhile, the revised Bloom's Taxonomy restructures these levels as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating, emphasizing a more dynamic and learner-centered approach to cognitive growth.

Based on the statement above, there are levels that serve as assessment benchmarks in a question. These levels are divided into two, namely Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Within these categories, there are benchmarks for determining whether a question belongs to the LOTS or HOTS category. In the LOTS category, there are three levels: remembering (C1), understanding (C2), and applying (C3). Meanwhile, in the HOTS category, there are three levels: analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6).

Considering the central role of textbooks as the primary learning resource in elementary schools, it is important to examine the quality of reading questions provided in English textbooks. Many studies have examined the application of HOTS and LOTS, such as (Laila & Fitriyah, 2022) who researched with the title "An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions in English Textbooks Based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy", this study examined the level of questions specifically related to reading skills in a book entitled "English" for 12th grade high school students. The results of this study show that there are a total of 142 reading comprehension questions, 83% of which are categorized as LOTS (Level of Thinking Skills) while 17% are categorized as HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills). This shows that these textbook focuses more on questions that test lower-order thinking than higher-order thinking.

Similarly, (Tayyeh et al., 2021) examines HOTS and LOTS reading skills with the title "An Analysis Of Reading Comprehension Questions In English Textbook "English For Iraq" According To Revised Bloom's Taxonomy". In this study, the researchers examined how many HOTS and LOTS questions were in the book entitled "English for Iraq." The results of the study show the following: the highest percentage of questions is remembering (49.65%) and understanding (36.52%), while the percentages for other levels are lower, namely applying (2.48%), analyzing (4.26%), evaluating (6.38%), and finally, creating (0.71%). These results indicate that all cognitive levels are covered in reading comprehension questions. However, most questions are dominated by lower cognitive levels. According to a study by (Zainil & Rosa, 2020) in "An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions in English Textbooks for SMAN Kota Padang: HOTS", this study examines reading comprehension questions in English textbooks for students learning English as a



foreign language (EFL). The results of this study indicate that the level of difficulty of the reading comprehension questions in the textbooks is mostly at a low level (LOTS). Some questions in the textbooks are categorized as HOTS, but their number is still far below that of LOTS questions.

Based on previous research, research on HOTS questions in English textbooks has already been conducted. However, research on HOTS questions in elementary school-level English textbooks remains limited. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine whether the implementation of HOTS in the reading questions in these textbooks aligns with the competency outcomes established in the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, this research focuses on analyzing the distribution of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are represented in English reading questions of the 6th grade elementary school English textbook based on the Merdeka Curriculum. The analysis is conducted by classifying reading questions according to cognitive levels to identify whether they reflect HOTS or LOTS. This research provides a clear picture of how far HOTS have been implemented in English reading questions at the elementary school level. The findings are expected to contribute to improving the quality of English learning materials, supporting teachers in designing HOTS-oriented assessments, and strengthening the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in developing students' higher-order thinking skills, especially in the reading exercises found in the English textbook "My Next Words".

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research used a qualitative approach with a content analysis research design. Content analysis was employed to systematically examine the reading questions in the Merdeka Curriculum English textbook for 6th-grade elementary school students, using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy to identify Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). The reading questions for this analysis were selected through purposive sampling so that the data could be organized according to the scope of the study, and throughout the research process, the researcher served as the primary research instrument. According to (Creswell, 2018), content analysis is a qualitative data analysis process that involves methodically analyzing texts or documents by classifying, coding, and finding themes in order to draw meaning from the data.

Source of Data

This research used the textbook *My Next Words* as its data source. This textbook is based on the Merdeka Curriculum and was created for students in 6th grade. The questions from the textbook was used as the data for analysis in this research.

Instrument of the Research

The research utilized document analysis as a research approach due the data was collected from a textbook document, *My Next Words*. Document analysis was conducted to find and choose questions from the textbook that were classified as reading comprehension questions. This strategy allowed the researcher to carefully study the textbook's content and obtain relevant reading questions for further examination.



During the data collection analyzing, checklist analysis was utilized to categorize each reading question into the cognitive levels of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which range from C1 (Remembering) to C6 (Creating). The researcher utilized a checklist table to collect and classify the questions based on cognitive level. Following the classification process, the frequency and percentage of each cognitive level were calculated in order to figure out the percentage of HOTS and LOTS questions in the textbook. The following table illustrates a detailed checklist table.

Table 1. Check List Analysis of Cognitive Levels Distribution

Chp	Page	No	Reading Questions	Cognitive levels					
				LOTS			HOTS		
				C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
2	26	2	Cici went to the library on_____	✓					
2	26	3	Joshua and Made borrowed_____ in the library		✓				

Data Collecting Technique

The researcher began data collecting by thoroughly reviewing all of the questions offered in the textbook *My Next Words*. This initial step was taken to get a thorough understanding of the types of exercises presented in the textbook, as well as to determine which questions were related to the research's primary focus. Throughout the process, the researcher read each chapter and carefully examined each activity. After analyzing all of the questions, the researcher determined and classified those that were defined as reading comprehension questions. The classification process was carried out in a systematic way, taking into consideration whether the questions needed students to understand, interpret, analyze, or respond according to written information. The analysis removed questions unrelated to comprehension, such as vocabulary matching, speaking activities, writing tasks, and grammatical exercises. This procedure was followed carefully and repeatedly to verify that only questions about reading skills were chosen for further analysis and that the data was accurate and consistent.

After accurately categorizing the reading questions, the researcher carefully examined each question and assigned it to the suitable cognitive level using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The investigation aimed to determine the thinking skills required by students to solve each question, which ranged from simple information recall to more complicated cognitive processes. A checklist table was utilized during the research to help classify the items systematically based on cognitive levels ranging from C1 (Remembering) to C6 (Creating). The checklist table served as an analytical tool that helped the researcher organize the data clearly and consistently. Each question was carefully evaluated, paying special attention to the operational verbs, the kind of response required, and the level of thought necessary in answering the question. This procedure allowed the researcher to determine the distribution of cognitive levels in the reading questions, as well as whether the textbook provided opportunities for students to develop Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) or was still dominated by Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS).

Data Analysis Technique

The researcher started by carefully reading and analyzing every question in the "My Next Words" textbook. At this point, the researcher determined which exercises



were connected to the reading questions. The identification procedure was carried out by focusing on the reading texts, the question instructions, and the objectives of the questions that required students to understand the text. The research data did not include questions that were unrelated to reading skills, such as writing assignments, picture-matching tasks, or grammar exercises that did not call for text comprehension. As a result, the object of analysis was limited to questions that actually fell within the category of reading questions.

Afterwards the collection of all reading questions, the researcher inserted all of the questions into a checklist table that had been set up in advance to facilitate the process of data classification and analysis. Each question was systematically categorized based on the question number, the form of the question, and the cognitive indicators reflected in the question. Additionally, the researcher classified each question according to the levels of cognitive skills in the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, namely Remembering (C1), Understanding (C2), Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6). The classification and analysis of the data was made easier with the help of this table. Based on the question number, the question's format, and the cognitive indications it included, each question was methodically documented. Additionally, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy levels of cognitive skills namely Remembering (C1), Understanding (C2), Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6) were used by the researcher to categorize each topic. Each question's attributes were compared to the markers of each cognitive level in order to complete the classification procedure.

After the categorization of all the questions, the frequency and percentage of each cognitive level were calculated. To find out the majority of each type of cognitive levels in the examined reading questions, a percentage calculation was performed. The researcher employed the following percentage formula in this investigation:

$$P: \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P: percentage of cognitive levels

F: frequency of question from each category

N: total reading question

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Distribution of Cognitive Levels in the Reading Questions

Tabel 2. The Distribution of Cognitive Levels in the Reading Questions

Chp	Page	No	Reading Questions	Cognitive levels					
				LOTS			HOTS		
				C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
2	26	1	Last Monday, Cici went to _____	✓					
2	26	2	Cici went to the library on _____	✓					
2	26	3	Joshua and Made borrowed _____ in the library		✓				



2	26	4	Aisyah read _____	✓
2	26	5	Cici looked for the traditional dancing book because _____	✓
5	51	1	Who went to Jakarta last week?	✓
5	51	2	How did he go to Jakarta?	✓
5	51	3	What did he bring for his grandmother?	✓
5	51	4	Did he arrive at his grandmother's house in the next morning?	✓
5	51	5	How did his grandmother feel?	✓
6	57	1	Who is Aisyah's best friend?	✓
6	57	2	Where did they go?	✓
6	57	3	When did they go to the library?	✓
6	57	4	What did they borrow?	✓
6	57	5	What did Aisyah read?	✓
6	57	6	What did Cici read?	✓
6	57	7	Were they in the library for three hours?	✓
6	57	8	How long were they in the library?	✓
6	57	9	When did they go home?	✓
6	57	10	Were they happy?	✓
6	59	1	Who is my friend?	✓
6	59	2	What did she do in the morning?	✓
6	59	3	Where did she wash her bike	✓
6	59	4	When did she have breakfast?	✓
6	59	5	What did she do in the afternoon?	✓
6	59	6	Who did she go to supermarket with?	✓
6	59	7	How did she go to the supermarket?	✓
6	59	8	What did she do in the evening?	✓
6	59	9	What did she watch TV with?	✓
6	59	10	Was it a happy Sunday for Aisyah?	✓
9	94	1	Will Joshua go to Taman Safari with his friends?	✓
9	94	2	Who will accompany Joshua to Taman Safari?	✓
9	94	3	What is the new animal species in Taman Safari?	✓
9	94	4	Do sloths walk slowly?	✓
9	94	5	Where is Museum Satwa?	✓
9	94	6	Will they see replicas of	✓



animals at Museum Satwa?						
Total Percentage: $\frac{\text{Total}}{36} \times 100\%$	33	3	0	0	0	0
	91,67%	8,33%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Reading 1, Chapter 2, Page 26

In this chapter, there are 5 reading questions. Four of these questions are categorized as the “Remembering” level (C1), these questions only contain answers that are explicitly stated in the text, so students can recall or refer to the text to answer the information asked in the question. For example, “Last Monday, Cici went to_____” and “Cici went to the library on_____.” For these questions, students only need to recall the information explicitly provided in the text.

Question 3 in this chapter is classified as Understanding level (C2). This question requires students to connect the information provided in the text with the question asked in order to provide the information needed to answer it. For example, “Joshua and Made borrowed_____ from the library.” In this question, students need to connect the information about which books were borrowed by the two characters in the question, namely Joshua and Made. Furthermore, in this chapter, no other cognitive levels—such as Understanding (C2), Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6)—can be found.

Reading 2, Chapter 5, Page 51

In this chapter, there are 5 reading questions. Of these 5 reading questions, 5 are categorized as the Remembering level (C1). In these questions, students only need to recall information explicitly stated in the text to find the information asked for in the question. For example, “Who went to Jakarta last week?” and “How did his grandmother feel?” In these questions, students only need to locate or recall information explicitly stated in the text; therefore, they do not need to connect, analyze, or evaluate information to answer the questions. Furthermore, in this chapter, no questions were found at the cognitive levels of Understanding (C2), Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6).

Reading 3, Chapter 6, Page 57

This chapter contains 10 reading comprehension questions, 9 of which are categorized as the Remembering level (C1). These questions are classified as the Remembering level (C1) because, to find the required information, students only need to recall or reread the information explicitly provided. For example, “Who is Aisyah’s best friend?” and “Where did they go?” In these questions, the information needed to answer them requires students to simply recall or reread the text provided without going through the process of connecting, analyzing, and evaluating the information.

Furthermore, one question was found to be categorized at the Understanding level (C2), namely question 7. In this question, to find the information needed to answer it, students must go through the process of linking information in the text to the question provided. For example, “Were they in the library for three hours?” Although the answer is directly present in the text, students need to understand and connect the information in the text with the provided question to answer it. In this process, students do not go through the process of analyzing or evaluating the information. Furthermore, in this chapter, no other cognitive levels such as Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6) were found.



Reading 4, Chapter 6, Page 59

This chapter contains 10 reading questions, 9 of which are classified as the Remembering level (C1). These questions are categorized as the Remembering level (C1) because, to answer them, students do not need to link, analyze, or evaluate information. For these questions, students only need to recall or reread information that is explicitly provided in the text. For example, “Where did she wash her bike?” and “When did she have breakfast?” To answer these questions, students only need to reread the information explicitly provided in the text.

One question was categorized as the Understanding level (C2), specifically question number 2. In this question, students go through the process of connecting information found in the text to identify the information required to answer the question. Although this information is still explicitly stated, students must comprehend the available information to answer the question. For example, “What did she do in the morning?” In this question, although the answer is explicitly stated in the provided text, to obtain the information needed to answer the question, students must go through the process of connecting information found in the text to answer the question correctly.

Reading 5, Chapter 9, Page 94

This chapter contains 5 reading comprehension questions, all of which are categorized as the Remembering level (C1). For these questions, students only need to refer to or review the provided text to obtain the necessary information. For example, “Who will accompany Joshua to Taman Safari?” and “What is the new animal species in Taman Safari?” To answer these questions, students do not go through the process of connecting, analyzing, or evaluating information; instead, they simply need to look at or recall the provided text.

After analyzing the results, the percentage comparison of each cognitive level is shown in the diagram below.

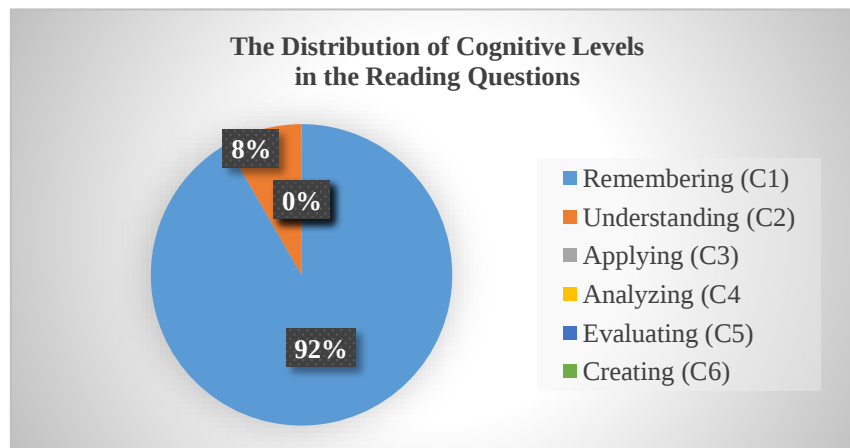


Figure 1. Distribution of Cognitive Levels in Reading Questions

Based on the diagram above, the cognitive levels in the “My Next Words” textbook for the Merdeka Curriculum for 6th-grade elementary school students are dominated by the Remembering level (C1), followed by the Understanding level (C2). The Remembering level (C1) accounts for 92% of the total; at this level, there are 33 questions out of a total of 36 questions. Next are the questions at the

Understanding (C2) level. This level accounts for 8%, comprising 3 questions out of a total of 36.

Based on the data above, the dominant cognitive level is Remembering (C1), followed by Understanding (C2). Based on this data, no other cognitive levels were found, such as Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6). The absence of the cognitive levels Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6) means that the “My Next Words” book in the Merdeka Curriculum has a Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) percentage of 100% and a Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) percentage of 0%.

Discussion

Based on the results of the above analysis, the reading questions in the book “My Next Words” were predominantly at the Remembering level (C1), with a small portion categorized at the Understanding level (C2). Of the total 36 questions analyzed, 33 questions (91.67%) were categorized as the Remembering level (C1). Furthermore, 3 questions out of the total of 36 were classified as the Understanding (C2) level, accounting for 8.33%. Meanwhile, questions at the Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6) levels were not found in this book. Based on this analysis, most of the reading questions in this book still focus on the cognitive levels of recalling and understanding the information explicitly stated in the text.

Level Remembering (C1) dominates in this book, which means that students only explicitly recall information contained in the provided text. As in (Widiastuti, 2025) Understanding means identifying crucial details and finding a meaning from the written material. Based on the data in the table, questions at this level simply ask students to identify information that is explicitly stated in the text, such as the names of characters, places, times, objects, or events. For example, in Chapter 5, page 51, question 1, “Who went to Jakarta last week?” For this question, students only need to recall or reread the information explicitly provided in the text, which means they simply find the answer already available in the text without needing to engage in further comprehension.

Furthermore, the data revealed that there were three questions categorized at the Understanding (C2) level. At this level, the questions not only encourage students to find explicit information in the text but also guide them to understand the context of the passage in order to find the correct answer. For example, in question 3 on page 26 of Chapter 2: “Joshua and Made borrowed ___ in the library.” In this question, students need to connect the information about which books were borrowed by the two characters mentioned in the question, namely Joshua and Made. As reported in (Armala et al., 2022), Understanding is the next stage. It happens when pupils fully comprehend what they have read. Keywords at this level include retelling, inferring, interpreting, explaining, forecasting, and outlining knowledge. However, at the Understanding level (C2), only 8.33% of the material in this book is found. This means that students’ opportunities to further develop their text comprehension skills are still very limited.

Moreover, the questions in this book do not appear at the Applying (C3) level. At this level, students apply information gained from the text and then use it in other contexts. In accordance with (Silalahi et al., 2022), C3: Implementing, carrying out, utilizing, and carrying out the knowledge the students acquired in any other



particular context and situations in a suitable way. For example, in the question in Chapter 2, page 26, number 5 “Cici looked for the traditional dancing book because___” students only need to refer back to the provided reading passage. However, if the question were phrased as “If you want to learn traditional dance, what would you do based on the text above?,” it would guide students to apply the information they already have, but in a different context.

The “Analyzing” (C4) level is not found in this book, questions at this level guide students to distinguish, classify, organize, and analyze information, and to identify patterns. As described by (Febrina, Bustami Usman, 2019), Analyzing is the process of separating a piece of material into its component elements and using differentiation, organization, and attribution to ascertain how those parts relate to one another and to a larger structure or purpose. For example, “Why was Aisha happy? Explain your answer in your own words.” In this question, students must not only answer the question explicitly as it appears in the text, but they must also connect the events to answer the question.

Further on, at the Evaluating level (C5), no reading questions were found. At this level, students are guided to assess, review, critique, and examine information. (Thamrin & Agustin, 2019) said that C5: assessing, considers the justification for a decision or course of action. It involves verifying, hypothesizing, evaluating, experimenting, and judging all knowledge acquired from various sources. For example, “Was it a good idea to bring fruits and flowers for his grandmother? Why?” In this question, students are guided to evaluate information based on the text provided.

Lastly, there is the Creating level. This level is not found in this book. At this level, students are guided to create specific information or products based on the various pieces of information they have acquired. (Nuramah, 2018) said that Creating is the last stage of Bloom's Taxonomy Category. It encourages students to exercise HOTS and develop strategies for starting a new concept or model, such as rearranging components into a new pattern or structure through initiating, planning, or producing, or integrating components to create a cohesive whole. Predicting, building, improving, imagining, designing, proposing, producing, elaborating, maximizing, constructing, combining, and minimizing are important verbs to use in HOTS questions at this level. For example, “Write a different ending for Aisyah using your own words!” In this question, students are instructed to create new information based on what they have learned from the provided text.

To determine the cognitive level appropriateness of the reading questions in the “My Next Words” book under the Merdeka Curriculum for 6th-grade elementary school students, the results of this analysis will be compared with the learning outcomes in the reading and listening aspect targeted for 6th-grade elementary school students under the Merdeka Curriculum. In the Merdeka Curriculum, students are able to understand the overall flow of information, main ideas, and detailed information from a variety of short or multimodal texts on everyday topics and respond to them according to context. In Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, these learning outcomes are categorized at the Understanding (C2) to Analyzing (C4) levels.

However, the results show that the cognitive levels present in the reading questions in the book “My Next Words” do not fully reflect existing learning outcomes. Although the “Understanding” (C2) skill is present in the book, the “Applying” (C3) and “Analyzing” (C4) skills were not found. Most questions only



ask students to find information explicitly written in the text, such as names, characters, places, times, and events. The results of this research are also in line with previous studies (Laila & Fitriyah, 2022b) with the title “An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions in English Textbook Based on Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy” which found that English textbooks, in terms of reading comprehension, are still dominated by Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) questions, accounting for 83% of the total. This is also aligned with research (Stevani, 2023) titled “Evaluating English Textbooks by Using Bloom’s Taxonomy to Analyze Reading Comprehension Question” This study found that reading comprehension questions in English textbooks are still dominated by Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) questions, accounting for 59% of the total.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings above, it could be concluded that the reading questions in the “My Next Words” Merdeka Curriculum textbook for the 6th grade elementary school students are dominated by Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). Of the total 36 questions, 33 questions with the percentage 91.67% are categorized into the Remembering (C1) category. Additionally, 3 questions with the percentage 8.33% are categorized as Understanding (C2). Meanwhile, the cognitive levels of Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6) are not present. These results indicate that the reading questions are more focused on the levels of remembering and explicitly understanding the text rather than encouraging students to think creatively and critically.

This data indicates that the reading questions in the book “My Next Words” do not yet facilitate students’ development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), these questions only assess the levels of Remembering (C1) and Understanding (C2). At these levels, students simply understand and recall the text explicitly or information explicitly present in the text. Meanwhile, students’ opportunities to learn applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating are still limited because the reading questions in this book do not yet cover the cognitive levels of Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6). Although this book is intended for elementary school students, questions based on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are also necessary to facilitate students’ critical and creative thinking. Furthermore, teachers also play a role in providing additional questions, particularly regarding reading skills or activities that encourage students to practice thinking creatively and critically.

Furthermore, textbook authors and curriculum developers are able to enhance the cognitive level distribution in reading questions by including Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) based reading questions into textbooks. Future researchers may conduct similar research on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) across different grade levels, curriculum, or book publishers. Alternatively, broader research could explore the implementation of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in learning materials, classroom teaching strategies, or the application of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in other educational contexts



REFERENCES

- Abd. Rahim, A. A. (2025). Integrating HOTS in Indonesian High School Textbooks: A Comparative Study of the 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum. *Jurnal Lingue: Bahasa, Budaya, dan Sastra*, 7(1), 116–128. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33477/lingue.v7i1.9426>
- Armala, I., Fauziati, E., & Asib, A. (2022). Exploring Students ' LOTS and HOTS in Answering Reading Questions. *Journal of Education Technology*, 6(3), 390–397. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23887/jet.v6i3.46427>
- Chandra Ramesh, P. (2021). Reading Skill: A Key to the Development of Language Acquisition. *The Creative Launcher*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.53032/tcl.2021.6.4.27>
- Creswell. (2018). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th Editio). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Dr. Farida Repelitawaty Br. Kembaren, Ernita Daulay, and F. L. (2018). Improving Students Reading Comprehension Achievement in Narrative Text Through Experience Text Relationship Method At VIII Grade MTs Al- Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung. *Journal of Language, Literature & Education*, 14(14).
- Fatoni, H. (2023). Hubungan antara Kemampuan Membaca dan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis di Era Digital. *Millennial : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam*, 3(1), 1–12.
- Febrina, Bustami Usman, A. M. (2019). Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions by Using Revised Bloom's Taxonomy on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). *English Education Journal (EEJ)*, 10(1), 1–15.
- Fitriani, R., Iskandar, I., & Suseno, M. (2023). The Implementation of Higher Order Thinking Skills in English Language Teaching : A Case of Indonesian Senior High School EFL Teachers. *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, 12(4), 739-750.
- Hadira. (2023). *Students' Reading Skill Through Literal Reading at the Second Grade of SMA Negeri 8 Pinrang*. State Islamic Institute ParePare.
- Krathwohl, D. R. (2010). A Revision of Bloom ' s Taxonomy : *Routledge Taylor & Francis Group*, 5841(2002). <https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4104>
- Laila, I., & Fitriyah, I. (2022a). An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions in English Textbook Based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. *JET (Journal of English Teaching)*, 8(1), 71–83.
- Mahmudati, R. (2023). The Characteristic and Developing an Assessment Instrument of High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) Items with 4-D Models. *Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika Dan IPA*, 14(1), 107–117. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.26418/jpmipa.v14i1.55497>
- Mardiana. (2023). Development of a High-Level Thinking Skills Test (HOTS) in English Writing. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics (EJAL)*, 9(2), 228–236. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.902019>



- Nuramah, H. (2018). *The Effects of Utilizing Youtube on LOTS and HOTS Questions Reading Comprehension and Motivation Among Thai Students*. Universiti Utara Malaysi.
- Prasetyo, A. H., Hidayatillah, Y., & Emqi, M. F. (2021). Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) and Bloom Taxonomy Revised. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management Monterrey*, 3945–3953.
- Rania Qaswari, A. B. A. (2020). The Higher and Lower-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS and LOTS) in Unlock English Textbooks (1st and 2nd Editions) Based on Bloom's Taxonomy: An Analysis Study. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 7(3), 744–758. <https://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/866>
- Setyowati, Y., & Munir, A. (2022). Critical Thinking within the Context of the Revised Bloom ' s Taxonomy in Written Language Tests. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*, 5(2), 14706–14715. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v5i2.5348>
- Silalahi, D. E., Saut, P., Sihombing, R., & Damanik, A. S. (2022). An Analysis of Students ' Achievement in Reading Comprehension through Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(2), 1853–1868. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i1.1249>
- Siti Rohmi Yuliati, I. L. (2018). Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) Analysis of Students in Solving HOTS Question in Higher Education Siti Rohmi Yuliati & Ika Lestari. *Perspektif Ilmu Pendidikan*, 32(2), 181–188.
- Stevani, M. (2023). Evaluating English Textbooks by Using Bloom ' s Taxonomy to Analyze Reading Comprehension Question. *SALEE: Study of Applied Linguistics and English Education*, 4(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.35961/salee.v0i0.526>
- Tayyeh, M. N., Prof, A., Hamza, S., Prof, A., & Aziz, H. (2021). An Analysis Of Reading Comprehension Questions In English Textbook " English For Iraq " According To Revised Bloom ' s Taxonomy An Analysis Of Reading Comprehension Questions In English Textbook " English For Iraq ". *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*, 12(7), 2868–2874.
- Thamrin, N. R., & Agustin, S. (2019). Conceptual Variations on Reading Comprehension Through Higher Order Thingking Skills (HOTS) Strategy. *ENGLISH REVIEW: Journal of English Education*, 7(2), 85–100. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v7i2.1777>.Received
- Widiastuti, K. (2025). LOTS and HOTS reading questions in EFL textbooks (Kurikulum Merdeka): unveiling every learning process purposes. *JOALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature)*, 10(1), 48–70.
- Zainil, Y., & Rosa, R. N. (2020). An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions in English Textbooks for SMAN Kota Padang : HOTS. *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Languages and Arts (ICLA-2019)*, 463, 76–80.

