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THE FLAW OF TASKS IN EFL TEXTBOOK FOR INDONESIAN VOCATIONAL STUDENTS OF GRADE IX

ABSTRACT

For many decades, English teachers around the globe admitted that various tasks exposed to ESL/ EFL students help them conceptualize, practice, and master the language. Therefore, it is not surprising that many studies regarding textbook analysis have been flourished and most of them pleased the National Board of Education Standard. The current study, however, tries to analyze the tasks provided in 'Forward An English' from a different perspective namely Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) while promoting students' analytical and critical thinking. Thus, the book which is designed for Grade IX of Vocational School students became the object of this research. Every task in each chapter was checked, analyzed, and classified into six columns (Revised Bloom's Taxonomy by Krathwohl and Anderson) to determine the cognitive level and types of a task as well. Based on 199 item tasks collected in the whole chapters, it was found out that the author presented the tasks in the following order: understanding, application, remembering, while evaluation and creation occupied the least. Moreover, the tasks are found to be mainly in the lower level, few in the middle level, and less in the higher level of the cognitive domain. It can be concluded then that the textbook does not promote students' creative and critical thinking skills. Relying on these data, one will not be surprised to witness that many Vocational students played around while working on the assignments.

KEYWORDS

Analysis of Task, Cognitive Domain, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

INTRODUCTION

Researches on textbook evaluation and analysis have been very fruitful in Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching and learning especially in the last ten years, resulted in the high awareness of English teachers' consideration in choosing the right materials for their students (Anggraeni and Anggi. 2013; Haibatil, and Alifah Fadillah. 2019; Noprika, Yoessy. 2006). Most of these analyses, however, relied heavily on the absolute standard prescribed by the National Board of Education Standard and therefore, claimed the books as standard or suitable with the core competence of the current Curriculum (Rohmatillah and Devi Audina, 2017; Adi H. and Puji Astuti, 2019). In the general sense, a task is a repetition activity in the learning process aiming at making students better understand and skillful in a subject matter. The task should aim at teaching receptive skills required for detailed reading comprehension and therefore, it should be divided into several groups depending on the purpose to be achieved. The tasks of course, should be related to the materials that have been studied. By doing the task, it will help the teacher monitor the students' understanding (Haibatil, 2019). Besides, it is important to design the task based on higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) as stated by The Ministry of Education and Culture (2017). Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) consist of the top three levels of thinking skills, namely analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6). HOTS means the ability to think in a complex process (Anderson, et. al., 2010).

The textbook is one of the crucial factors in determining the success of English teaching or learning. It is used as a source of teaching-learning material. For a beginning teacher, the textbook will be a good solution in teaching because they are still nervous or embarrassed. Without textbooks, it is hard for them to stay focused and they cannot remember most of the material of the learning as well. This is the reason why most English teachers use a textbook in their classes. It is not surprising that some teachers use a textbook, for many beginning teachers have lacked confidence and experience. They prepare their materials and rely on the textbook to minimize their burdens.

There are several benefits of a textbook for the students such as: (1) Students do not need to record all the teacher's explanations. (2) Students can prepare themselves at home in order to follow the lesson at school the next day. (3) Students do not need to explain the subject matters contained in textbooks, but only partially explain the subject matter that indicates the difficulty to understand of the students. (4) The teacher has a face to face time is relatively longer than when students take note. English teachers can use Bloom's Taxonomy of the educational objective to select a criterion of a good task in textbooks. Bloom's Taxonomy is a framework, which has some categories. These categories are one of the basic principles in the taxonomy itself. This Taxonomy could help English teachers in determining or choosing learning materials by analyzing the tasks given. The original Bloom's taxonomy only contains a dimension, but the new revision of the taxonomy contains two dimensions. Those two are the cognitive

domain and the knowledge domain. Interrelation between those two dimensions is called the Table of Taxonomy.

There are some others differences between the original taxonomy and the revised taxonomy. The research about taxonomy is addressed as a reference for English teachers. They must be able to choose appropriate teaching and learning materials that contain a balanced order of thinking as stated in detail in the cognitive domain. Based on the previous research about Bloom's taxonomy, the cognitive domain of reading tasks was not balance because the reading tasks only contained a lower level of thinking rather than the higher level. English teachers need a reference of which appropriate materials are accommodating the development of student's critical thinking based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy beside the other aspects outside the context of this research. Based on the previous explanation, the researcher investigated the components of the cognitive domain that were applied in the contents of tasks in "Forward An English" Textbooks.

The textbook is more economical compared to the other learning media. Therefore, a textbook in the learning process is still used although there are many learning media available. Longman (1978) states that a textbook is a standard book for the study of a particular subject, especially used in schools. There are some definitions of tasks from the experts. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 224) state that a task is an activity that is carried out using language such as finding a solution to a puzzle, reading a map, making a telephone call, writing a letter, and reading a set of instruction. The activity in a task should accommodate the learner's need. Task not only set for personal work but also for two or more persons. The non-individual task can be used to simulate how to work together in a group. Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers defined tasks as:

A part of classroom activities which improve the learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language but their attention is principally on presenting their grammatical knowledge to bring meaning rather than to manipulate form." Student's activity in interaction when using a language has a different outcome.

According to Richards and Rogers (2001:226), the task should contain four important dimensions as; (1) the products students asked to produce; (2) the operation they are required to use; (3) the cognitive operations required; and 4) the accountability system involved. The cognitive domain is also called the cognitive process because it consists of some different levels of thinking. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), the cognitive process is one of the dimensions in Revised Bloom's Taxonomy that consist of six parts. Bloom's taxonomy is often used to analyze the assessment and curriculum and those are indicating to focus only on remembering cognitive process without having more exploration on the other cognitive process The most important parts in the cognitive process are retention and transfer. Retention is the ability on remembering the lesson materials for a certain period as the material was taught before, that transfer is the ability on solving new problems, answering new questions, or making easier to learn new materials by using the knowledge that was learned before. When a

teacher teaches and assesses the students to make them learn material or lesson then remember for a certain period, it means that teachers directly focus on remembering as one of the cognitive process categories only. When teachers expand the focus to develop the lesson for growing and assessing meaningful learning, they need to develop a more complex cognitive process beyond remembering. In retention, the teacher just needs the students to remember the lesson as one of the cognitive processes. The others five cognitive processes such as understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating can be used to transfer the learning materials. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) categorize the cognitive domain into the following categories and sub-categories such as ‘remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Relevant to the issues above, this current study is addressed to answer the following questions: a) What level of Cognitive domain were achieved by the tasks presented in ‘Forward an English’? and b) What types of task were employed in the English textbook ‘ Forward an English’?

METHOD

Related to the objective of this study, we were encouraged to clarify or explain the phenomenon (Arikunto, 1996: 29). As this research is non-hypothesis research, we collected data, analyzed them, and drawn a conclusion. The data in the research were the relevance of materials towards the curriculum, material accuracy, supporting learning materials, language appropriateness, presentation technique, teaching and learning technique, and presentation coverage that were available on the textbook entitled *Forward An English* Textbook for Vocational School Students grade XI, as the resource data. It consists of eight units and 200 pages.

The observation was used to collect data in which we made a note through systematic phenomenon under investigation. The instrument of observation was a checklist. The checklist is a list of data variables that will be collected (Sujiono, 2010). The observation checklist contained six components of the cognitive process of Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy. The researcher marked (✓) in the columns of the checklist if the task was using the component of the cognitive process of Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Two raters were used to gather the data. The two raters were the researcher and co-researcher. The checklist of the Cognitive domain contains remembering level, understanding level, applying level, analyzing level, evaluating level, and applying level. The tasks were analyzed and evaluated by using components of cognitive process and operational verb proposed by Krathwohl and Anderson in Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy. Finally, the result of the checklist was transformed into a percentage by using the cognitive domain of Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy. The data analysis followed the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

Note :

P = Percentage

F = Number of tasks
 N = Number of all tasks

RESULTS

1. Cognitive Domain Employed in Tasks of “*Forward An English*” Textbook

The final results about the cognitive domain of Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy from tasks of “*Forward An English*” Textbook for Vocational High School published by The National Education Department are displayed in the following table.

Table 4.1 Level of Cognitive Domain Developed in the Task

Chapter	Level of Cognitive Domain						Total
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	
I	1	14	7	3	0	0	25
II	6	7	1	0	0	0	14
III	4	12	5	1	0	0	22
IV	6	10	4	0	1	0	21
V	4	9	2	3	0	3	21
VI	2	6	13	5	0	0	26
VII	1	4	9	4	0	0	18
VIII	4	1	8	2	0	0	15
IX	1	8	3	8	0	1	21
X	1	7	5	3	0	0	16
Total	30	78	57	29	1	4	199
%	15.08%	39.20%	28.64%	14.57%	0.50%	2.01%	100%

The table shows that within 199 tasks covered in “*Forward An English*” Textbook, it was found that Understanding occupied in the first place (39,20%), followed by Applying (28,64%), Remembering (15,08%), then comes Analyzing (14,57%), Creating (2,01%), and Evaluating (.5%). It seemed that the level of tasks was dominated by the understanding, which belongs to Low Order Thinking of the cognitive domain in Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy. As understanding, remembering and applying are included belong to low order thinking, and the total number of tasks related to low order thinking was 82.92% with frequency 165 out of 199 activities. Evaluating, analyzing, and creating which belong to high-order thinking were only 17.08% or 34 activities out of 199.

2. Types of Tasks Employed in “*Forward An English*”

The types of task in “*Forward An English*” Textbook for Vocational High School published by The National Education Department is displayed in the following table.

Table 4.2 Types of Task Presented in ‘*Forward An English*

Chapter	Level of Cognitive Domain						Total
	L	OS	C	PS	SPE	CT	
I	15	5	3	1	1	0	25
II	5	3	4	0	0	2	14
III	3	6	6	0	1	6	22
IV	3	4	11	0	2	1	21
V	2	1	12	1	1	4	21
VI	4	3	16	0	1	2	26
VII	3	0	11	0	1	3	18
VIII	4	2	7	0	0	2	15
IX	5	0	11	1	1	3	21
X	3	1	9	0	0	3	16
Total	47	25	90	3	8	26	199
Percentages	23.62	12.56	45.23	1.51	4.02	13.07	100

Note:

- L = Listing
- OS = Ordering and Sorting
- C = Comparing
- PS = Problem Solving
- SPE = Sharing Personal Experience
- CT = Creative Task

Table 4.2 shows that there 199 tasks in “Forward An English” Textbook. The data in the table showed that 23.62% tasks used listing type, 12.56% task used ordering and sorting type, 45.23 task used comparing type, 1.51% task used problem solving type, 4.02% task used sharing personal experience type, and 13.07% task used creative task type. Based on these data, it can be concluded that the types of tasks is dominated by the comparing type.

DISCUSSION

The fact that ‘Understanding’ preoccupied the cognitive level in the textbook suggests that the author intended students to be able to grasp the meaning of the material, translate them, and interpret them in the teaching and learning process. However, if it is related to the components of the cognitive domain which reveals remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Anderson and Krathwohl: 2001), Vocational students’ learning seemed to be left behind in the lower order thinking skills. This inconvenient situation contradicts with students’ nature in which they are trained to be active doing or working on several projects such as building, assembling, measuring, reconstructing, etc. Regardless of the topics presented to these students, current projects are already in their minds rather than doing the tasks they have to complete.

Applying level occupies the second position after understanding. 57 of 199 tasks or 28.64 %. It showed that there was 28.64 % task supposed student to use

and implement their knowledge in the familiar task, to apply their knowledge in appropriate situations, and to execute the theories. There was 30 task being included to remembering in the textbook “Forward An English” meaning that recalling previously taught material in the teaching-learning process. Whereas there were only a few tasks related to analyzing level, it was only 29 of 199 with a percentage of 14.57 %. Its total number was underneath remembering. Cognitive dimensions that are not frequently found were evaluating with one activity and creating with four activities. They were the lowest number of cognitive aspects in the textbook “Forward An English” with a percentage of 0.50 % in each. Although these levels were implemented in this book, the amount of them was not sufficient. The limited numbers of the three aspects; analyzing, evaluating, and creating, showed the uneven task distribution into complete cognitive aspects. They were varied in each unit.

The result also implied that the author of “Forward An English” emphasized the lower thinking process which contradicted to the high order thinking. Within the few high orders thinking in this textbook “Forward An English”, it is hard to expect that students would be able to develop their thinking skills. As demonstrated in the data, the textbook is not appropriate with the cognitive dimension theory of Bloom Taxonomy. The book didn’t cover the entire cognitive dimension, especially in the three high-order thinking, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Anggraini , 2017).

There is also a tendency that the most dominant type of task adopted from Willis (1996) in the textbook was comparing. It means the intended students can compare information of a similar nature but from different sources or versions to identify common points and/or differences. The processes involved are: a) matching to identify specific points and relate them to each other, b) finding similarities and things in common, c) finding differences. It can be seen from the analysis result table that has shown 90 out of 199 tasks.

The result of this research was compared to some theories and related studies explained in chapter II to see whether there was a similarity or difference. After analyzing the cognitive domain in “Forward an English”, it could be seen that the result of this research was different from the theories and related findings explained previously. It was found some components of the type of task used in tasks of “*Forward An English*” textbook. The types of the task were listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experience, and creative tasks. The result implies that the author of “Forward An English” emphasized the most types of tasks was comparing type. This number contradicted to the other types in this textbook. There were few types of creative tasks in this textbook “Forward An English”. It does not give the student chance to develop their creative thinking skill.

Based on the above analysis, there is also a relationship between the cognitive dimensions and the types of tasks used by the author textbook. Viewed from a cognitive dimension, the author seemed to give less motivation to develop their thinking skill, and it is also reflected in the types of task used by the author, which is not emphasized to developing students' creative thinking patterns so that

students only focus on the tasks in the textbook, or it can be said that students were not too creative in developing their ideas when doing the tasks.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In terms of the implementation of the cognitive domain, the result showed that all chapters in the textbook have implemented the cognitive dimension of Bloom's revised taxonomy. Unfortunately, not all the cognitive process dimensions have been covered in the task in each chapter of the textbook evenly. There is a dominant level of cognitive dimension in each chapter in the textbook. The most prevalent cognitive processes were *remembering* and *understanding* which are the lowest order category in Bloom's revised taxonomy. It indicates that the task emphasizes retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory or recalling previous information as a dominant without encouraging students to think more critically. It does not enhance students' higher thinking skills due to the imbalance portion among the six levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy in the task and therefore, tends to provide low levels of task which do not help them develop higher thinking skill. It demonstrates that the lower-level processes of the cognitive domain within Bloom's Revised Taxonomy are more frequently represented than those higher-level. In other words, the majority of the task assessed the three lower levels of the cognitive domain, and only a few tasks were found to address higher cognitive processes among the six levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy.

Based on the data analysis toward textbook "Forward An English", there is a tendency that the most dominant type of task is comparing. It requires the student to compare the information of a similar nature but from different sources or versions to identify common points and/or differences. The author of "Forward An English" emphasized comparing the type of task. This number is contradicting with the other types in this textbook.

The following suggestions are worth considering that it will be better for the school to pay more attention to the compatibility of the cognitive levels of the textbook. Therefore, the teachers are required to be more selective in choosing the appropriate textbook that can develop student's competence. As the book leads the students to rote learning, they should be guided to apply their knowledge, not only to remember the lessons but also to create new things that are useful for many people.

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