

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Reading skill is one of the most important skills in learning English. Nowadays, reading ability has become the most essential language skill for students learning English, a foreign language or second language in academic setting. If they are good in reading, they also have a great chance to be successful in studying. Reading is an important skill to be mastered by students so they are able to survive in English environment, education, work, and social life. However, reading is still considered as a difficult skill since it is a complex skill. Linse (2006) state that reading involves higher order thinking skills (HOTS). Knowing how to read words does not mean we can read. Reading is more complex than that. In reading process, deriving meaning and analyzing what have been read are also essential. Therefore, in order to be able to understand, analyze, evaluate, and conclude the text have been read, which mean also mastering reading skills, students need to be taught and trained to have higher order thinking skills (HOTS).

Reading skills are very important, involving Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) for students, both in academic contexts and in current life. This ability allows students to understand, analyze and broadcast texts critically, which is the essence of HOTS. With good reading skills, students can absorb complex information, make connections between ideas, and construct logical, evidence-based

arguments. In the current information era, in-depth and critical reading skills help students not only gain knowledge, but also think creatively and innovatively when solving problems and making the right decisions based on valid information. Higher order thinking skill is now being crucial in education world. It emphasizes students to have the ability to analyze, evaluate, and create an idea related to the problems faced at school or in social lives. It should be improved by applying it in teaching and learning process.

Teachers play a crucial role to enhance their students' higher order thinking skill. Since the Indonesian curriculum has been changed to be Merdeka curriculum, the government requires teachers to assist students to emphasize their critical thinking skills. It includes analyzing, evaluating, and creating which are higher order thinking skills. The government expects that the students will be more critical and analytical in their thinking so they can solve the problems in their daily lives.

Additionally the higher order thinking skill is not only necessary in academic matters but also in every parts of our life to present our opinion and make a logical decision whoever and wherever we are. And the focus in the college life is on the higher order thinking for being active to evaluate the ideas and information. For this reason, the higher order thinking skill plays a vital role throughout the learning process because it could improve students ability in critical thinking skill to evaluate information. Moreover, for the tenth grade of senior high school students who will continue their study to the college or even for them who want to go to work, having the higher order thinking skill is very important for preparing themselves to do their own thinking in the real world.

In the national curriculum, there is two well-known taxonomy used for educational purposes, namely Bloom's and Barrett's Taxonomy. Bloom's taxonomy is applied to measure students cognitive level, not only in English learning but also in other subjects such as science, math, and others. Then, there is another way to test students' cognitive and affective levels of reading comprehension, namely by using Barrett's taxonomy which is intended as a parameter to construct questions with the aim of reading comprehension. Therefore, the study was a design intended to use Barrett's taxonomy created (Barret, 1968) and explicitly to understand the reading. Cited by Heilman et al., 1990, Barrett's Taxonomy is representative of comprehension, the taxonomy that can be used when developing instructional activities, notifying questions, and specifying reading comprehension instruction. It consists of five levels of questions. Those questions are designed by asking various types of questions, and it is divided based on their difficulties.

We can see data from the 2022 Program for Student Assessment (PISA) research results which were announced in December 2023, Indonesia is ranked 71th out of 80 countries with score 359. The ASEAN Student Reading Ability Score according to PISA (2022) shows that the reading performance of Indonesian students is relatively low on the ASEAN scale. This can be seen from the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) report released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA defines reading ability as "the ability to understand, use and reflect on texts to achieve certain goals, develop knowledge and potential, and participate in society". To measure this ability, PISA conducted tests and surveys on samples of 15 year old students from dozens of countries. PISA

then classified reading ability into 8 levels, from the highest level 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1a, 1b, to 1c. Indonesian is at level 1a. This means that generally Indonesian students can understand the literal meaning of short sentences or paragraphs. However, level 1a readers cannot understand long texts, where the information is implicit, abstract, or compare the perspective of a text with other texts Indonesia is also lower than 5 neighboring countries in ASEAN, such as Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam and Singapore. And even if we compare it with 2018, 2022 will still be lower.

Indonesia's PISA results in 2018 for the reading ability category, Indonesia obtained an average score of 371 and was ranked 74th out of 79 countries. In that study revealed that students in Indonesia performed at a low level of reading comprehension. The data collected in 2018 shows that around 85% of Indonesia 15-year-old students perform reading ability at level 1, which is the lowest proficiency level in PISA (2018). It is mean Indonesia have the sixth lowest reading performance rate among 79 participating countries. This study indicates that there is a need for the teacher and government must improve students' reading comprehension ability.

Although English literacy is a burning issue in the 21st century, the data from international measures indicate that Indonesian people literacy is still weak. In data results of English Proficiency Index (EPI) in 2023 showed that Indonesia's position was 79 out of 113 countries with score 469. That means Indonesia's English skills are still low. World's Most Literate Nations (WMLN, 2016) rank Indonesia in the 54th rank out of 61 countries.

From these data we can see that the performance of reading skills in Indonesia is still in the very low category, especially the reading section which is in high level

thinking skill. The HOTS assessment targets students capable of higher level thinking. However, the reality is that Indonesia in international competitions such as the PISA ranking is still at level 1 for all categories (Schleicher, 2019), students still experience difficulties in solving high-level thinking skills (HOTS) questions (Kusuma & 'Adna, 2021) However reading process need critical thinking, Yee et al (2012) argue that the students" should be taught to acquire HOTS so they will be able to answer questions in the exam that require thinking skills it is mean that critical thinking is one of learning objective that students are expected to achieve in learning process, as well as in reading exercises of textbook should be arranged by critical thinking.

Textbooks are the most widely used teaching materials among all other teaching materials, teaching textbooks are still considered the most important teaching materials used in the learning process. Textbook is a the medium of teaching which is very widely used in school in Indonesia, especially in teaching and learning a foreign language. Further English textbook is the most commonly resource used in English language teaching process. It plays important role in EFL classroom because it provides beneficial guidance and cover the materials that teachers need to deliver. The learners use textbooks as the main learning resource that can improve their ability to achieve learning goals. Thus, the content of textbooks contains scientific and pedagogical content that can improve knowledge, skills, and pedagogy that can improve learners' knowledge, attitudes and skills. A textbook is an important thing in teaching and learning process. It is students" guide which supplies them with the information, enriches their mind

with knowledge, and to support the students to do activities or exercises. It is important to choose and evaluate the best reading texts questions because reading questions are the best way to evaluate students' competence in reading skills. In reading skills, materials are usually provided with reading comprehension questions. The questions may include from higher order thinking skills (analyzing, evaluating, and creating) of cognitive levels of reading comprehension exercises. To deal with the information above, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in Indonesia developed and launched a new curriculum that is widely known as the Merdeka curriculum. This curriculum aims to improve students' competency in literacy and numeracy and to develop their characters that reflect Pancasila students' profile. Through the implementation of this taxonomy, students are encouraged to improve the soft skills needed in the 21st century, such as communication, collaboration, leadership, and so on. Merdeka Curriculum presents fewer learning materials with more comprehensive discussions and practices for each lesson. By concentrating on crucial material, students are encouraged to improve their comprehension in higher order thinking skills.

Some studies have investigated the analysis of higher order thinking skills in the textbooks. The results of previous studies show that the majority of reading comprehension questions in the textbook for year X of the high school published by the Ministry of Education at the lowest level of revised Bloom's taxonomy (Atiullah et al, 2019). Naila Nurul Izzah et al, in 2023 stated in the result of the reading exercises in English on Sky 3 course book for grade 9 students of junior high schools

published by Erlangga in 2018, that the distribution of the HOTS is lower than the distribution of LOTS. It is demonstrated by the research results, which indicate that the distribution of HOTS is 3.80% and LOTS 96.20%.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher interest to analyze the exercises of reading comprehension based on Barrett's taxonomy level. This research is aim to analyze the cognitive levels of reading questions in English Textbook ""Work in Progress"" for X Grade senior high school in Merdeka curriculum, published by The Ministry Education and The Center of Curriculum and Books in 2022 using cognitive levels of Barrett's taxonomy. After analyzing the reading questions, the researcher compose the new questions for all reading questions in the text of textbook to meet the demand of higher order thinking skill. Some of the examples of reading exercises from the English textbook "Work in Progress" using Merdeka curriculum published by Kementrian dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia in 2022.

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Table 1.1 The Analyze of Questions List from Work in Progress Textbook

Chapter	Page	List of Questions	HOTS
1	12	What is the main idea of the text? How did he get known as rocket man?	√
1	28	What supports do they play? What limitations or physical impairments to they have?	
2	37	Whydo you think the writer stated that the winner was unpredictable? Could you feel the same excitement of watching the game by just reading the text?	√ √
3	78	How would you compare and contrast keeping a journal versus talking to someone about your problems? Which part of journal writing can help you the most with your mental health?	√
4	86	It takes for the brain to get the information that you have eaten enough. (.....) You need to focus and find a proper place to eat. (.....)	
5	114	What is the author claiming? What reasons does the author use to support the claim?	

6	136	Why did Little Red Riding Hood break when she talked to the wolf? What rule did Red Riding Hood when she talked to the wolf? Who told the story?	
	154	What made the girl scream an ear piercing scream?	

Based on the results of observations in the textbook "Work in Progress", the researcher observed all chapters in the book in the reading comprehension exercises section then the researcher analyzed and made a list of questions from all chapters ranging from chapter one to chapter six contained in the textbook, especially in reading comprehension exercises and categorized the questions into the category of questions that are lower order thinking skills and higher order thinking skills. From the explanation of the table above, we can see that reading questions that are lower order thinking skills are more than higher order thinking skills. The researcher expects that the textbook will have a lot of reading exercises that are high-level thinking skills, but based on observations the expectation is different with reality, reading exercises that are low-level thinking skills are more dominant. For this reason, based on the results of observations, researcher want to analyze more deeply what types of Higher Order Thinking Skills are find out in the reading comprehension of Merdeka Curriculum English textbook "Work in Progress" for X Grade Senior High School and how the higher order thinking skills are distributed in reading exercises in the textbook.

B. Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher identifies the

problems of study is formulated as follow:

1. What types of Higher Order Thinking Skills are find out in the reading comprehension of Merdeka Curriculum English textbook “Work in Progress” for X Grade Senior High School?”
2. How are the higher order thinking skills realized in reading comprehension exercises of Merdeka curriculum English textbook ““Work in Progress”” for X Grade of Senior High School?

C. Objectives of the Study

As mentioned the problems of the study, the objective of the study are:

1. To identify the types of Higher Order Thinking Skills that find out and the types in the reading comprehension exercises of Merdeka curriculum English textbook “Work in Progress” for X Grade Senior High School.
2. To analyze how the higher order thinking skills realization in reading comprehension exercises of Merdeka curriculum English textbook “Work in Progress” for X Grade Senior High School.”

D. Scope of the Study

The study focus and is limited to the analysis of reading comprehension questions or reading comprehension exercises in each type of text in textbook using Brookhart’s teory in Merdeka curriculum English textbook “Work in Progress” for X Grade Senior High School.

E. Significant of the Study

The research findings of this study will be expects to be useful for:

a. Theoretically

To the reader this study give understanding and perception about how the concept and realization higher order thinking skills in the reading comprehension questions in Merdeka curriculum English textbook “Work in Progress for X Grade Senior High School”

b. Practically

i. For Students

To give information to improve their thinking skill ability in reading comprehension especially in higher order thinking skills and they can work on the questions well and preparation for big exam such as National Examination, TOEFL, IELTS, UTBK, CPNS, BUMN, and others examinations.

ii. For Teacher

The teacher can select English textbook well to develop students thinking skill in reading comprehension and the teacher can provide and teach students reading comprehension questions appropriately.

iii. For researcher

This study can be use a source of information for other authors who are interest in conducting further research or relevant research.