

## An analysis of the English course book viewed from higher-order thinking skills

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### Abstract

This study analyzes an English Course Book entitled *Symphony 1* to find out to what extent Higher and Lower-Order level thinking used in the reading tasks. The focus of this study was on the availability and the variety of HOTS on reading assignments on *The Symphony 1* English course book. This descriptive qualitative research adopted the cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy as the instrument. Subsequently, the researcher calculated the percentage and the frequencies of the cognitive field of questions analyzed. Afterwards, the items indicated as HOTS are analyzed again by using tools from Keshta and Sheif to know the variety of HOTS found in the textbook. The results showed that the percentage of LOTS items was 63% while the percentage of HOTS items was 37%. It indicated that LOTS dominated the book. This domination discourages students from thinking critically. Based on the finding, the researcher recommends that textbooks authors need to advance HOTS to develop students' critical thinking, and teachers have to improve their knowledge about HOTS.

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## INTRODUCTION

Antara (2019) reported Indonesian students have poor literacy; as indicated in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment). Besides, Antara (2019) reported that Makarim, the current Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, stated that Indonesian students' PISA scores of reading were low in 2018. Further, the Minister noted that PISA's report was critical to give perspective for Indonesia Education. Moreover, lifelong learning could be built from reading because students would learn almost all materials from reading (*PISA for Development Reading Framework*, 2018). However, the PISA score of reading in Indonesia is still low. Also, only 30% of students from Indonesia attained at least level 2 proficiency in reading (*PISA for Development Reading Framework*, 2018). Meanwhile, 77% of students from OECD (Organization Co-operation and Development) achieved at least level 2 proficiency in reading.

Textbooks are widely available in Indonesia. However, most of the textbooks in Indonesia contain Lower-Order Thinking Skills because most of the books comprise of memorizing and understanding (Margana & Widyanoro, 2017). This shows the reason why it is hard for students to develop their critical thinking and reading comprehension. Therefore, a study should be conducted to understand the type of order of thinking skills available. Furthermore, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy can ease the researcher to differentiate the Higher-Order levels and Lower-Order levels (Anggraeni & Suharyadi, 2013). From the findings found, there are 72.5% of Lower-Order thinking skills and 27.5% of Higher-Order thinking skills in the textbook. Another research was conducted by Freahat and Smadi (2014). Based on the research, High School Stage EFL and New Headway Plus Pre-Intermediate textbooks were dominated by Lower level questions. Then the researchers suggest textbooks authors have to balance both questions in Higher-Order levels and Lower-Order levels. Similar research conducted by Raqqad and Ismail (2018). This research is about analyzing the reading tasks based on Bloom's Taxonomy. Moreover, Assaly and Igbaria (2014) used Bloom's Taxonomy and the outcome of that study showed that 114 activities presented Lower-Order Thinking Skills, while only 59 questions presented Higher-Order Thinking Skills. As a result, Lower-Order Thinking Skills dominated the findings. Moreover, Tangsakul et al. (2017) did a research by applying the cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The result of the study found that understanding level dominated the findings. On the other hand, level cognitive of creating did not exist in the research.

Textbooks are an essential thing to espouse a learning process because textbooks will guide students and teachers in a learning process. Moreover, Abdelrahman (2014) stated that textbooks have instructional materials that can support the learning process. Thamrin and Agustin (2019) about Higher-Order Thinking Skills. That research led to developing students' critical thinking skills. Besides, they stated that students have to acquire the Higher-Order Thinking Skills strategy to improve the thinking process from LOTS to HOTS. As a result, students' critical thinking can be encouraged through HOTS. Thus, teachers should give Higher-Order questions related to the material during class activities. Also, Adams (2015) researched Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning objectives. The study aimed to analyze the relationship between Bloom's Taxonomy with critical thinking. The investigation resulted that there is a new dimension across all six cognitive processes. Besides, Assaly and Smadi (2015) researched by using Bloom's Taxonomy to evaluate the cognitive levels of *Master Class* Textbook's Questions. This study focuses on assessing the cognitive level according to Bloom's Taxonomy. Also, the instrument of this study was used to categorize the cognitive level of those questions. The result of the analysis showed that the book analyzed contains Lower-Order level and Higher-Order level cognitive. On the other hand, the variation of the cognitive domain is not significant. It can be known from the results that 60% is Lower-Order level and 40% is Higher-Order level. Besides, Anggraeni and Suharyadi (2013) researched reading questions in an English textbook based on Bloom's Taxonomy. Assaly and Smadi (2015) stated textbooks should have sufficient HOTS questions to improve students' cognitive level. The ideal distribution of Higher-Order and Lower-Order levels is 50:50 (Anggraeni & Suharyadi, 2013).

Problems investigated in this research are (1) how the availability of HOTS on the reading tasks of *The Symphony 1* English Course Book is and (2) how the variety of HOTS in the reading tasks of *The Symphony 1* English Course Book is. Based on the previous studies, some textbooks and tests have been analyzed by using Bloom's Taxonomy and or Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Some of them are also related to critical thinking. Although those studies are similar to the present study, however there are differences. Most of the studies only focus on the availability of HOTS. Meanwhile, this study also analyzes the variation of HOTS analyzed by using the framework from Keshta and Sheif (2013).

**METHODS**

Qualitative research aims to make new insight. It uses a natural setting to conduct research. According to Sherman and Webb (2005), qualitative research has the main goal that is to find new insight from discovery. Also, qualitative research is not conducted to conclude the verification of a predetermined idea. Subsequently, qualitative research sometimes is called a naturalistic inquiry. In this qualitative research, the study aimed to explain HOTS's composition and variation on the reading tasks of *Symphony 1 English Course Book*. To collect the data, the researcher used content analysis.

The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach to conduct this study. Qualitative research is more iterative, while the content defined by the researcher (Crescentini & Maninardi, 2009). Qualitative research aims to make new insight. Qualitative research uses a natural setting to conduct research. According to Sherman and Web (2005), qualitative research has the main goal that is to find new insight from discovery. Also, qualitative research is not conducted to conclude the verification of a predetermined idea. Subsequently, qualitative research sometimes is called as a naturalistic inquiry.

As a result, definitions and ideas are refined through the process recursively. Besides, qualitative research aims to find a holistic picture of the historically odd situation (Ospina, 2004). Content analysis is a procedure to categorize messages based on their meaning (Holsti, 1969). In this qualitative research, the study aims to explain HOTS's composition and variation on the reading tasks of *Symphony 1 English Course Book*. To collect the data, the researcher used content analysis. Content analysis means the process of summarizing and reporting data (Manion, et. al, 2007). Cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy was used to analyze the data of this study. Table 1 shows the content analysis using cognitive process of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy for *The Symphony 1 English Coursebook*. The data acquired are then analyzed and divided into remembering, understanding, applying, evaluating, and creating.

Table 1. Structure of the cognitive domain and the explanation of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

Remembering	Understanding	Applying	Analyzing	Evaluating	Creating
Recognizing	Interpreting	Executing	Differentiating	Checking	Generating
Recalling.	Exemplifying	Implementing	Organizing	Critiquing.	Planning
	Classifying		Attributing		Producing
	Summarizing				
	Inferring				
	Comparing:				
	Explaining.				

The researcher conducted several steps in the procedure of collecting data: 1) reading all the tasks inside the textbook, 2) deciding the tasks to be analyzed, and 3) selecting tasks that have the potential to support the realization of Higher-Order Thinking Skills. In doing the data analysis, the researcher used the method from Milles and Huberman (1994). The data analysis consists of three levels: data reduction, data analysis, and conclusion and drawing verification. Then, below is the data reduction conducted by the researcher: 1) selecting the data: the researcher read all the tasks inside the book; 2) focusing the data: the researcher focused on the questions of reading tasks selected. 3) simplifying the data: the researcher placed all questions selected into the table then analyzed by using the instruments; 4) abstracting the data: after the data had been placed, then, the researcher put the data into the classification to know the variety of HOTS; and 5) transforming the data. The researcher summed up the Lower-Order and Higher-Order questions of the reading tasks from the textbooks in quantitative output to show the percentage and number.

The data analysis displayed data reduction, after the level of data reduction, then the data analysis throughout data display. Data display can extend to the graphic, diagram, chart, or matrix. In the third level of the data analysis, the researcher drew the conclusion and verification. The end draws aimed to consider what data mean and to assess the implication from the research questions. Meanwhile, confirmation means linked integrally to the conclusion drawing, so this aims to verify these new conclusions.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The data for this research was gathered by analyzing the reading tasks from *The Symphony 1*. Thus, the reading tasks from the book analyzed by using the instruments from Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). Then questions indicated HOTS were analyzed again by using the tools from Keshta and Sheif (2013). It intended to know the variety of HOTS in the reading tasks.

**The Availability of HOTS in *The Symphony 1***

Some studies previously found that in Indonesia, the textbooks used are more on LOTS (Margana & Widyantoro, 2017). It made the researcher wanted to find out the availability of HOTS in the English textbook entitled *The Symphony 1* English Coursebook. Based on the finding of the book, there are 18 reading tasks and 135 reading question items analyzed. The questions were analyzed and classified into six levels of the cognitive domain in Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. This table and chart below show the frequency and percentage of each level.

Table 2. The cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy found in *The Symphony 1*'s reading tasks

No	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Remembering	52	39%
2	Understanding	33	24%
3	Applying	0	0%
4	Analyzing	43	32%
5	Evaluating	6	4%
6	Creating	1	1%

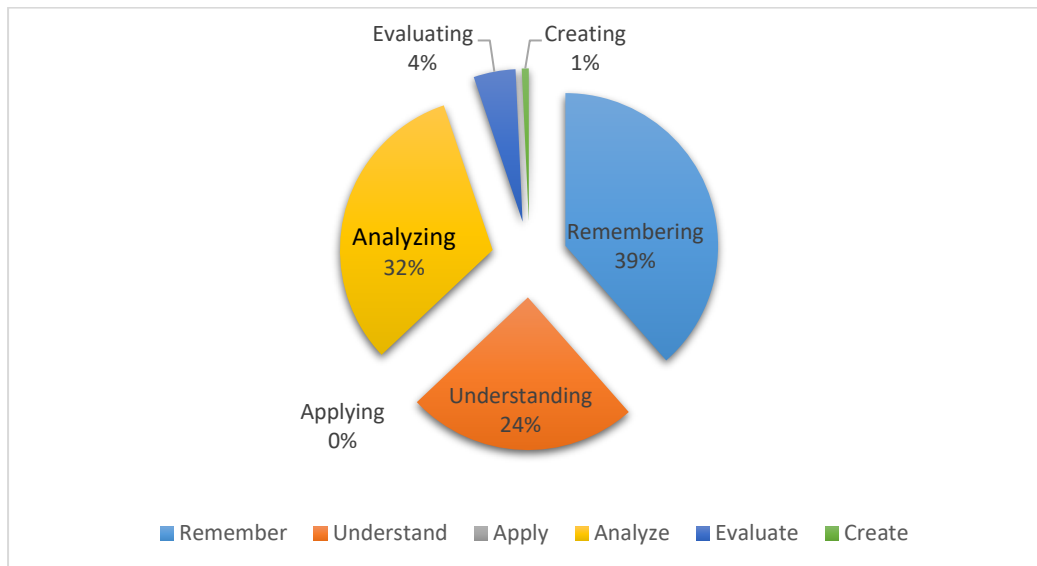


Figure 1. The cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy found in *The Symphony 1*'s reading tasks

Based on Table 2, there are six classifications of the question items from the cognitive domain of Revised Blooms' Taxonomy. From Figure 1, Lower-Order levels dominated the reading tasks in *Symphony 1* just like a finding in Freahat and Smadi (2014), based on the research High School Stage EFL and New Headway Plus Pre-Intermediate textbooks were dominated by Lower Level questions, the most of the

coursebook contents were in Lower-Order level, in detail the percentage of Lower-Order level was 63%. Like the remembering level was the highest frequency with 50 cases, and the rate was 37%. The understanding level recorded 32 cases or 24%. Furthermore, the lower-order level applying did not exist on the reading tasks, which was mentioned as 0%.

Another case in the chart and table was 39% of Higher-Order level questions or 50 questions from the total. Afterward, the result shows that the Higher-Order level analyzing level was 32% or 43 items. Besides, the Higher-Order level of evaluating level reached 4% or six questions. Moreover, the Higher-Order level creating level recorded only 1% or one issue. As a result, creating was the lowest point from the Higher-Order level, and analyzing was the highest point of the Higher-Order level. The explanation below is the detailed information related to the table and graphic.

The types of the cognitive process dimension aim to serve a classification for some cognitive processes that include in objectives. As shown in the table above, there are some parts of the cognitive process of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, such as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Remembering level means by recalling proper knowledge from memories. Besides, intelligence is defined as establishing meanings of messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication. Moreover, applying mentioned as utilizing knowledge in a given situation. Furthermore, analyzing level means splitting materials based on the information's core, after determining how the parts of the report are related to each other. Additionally, evaluating means deciding judgment based on a standard. Lastly, creating a level, this element is defined by placing some materials from an idea into an original product.

Along with the data from the analysis, the remembering level used some action verbs such as find, name, relate, list, show, and tell. Action verbs dominated by the verb telling with 26 questions. Furthermore, there are 14 action verbs of showing, six action verbs of finding, three action verbs of relating, two action verbs of listing, and one action verb of naming. Moreover, this analysis also used cognitive processes and then found some cognitive processes, such as recalling and recognizing. The number of cognitive process by utilizing the recalling process was 46 questions. In contrast, the number of cognitive process by using the recognizing method was only six questions.

The action verbs used on the understanding level were translated, explained, and summarized. There were some action verbs found on the book including two translate verbs, 27 describe verbs, and 3 summarize verbs. As a result, it was dominated by explaining the verb. Also, on the analysis by using the cognitive process, there were some processes found, such as interpreting, explaining, and summarizing. In detail, the number of interpreting process found was only one. On the other side, the total of explaining process reached 29 questions. However, the sum of the summarizing process found were three issues.

Along with the data, applying process was not found in the data. Moreover, the one found in the data was analyzing level. According to the data, analyzing level used some action verbs such as examine, analyze, compare, assume, inspect, classify, discover, inference, distinguish, and compare verb. Analyzing level was dominated by examining, and inference verbs.

The Evaluating level is one of the Higher-Order levels in Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Then, there were some action verbs used in the analysis, such as assessing, deciding, and appraising. Action verb dominated by assess verb that uses three action verbs. Furthermore, there were two verbs of appraising verb and one verb of assess. Besides using action verbs, this analysis also used the cognitive process of critiquing. Creating a level is one of the parts of Higher-Order level skills. Then, the analysis of the data resulted in only one question included creating a standard. Also, this creating level used to adapt as an action verb. Furthermore, the cognitive process found in the data is the generating process.

### **Variety of HOTS in *The Symphony 1* Analyzing Level**

Analyzing level is the starting point in Higher-Order levels. According to Nourdad et al. (2018), Higher-Order Level is the starting stage of the Higher-Order level. Besides, learners can break down the information on analyzing level. However, this case also needs calculations and classifications. In the reading tasks, 45 questions belong to the analyzing level. Cases in the analyzing level are related to breaking up the material into smaller part which is engaged with constituent parts and determining how the pieces are associated with the whole structure. The cognitive processes in the analyzing level are differentiating, organizing, and attributing. Analyzing questions found in the textbook were then analyzed and categorized into 13 criteria, as shown in the table below:

Table 3. The types of analyzing item in Symphony 1

No	Item Types	Frequency	Percentage
1	Distinguishing facts from opinion	0	0
2	Categorizing information in text	0	0
3	Comparing items in text	3	7%
4	Guessing meaning of words in context	1	2%
5	Reading between lines	13	30%
6	Recognizing causes and effects	0	0
7	Explaining the information introduced	18	42%
8	Recognizing clues and evidence	8	19%
9	Eliciting rules and principles	0	0
10	Inferring the mood, attitudes, or tones of the author.	0	0
11	Distinguishing main ideas from supporting ones.	0	0
12	Ordering items according to their importance.	0	0
13	Breaking down the text into its main component.	0	0
Total		45	100%

Based on Table 3, there are five out of thirteen cases found in analyzing items of *Symphony I*'s reading tasks. Types included in the analysis are as follows: comparing things in the text, guessing the meaning of words in context, reading between the lines, and recognizing clues and evidence. The item using explaining the information introduced is the highest number among the five things that are 40% or 18 cases.

Table 4. The example of analyzing item from Symphony 1

No	Items	Categories	Action Verbs	Cognitive Process
1	What is the meaning of the statement “Pickwick was noted for his honesty and humanity”?	Analyzing	inference	Attributing
2	Describe the humor contained in the line “huge Pickwick approach him with a whip”.	Analyzing	interpret	Differentiating

Table 4. shows the categories of explaining the information introduced. According to Keshta and Seif (2013), this category requires students to find the meaning of some statements shown. Then students should explain what the purpose of the report is. As a result, students have to understand the comments in the context.

For making students can answer the questions, they can enlighten the statement based on the context. In this step of explaining, the information introduced and students should develop their ability to recognize the explanation related to the setting. Thus, students should know the meaning of the statement then interpret it according to the context. After that, they had to explain in their own words.

Also, the cognitive process included in the first question was attributing. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) attributing is something resulted from a particular thing. The writer defines that the attributing process happens from the questions since students should find an explanation about the problem context. As a result, students have to find a particular meaning related to the statement.

Another cognitive process related to this explains the information introduced as differentiating. The differentiating cognitive process is to recognize that two things are not the same. This definition means students should identify differences between two things or among more than two words. After that, they should explain the information about the differences.

Another item is ‘reading between the lines’. This item means students have to elaborate the text to look for the hidden message from the document, which is implicitly stated in the report. Based on the analysis, it depicts a percentage of 29% with 13 frequencies.

Table 5. The example of analyzing items from Symphony 1

No	Items	Categories	Action Verbs	Cognitive Process
1.	What decision does the author make in this poem?	Analyzing	Examine	Attributing

2. What do you think the author is saying in this Analyzing Analyse Attributing poem?

The first question on Table 5 demands students to explore the poem related to the content of the poem. To find the answer, students have to know the clues that can support the solution. Usually, the evidence appears after the students understand what the meaning of the question is. The second question is almost the same as the first question.

Answering the questions above cannot be found from the lines printed. As a result, the writer categorized these questions as reading between the lines items because the answers are not stated implicitly in the text, students should find the answer after analyzing the information presented in the book, finding the relevant information, and making conclusions related to the questions demanded. Those processes for finding the solution also happen in the attributing. In short, those questions are analyzing items. Besides, these questions encourage students to make them develop their critical thinking because they should find the answer according to the students' perspective—the students' perspective which built from the information collected. Another sub-skill found in the analysis is recognizing clues and evidence. In this matter, students have to find clues and indications on a particular topic. In this case, below is the example for identifying clues and evidence in the text.

**Evaluating Level**

The evaluating level includes the Higher-Order Thinking Skills. This cognitive domain level demands students to give and defend opinions by presenting judgment sourced from criteria and experience (Anderson & Kratwohl, 2001). This category consists of the cognitive process of checking (judgments about internal consistency) and critiquing (judgments based on external criteria). In short, this level is higher than the analyzing level because, at this level, students urged to make judgments and or opinions after examining the text by looking for some point of view. For making a clear explanation, below is the example of evaluating level based on the book of *The Symphony 1*. According to the analysis found in *The Symphony 1*, this level only was counted six-question or 4% from the complete review. Instruments from Keshta & Sheif (2013) analyzed the questions. The analysis is presented below:

Table 6. The types of evaluating items in Symphony 1

No	Item Types	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Expressing his/her opinion towards situations in the target text	6	100
2	Concluding themes of texts	0	0
3	Recognizing subjectivity and objectivity	0	0
4	Making choices based on reasoned argument	0	0
Total		6	100

From those criteria in Table 6, there was only one type found in the textbook. This type encourages students to express their arguments based on the situation in the target text. In this level, students should make a judgment whether they agree or disagree with the opinion. Then they should find evidence to strengthen their argument.

Table 7. The example of evaluating item from Symphony 1

No	Items	Categories	Action Verbs	Cognitive Process
1	What do you think about Singkawang? Are you interested to go there? Give reasons.	Evaluating	Assess	Critiquing
2	Discuss with the class what each local government should do to boost income from tourism.	Evaluating	Decide	Critiquing

The first question demands students to declare their argument about Singkawang. This evidence-based on the situation there. In short, they have to give a reason why they attractive in it. Students have to assess a case, so the researcher uses action words to determine. The second question requires students to take action toward the situation in the text. Students have to find solutions to the job. They may have other sources to make their idea more potent and more effective. In this case, the researcher uses action verbs to



decide because this question encouraged students to determine what the proper actions are. Both of the items use the cognitive process of critiquing. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), critiquing is judging because those questions demand students to give an opinion.

**Creating level**

The creating level is the highest at Bloom's Taxonomy level. From this level, students have to result in a new product. The new product can be managed from the pattern or information before (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). This level can be done after students through other levels such as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, and evaluating. Creating a level is the highest level in Bloom's Taxonomy level. From this level, students have to result in a new product. This level is done after students through other standards such as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, and evaluating.

Yet creating a level is the part of a Higher-Order level, so students have to think critically to manage this case. Moreover, in creating something, students have to collect from some sources to make the product in prior knowledge. Some elements can be put in a way that makes the product to be structured well. Subsequently, students should have ideas and creativity. Also, this level adopted three cognitive processes such as generating, planning, and producing. Based on the research from this book, the researcher found only one question that requires creating a level. As a result, this is only 1% of the total. Creating a degree is the lowest number found in the reading task of *Symphony 1*. The following is the creating level found in *Symphony 1*.

Table 8. The types of creating items in Symphony 1

No	Item Types	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Rearranging information related to the text	1	100
2.	Summarizing texts	0	0
3.	Writing or retelling the material of the text using his own words	0	0
4.	Predicting events or solutions related to the text	0	0
5.	Discussing to persuade	0	0
6.	Hypothesizing data	0	0
7.	Generating information related to the text	0	0
8.	Combining his information with the information in the text	0	0
9.	Connecting knowledge from different sources	0	0
Total		1	100

The data from Table 8 shows that the Lower-Order Level dominates the task. It can be seen from Figure 1 that Lower-Order Level was 63%. This result is significant because this is more than 50%. The research also found that there is no level of *applying* found in the data in the Lower-Order level. Higher-Order Level in the tasks is dominated by analyzing level it reaches 32% out of 37% from the total of Higher-Order Level. It is followed by *evaluating level* counted 4%, then creating a level of only 1%.

Table 9. The example of creating item in Symphony 1

No	Item	Categories	Action Verbs	Cognitive Process
1.	Compose a single stanza quintet using the same pattern of rhymes found in this poem.	Creating	adapt	Generating

This question demands students to make a new product by using the pattern in the issue. As a result, this case encourages students to adapt further information. Also, the cognitive process involved in this question is *generating*. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) declared that the generating process involved with produce or create something.

The Higher-Order Level exists on the task, but most of them were not distributed well in all items by Kesthta and Sheif (2013). It can be seen from the data of analyzing level which only contains five out of thirteen pieces. It consists of comparing items in the text, guessing the meaning of words in context, reading between the lines, explaining the information introduced, and recognizing clues and evidence. Besides, most questions require revealing the information presented that reached 42% out of 100%. On the other hand, guessing the meaning of words, only 2% out of 100%. This result is quite a significant comparison. It



demonstrates that the tasks in the textbook did not have many varieties of Higher-Order Level, and this is in line with the statement that most of the textbooks in Indonesia contain Lower-Order Thinking Skills because most of the books comprise of memorizing and understanding (Margana & Widyantoro, 2017). Thus, based on the finding, this book could not stick to the criteria of Higher-Order. The ideal distribution of Higher-Order and Lower-Order level is 50:50 (Anggraeni & Suharyadi, 2013). If this continues, then students will not be exposed to Higher-Order instructions that stimulate their critical thinking and holistic comprehension.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher can conclude some numbers from the overall findings. First, the higher-order cognitive skills in the textbook's reading tasks are not distributed and treated well. The result of Higher-Order levels in the textbooks' reading tasks was less than Lower-Order levels. According to the information, there are six classifications of the question items from the cognitive domain of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Also, Lower-Order levels dominated the reading tasks in Symphony 1 with the percentage of 63%. Remember, the standard has the highest frequency among all levels, with 50 cases and a 37% rate. The understanding level resulted in 32 cases or 24%.

Furthermore, the Lower-Order level apply does not exist on the reading tasks. In another case in the information, there are 39% of higher-order level questions, or there are 50 questions from the total. Then, the Higher-Order level of analyzing reaches 32% or 43 items—meanwhile, the higher-order level of evaluating touched 4% or six questions. Subsequently, the Higher-Order level creating level recorded only 1% or one issue. As a result, creating is the lowest point from the higher-order level, and analyzing is the highest point of the higher-order level.

Then questions indicated of Higher-Order Level have been analyzed to know the variety of HOTS found in the textbooks. From analyzing the level contained four out of thirteen items. They compared things in the text, guessing the meaning of words in context, reading between the lines, explaining the information introduced, and recognizing clues and evidence. Also, most questions that contain disclosing the information presented reached 42% out of 100%. On the other hand, the questions that contain guessing the meaning of words had only 2% out of 100%. The result was entirely a significant comparison. It proved that the tasks in the textbook do not have many varieties of Higher-Order Level.

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