A Content Analysis of Activities in English Textbook “When English Rings A Bell”

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Abstract

This study aimed at identifying and analyzing the levels of activities available in English textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for eighth grade by using cognitive domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Content analysis was applied in 12 chapters of textbook in order to know to what extent the activities emphasized on Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). The activities were collected, listed, and analyzed based on cognitive domain levels of revised Bloom’s Taxonomy; remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The results showed that the most dominant cognitive domain level focused on remembering level which provided 93 activities (54.4%), followed by applying level (19.3%), analyzing level (11.1%), evaluating level (8.2%), understanding level (4.1%), and creating level (2.9%). It was concluded that this textbook emphasized on LOTS (133 activities/77.8%).

Key Words: Bloom’s Taxonomy, Cognitive Domain, Activities, English Textbook

1. INTRODUCTION

Students in Indonesia are familiar with English as one of the subjects due to its important use in nowadays era. Equally, like in any other foreign languages, textbook is worthy to be used in English teaching and learning as a primary source. It helps both the teachers and the students in accomplishing the goals of the lesson. Therefore, in 2014, the government introduced a textbook for second year students of Junior High School entitled “When English Rings a Bell”, which is compatible with the 2013 curriculum.

Richards (2001) stated that the content of a textbook consists of materials and activities. Those are some of the important aspects in developing the students’ thinking level. Assaly and Igbaria (2014) also said that the materials and activities in the textbook should be well designed in order to direct the students to be critical thinkers. This statement means that textbook is one of the teaching materials that can enhance students' ability. Harwood (2010) pointed out the authors of textbooks should
consider the principles of language teaching, such as redesigning the materials and activities which can help the learners develop their own thinking.

Therefore, the authors of textbooks should provide the instructional materials and activities that stimulate the learners to be critical in thinking. Critical thinking is an intellectual ability to think clearly and rationally about something. In Bloom’s Taxonomy, critical thinking refers to Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS), which focuses on the top three levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy: analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5) and creating (C6). Unfortunately, as previous researches had indicated, most textbooks activities and questions only reflected the Lower Order Thinking Skill (LOTS) (Assaly & Igbaria, 2014).

Related to the problem above, the researcher intends to explore and to analyze the content of the English textbook ‘When English Rings a Bell’ for eighth grade students in order to know which activities could provoke the students’ thinking to be either in LOTS or HOTS.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Textbook

As stated by Richards (2001) textbooks are commonly used in language teaching as the teaching materials. He also adds that textbooks are the key components in most language programs, in which they could be the sources of materials and activities. Tomlinson (2012) and Cunningsworth (1995) define textbook as a media that can be used to support learning and teaching process which includes the materials and activities.

2.2 Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom’s Taxonomy is the most widely applied one out of all the taxonomies used today. In 1956, Bloom et al. published their widely accepted taxonomy for classifying objectives and assessment items for education. Bloom divided the purpose of education into three domains. The three domains of objectives are the cognitive domain, affective domain, and psychomotor domain. The cognitive domain encompasses intellectual activities, the affective domain involves attitudes, and the psychomotor domain includes actions. According to Airasian and Russell (2008), the most commonly taught and assessed educational objectives are those in the cognitive domain.

2.3 Cognitive Domain

According to Bloom et al., (1956), the cognitive domain involves knowledge and the development of intellectual skills. The cognitive domain in the original taxonomy includes intellectual activities such as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In 1990’s, Lorin Anderson, a former student of Benjamin S. Bloom, made some changes to the cognitive domain of the learning taxonomy. Published in 2001, Nayef, Yaacob, and Ismail (2013) the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy reflects different forms of thinking, which is an active process that requires more accurate verbs. The new version of Bloom’s Taxonomy became remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating.

The revised of cognitive domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy will be explained below based on Anderson and Krathwohl (2001):

1) Remembering level
Remembering means retrieving, recognizing, and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory. This level involves remembering material without any additional thinking process.

2) Understanding level

*Understanding* is the ability to comprehend the taught materials. It involves translating material, interpreting material by explaining or summarizing, or predicting consequences or effects.

3) Applying level

*Applying* is the ability to using a procedure to a familiar task.

4) Analyzing level

*Analyzing* is the ability to breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing, and attributing.

5) Evaluating level

*Evaluating* is the ability to making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing. It involves the ability to judge information based on the criteria determined by the students or teacher.

6) Creating level

*Creating* is the ability to creat new products and ideas by using what was previously learned.

### 3. METHODS

The research methodology used in this study is content analysis. Wahyuni (2011) said that content analysis is one of the numerous research methods used to analyze text data. She also added that content analysis is a research methodology that employs a set of procedures to determine the quality and the themes of documents, discourses or books. Since this study analyzed a textbook as the main source of data, this research is categorized as a content analysis research. Furthermore, content analysis belongs to the qualitative data analysis. This study is considered to be a qualitative study in term of analysis and collecting the data. According to Marshall and Rossman (1990), qualitative data analysis is a study about the relationships among categories of data.

The main source of data in this study is an English language textbook entitled 'When English Rings a Bell' for eighth grade level. Whereas, the kinds of data needed in this study are the activities presented in the textbook. There are 12 chapters with 171 activities on it.

The technique of data collection used in this study was document review. The data were collected in two stages. In the first stage, the writer read the textbook chapter per chapter. In the second stage, the writer analyzed the activities from the textbook to get the total number of the activities. Finally, those activities were then displayed on analysis sheet.

The writer listed and displayed those activities into an analysis sheet which was adopted from Igbaria (2013). In the analysis sheet, the writer then decided the level of cognitive domain activities based on the new version of Bloom’s Taxonomy. The coding categories were labeled as C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6. The writer also validated the data analysis by using teachers’ book and syllabus. Afterward, the number of activities in each category was counted, then the frequency (F) of each level of cognitive domain was calculated and the percentage (%) was calculated by using following formula.
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Next, the researcher validated the data by using teachers’ book and syllabus, also use of peer debriefing. The peer debriefing technique required the writer to work together with one or several colleagues who hold impartial views of the study. In this research, the first supervisor will examined the writer’s analysis sheet, final report and general methodology. Finally, the results in the table were interpreted descriptively.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing all of the activities, a total of 171 instructional activities were obtained from the English textbook “When English Rings a Bell”. Those activities were distributed throughout the entire 12 chapters in the book. The writer analyzed all of the textbook’s activities, and then collected all the results. These results are shown in Table 4.1 which shows the level of the activities and the frequency for each level in each chapter of the book. The writer coded the cognitive domain as follow: remembering (C1), understanding (C2), applying (C3), analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6).

Table 4.1 The frequency and Percentage of activities in English textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for 8th grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, it is shown that C1 or remembering level had the highest frequency (93 activities). After remembering level, applying level or C3 had 33 activities in total. Then, it was followed by analyzing level (C4) which had 19 activities and evaluating level (C5) which had 14 activities. However, the C2 or understanding level only had 7 activities. In comparison to the activities found in remembering level, creating level (C6) had the lowest frequency of activities. From 12 chapters, the book only provided 5 activities that were categorized in creating level.

The frequencies in the table range from 5 to 93, while the percentages range between 2.9% and 54.4%. Therefore, it is clearly understood from the table that

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\text{Percentage} = \left( \frac{\text{The frequency per level}}{\text{The total of activities}} \right) \times 100\%
\]
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removing level is the most dominant activities in the English textbook “When English Rings a Bell”, with a percentage of 54.4%. The detail explanation of the six cognitive levels will be explained below.

1) Remembering level

The operational verbs used in remembering level in this textbook are repeat, write, list, match, find, who, what, and why. Some sample activities involved in this level are, for instances; the students have to list the activities by using check or cross, find the details included in the conversations, write down the sentences regarding the conversation, repeat the speakers’ sentences, and role plays. The most abundant activities found in this level are role plays (23 activities). The writer categorized role play in the first level because the students only do ‘scripted role play’, the students just have to repeat and read the sentences from the textbook, without making the dialogue themselves.

2) Understanding level

In the understanding level, the operational verbs used in this textbook are describe and summarize. Some of the activities presented in the textbook encouraged the students to describe the picture, and to tell what they had learnt.

3) Applying level

In this level, the activities used operational verbs such as complete, make, practice, and try. From 33 activities, there were 23 activities that used complete as an operational verb and 10 activities that used other operational verbs. Some of the activities presented in the textbook that were categorized in this level instructed the students to “complete the sentence according to conversation”, “make sentences based on the table”, “practice the conversation”, and “try to send messages to each other”. Therefore, in this level, the activities that the students do are peer assessment and group discussions, for example, the students work in pairs and practice the conversations.

4) Analyzing level

In every chapter of this book, the students are instructed to write reflective journals about what they learnt and the difficulties they encountered in doing so. In this level, the activities used operational verbs such as analyze, compare, and arrange. Therefore, the sample activities of the analyzing level found in this textbook instructed the students to write the difficulties they had, to compare the qualities of the three things on each set with real purposes, and to put the sentences in the right order.

5) Evaluating level

In evaluating level, the students have a self-evaluation in every chapter of this textbook, for example, the students are instructed to write an evaluation about the sentences they had made. Nonetheless, the operational verb used in this level is only evaluate. This activity is relevant to the 2013 English curriculum that trains the students to be more critical in thinking.

6) Creating level

The sample activities presented in this textbook tutored the students to create personal invitation card and to design a poster. Those activities are suitable for junior high school level. From 12 chapters, this level only appears on chapter 1, 4, 9 and 10 which used operational verbs such as write, create and design.

From the explanation below, it was affirmed that most activities were designed to accommodate LOTS. It was proven by 133 activities which were categorized in the levels of remembering, understanding, and applying, while there
were only 38 activities available at analyzing, evaluating, and creating levels. Therefore, the activities in the textbook cover all levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. It means that the activities presented in the textbook which involved both LOTS and HOTS. The percentage of LOTS and HOTS represented in the textbook is listed in the following table.

Table 4.2 Level of Thinking Based on Cognitive Domain in “When English Rings a Bell” Textbook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Thinking</th>
<th>Cognitive Domain</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOT</td>
<td>Remembering</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>133</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOT</td>
<td>Analyzing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>171</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Regarding to the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the activities in the English textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for eighth grade required both Lower Order Thinking skill (LOTs) and Higher Order Thinking skill (HOTs). However, the activities were not fairly divided. It was proven by 133 activities which were categorized as lower order thinking skills, while only 38 activities that belong to higher order thinking skills. Based on the findings, it showed that 54.4% of the activities were in the remembering level (C1), 4.1% in the understanding level, 19.3% in the applying level, 11.1% in the analyzing level, 8.2% in the evaluating level, and 2.9% were in the creating level. The data analysis showed that the most dominant activities in the textbook were dominated by the remembering level (54.4%) which is a part of the lower order thinking skill.

Therefore, the writer would give some suggestions that may be useful for many sides related to analyzing textbook by using cognitive domain level of Bloom’s Taxonomy. First, for the textbook authors, since the mindset of curriculum 2013 is to emphasize on higher thinking level, it is better not to focus on the lowest level. Second, for English teachers, they can use this book in teaching and learning processes because this book has many activities that train students’ minds to be more critical in thinking, such as the reflective journal and self-evaluation.

REFERENCES


