

## The Study of Reading Comprehension Questions in *Bright an English 2* Based on Barrett's Taxonomy

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### Abstrak

Penelitian kualitatif ini menerapkan metode analisis konten untuk menganalisis relevansi pertanyaan pemahaman membaca dalam buku *Bright an English 2* (versi kurikulum Merdeka) terhadap jenis-jenis pemahaman dalam taksonomi Barrett. Selain itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan proporsi pertanyaan di tiga tingkat pemahaman. Tabel *checklist* digunakan sebagai instrumen untuk mengklasifikasikan setiap pertanyaan membaca ke dalam lima jenis pemahaman: literal, reorganisasi, inferensial, evaluasi, dan apresiasi, berdasarkan kriteria Barrett. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa pertanyaan membaca dalam buku teks hanya relevan dengan empat jenis pemahaman, kecuali 'apresiasi'. Keempat jenis tersebut selanjutnya dikelompokkan menjadi tiga tingkat pemahaman: tingkat rendah (pemahaman literal dan reorganisasi), tingkat menengah (pemahaman inferensial), dan tingkat tinggi (evaluasi). Untuk memeriksa proporsi pertanyaan di ketiga tingkat ini, peneliti menjumlahkan persentase dari setiap jenis pemahaman dalam kelompok tingkat yang sesuai. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pertanyaan tingkat rendah memiliki proporsi tertinggi dalam buku, yaitu 81% dari total pertanyaan, sementara pertanyaan tingkat tinggi memiliki proporsi terendah, yaitu hanya 4%. Akhirnya, menjadi jelas bahwa buku tersebut tidak mencakup semua jenis pemahaman dalam taksonomi Barrett dan tidak mencerminkan proporsi yang seimbang dari ketiga tingkat pemahaman di dalamnya. Buku tersebut seharusnya disusun dengan proporsi yang lebih seimbang dari ketiga tingkat tersebut agar lebih efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berpikir kritis dan pemahaman membaca siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** Buku pelajaran bahasa Inggris, pertanyaan pemahaman membaca, taksonomi Barret tentang dimensi kognitif dan afektif dalam pemahaman membaca

### Abstract

This qualitative research applied content analysis method to analyze the relevance of reading comprehension questions in the textbook *Bright an English 2* (*kurikulum Merdeka*/Freedom curriculum version) to the comprehension types in Barrett's taxonomy. Additionally, the study aimed to describe the proportions of questions across three comprehension levels. A checklist table was used as an instrument to classify each reading question into five comprehension types: literal, reorganization, inferential, evaluation, and appreciation, based on Barrett's criteria. The analysis revealed that the reading questions in the textbook were relevant to only four comprehension types, excluding 'appreciation'. These four types were further grouped into three comprehension levels: low-level (literal comprehension and reorganization), middle-level (inferential comprehension), and high-level (evaluation). To examine the proportions of questions across these levels, the researcher summed up the percentages of each comprehension type within their corresponding level groups. The results showed that low-level questions have the highest proportion in the textbook, representing 81% of the total questions, while high-level questions have the lowest proportion, at only 4%. Finally, it became evident that the textbook does not cover all the types of comprehension in Barrett's taxonomy and fails to reflect a balanced proportion of the three comprehension levels within it. The textbook should be organized to include a more balanced proportion of these levels to more effectively enhance students' critical thinking and reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** English textbook, reading comprehension questions, Barrett's taxonomy of cognitive and affective dimensions of reading comprehension

### INTRODUCTION

One of the important components of language teaching is the use of textbook. Textbook is the most common instructional material used by teacher in the teaching and learning process (Brown, 2004). It is a structured written

resource that has various kinds of contents or materials related to a subject. It is also the center of curriculum and syllabus (Amalya et al., 2020); therefore, their existence in the learning process is important and beneficial for both teacher and students (Harmer, 2008). In the context

of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), textbook plays an important role as it can assist and support the process of English language teaching and learning. According to Cunningsworth (1995), the activities and exercises in the textbook provide important input for students in the classroom. They enable students to practice sentence construction, understand grammar, and build vocabulary, all of which are essential for enhancing language proficiency. This demonstrates that a textbook not only helps students access English but also assists in improving their language skills.

One important language skill that needs to be mastered for success in learning English is reading. Reading is an activity to get information and knowledge from texts. Harmer (2008) highlights that reading is not a passive skill. It requires readers to actively process and interpret the information presented in the text, rather than simply receiving it passively. This indicates that reading is not merely about recognizing letters but involves an active process of constructing meaning. This is supported by Alderson (2000) who defines reading as a fluent process in which readers integrate information from a text with their prior knowledge to construct meaning. Therefore, the primary goal of reading is to achieve comprehension, which is the process of deriving meaning from text (Woolley, 2011). However, reading comprehension is a complex task that requires a combination of various cognitive skills and abilities (Oakhill, 2014). This makes it more challenging for students compared to other language skills. Therefore, they need to be trained through practice to become familiar with reading comprehension.

To help students improve their reading comprehension skills, teachers can encourage them to complete reading tasks provided in the textbook. These tasks include questions related to a reading text (Cunningsworth, 1995), requiring students to read the text and answer questions. In language learning, the presence of such questions is considered important. They assist teachers in supporting and evaluating students' comprehension of a text. As emphasized by Delican (2022), questions are fundamental in activities and designed to both support and assess individual reading comprehension skills. Furthermore, Cunningsworth (1995) highlighted that exercises accompanying reading texts help students gain a deeper understanding of their readings. However, nowadays, many textbooks are designed to meet general market demands without considering the quality of their content, particularly the questions provided. As a result, many English textbooks used by teachers have been found to be problematic. For example, study by Aqeel and Farrah (2019) found that the reading questions in the textbook *English for*

*Palestine-Eighth Grade* predominantly focused on literal comprehension, which is the lowest comprehension level in Barrett's taxonomy. Ripalga and Fitrawati (2023) found that reading questions in the tenth-grade senior high school textbook *Work in Progress* cover only three of the four levels of thinking in Marzano and Kendall's taxonomy, with lower-level categories being more dominant. Arlansyah et al., (2023) also found that the reading questions in the seventh-grade junior high school textbook *English for Nusantara* cover only three categories of cognitive process dimensions in the revised Bloom's taxonomy, with lower-level categories also being more dominant. The results of these studies have shown that the reading comprehension questions in these textbooks place greater emphasis on lower-level comprehension, which require basic cognitive processes. On the other hand, higher-level comprehension questions that encourage critical thinking are not adequately represented in these textbooks. This implies that many textbook authors do not consider using a balance mix of different comprehension levels in reading questions, despite the fact that doing so can effectively enhance students' critical thinking skills and improve their reading comprehension (Reeves, 2012). As a result, most EFL textbooks do not provide adequate opportunities for students to improve their reading comprehension skills.

Due to the problems mentioned above, teachers should evaluate the textbooks used in the classroom to ensure their quality. This process provides teachers with valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks (Cunningsworth, 1995), enabling them to decide whether to rely on the textbook or seek additional resources. Since textbooks contain various reading exercises to assess students' learning progress, it is essential to evaluate whether the reading questions help students develop their reading comprehension skills. Thus, one way to evaluate a textbook is by analyzing the extent to which it provides reading questions that address various levels of comprehension. This analysis determines the textbook's quality in developing students' reading comprehension skills.

When analyzing reading comprehension questions, the use of an appropriate taxonomy is essential. A taxonomy that is considered a practical and detailed framework for analyzing reading comprehension questions is Barrett's taxonomy. Pearson and Johnson (1978, as cited in Tharmalingam, 2014) mentioned that among the various taxonomies used for educational purposes, Barrett's taxonomy is the most widely used in reading courses. This taxonomy provides a detailed classification of five comprehension types: literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation. According

to Reeves (2012), these five types can be further grouped into three levels: low-level (literal comprehension and reorganization), middle-level (inferential comprehension), and high-level (evaluation and appreciation). Reeves also suggests that textbooks should be organized to include a balanced proportion of these levels to effectively enhance students' critical thinking skills and improve their reading comprehension. For these reasons, Barrett's taxonomy was used in this research as a guide to analyze the reading comprehension questions presented in the textbook.

Numerous studies have analyzed reading comprehension questions using Barrett's Taxonomy. For example, Fitria et al. (2014) examined the reading comprehension questions in the textbooks *English Texts in Use* and *Look Ahead* for tenth graders. Amalya et al. (2020) analyzed the forms and types of reading comprehension questions Gravesns in the textbook *Bright an English* for eighth graders, published by Erlangga in 2016. Aqeel and Farrah (2019) assessed the alignment of reading questions in the textbook *English for Palestine-Eighth Grade* with Barrett's Taxonomy. Sakinah and Fudhla (2023) investigated the cognitive levels of reading comprehension questions in the textbook *English for Senior High School Grade XII*. While these previous studies have focused on various English textbooks published under the 2013 curriculum, this curriculum is no longer in use. Currently, all schools use textbooks aligned with the Merdeka curriculum. However, few studies have examined the reading questions in these updated textbooks, particularly using Barrett's taxonomy. This lack of research could be due to the recent implementation of the Merdeka curriculum and the corresponding new textbooks. Therefore, to address this gap, this research aims to analyze the relevance of the reading comprehension questions in the textbook *Bright an English 2* to the comprehension types in Barrett's taxonomy. Additionally, the research aims to describe the proportions of questions across the three levels of comprehension. Previous studies have examined the earlier version of the textbook but have not yet examined this new version, making this analysis necessary.

**METHODS**

This research employed a qualitative approach. According to Mackey & Gass (2005), qualitative research aims to develop a detailed understanding and interpretation of social phenomena through in-depth analysis of non-numerical data. This research also applied a content analysis method because the researcher used a textbook to analyze the reading comprehension questions. As Ary (2006) emphasizes that content analysis is a research method applied to analyze text data

from various written or visual sources, including textbooks. Furthermore, this research also involved the use of numerical data for counting and presenting the percentage of each checklist item. As stated by Ravid, despite qualitative research being descriptive, it may involve the use of numbers, such as counting occurrences. Therefore, the results will be described based on the percentages or statistical data.

In this research, the data consisted of reading comprehension questions from the eighth-grade textbook *Bright an English 2*, published by Erlangga in 2022. This textbook has adopted the Merdeka Curriculum, as indicated by its logo on the cover. All questions were obtained from reading sections in the textbook, including *activity section*, *let's practice*, and *critical thinking tasks*. It consists of eight chapters, resulting in a total accumulation of 217 reading comprehension questions across all chapters.

In qualitative research, humans serve as the main instruments due to their ability to collect and interpret research data. Hence, in this research, the researcher acts as the primary instrument for data collection. Furthermore, to assist the data collection process, the researcher used an additional instrument called checklist table. This table will be used to classify each reading questions into the five types of comprehension based on the criteria in Barrett's taxonomy. The researcher put a check mark (✓) in the corresponding column to indicate if a question was relevant to one of the types. Then, each question was coded based on its characteristics. The detailed form of the checklist table can be found in Table 1 below:

**Table 1. Checklist Table**

Questions	Code	Types of Reading Comprehension					Sub-skills
		LC	R	IC	E	A	

After collecting the data, the researcher calculated the total occurrences of each comprehension type recorded in the checklist table, expressing them as percentages. The formula used is as follows:

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

**Note:**

- P** : percentages
- n** : the number of questions in each category
- N** : the total number of the questions across 8 chapters

When the percentages for each comprehension type were determined, the researcher grouped them into three levels: low-level (literal comprehension and reorganization), middle-level (inferential comprehension), and high-level (evaluation and appreciation). Then, the researcher calculated the final percentages for each level by summing up the percentages of each comprehension type within their corresponding level groups. Finally, the final results were compared with the percentages suggested by Reeves (2012). This comparison aimed to assess whether the proportion of the three comprehension levels is properly balanced. The suggested guidelines for each comprehension level are shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2. Guidelines for Comprehension Levels in Barrett’s Taxonomy**

Type of Comprehension	Level of Comprehension	Proportions
Literal Comprehension	Low-level	40%
Reorganization		
Inferential Comprehension	Middle-level	40%
Evaluation	High-level	20%
Appreciation		

(Adapted from Reeves, 2012)

The findings were then analyzed in relation to the theoretical framework of Barrett taxonomy, and conclusions were drawn based on this analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Reading Comprehension Questions in the textbook *Bright an English 2* that Relevant to the Types of Comprehension in Barrett’s Taxonomy

The researcher collected and analyzed 217 reading comprehension questions across the eight chapters in the textbook. The results revealed that the reading comprehension questions in the textbook are relevant to only four types of comprehension: literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, and evaluation. ‘Appreciation’ was not indicated in any of the question. The detailed distribution of these comprehension types in the reading comprehension questions is shown in Table 3 below:

**Table 3. The Distribution of Reading Comprehension Types in the Textbook**

Comprehension Types in Barrett’s Taxonomy	Frequency	Percentage
Literal Comprehension	170	78.3%
Reorganization	5	2.3%
Inferential Comprehension	33	15.2%
Evaluation	9	4.1%
Appreciation	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table above, literal comprehension consists of 170 questions, representing 78.3% of the total questions. This type appears most frequently among other types. Reorganization has 5 questions, or 2.3% of the total, making it the least frequent. Inferential comprehension includes 33 questions, representing 15.2% of the total, making it the second most frequent. Lastly, evaluation has 9 questions, or 4.1% of the total, making it the second least frequent. Unfortunately, there are no questions relevant to appreciation – type. The detailed explanation of these four comprehension types is as follows:

#### 1. Literal comprehension

Literal Comprehension represents the lowest level in Barrett’s taxonomy and is considered a fundamental skill in reading. There are two aspects of literal comprehension: recognition and recall, each consists of six sub-skills ranging from simple to complex. For the recognition aspect, all sub-skills are covered in the textbook. However, in the recall aspect, only five sub-skills are included. Table 4a below presents samples of literal comprehension questions that cover the six sub-skills associated with the recognition aspect. These questions require students to identify information explicitly stated in the reading passage, using cues or options provided within the questions.

**Table 4a. Sample of Literal Comprehension Questions (recognition) in the Textbook**

Questions	Sub-skills	Chapter
What is Devon?	Recognition of details	2
What is the second paragraph about?	Recognition of main ideas	8
What should we do before adding the	Recognition of a	7

pasta into the pan in the stove top method?	sequence	
Can you compare between the drivers in the two places?	Recognition of comparison	7
Why does Devon sometimes stay up late?	Recognition of cause and effect relationship	2
Which of following statements represents about Luna?	Recognition of character traits	2

Meanwhile, Table 4b below presents samples of literal comprehension questions that cover the five sub-skills related to the recall aspect. These questions require students to generate from memory information explicitly stated in the reading passage without the aid of cues or options provided in the questions.

**Table 4b. Sample of Literal Comprehension Questions (recall) in the Textbook**

Questions	Sub-skills	Chapter
What happened to Arlene Kelsch's house?	Recall of details	4
What does the third paragraph tell us about?	Recall of main ideas	4
What happened in the middle of his journey?	Recall of a sequence	8
How big is it, compared to the country of Switzerland and Yellowstone Park?	Recall of comparison	7
Why did he step back into the shed?	Recall of cause and effect relationship	6

Questions involving these sub-skills are simple and specific, as they assess students' understanding of factual information explicitly stated in the text (Barrett, 1976). Therefore, the questions are quite easy to answer because they do not require additional complex skills such as critical thinking. As a result, literal comprehension questions are the most frequently asked in textbooks or by teachers (Surtantini, 2019; Amalya et al., 2020; Aqeel & Farrah, 2019; and Tharmalingam, 2014). The answers to these questions are also simple and straightforward, directly found in the text and only have one correct response. Furthermore, according to Nurjanah and Putri (2022), it is necessary for developing a strong literal comprehension as the foundation to develop higher-level comprehension skills. However, several researchers argue

that questions at this type do not encourage the students to use their thinking skills to their fullest potential. Therefore, they should be used appropriately, meaning only when it is necessary (Cotton, 1988 as cited in Tharmalingam, 2014). It would be beneficial for students if the questions are able to ask various types of comprehension to improve their thinking skills rather than asking too many literal questions.

## 2. Reorganization

Reorganization represents the second-lowest level in Barrett's taxonomy. Questions at this type are essential for encouraging students to analyze, synthesize, and/ or organize ideas or information explicitly stated in the text (Barrett, 1976). Reorganization questions are classified into four sub-skills: classifying, outlining, summarizing, and synthesizing. However, only two of these sub-skills are included in the textbook. Table 5 below presents samples of reorganization questions that cover the included sub-skills.

**Table 5. Sample of Reorganization Questions in the Textbook**

Questions	Sub-skills	Chapter
Write down parts of the Legend of Kemaro Island that fit the following structure	Outlining	8
From the text, we can conclude that...	Summarizing	7

Questions involving these sub-skills require students to restructure or present the explicit information in different formats in order to produce the expected outcome. To convey the information differently, students might use the direct statements of the author, summarize main points, outline sequences of events, or paraphrase the author's statements. This indicates that the answers to these questions are presented in the text but not as quite obvious as those in literal comprehension. Despite this, reorganization questions are being the least frequently asked in the textbook. Similarly, previous studies have shown that reorganization questions are often the least represented (Surtantini, 2019 and Tharmalingam, 2014). This is significantly imbalanced compared to the number of literal comprehension questions. According to Tollefson (1989, as cited in Tharmalingam, 2014), the limited emphasis on reorganization questions undermines students' ability to reorganize and synthesize information effectively. Consequently, students do not have enough opportunities to enhance these skills.

### 3. Inferential Comprehension

Inferential comprehension represents the middle level in Barrett's taxonomy and is essential for developing students' reading comprehension (Rahmadani & Zainil, 2023 and Casey, 2022) as well as their critical and creative thinking skills (Ellis, 1993 as cited in Tharmalingam, 2014). Inferential comprehension questions are classified into eight sub-skills: inferring supporting details, main ideas, sequence, comparisons, cause and effect relationships, character traits, predicting outcomes, and figurative language. However, only six of these sub-skills are included in the textbook. Table 6 below presents samples of reorganization questions that cover the included sub-skills.

**Table 6. Sample of Inferential Comprehension Questions in the Textbook**

Questions	Sub-skills	Chapter
What lesson can we get after reading Eller's experience?	Inferring main ideas	4
Which of the following proverbs goes with the story?	Inferring comparisons	6
What might be the intention of Kartika to move to Dubai?	Inferring cause and effect relationship	3
What was Roro Jongrang like	Inferring character traits	8
What movement do you think your city need at the moment?	Predicting outcomes	6
The helicopters belonged to the rescue teams, but they failed to see Eller." The sentence implies that..	Inferring character traits	4

Questions involving these sub-skills require students to make logical hypotheses and inferences based on clues or information implicitly stated in the text. To answer these questions, students must combine evidence from the text with their personal intuition, experience, and background knowledge (Javed et al., 2016). As a result, these answers demand broader knowledge and a more extensive vocabulary (Dillon, 1984 as cited in Tharmalingam, 2014), as they are not explicitly stated in the text but must be inferred. This makes answering these questions more challenging than those requiring literal comprehension. Despite this, inferential comprehension questions are being the second most frequently asked in the textbook. Similarly, previous studies also show that inferential comprehension questions are among the most

frequently asked in textbooks and by teachers (Sakinah & Fudhla, 2023; Surtantini, 2019; Amalya et al., 2020; Tharmalingam, 2014; and Rahmadani & Zainil, 2023).

### 4. Evaluation

Evaluation represents the second-highest level in Barrett's taxonomy and is necessary as a basic competency of critical thinking for students. Evaluation questions are classified into five sub-skills: judgments of reality or fantasy, fact or opinion, adequacy and validity, appropriateness, and worth, desirability, and acceptability. However, only three of these sub-skills are included in the textbook. Table 7 below presents samples of evaluation questions that cover the included sub-skills.

**Table 7. Sample of Evaluation Questions in the Textbook**

Questions	Sub-skills	Chapter
"I believe technology can make life easier and more meaningful." Do you agree with Devon's statement? Why/Why not?	Judgments of opinion or fact	3
Do you think what Arlene Kelsch did is correct in such a situation? Why/Why not?	Judgments of worth, desirability, acceptability	4
Can you apply the movement in your city? Why/Why not?	Judgments of appropriateness	6

Questions involving these sub-skills encourage students to evaluate the text critically. They are required to compare evidence from the text with external criteria, such as various written sources provided by the teacher or other authorities, and internal criteria, such as students' personal experiences, knowledge, or values, to make evaluative judgments (Barrett, 1976). According to Bonwell & Eison (1991, as cited in Tharmalingam, 2014), such questions help students develop their critical thinking skills, engage deeply with the text, and effectively present their own ideas and opinions based on the information provided in the text. Despite their importance, evaluation questions are being the second least frequently asked in the textbook. Previous studies (Surtantini, 2019; Rahmadani & Zainil, 2023; and Tharmalingam, 2014) have similarly shown that evaluation questions are among the least frequently asked in textbooks and by teachers. This indicates that the textbook does not provide enough opportunities for

students to practice and develop their evaluative reading skills. As a result, the limited use of evaluation-type questions hinders students' language proficiency and critical thinking skills (Brophy and Good, 1985 as cited in Tharmalingam, 2014).

### 5. Appreciation

Appreciation represents the highest level in Barrett's taxonomy. However, this research found that none of the questions in the textbook were categorized under the 'appreciation' type. Similarly, a study by Sakinah and Fudhla (2023) also revealed the absence of appreciation-type questions. This absence might be due to the challenges in designing and assessing these types of questions, as they require students to provide emotional and aesthetic responses to the text based on their personal engagement and a deep engagement with the material (Barrett, 1976). Such questions demand higher-level cognitive and creative skills. As a result, the absence of appreciation questions in the textbook diminishes students' progress in developing their critical and creative thinking as well as language proficiency (Dillan, 1983 as cited in Tharmalingam, 2014).

### The Proportions of Questions across Different Levels of Comprehension in Barrett's Taxonomy

Previously, the analysis revealed that the textbook is relevant to only four types of comprehension in Barrett's taxonomy: literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, and evaluation. According to Reeves (2012), these types can be further grouped into three levels: low-level comprehension (literal comprehension and reorganization), middle-level comprehension (inferential comprehension), and high-level comprehension (evaluation). Furthermore, Reeves (2012) suggests that textbooks should be organized to include a balanced proportion of these levels to effectively enhance students' critical thinking skills and improve their reading comprehension. Therefore, to address the second research question, the proportions of reading comprehension questions are assessed based on these three levels. The detailed proportion of these levels is shown in Table 8 below:

**Table 8. The Proportion of Questions across Different Comprehension Levels in the Barrett's Taxonomy**

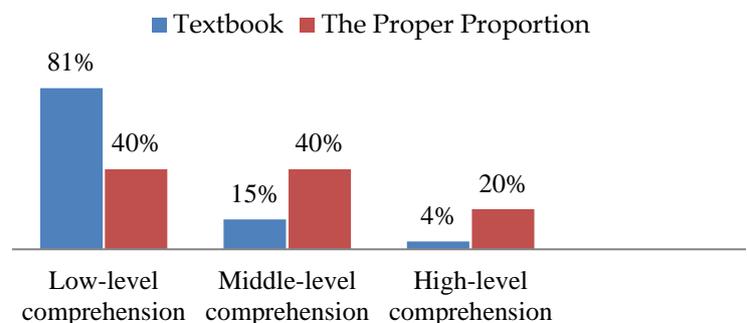
Comp. Level	Comp. Type	Frequency	Percentage	
Low	Literal	170	78.3%	81%
	Reorganization	5	2.3%	

Middle	Inferential	33	33	15.2%	15%
	Evaluation	9	9	4.1%	4%
High	Appreciation	0		0	
<b>Total:</b>		<b>217</b>		<b>100%</b>	

Based on the table above, the data shows that there are 175 reading comprehension questions, or 81% of the total, fall into the low-level category (literal comprehension and reorganization). There are 33 questions, or 15%, categorized as middle-level (inferential comprehension). Meanwhile, 9 questions, or 4%, are considered high-level (evaluation). Thus, among the three levels of comprehension, low-level comprehension questions have the highest proportion in the textbook.

Moreover, to determine whether the textbook reflects a balanced proportion of the three comprehension levels, the percentages for each level were compared to those suggested by Reeves (2012). The results are as follows:

**Chart 1. The Comparison of Proportions across Three Levels between the Textbook and Suggested Guidelines**



The chart above shows that the proportion of the three comprehension levels in the textbook does not align with the suggested guidelines, resulting in an insufficient and imbalanced proportion. The percentage of low-level comprehension is excessively higher than the suggested proportion, while the percentages of middle- and high-level comprehension are significantly lower. Thus, it is evident that the textbook does not adequately reflect a balanced proportion of the three levels of comprehension in Barrett's taxonomy. It places a greater emphasis on low-level comprehension questions, while middle- and high-level comprehension questions are not adequately represented. These results were compared with those of a previous study conducted by Amalya et al. (2020), and it discovered that they have similarities and differences. Their study examined the types of reading comprehension questions based on Barrett's taxonomy in the *Bright an English 2* textbook for eighth graders.

Despite sharing the same textbook title, grade level, and publisher as this research, their study focused on a different curriculum version. Their study used the earlier version of the textbook, which was under the 2013 curriculum, whereas this current research analyzed the updated version designed for the Merdeka curriculum. The results of their study revealed that low-level comprehension questions had the highest number in the textbook, while high-level comprehension questions had the lowest. Similarly, the current research also found the same case. Another similarity was found when comparing the percentages of the three comprehension levels with those suggested by Reeves (2012). The results showed that the proportions of these levels in both studies did not align with the suggested guidelines. However, there were differences in the proportions of high-level comprehension between the two studies. Their study included two categories for high-level questions: 30 evaluation questions and one appreciation questions. In contrast, this research only identified nine evaluation questions, with no appreciation questions found in the textbook. This makes the proportion of high-level comprehension questions in their study was not too overlapping or quite close with the suggested. It was only 4.1% higher than the suggested. In contrast, this study found it to be 16% lower than the suggested proportion, indicating significance differences in frequency and percentage.

Thus, although both studies used the textbook *Bright an English 2*, the version used in the previous study, which followed the 2013 curriculum, had a better proportion of high-level comprehension questions compared to the version used in this current research, which follows the Merdeka curriculum. This finding contradicts the initial expectations that curriculum changes would lead to corresponding improvements in textbook content, particularly in the exercises provided. The assumption was based on the objectives of the Merdeka curriculum for English learning, which aims to develop students' critical and creative thinking skills. However, the results of this research show the opposite. Thus, it can be concluded that the reading comprehension questions in the updated version of the textbook *Bright an English 2* used in this research do not fully align with the objectives of the Merdeka curriculum. This textbook is lacking in fostering higher-level cognitive skills compared to the previous version of the textbook. The previous textbook offered more opportunities for students to engage in high-level comprehension questions, such as evaluation and appreciation. This implies that students using the previous textbook had more chances to develop critical thinking and creativity compared to those using the current textbook.

There could be several possible reasons why the reading comprehension questions in the textbook primarily focus on low-level comprehension. Firstly, the textbook is intended for eight grades which is a transitional period where students are still developing their reading comprehension skills. According to Kemdikbud (2022), the Merdeka curriculum focuses on essential materials and the progressive development of student competencies. As a result, with the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, reading questions in the textbook are adjusted to correspond with students' stages of progress and development, allowing them to learn in accordance with their abilities and developmental needs. Second, the author might perceive that eighth-grade students are not yet ready to tackle high-level comprehension questions because such questions could be seen as too difficult or frustrating for them, potentially leading to disengagement. On the other hand, low-level comprehension questions are typically easier for them to answer because they require basic comprehension skills. Therefore, it is likely that the author may include more low-level comprehension questions to adjust the textbook with students' abilities and readiness. As Sukma and Trisno (2023) stated, in the Merdeka curriculum, students should be provided with materials and activities based on their learning abilities and readiness levels to keep them engaged. Despite this, it is still necessary to provide a balanced mix of lower, middle, and higher-level comprehension questions in the textbook to effectively enhance students' critical thinking skills and improve their reading comprehension. It is because these three levels are interrelated and integrative, meaning they are complement and enhance each other (Frehat and Smadi, 2014). Low-level questions ensure foundational understanding, middle-level questions bridge the gap between low- and high-level questions, while high-level questions build on the foundation to develop advanced cognitive skills and deeper comprehension.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the results that the reading comprehension questions in the textbook *Bright an English 2* are relevant to only four types of comprehension in Barrett's taxonomy: literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, and evaluation. Appreciation was not represented in the textbook. Furthermore, when these types were grouped into three levels, the textbook does not adequately reflect a balanced proportion of these levels. It places a greater emphasis on low-level comprehension questions, while middle- and high-level comprehension questions are not adequately represented.

Then, after comparing different versions of the textbook *Bright an English 2*, it was found that the previous version, which followed the 2013 curriculum, had a better proportion of high-level comprehension questions compared to the current version, which follows the Merdeka curriculum. Unlike its earlier version, the updated textbook lacks in fostering higher-level cognitive skills because it does not provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop critical and creative thinking skills. Therefore, when designing reading questions, the textbook author should ensure that all types of comprehension from Barrett's taxonomy are included and aim for a balanced proportion of the three comprehension levels, following the suggested guidelines. Additionally, teachers should not rely heavily on the textbook used in this research. Instead, in the context of reading exercises, they should seek additional resources that provide a balanced mix of comprehension levels in Barrett's taxonomy. This will help in the comprehensive development of students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills

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