



COGNITIVE LEVELS OF FUN TIME SECTIONS IN THE EIGHTH GRADE ENGLISH FOR NUSANTARA TEXTBOOK

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the cognitive domains embedded in the *Fun Time* sections of the *English for Nusantara* textbook used at the Indonesian junior secondary level, with particular attention to how these activities support lower-order and higher-order thinking skills. Employing a qualitative descriptive content analysis, the study adopts the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy as its analytical framework. All *Fun Time* activities were systematically reviewed and manually coded using a structured classification sheet aligned with the six cognitive domains: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The findings reveal a clear dominance of lower-order thinking skills, particularly remembering, understanding, and applying, while higher-order thinking skills analyzing, evaluating, and creating appear less frequently and are unevenly distributed across units. Although higher-order cognitive tasks are present, their limited occurrence suggests an imbalance in the cognitive demands promoted by the textbook. The results highlight important implications for textbook evaluation, English language teaching, curriculum and materials development, and instructional design. By focusing specifically on the *Fun Time* sections an area rarely explored in prior studies this research offers fresh insights into the role of engaging textbook activities in fostering students' cognitive development within Indonesian junior secondary English education.

Keywords: *Textbook analysis; Cognitive level; Revised Bloom's Taxonomy; English for Nusantara*

1. INTRODUCTION

In English language teaching (ELT), textbooks play a significant role, particularly as the primary source of material guiding classroom learning activities. Structured textbooks provide language input for students during the learning process, a sequence of tasks to test students' abilities and understanding, and guidance on how teachers can encourage reciprocal interactions (Brown, 2019; Seraj et al., 2024; Jaya et al., 2025). Recent research suggests that textbooks serve not only to convey language-related material but also to encourage student participation in the thinking process through the activities they provide (Ahmed, 2023; Soe, 2024; Sukmawijaya et al., 2020). Thus, textbook

assessment increasingly focuses on examining the cognitive demands inherent in learning tasks.

Meanwhile, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia has led to a significant shift toward student-centered education, encouraging students to think more critically and to prioritize creativity, autonomy, and collaboration (Puspitasari, 2023; Saragih & Rahayu, 2022; Lesiana et al., 2023). This curriculum no longer relies solely on memorization; instead, it encourages students to construct and master knowledge actively. In response to this policy, the government introduced English for Nusantara as the official English textbook for junior high school students. English for Nusantara is designed to

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support students' communicative skills through interactive assignments and exercises, visually enhanced materials, and collaborative activities that provide opportunities for active student participation (Arsana, 2023; Hidayat & Rohmana, 2025; Gulnaz, 2020).

The English for Nusantara textbook features a unique "Fun Time" section with games, quizzes, group work, and other interactive activities to create a more enjoyable English-learning experience. The activities included in the English for Nusantara textbooks are expected to increase student engagement in class and further motivate students to learn English. However, some aspects should not be overlooked. Hapsari (2022) stated that without deliberate cognitive design, engaging activities may remain at the beginner level. This suggests that the interactive tasks or activities included in textbooks do not automatically encourage in-depth thinking. This is further explained in a study by Latif (2022), who stated that to achieve effective HOTS integration, tasks are needed that challenge students to think critically, evaluate, and create, rather than simply memorizing information.

To identify the cognitive complexity of learning activities, Bloom's Taxonomy and its revised version, proposed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2019), remain among the most widely used frameworks today. The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy classifies cognitive processes into six levels: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. These levels are commonly grouped into two categories: Lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) (Kholisoh & Linggar Bharati, 2021). LOTS supports basic knowledge acquisition, while HOTS enables students to engage in higher-level cognitive processes such as reasoning, judgment, and creative language use (Clark & Mayer, 2023). In ELT, the integration of LOTS and HOTS must be

balanced, as both are considered crucial for supporting language accuracy and cognitive development (Saraswati & Mulyadi, 2021; Latif, 2022; Jaya et al., 2025b; Mahesti et al., 2025).

In contrast, studies published between 2020 and 2025 consistently indicate that ELT textbooks tend to emphasize LOTS over HOTS. International research also suggests that memorization and comprehension dominate most textbook-based tasks (Johan et al., 2022; Sitio et al., 2023; Arsana et al., 2023). Ahmed (2023) argued that most elementary English textbooks developed under Pakistan's Single National Curriculum target lower cognitive levels or thinking requirements. Zamir and Jan (2023) supported this finding by reporting that English examination questions in Pakistan primarily focus on memorization and comprehension, with limited analytical and evaluative demands. These findings highlight a gap between curriculum expectations and the cognitive demands embedded in learning materials.

A similar pattern can be observed in the Indonesian education system. Although HOTS is frequently emphasized in the curriculum, its implementation in textbooks remains limited and inconsistent (Sukmawijaya et al., 2020; Himawan & Suyata, 2021; Ayu et al., 2022). EFL textbooks in Indonesia tend to prioritize LOTS, particularly in reading activities and grammatical exercises (Saraswati & Mulyadi, 2021). Recent studies further support this view, with Maryamah et al., (2024), reporting that reading comprehension tasks in Indonesian EFL textbooks predominantly focus on remembering and understanding, while analyzing and evaluating are rarely addressed. Arsana (2023) specifically examined the English for Nusantara textbook and found that remembering was the most frequently represented cognitive level across all activities.

Furthermore, Hidayat and Rohmana (2025) reinforced this argument by analyzing

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the cognitive processes embedded in the English for Nusantara textbook for eighth-grade junior high school students. Their findings revealed that comprehension and application were the most frequently observed cognitive processes, compared with higher-level processes. While the dominance of LOTS may help students grasp basic language concepts, it also raises concerns, as it can limit students' opportunities to develop critical thinking skills. Hapsari (2022) further noted that teachers often encounter difficulties in implementing HOTS-based instruction when textbooks do not consistently support it through tasks that require higher cognitive demands.

Other systematic studies also support this view. One such study by Soe (2024) analyzed a comprehensive review of ELT textbook evaluation studies. It concluded that most textbooks analyzed using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy still exhibited a significant dominance of LOTS. These findings indicate that HOTS is applied inconsistently and often functions more as a supplementary element rather than a core component of learning activities. Puspitasari et al. (2024) further emphasized that the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum largely depends on how well learning materials translate policy objectives into concrete classroom practices.

Although the number of textbook review studies has increased significantly, more detailed analyses of specific sections, such as the "Fun Time" section in the English for Nusantara textbook, remain very limited. Most existing studies focus on reading comprehension questions, general assignment tasks, or unit-level analyses (Arsana, 2023; Maryamah et al., 2024). As a result, there is a lack of in-depth investigation into whether interactive textbook sections genuinely promote higher-level cognitive processes. Given that teachers rely heavily on textbooks to guide classroom instruction, all textbook components must align with intended cognitive learning

objectives (Arsana, 2023; Saraswati & Mulyadi, 2021; Maryamah et al., 2024).

Considering that junior high school students are still at a critical developmental stage and are beginning to engage in more analytical and critical thinking, the cognitive demands of "Fun Time" activities are particularly important (Latif, 2022; Rahayu & Saragih, 2022). In line with this, Hidayat and Rohmana (2025) argued that ELT materials in Indonesian textbooks demonstrate a gradual shift toward HOTS-oriented tasks, although LOTS continues to dominate. Understanding how this balance is represented in interactive textbook sections can offer valuable insights for improving instructional design.

This study employs Saraswati and Mulyadi (2021) Revised Bloom's Taxonomy as an analytical framework to classify the levels of thinking represented in the "Fun Time" section of the English for Nusantara textbook. Focusing on this specific section aims to address a gap in the existing literature, as most previous studies have concentrated on comprehension questions, unit-level exercises, or the overall textbook design (Arsana, 2023; Maryamah et al., 2024). By narrowing the analysis to the Fun Time section, this study examines whether the activities in the textbook align with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasize the development of creativity and higher-order thinking skills among students.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What cognitive domain levels are found in the "Fun Time" sections of the English for Nusantara textbook for eighth-grade students?
2. Which type of thinking skills (LOTS or HOTS) is more dominant in these sections?

The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the ongoing discussion of textbook evaluation, provide practical insights for teachers regarding the use of the English for Nusantara textbook,

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and offer educational implications for curriculum developers in adapting and aligning fun and engaging textbook activities with the stated goal of developing students' higher-order thinking skills.

2. METHODS

The method used in this study was a descriptive qualitative method with a focus on content analysis. According to Creswell (2022), the qualitative method was descriptive in that it investigated the meanings, procedures, and understandings derived from words or images. It allows the researcher to explore the meanings, processes, and descriptions rather than perform numerical measurements (Neuman, 2019; Tisdell et al., 2025; Oe et al., 2022). The researcher's perspective was used to interpret the data descriptively, while the qualitative data were collected, classified, and analyzed using the theory of Anderson and Krathwohl (2019) as the theoretical framework. After analyzing the data, an interpretation was made to present a conclusion.

The focus of this study was to investigate the activities in Fun Time sections in the English for Nusantara textbook based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The data sources were taken from the activities of "Fun Time" sections in the "English for Nusantara" textbook for 8th-grade students published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2022, which consists of 5 chapters. There were two or three "Fun Time" sections in each chapter, so there were twelve "Fun Time" sections in total.

Each activity was classified and analyzed according to the cognitive processes outlined in the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy by Anderson and Krathwohl (2019). For the data collection instrument, the researcher adapted and developed it through the Anderson & Krathwohl (2019) frameworks.

The researcher observed the activities to collect primary information. The activities were then classified and analyzed qualitatively using the theoretical framework by Anderson & Krathwohl (2019). Later, the researcher interpreted the findings in light of the research questions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of an analysis of the Fun Time sections in the English for Nusantara textbook for eighth-grade students, based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The analysis is conducted in two parts: (1) identifying the cognitive domain levels found in each Fun Time section, and (2) determining the type of thinking skills (lower-order thinking skills or higher-order thinking skills) that are more dominant in each section. The findings show that the activities involve a range of cognitive processes from lower-order thinking skills, such as Remembering (C1), Understanding (C2), and Applying (C3), to higher-order thinking skills, including Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6), with varying distributions across chapters and units. The detailed results are organized by chapter and unit and are presented in the following explanations.

1. Cognitive Domain Levels Found in Each Fun Time Section

This research examined the Fun Time sections of the English for Nusantara textbook, designed for eighth-grade students, using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy by Anderson & Krathwohl (2019). The focus was on determining which cognitive processes, Remembering (C1), Understanding (C2), Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6), were frequent in each section. The findings indicate that the Fun Time sections incorporate various levels of thinking, although their distribution differs among chapters.

In Chapter 1, there are three units, and each one of them has a Fun Time section. In Unit 1, students play a bingo game, recalling and arranging verbs into a grid before gameplay begins. The task primarily emphasizes Remembering (C1), as students access vocabulary from their memory, as shown in some instructions, "Each member of the group mentions a past form verb (regular and irregular)." "One student from each group writes the words on the board." "Every group chooses nine words from the board." "Every group writes the nine words in the grid." The bold verbs or expressions indicate Remembering's action words. Analyzing (C4) is also found in this unit, as

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they compare the called-out verbs with what they have on their grids and recognize accurate matches. There is evidence that shows the action verbs for analysing. “Every group takes turns to say a verb to the class.” Moreover, “Each group should check if they have the verb or not.” Consequently, this exercise promotes a combination of lower- and higher-level cognitive processes (C1 and C4), moving naturally from memory recall to comparative analysis. The second unit in this chapter also introduces higher- and lower-order thinking skills. The activity mainly involves Creating (C6), as students draw a picture and write content to form a brief narrative, similar to the textbook's evidence: “Each group member takes turns to draw a picture of their past action in the boxes.” Moreover, “Have the group write a sentence under each picture to make a sequence of experiences.” It also includes Understanding (C2), as they show comprehension by presenting and orally interpreting their work. “Show the pictures and read the sentences to the class.” As a result, the task combines creative expression with support for students in organizing and communicating ideas coherently. Unit 3 combines Remembering (C1) and Analyzing (C4). Students start by recalling well-known tourist locations, while their classmates attempt to ask questions and guess the place. Remembering is shown in the action verb below: “Each member prepares 10 names of famous tourist sites around Indonesia.” And “Do the ‘Guessing Game’ in the group.” While responding to clues, they analyze information, eliminate incorrect options, and answer correctly, just as the textbook instructions say: “The other three people ask questions and guess.” And “The winner is the one who can guess correctly and fast.” This game demands quick thinking and decision-making, guiding students beyond simple recall into analytical thinking. It combines low- and high-level cognitive processes.

Moving on to Chapter 2, Unit 1 is all about miming and a guessing game. The activities in this unit combine lower and higher-order thinking skills: Applying (C3) and Analyzing (C4). Students start by applying their knowledge to describe the mimed actions. These instructions are “Pick a card.” Moreover, “Mime the action on the card.” Make the researcher conclude the

verbs as part of the Applying. “Your partners have to ask questions using the past tense forms to the student miming the action.” Moreover, “An extra point is given if they can guess the character who did the action in the story.” They are indicated as Analyzing (C4) because students analyze clues from the mime and questions, eliminate incorrect options, and answer correctly. Meanwhile, Unit 2 promotes high-order thinking skills, which include Analyzing (C4) and Creating (C6). Students discuss and analyse some alternative endings, compare them, and choose one ending that suits the story. Students are free to create their own endings based on their knowledge and creativity, just as in the instructions from the Fun Time Section in Unit 2, Chapter 2. “In a group of four, choose one of the endings that suits the story. Circle number 1, 2, 3, OR 4.” Moreover, “Your group can create your own ending. Draw a picture for the ending of the story.” Those action verbs in the instructions are clearly stated: Analyzing (C4) and Creating (C6). This task encourages imagination while remaining connected to the text's content.

Unit 1 in Chapter 3 focuses on low- and high-order thinking skills: Understanding (C2), Analyzing (C4), and Evaluating (C5). Students recognize and interpret the picture. Then, students analyze and evaluate the picture to express their opinions, as evidenced by the listed instructions below:

- a. “Take turns to pick out the flashcards one by one.”
- b. “Express your opinion on the flashcard, do you think it is bad or good for the environment? Why yes or why not?”

Unit 2 also promotes low- and high-order thinking skills: Applying (C3) and Analyzing (C4). The instructions in the textbook are “The word keeper writes a word of five letters”, “Other players take turns to guess the word by putting the gray letters on the first line of the sheet.”, and “The word keeper changes the letter based on the rules below:

If other players guess the letter right but in the wrong position, the word keeper changes the gray letter to a yellow letter.” Which identifies as students (the word keeper) applies vocabulary knowledge to select an appropriate five-letter word. In contrast, the other students, the players, apply their

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knowledge of word spelling and vocabulary to form word guesses. They also analyze color-coded feedback (gray, yellow, green), compare patterns across attempts, eliminate incorrect letters or positions, and infer the most probable word. The last unit of this chapter only promotes the lower cognitive process, applying (C3). Students must use the given clues to apply their vocabulary knowledge and correctly place words into the provided squares, as instructed: “Fill in the squares with words you found based on the clues.”

In the following chapter, Unit 1 asks students to play a game (Cross the River). This unit only develops lower-level cognitive processes: Applying (C3) and Understanding (C2). “To step on each stone, you must ask a ‘Yes/No’ question with ‘Did’ or past tense ‘to be’ correctly.” Students apply grammatical rules to create ‘Did’ or past tense ‘to be’ questions correctly. “Three cards are in red, meaning you answer the question that your teacher asks based on the picture.” Understanding occurs when students interpret the picture and comprehend the teacher’s question, enabling them to respond appropriately, as in the instruction above. Meanwhile, in Unit 2, students should make Wh-questions based on the words on the answer cards. This unit combines lower and higher cognitive levels, which are Applying (C3), Analyzing (C4), with a sight of Remembering (C1). Students start by applying their knowledge of grammatical rules and question words to construct correct Wh-questions. Then they compare questions, evaluate grammatical accuracy, and judge quality using criteria. Remembering takes part when students have to recognize and recall the information from the card, as reflected in the listed instructions below:

- a. “The players in the group then race to make a past simple Wh-question using a question word from their card to elicit the word or phrase read out.”
- b. “If two players ask a question at the same time, the other players decide which question is the best in terms of grammatical correctness or inventiveness.”
- c. “Then, it’s the next student’s turn to take an answer card and read it aloud.”

In Chapter 5, as conducted in the previous chapter, Unit 1 is about a miming and guessing game. The unit incorporates Understanding (C2), Applying (C3), and Evaluating (C5). Students interpret cards, act out clues, reconsider incorrect guesses, and later share their opinions about the activity. This activity categorizes students into low- and high-order thinking skills. The following is the list of instructions that describe those cognitive levels:

- a. “Take one card.”
- b. “Think of what you are going to mime.”
- c. “In two minutes, mime what is shown on the card.”
- d. “The members of his/her team guess the answer, for example, ‘You are shaving your beard’.”
- e. “What are your opinions about the activities in the miming cards?”

In Unit 2, students are required to find adverbs and answer questions based on a story. It begins with Understanding (C2), “Find 9 adverbs of manner in the sentences,” as students identify adverbs of manner in various sentences. “Compare your answer with your friends’ answers.” They then verify and discuss which responses are correct or missed; this portrays Analyzing (C4), as instructed. This unit also concentrated on lower and higher cognitive levels.

2. Type of Thinking Skills (LOTS or HOTS) That are More Dominant in Each Fun Time Section

This section presents the analysis of the dominant type of thinking skills found in the Fun Time sections of the English for Nusantara textbook for eighth-grade students. Based on Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy by (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), cognitive processes are classified into lower-order thinking skills (LOTS), consisting of Remembering (C1), Understanding (C2), and Applying (C3), and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), consist of Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6). In the previous section, we learned which cognitive levels are found in each Fun Time section and the frequency of each cognitive level shown in the English for Nusantara Textbook. This analysis aims to determine which type of thinking skill is more dominant by examining the frequency and percentage of

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each cognitive level identified across the textbook, as presented in the table below.

Table 1. Frequencies of and Percentages of LOTS in the Fun Time Sections

Cognitive Level	Frequency	Percentages (%)	Type of Thinking Skills
C1 (Remembering)	3	11.54%	LOTS
C2 (Understanding)	5	19.23%	LOTS
C3 (Applying)	6	23.08%	LOTS
Total LOTS	14	53.85%	

Table 2. Frequencies of and Percentages of HOTS in the Fun Time Sections

Cognitive Level	Frequency	Percentages (%)	Type of Thinking Skills
C4 (Analyzing)	8	30.77%	HOTS
C5 (Evaluating)	2	7.69%	HOTS
C6 (Creating)	2	7.69%	HOTS
Total HOTS	12	46.15%	

Table 3. Total LOTS & HOTS in the Fun Time Sections

Type of Thinking Skills	Percentages (%)
LOTS	53.85%
HOTS	46.15%
Total	100%

As indicated in the table, lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) account for 53.85% of the total cognitive processes identified in the Fun Time sections, while higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) represent 46.15%. This distribution shows that LOTS are slightly more dominant across the activities. The findings suggest that the textbook places greater emphasis on basic cognitive processes, such as recalling, understanding, and applying language knowledge. However, the considerable proportion of HOTS also indicates that students are provided with opportunities to engage in higher-level thinking, including analyzing, evaluating, and creating, within the learning activities.

Discussion

This research focuses on the cognitive aspects of one section of the English for

Nusantara textbook for eighth-grade junior high school students, namely Fun Time, which was analyzed using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The results indicate that lower-order thinking skills (LOTS), specifically Remembering (C1), Understanding (C2), and Applying (C3), continue to dominate textbook activities. Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), including Analyzing (C4), Evaluating (C5), and Creating (C6), are still rare and unevenly distributed across units. This suggests that the Fun Time section in the textbook does not fully encourage higher-order thinking processes, as most activities still focus on students' basic cognitive abilities.

This continued dominance of LOTS aligns with the findings of recent studies on EFL textbook evaluation. First, as stated by Maryamah et al (2024), English textbooks for junior high schools in Indonesia still focus largely on memorizing vocabulary and basic concepts, indicating a strong emphasis on memorization and comprehension. A similar pattern is also found in various recent studies, which show that tasks emphasizing lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) are still used far more frequently than activities designed to develop higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in ELT materials (Ahmed, 2023; Sukmawijaya et al., 2020; Zamir & Jan, 2023). This indicates that although the current curriculum clearly encourages the development of critical, creative, and reflective thinking, its implementation in textbooks is not fully aligned with these objectives, and textbooks still prioritize language accuracy and comprehension.

From a theoretical perspective, the continued dominance of LOTS in textbooks can be seen as support for the thinking process. Clark and Mayer (2023) argue that remembering and understanding are crucial foundations needed before students can engage more deeply in higher-order thinking processes. In this study, the implementation of this supporting function is evident in Chapter 1, Unit 1, where students actively participate in a bingo game that requires them to remember verbs. This activity activates Remembering (C1) and allows students to reinforce vocabulary in a less demanding yet engaging context. This type of activity may be appropriate for junior high

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school students who are still in the foundational stages of language development.

While the dominance of LOTS is undeniable, research findings also suggest that some activities in the Fun Time section involve higher-order cognitive skills. One example is found in Chapter 1, Unit 2, where students must interpret a series of images and construct original sentences. This activity combines aspects of Understanding (C2) and Creating (C6). Activities like these can motivate students to go beyond mere memorization by prompting them to produce their own language output using visual cues. Similar findings were also noted by Latif (2022), who stated that creative language tasks can foster HOTS, especially when students are required to construct their own meaning rather than simply selecting predetermined answers (Latif, 2022). Activities like these demonstrate that textbooks allow students to think creatively, even if the opportunities are not yet maximized.

A higher cognitive level, analytical thinking (C4), was also found in several activities within the Fun Time section. One example is in Chapter 1, Unit 3, where this activity involves drawing conclusions and sorting out incorrect options. In this activity, students must guess tourist destinations based on clues provided by classmates. This requires them to comprehend information, identify patterns, and draw logical conclusions. This Fun Time activity aligns with Arsana et al (2023), statement that English for Nusantara applies analytical processes through its clue- and inference-based activities. These activities encourage students to process the information they receive and then use reasoning to think analytically, indicating that C4 is also implemented in several interactive activities within Fun Time.

A higher-level application of HOTS can also be found in Chapter 2, Unit 2, where students must evaluate the ending of a story and draw their own conclusions. This activity activates the Analyzing (C4) and Creating (C6) aspects, as students must validate their judgments and produce new content. These findings support Saraswati and Mulyadi (2021), assertion that higher-order thinking skills are strengthened when students must evaluate and provide logical justification for

their choices. These activities illustrate the Independent Curriculum's encouragement of student creativity, reflection, and agency (Puspitasari, 2023). However, HOTS-oriented activities do not appear in all units; they are limited to specific units, indicating that their implementation is selective and not yet systematic.

The irregular distribution of HOTS implementation across the Fun Time unit indicates that higher-order thinking skills are presented primarily as enrichment activities rather than as core cognitive demands. The results of this study partially contradict the statement by Sukmawijaya et al (2020), who stated that HOTS must be integrated throughout learning materials to support the development of students' sustainable thinking skills. When HOTS-oriented tasks are limited in textbooks, teachers often struggle to find ways to implement higher-order thinking optimally in the classroom (Hapsari, 2022). In this textbook, although HOTS-based activities exist, their limited frequency and minority presence still act as a barrier, restricting students' ability to fully practice analytical, evaluative, and creative thinking in a structured manner.

However, these findings also reflect a general trend in ELT textbooks in Indonesia. Diana et al (2025) noted a shift from predominantly LOTS-based activities to the addition of activities that require higher-order thinking skills in English for Nusantara. This study confirms this aforementioned shift, particularly in the Fun Time section, as evidenced by the presence of activities that require students to engage in higher-order thinking, such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating, although the number is still small. However, rather than revealing a pedagogical weakness, the dominance of LOTS enables it to serve as a crucial and necessary linguistic and cognitive foundation for students before they engage in more complex thinking processes in English.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the Fun Time section in the English for Nusantara textbook balances engagement and demands for thinking skills by prioritizing basic skills while selectively including activities that implement higher-order thinking. While this approach aligns with the developmental needs of junior high school students and the scaffolding principles

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proposed by Clark and Mayer (2023), greater consistency in the application of HOTS would certainly further support the goals of the Independent Curriculum. Future textbook development would be even more beneficial if the activities within it shifted their orientation toward HOTS and were distributed evenly across the units, ensuring students have the opportunity to directly and consistently practice these higher-order thinking skills alongside language learning.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the cognitive domains embedded in the Fun Time sections of the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VIII using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The analysis reveals that lower-order thinking skills (LOTS), particularly remembering, understanding, and applying, dominate the activities, while higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), including analyzing, evaluating, and creating, appear less frequently and are unevenly distributed across units. These findings indicate that although the Fun Time sections are designed to engage students through interactive and enjoyable activities, their cognitive demands primarily emphasize foundational language processing.

The dominance of LOTS suggests that the Fun Time activities primarily function as linguistic and cognitive scaffolding for junior high school learners. By focusing on recall, comprehension, and basic application, the textbook supports students in strengthening vocabulary knowledge and understanding language forms before engaging in more complex reasoning. This approach aligns with the theoretical perspective that lower-order cognitive processes serve as the necessary foundations for the development of higher-level thinking. At the same time, the presence of HOTS-oriented activities, though limited, demonstrates that the textbook provides opportunities for students to engage in analytical, evaluative, and creative thinking within specific units.

However, the uneven distribution of HOTS indicates that higher-order thinking skills are not yet systematically integrated across the Fun Time sections. Instead, HOTS-oriented activities tend to appear selectively and function more as enrichment

rather than as consistent cognitive demands. While this pattern reflects a gradual shift toward higher-order thinking in line with the Merdeka Curriculum, it also suggests that students may have limited sustained exposure to higher-level cognitive tasks during interactive learning activities.

Overall, this study contributes to ELT textbook evaluation research by providing a focused analysis of the Fun Time sections in the English for Nusantara Textbook for eighth-grade students. The findings highlight the need for a more balanced integration of LOTS and HOTS better to support both language development and critical thinking skills. For textbook developers, the results suggest the importance of embedding higher-order thinking tasks more consistently across units. For teachers, the findings underscore the need to supplement interactive activities with additional prompts or guidance that encourage deeper cognitive engagement. Future research may explore how teachers implement Fun Time activities in classroom practice or examine their impact on students' actual cognitive performance.

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