Evaluating Reading Activities Of Intermediate Grade-1 (English For Iraq Textbook) For In The Light Of Higher-Order Thinking Skills

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Abstract: The basic goal of this research paper is to evaluate the reading activities in the light of higher order thinking skills (HOTS) of "English for Iraq" textbook Grade -1in order to discover to what degree all the reading activities in the SB and AB correspond the suggested criteria. To fulfill this aim, the researcher utilized the descriptive approach. As a research tool , the researcher used content analysis card by constructing a checklist. The researcher constructed the checklist from books, papers, the related literature, and several previous studies. Consequently, the results were as follows: the analyzing skill got 51.92% (SB 58.44% and AB 33.33%). Concerning the evaluating skill, it got 41.35% (SB 32.47%and AB 66.67%). While the creating skill got 6.73% in the reading activities of the SB.So, HOTS were not well distributed in the student's book as well as the activity book.

Keywords: Evaluating, English Textbook, Higher-Order Thinking Skills.

1.Introduction

Textbooks are the most commonly used teaching and learning materials for both teachers and students. They provide a system for teachers for the achievement of objectives and aims of the course and also act as a resource for teachers when managing lessons. The textbook is a significant source of information and a good opportunity for EFL students to make an interaction in the target language, which is only recognized in the classroom environment.

Ur states that "textbooks must have a clear form of activity, so the teachers and students know what will happen and understand what is done next so that there is a change".[1] The textbook is a good source of knowledge which provides many forms of materials, tasks, and exercises. Furthermore checking the exercises in a textbook is extremely substantial since a good book contains the four basic skills of the language. Thus, the teacher has to evaluate whether or not the textbook is good.

English teachers have the privilege to engage in the evaluation process since they utilize textbooks in their classes to be equipped with the appropriate textbook for their particular community of learners. For the following two reasons, language teachers can be efficient in the analysis of the textbooks. First, they are the direct users of the language. Second, they spend a lot of time periods with their students.Thus, they are experienced with their students' needs, background, and desires[2].

Marier states that "Students should be taught how to read to become effective readers. To fulfill this aspect, good readers use higher-order thinking strategies to think about and control their reading before, during, and after reading a selection."[3]

Critical reading means having HOTS. It is assumed to be philosophical and sophisticated thinking which requires some effort and achieves highly esteemed results. These results are not easy to predict since that process is not a mechanical one. This means making higher-order thinking is difficult to be explained. Nevertheless, it is possible to understand higher order thinking and to tutor it in the coming years.[4]

The researcher believes that the evaluation of reading activities in the light of HOTS is important because it can add critical thinking skills to reading skills and can make students stronger in the English language environment.

2.Research Questions

1.To what percentage do all the reading activities of the textbook contain the analyzing skill?

2.To what percentage do all the reading activities of the textbook contain the evaluating skill?

3.To what percentage do all the reading activities of the textbook contain the creating skill?

3.Literature Review

3.1 Evaluation

Evaluation is a method of investigation that gives details about the accomplishments reached and provides explanations in addition to more developmental proposals. [5] It is the process of seeking to establish the value of something for some purpose .[6]

3.2 Significance of Evaluation

By using evaluation, students can determine their level amongst the others to reach top levels. Also, It provides them with appropriate feedback. The evaluation identifies students' manners and predispositions with a student's mental stability to provide a suitable education for him/her.[7]

Evaluation helps in providing essential guidelines to tame the difficulties of learning that may subtend learners.[8]

In the educational field, the evaluation shall be deemed as a significant aim to make choices, and decisions therefore students deem evaluation as the crucial component of their success. [9]

3.3 Textbooks

Textbooks are considered the most prominent teaching materials used throughout the EFL classes. They include the fundamental elements of both culture and language, also they match learners' interests and cultural perspectives and background. Subsequently, it is extremely important to assist teachers to select the convenient ones for their grades.[10]

3.4 Merits and Drawbacks of Using Textbooks

Ur[1] states that a good textbook has some merits as follows:

1.Clear and concise design.

2.Interesting and various themes and tasks.

3.Obvious instructions.

4.Systematic syllabus.

5.Arranged content.

On the other hand, the list below includes several drawbacks of using textbooks :

1.The material of textbooks may not even be pertinent or meaningful to the class and they do not really reveal the interests of students and their needs.

2.They may include unauthentic language, since conversations, texts, and other elements of the content, oftentimes, do not represent the language use.

3.The material of textbooks may not even be at the appropriate level.

4.They may be culturally and socially biased. [11],[12]

3.5Textbook Evaluation

When teachers choose a new material, at a school, they must examine that material to check its suitability for their school environment. In this matter, they should take into consideration several various aspects, such as the students' level of proficiency, the language factors, the students' age, etc. This process is called materials evaluation.[13]

Ellis suggests that material evaluation could be carried out in three major stages:

1.Pre-use evaluation which is intended to examine the prospective effectiveness of the textbooks,

2.In-use evaluation which is intended to examine the material which is already utilized, and

3. Post-use evaluation which is involved in the evaluation of a textbook after it has been used.[14]

Richards claims that before evaluating a textbook, information on the following points is deemed necessary:

1.The function of the textbook in the course,

2.The teachers in the course, and

3.The students in the course.[15]

3.6 Reading

Reading is an enjoyable, intense, private activity, from which much pleasure can be derived, and in which one can become absorbed. [16]

It is the process where readers are learning thingsconcerning what they are actually. Consequently, we can read to criticize and evaluate, or we can read for comprehension which is considered as the most common purpose which is taking place when reading an enjoyable story or a motivating novel.[17]

3.7 Kinds of Reading

Brown[18] suggests that reading is divided into three types of performance:

1.Perspective reading wherein reading drills and tasks require the elements of greater discourse ranges: words, letters, and some other graphic symbols.

2.Interactive reading in which reading is considered to be a process of engaging learners; readers bring to the text various set of abstract objects and events and links them in the real world to understand the text.

3.Extensive reading applies to texts of more than one page, essays, professional articles, books, and short stories.

3.8 HOTS & Bloom's Taxonomy

Brookhart defines HOTS by classifying it into three distinct terms:

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1. In terms of transfer: HOTS is the ability of students to apply the information and skills they have already gained in a new environment or an unfamiliar situation.

2. In terms of critical thinking: HOTS is the ability to create a judgment. In this case, students are requested to think, reflect, and make some decisions.

3. In terms of problem-solving: HOTS is the ability to solve problems both in life and in the academic sector. In this sense, students are requested to recognize and find a creative and new solution to any problem. [19]

Bloom's taxonomy was introduced at the beginning of 1956 by Dr. Benjamin Bloom. It is a model of categorizing thinking according to six perceptual levels. As shown in the figure below the taxonomy is divided into three lowest levels and three highest levels[20].

The taxonomy is a collection of thinking skills that come in sequence. Bloom's taxonomy is helping to instruct teachers in the design of student tasks according to their cognitive abilities.[21]

Bloom's Taxonomy[22]

The revised taxonomy comprises six levels: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Analyzing, evaluating, and creating are the highest three levels of the revised taxonomy. Those are the HOTS[23]. Those changes are made in three main categories: terminology, structure, and emphasis. [20][33]

OriginalTaxonomy	Revised Taxonomy
Knowledge	**Remember-**retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory.
Comprehension	**Understand** – determine the meaning of the instructional message.
Application	**Apply** – use a procedure in a given situation.
Analysis	**Analyze** – break material into parts and see how they are related.
Synthesis	**Evaluate** – make judgments based on criteria and standards.
Evaluation	**Create** – put elements together to form a coherent whole or make an original product.

Original Taxonomy Vs. Revised Taxonomy [24]

As a result, the HOTS in the revised taxonomy looks like these:

1.**Analyzing level:** This implies that the knowledge is split up into smaller concepts and ideas and trying to identify the relationships among them.
2.**Evaluating level:** This involves evaluating and criticizing the value of content on the basis of different criteria.
3.**Creating level:** This involves the creation, organizing, and production of a new structure based on various elements. [19]

3.9 HOTS & Reading

Abu Nejmeh states that the relation between HOTS and reading comprehension is strongly associated.HOTS strategies can promote the reading process , and reading can lead to the development and implementation of HOTS. [25][32]

Critical thinking allows students to figure out the meaning of a text by making generalizations and evaluation according to previous experience. Reading skills must be taught alongside all perceptual skill sets. These skills start from remembering and ending with creating. Also, These skills should be learned throughout the exercise of reading comprehension. As a consequence, any reading text must be supported with activities, exercises, and drills to improve those skills. [26]

3.10 Previous Studies

● **Apriani** [27]

This study is about evaluating HOTS in reading activities of EFL "Pathway to English" textbook depending on the Bloom's taxonomy. This study is performed on the 10th grade school students in Bengkulu, Indonesia in the scholastic year (2019-2020).

The researcher utilizes the content analysis because she realizes the specific characters of the content in"Pathway to English". Qualitative data is used since the information is in the form of words. Data was gathered through two tools; the analysis card, and the checklist table.

The results of the representation of HOTS are 2 of 72 essay questions concerning the analyzing skill (2.78%), the evaluating skill acquires 1 out of 72 questions(1.38%), and the creating skill attains null (0%). It could be concluded that the representation of HOTS was not well-distributed.

● **Daniati and Fitrawati** [28]

The purpose of this study is to analyze reading exercises according to HOTS in "Bright an English Course Book". This study is performed on the 9thgrade of school students in Indonesia in (2019-2020). It used the descriptive qualitative method. Data was gathered from "Bright" an English textbook by using the analysis card and the checklist table.

The findings revealed that the questions of HOTS were 78 or 18.9% of 412 reading questions. Thus, the analyzing level got 11,9%, 5,8% for the evaluating level, and 1,2% for the creating level. However, the questions regarding HOTS were not the predominant level in this book.

4.Methodology

4.1 Research Design

In order to conduct this study, the researcher, adopted the descriptive-evaluative content analysis. Singhdeclares that a descriptive research is used to describe an activity and also provide a concise description of the phenomenon being analyzed.[29][34]

It determines the total number of periods something takes place and attempts to establish the descriptive or representational statistics for a phenomenon,– i.e., the overall amount or frequency of occurrences.

4.2 Research Population & Sample

The population of this study is the "English for Iraq Textbook"(Both SB and AB textbooks) of grade-1, while the sample of this study is all the reading activities the textbook.

4.3 Instrument of Data Collection

After reviewing the literature available, like books, prior research, related articles, and papers, the researcher formed an analytical tool. In order to analyze and evaluate the reading activities for intermediate grade-1 textbook "English for Iraq", the researcher constructed a checklist(comprises of 3 skills and 26 sub-skills) that depends on the HOTS in the revised Bloom's taxonomy.

4.4 Statistical Analysis

The researcher utilized the statistical procedures below:

1.Percentage as a way of measuring the frequency of data related to the suitability of the activity.
2.The reliability of the checklist data is determined by the reliability coefficient.
3.The final results obtained by the checklist are measured by means.

5.Results & Findings

Q1.To what percentage do all the reading activities of the textbook contain the analyzing skill?

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In order to answer the question above, the researcher analyzed the reading activities in the textbook. The analyzing skill contains (13) items concerning the reading activities in the SB and AB. The following table shows the frequencies and the percentage of each item in the analyzing skill.

Item	S.B.	%	A.B.	%	T.	%
1.Realize the facts by recognition of opinions.	5	11.1	4	44.4	9	16.7
2.Classify data in the text.	0	0	0	0	0	0
3.Compare the elements in the text.	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.Deduce meanings of words.	4	8.9	1	11.1	5	9.3
5.Read among the lines.	3	6.7	0	0	3	5.6
6.Identify the causative factors.	3	6.7	0	0	3	5.6
7.Clarify the informationprovided.	0	0	0	0	0	0
8.Realize clues and proofs.	2	4.4	0	0	2	3.7
9.Educe fundamental rules.	0	0	0	0	0	0
10. Deduce the emotions, behaviors, or tones of the writer.	7	15.6	1	11.1	8	14.8
11. Recognize the difference between the key ideas from the supportive ones.	2	4.4	0	0	2	3.7
12. Arrange items based on significance.	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. Divide the text into its basic elements.	19	42.2	3	33.3	22	40.7
	45	100	9	100	54	100

Table (5.1)
Freq. and P. of the items in the analyzing skill

Table (5.1) demonstrates that high percentages in the SB are scored for (divide the text into its basic elements)which got 42.2% with a frequency of (19), (deduce the emotions, behaviors, or tones of the writer) which got15.6% with a frequency of (7), and so on. While in the AB the item (realize the facts by recognition of opinions) got the highest percentage with a frequency of (4).

Q2.To what percentage do all the reading activities of the textbook contain the evaluating skill?
In order to answer the question above, the researcher analyzed the reading activities in the textbook. The evaluating skill contains (4) items concerning the reading activities in the SB and the AB. The following table shows the frequencies and the percentage of each item in the evaluating skill.

Item	S.B.	%	A.B.	%	T.	%
1.Provide an opinion on the positions in the target text.	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.Infer the text themes.	0	0	0	0	0	0
3.Perceive subjectivity and objectivity.	5	71.4	0	0	5	71.4
4.Make decisions on the basis of logical arguments.	2	28.6	0	0	2	28.6
	7	100	0	0	7	100

Table (5.2)
Freq. and P. of the items in the evaluating skill

Table (5.2) shows that twoitems (perceive subjectivity and objectivity and make decisions on the basis of logical arguments) are only available in reading, whereas the AB activities do not cover any of these items at all.
Q3.To what percentage do all the reading activities of the textbook contain the creating skill?
In order to answer the question above, the researcher analyzed the reading activities in the textbook. The creating skill contains (9) items concerning the reading activities in the SB and the AB. The following table shows the frequencies and the percentage of each item in the creating skill.

Item	S.B.	%	A.B.	%	T.	%
1.Reconfigure text related facts.	2	8	2	10.5	4	9.3
2.Epitomize the text.	9	36	0	0	9	20.9
3.Write the text material using your phrases.	8	32	3	15.8	11	25.6
4.Predict situations related to the topic.	0	0	1	5.3	1	2.3
5.Make a discussion.	2	8	9	47.4	11	25.6

6.Produce a hypothesis.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
7.Develop Text-related facts.	**4**	**16**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**9.3**
8.Consolidate your existing knowledge with the data in the text.	**0**	**0**	**2**	**10.5**	**2**	**4.7**
9.Link information from diverse sources.	**0**	**0**	**1**	**5.3**	**1**	**2.3**
	25	**100**	**18**	**100**	**43**	**100**

Table (5.3)
Freq. and P. of the items in the creating skill

Table (5.3)illustrates that in the SB the item (epitomize the text) acquired the frequency of (9) and 36% concerning the percentage. Then, the item (write the text material using your phrases) acquired32% as a percentage and a frequency of (8).Whereasin the AB the item (make a discussion) got % 47.4% with a frequency of (9).
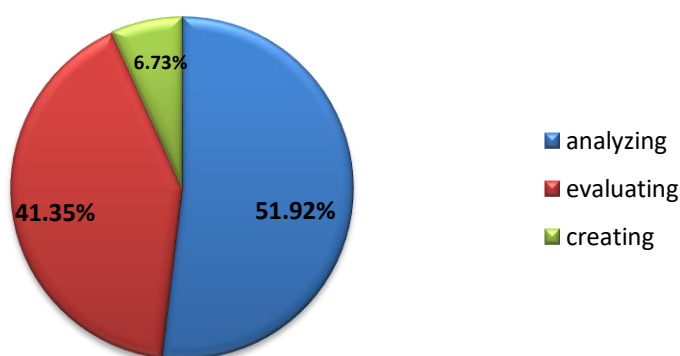
HOTS percentage in the Textbooks

6.Conclusion
The outcomes of this study have shown that HOTS are not well distributed in reading activities of the textbook in question. To highlight, out of the (26) items used as criteria to evaluate the reading activities, only (15) were covered in the SB,that is,58% whereas 42% were obsolete. Furthermore, in the WB only 10 skills, that is,46% were covered whereas54% were neglected.
As far as the processing and handling of the reading activities is concerned, almost all the identical form of questions has been presented, For example, all the concerns connected to the recognition of causes and effects of sub-skills are dealt with as why questions. As for the distribution of thoseactivities, some skills got a higher frequencies rate, others have a low frequencies rate,for instance, the sub-skill divide the text into its basic elementstakes place (19) times whereas summarize texts sub-skill takes place only once. There is a noticeable shortage of HOTS in both the SB and the AB. Also, the distribution of them were not equally covered throughout the textbooks.

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