

**ANALYZING HIGH-ORDER THINKING SKILLS (HOTS)
IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS FOR VOCATIONAL
HIGH SCHOOL AND TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING**

THESIS

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AR-RANIRY STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
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Has been Approved and Submitted to the Thesis Munaqasyah Defense
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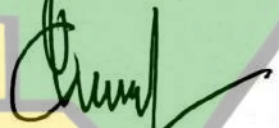

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ABSTRACT

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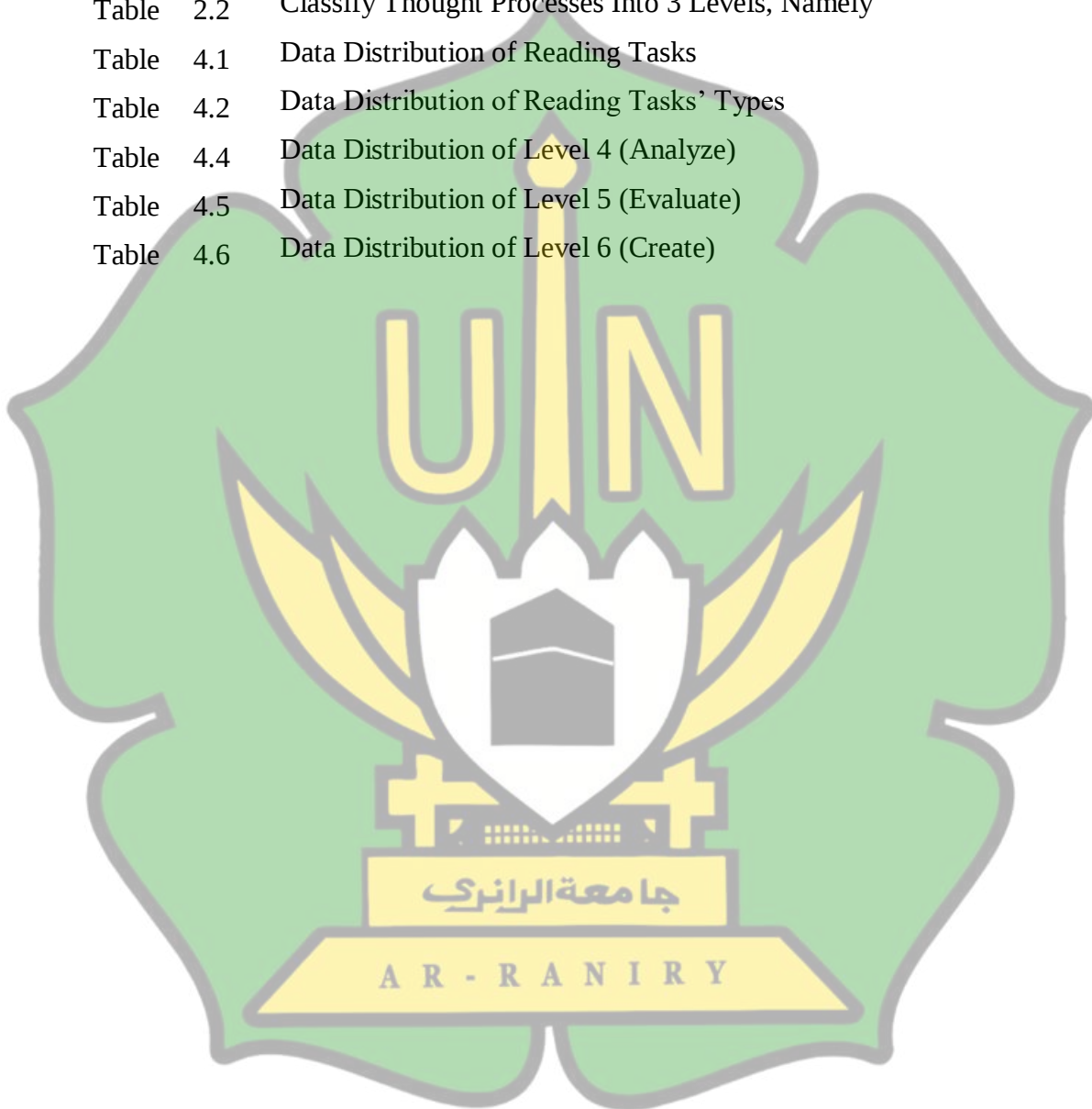
This research aims to analyze the extent to which the questions in the English textbook for eleventh grade in Indonesia reflect Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and explore teachers' understanding of the questions. The method used is content analysis of the questions in the textbook and surveys of English teachers. The results indicate that the questions in the eleventh grade English textbook mostly reflect lower-order thinking skills, while only a few questions meet the criteria of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), in addition, teachers' understanding of HOTS questions in the eleventh grade textbook remains limited, with only a small proportion able to apply them effectively in teaching. Furthermore, although 60% of teachers have a good understanding of HOTS, only 30% are able to apply them in the learning process. These findings indicate that there are still significant challenges in integrating HOTS into English education in Indonesia. Therefore, this study recommends improvements in teaching materials, professional training for teachers, and the development of a more interactive learning environment to support the development of students' critical and creative thinking skills.

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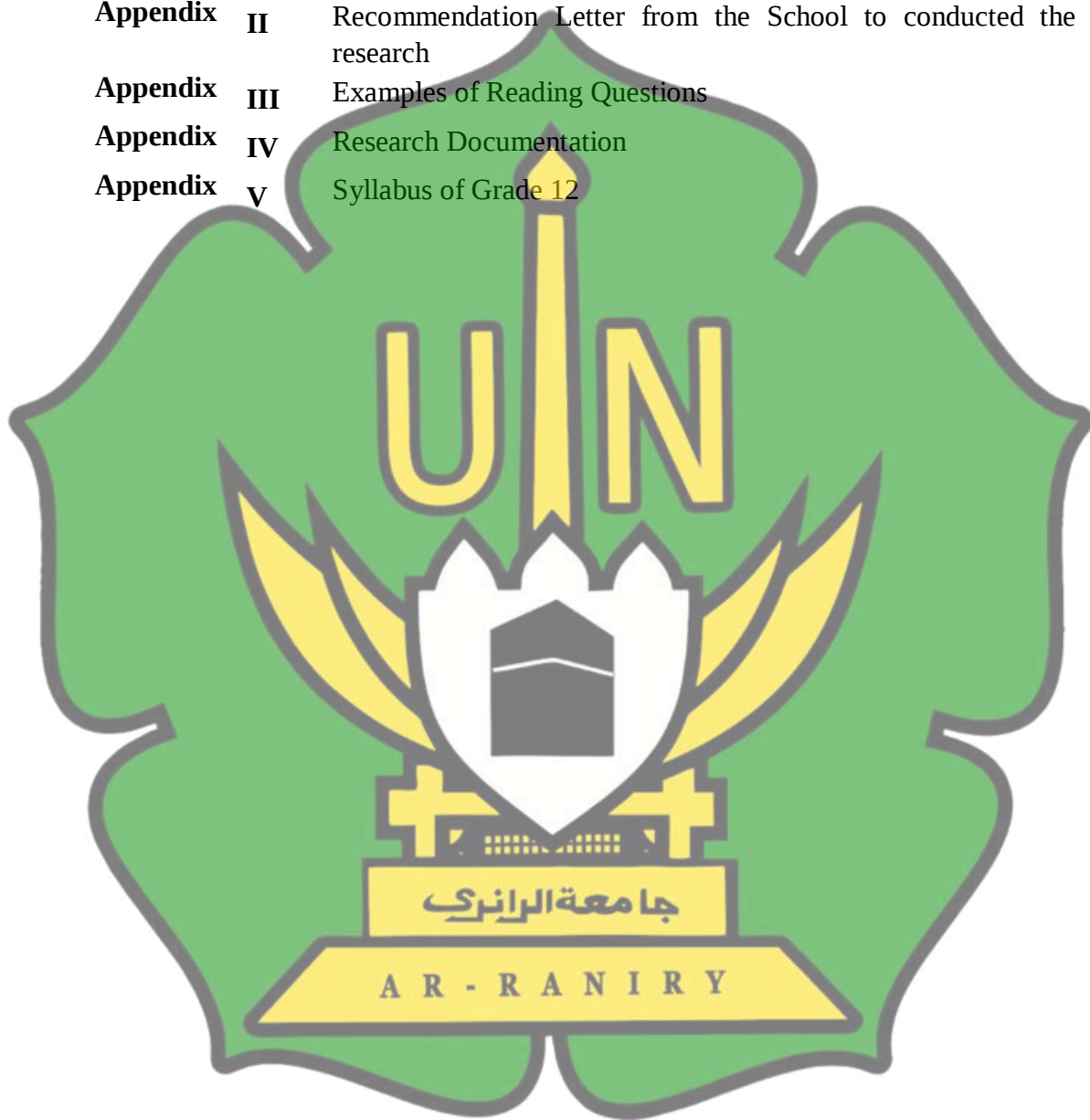
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB) is a new curriculum issued by the Indonesian government as a form of initiative in developing a more independent curriculum and context for students throughout Indonesia. Previously, the 2013 Curriculum (*Kurikulum 2013/K13*) was implemented nationwide, emphasizing competency-based learning with a strong focus on integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes. However, K13 was often considered rigid and less adaptive to the diverse needs of students. The Independent Curriculum aims to create a curriculum that is more relevant to the needs of students and provides freedom for teachers to develop learning materials that are suitable for more interesting and meaningful. According to Kartika et al. (2024), the Independent Curriculum prioritizes creativity and enjoyment by fostering students' development based on their individual interests and talents. Unlike the 2013 Curriculum, which focuses on skill development not only in the cognitive domain but also in the affective and psychomotor domains, the Independent Curriculum emphasizes a more comprehensive and student-centered approach. In the field of education, high-level thinking skills include the ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge critically. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are emphasized in the Independent Curriculum. The skills include analyzing, evaluating, and creating an international curriculum goal (Halili, 2018). The Partnership for 21st Century Skills

(P21) also mentions that high-level thinking skills, such as critical and creative thinking, can help students succeed in their future careers (Alismail & McGuire, 2015).

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) play a crucial role in English language teaching, as they encourage students not only to understand and remember language structures but also to analyze, evaluate, and create using the language. For English teachers, integrating HOTS into classroom activities means moving beyond rote learning to tasks that foster critical and creative thinking, such as interpreting texts, debating, problem-solving, and producing original written or spoken work. This approach aligns with the communicative competence framework, which emphasizes meaningful language use in real-world contexts (Richards, 2015).

By promoting HOTS, English teachers help students develop the ability to process information deeply, adapt language to different purposes, and engage with global issues through English as an international language. According to Brookhart (2010), teaching HOTS prepares learners to be independent thinkers who can transfer their skills to unfamiliar situations, a key requirement in the 21st century. Moreover, as Halili (2018) notes, embedding HOTS in teaching supports the development of problem-solving abilities and creativity, both of which are essential for academic success and future employability.

HOTS skills are also important for students' results in HOTS being taught and practiced in every learning in school, including learning English. In the learning process, textbooks are one of the things that are important to pay attention to both when

preparing and implementing Learning. In relation to practicing HOTS, a good textbook is a textbook that trains HOTS (Erdiana & Panjaitan, 2023).

However, many textbooks, including English textbooks, still lack in-depth analysis of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). In fact, HOTS is very important in preparing students to face real-life challenges, which are often complex, unstructured, and require the ability to think logically and creatively (Halili, 2018). In the context of English learning, HOTS are essential skills that need to be developed, including analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Evaluation and assessment also play a role in building students' thinking ability. According to Sudaryono (2018), evaluation in Indonesia refers to assessment, which involves gathering information and using it to make educational decisions. Teachers can train students to be skilled by giving them questions that encourage them to think critically, solve problems, and make decisions. Therefore, analyzing the practice questions in English textbooks is important to see whether they reflect HOTS. This is one of the reasons why this study is significant. The teacher's role is very important in making students have higher-order thinking skills. Therefore, the teacher should provide questions that are applicable in everyday life to make it more interesting and train students to develop their thinking skills. HOTS questions are not difficult questions, but questions that hone students' active abilities to create students who are able to think in a complex and deep way to solve a real problem. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to optimize assessment techniques in the form of tests that can be used to hone students' higher-order thinking skills. Besides the low level of higher-

order thinking skills of students in Indonesia, assessment instruments specifically designed to train students' higher-order thinking skills are also still lacking in schools, so it is necessary to develop a HOTS-based test instrument from English textbooks.

It is also crucial for teachers to help students have higher-order thinking skills. Teachers should give questions that are based on real-life situations, to make learning more meaningful and to develop students' thinking skills. HOTS questions are not necessarily difficult, but they are questions that train students to think deeply, critically, and creatively in solving problems. However, the use of HOTS-based assessment tools is still limited in schools, especially in English subjects. Therefore, it is important to develop test instruments that train students' higher-order thinking skills from English textbooks (Aniceto, 2023).

English is not only important for science and education, but also for communication in social and economic contexts. As an international language, English connects people around the world. That is why English should be mastered by students. Unfortunately, students' critical thinking skills are still low. This happens because English lessons at school often use lecture methods and do not focus on developing higher-order thinking. As a result, students become less interested in learning English.

According to Setiawati (2019), higher-order thinking (HOT) refers to cognitive processes such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating, as outlined in Bloom's revised taxonomy. Meanwhile, higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) focus on how students apply those thinking processes to solve real-life problems effectively. Several previous

studies have investigated the use of HOTS-based questions in various educational contexts, particularly in textbooks and assessment instruments.

Azizah and Mulia (2021), in their study published in the *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, entitled *An Analysis of HOTS in English Textbooks for Senior High School*, used a descriptive qualitative method. The findings showed that the distribution of cognitive levels was uneven, with most questions focusing on analyzing (C4), while evaluating (C5) and creating (C6) were rarely included. The difference between this study and the present research is that the previous study analyzed textbooks for senior high school, while the current study focuses on vocational high school.

Saputra and Pratiwi (2020), published in the *Indonesian EFL Journal*, conducted a study entitled *An Analysis of HOTS in English National Examination for Senior High School*. This research used a descriptive qualitative method. The findings revealed that only a limited number of items met the HOTS criteria, particularly in the higher-level domains of evaluating and creating. The difference lies in the data source; the previous study analyzed national examination questions, while the present research focuses on English textbooks and teachers' understanding.

Tosuncuoglu (2018), from the *International Journal of Higher Education*, carried out research entitled *Place of Critical Thinking in EFL*. This study applied a literature review method. The findings emphasized the importance of embedding critical and creative thinking core aspects of HOTS into English language teaching materials to improve learners' problem-solving skills. The difference between this

study and the present one is that the previous study focused on theoretical perspectives of critical thinking, while the current study analyzes real textbook questions and teachers' understanding.

Rohim and Iskandar (2020), in the *ELT Worldwide: Journal of English Language Teaching*, conducted research entitled *Teachers' Perception and Challenges in Implementing Higher-Order Thinking Skills in English Learning*. This study used a qualitative survey method. The findings showed that many English teachers recognized the importance of HOTS but struggled to implement it effectively due to limited training and resources. The difference lies in the scope of analysis; the previous study examined teachers' perceptions in general, while the current research specifically addresses vocational high school teachers' understanding.

Mardhiah and Anwar (2022), in the *Journal of English Language Teaching Innovations and Materials*, wrote a study entitled *English Teachers' Understanding of HOTS-Based Assessment in Vocational Schools*. Using a qualitative approach through interviews and document analysis, the findings indicated that vocational school English teachers' understanding of HOTS-based assessments was still developing, which affected the quality of test items they created. The difference between this study and the present one is that the previous research emphasized assessment practices, while the current study combines textbook analysis with teachers' understanding.

Based on previous research, several studies have investigated the use of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in English learning materials and assessments. However, most of these studies either focused on textbooks at the senior high school

level, national examination questions, or teachers' general perceptions, without combining the analysis of English textbook questions with teachers' understanding in the vocational high school context. There is still limited research that comprehensively examines both the characteristics of HOTS in English textbook questions for vocational high schools and the extent of teachers' understanding of HOTS in designing assessments. Therefore, the researcher considers it important to conduct a study entitled *“Analyzing Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in English Textbook Questions for Vocational High School and Teachers' Understanding.”*

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the problem, the author decided that the research should focus on analyzing grade XI books in the limits of HOTS-based questions.

1. To what extent do the questions in the English textbook in High School grade XI in Indonesia reflect HOTS?
2. How do the teachers understanding the HOTS questions in the English textbook for grade IX?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the problem formulation, the purpose of this research is to determine:

1. To find out to what extent do the questions in English textbook for high school grade in Indonesia reflect hots.
2. To find out to percentage of teachers' understanding level in hots questions in the English textbook for grade IX.

D. Benefits of the Research

1. Theoretical Benefits

This research contributes to the development of knowledge by analyzing the application of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in questions from a government-approved English textbook, thereby providing insights into the effectiveness of teaching materials in promoting students' critical thinking. These findings can assist in curriculum improvement and teaching strategies.

2. Practical Benefits

- a. Can contribute to research that can be used to improve the assessment process from year to year.
- b. It is hoped that by analyzing the items of high-level thinking skills at SMK Negeri 1 Kutacane, the quality of education and high-level thinking at SMK Negeri 1 Kutacane will increase, especially in grade XI.

