



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ACTIVITIES, TASK TYPES AND DIGITAL TOOLS IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract: This study analyzed the activities, task types, and digital tools in two English textbooks: the 2013 Curriculum by Utami Widiati et al. and the Merdeka Curriculum's Life Today by Susanti Retno Hardini et al. Using a qualitative approach and frameworks like Bloom's revised taxonomy, findings show the 2013 book emphasizes remembering (32%) and understanding (29%), with a focus on reading (44%) and speaking (21%), using digital access tools (100%). The Merdeka book emphasizes understanding (35%) and evaluating (20%), with reading (46%) and writing (21%), and slightly broader digital use (91% access, 6% interaction). The study suggests balancing skills and enhancing digital integration.

Keywords: Activities, Task Types, Digital Tools, Textbook Analysis

AKTIVITAS, JENIS TUGAS, DAN ALAT DIGITAL DALAM BUKU TEKS SMA

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menganalisis aktivitas, jenis tugas, dan alat digital dalam dua buku teks Bahasa Inggris: Kurikulum 2013 oleh Utami Widiati dkk. dan Life Today Kurikulum Merdeka oleh Susanti Retno Hardini dkk. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan kerangka kerja seperti taksonomi Bloom yang telah direvisi, hasil menunjukkan bahwa buku Kurikulum 2013 menekankan pada kemampuan mengingat (32%) dan memahami (29%), dengan fokus pada membaca (44%) dan berbicara (21%), serta penggunaan alat digital untuk akses informasi (100%). Buku Kurikulum Merdeka lebih menekankan pada memahami (35%) dan mengevaluasi (20%), dengan tugas membaca (46%) dan menulis (21%), serta penggunaan alat digital yang sedikit lebih luas (91% akses, 6% interaksi). Studi ini menyarankan perlunya keseimbangan keterampilan dan peningkatan integrasi digital.

Kata kunci: Aktivitas, Jenis Tugas, Alat Digital, Analisis Buku Teks



INTRODUCTION

Textbooks play a central role in English language education (Vidhya Pokhrel, 2021), particularly in contexts where they function as the primary instructional resource for both teachers and students. They provide structured content, sequence learning objectives, and offer guidance for classroom activities and independent study (Cunningsworth, 1995; Richards, 2015; Qian, Y., 2022). In the Indonesian context, textbooks are expected to align with national curriculum frameworks, including the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, both of which emphasize competency-based learning, student-centered instruction, and the development of higher-order thinking skills. As such, English textbooks should not only present linguistic knowledge but also facilitate meaningful language use, critical thinking, and learner autonomy.

Despite these expectations, previous studies indicate that many English textbooks used in Indonesian schools still rely heavily on mechanical exercises and limited task variety. Research by Widodo and Kadarwati (2013) and Zainil et al. (2021) reveals that textbook activities frequently emphasize lower-order thinking skills, such as recall and comprehension, while providing few opportunities for analysis, evaluation, or creative language use. Furthermore, tasks often lack real-life relevance, reducing their potential to foster learner autonomy and authentic communication (Mina Gavell., 2021). This issue is particularly critical at the senior high school level, where students are expected to develop independent learning skills in preparation for higher education and the workplace.

In addition to pedagogical concerns, the integration of digital tools and technology in English textbooks remains limited, even though digital literacy is increasingly recognized as an essential component of 21st-century education (Alakrash, H. M., & Abdul Razak, N., 2021). The Merdeka Curriculum explicitly encourages the use of digital resources and flexible learning pathways to support differentiated instruction and independent learning (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022). However, studies such as those by Tomlinson (2012) and Hockly (2018) suggest that many textbooks fail to meaningfully incorporate digital elements, such as online tasks, multimedia resources, or technology-mediated collaboration. This gap raises questions about the extent to which current textbooks support technology-enhanced language learning.

To systematically examine these issues, this study investigates two English textbooks for Grade 12 senior high school students in Indonesia: one developed based on the 2013 Curriculum and the other aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. Using qualitative content analysis, the study focuses on three main aspects: (1) the types of activities and tasks provided in the textbooks, (2) the cognitive levels promoted by these tasks, and (3) the extent to which digital tools and resources are integrated to support learning. Bloom's Taxonomy is employed to analyze the cognitive demands of textbook tasks, particularly in relation to higher-order thinking skills, while the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework is used to examine how technology is embedded within pedagogical and content considerations (Bloom et al., 1956; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Anderson, L. W., 2001; Inggrit Presti Rena, Abdul Kodir Al-Baekani, Acep Bahrum Kamil, 2023)).

By aligning textbook analysis with these theoretical frameworks, this study aims to evaluate how effectively the selected textbooks support language skill development, promote independent and autonomous learning, and integrate digital resources in accordance with current curricular goals (Alfia, N., Sumardi, & Kristina, D., 2020). The findings are expected to provide empirical insights into the strengths and limitations of English textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools, as well as practical recommendations for textbook developers, curriculum designers, and teachers. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to ongoing efforts to improve the quality and relevance of English language textbooks in response to the evolving demands of contemporary education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with content analysis to examine senior high school English textbooks (Krippendorf, K., 2013). The focus was on evaluating speaking activities, task types, and the

use of digital tools. Using Bloom's revised taxonomy as the analytical framework, the study assessed the cognitive complexity of the tasks, from basic remembering and understanding to more advanced skills like evaluating and creating. The study was conducted at a university in Jakarta between March and May 2025. To ensure accurate and trustworthy results, the researchers used triangulation by analyzing official digital textbooks published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education. Additionally, inter-coder validation was conducted, where several researchers independently examined and cross-checked the coding and categorization of tasks and themes. This collaborative process helped reduce potential bias and enhanced the overall reliability and validity of the research outcomes. Textbooks were selected using criteria based on curriculum relevance, student suitability, and cognitive development. Identified speaking activities were then analyzed to see how well they support real-world communication and independent learning.

The research also explored how tasks such as discussions, role plays, and problem-solving promote student engagement and align with communicative teaching principles. It examined the presence and function of digital tools in supporting learning, as well as how well the textbooks balance grammar-focused and communication-focused tasks. Additional features such as visuals, activity sequencing, and teacher guidance were reviewed. The results offered both numerical data and descriptive insights, aiming to guide better textbook development and help teachers select materials that support students' cognitive and language skill growth.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Activities, Task Types, and Digital Tools in English Textbook 2013 Curriculum by Utami Widiati and friends

The analysis of the textbook shows that the most dominant cognitive level in its activities is Remembering (32%), followed by Understanding (29%), Applying (14%), Analyzing (11%), Evaluating (8%), and Creating (6%). This suggests the book primarily focuses on helping students recall and recognize essential knowledge, such as vocabulary, grammar rules, and sentence structures. The strong presence of Understanding also indicates an emphasis on interpreting and organizing learned material, like identifying main ideas and matching grammar to examples. While foundational skills are prioritized, the textbook gradually introduces higher-order thinking to support more advanced language learning.

Reading tasks dominate the textbook (44%), followed by speaking (21%), listening (20%), and writing (15%), indicating a strong focus on developing students' reading comprehension through activities like summarizing and analyzing. These tasks promote critical thinking, help students understand text structure and meaning, and encourage independent learning. At the same time, the significant inclusion of speaking tasks supports practical language use, enabling students to apply their knowledge in real-life communication, thus building fluency, confidence, and overall communicative competence (Caner, M., & Çelik, A., 2020).

The textbook's only form of digital integration is Access to Resources (100%), providing links to digital books or online materials without including multimedia, interactive tasks, or collaborative tools. This approach emphasizes helping students develop skills to find, evaluate, and use online information, promoting independence, critical thinking, and digital literacy. By focusing on accessible digital content, the book supports equal learning opportunities and prepares students to use technology effectively in academic, professional, and everyday contexts.

Table 1
Activities in 2013 Curriculum Textbook

Code	Activity	Cognitive Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A1	Identify key terms	Remembering	101	32%
A2	Summarize a passage	Understanding	91	29%
A3	Write a dialogue	Applying	43	14%
A4	Compare two texts	Analyzing	34	11%
A5	Debate a topic	Evaluating	25	8%
A6	Compose a story	Creating	18	6%
Total			312	100%

Table 2
Tasks in 2013 Curriculum Textbook

Code	Category	Cognitive Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
T1	Reading Tasks	Understanding, Analyzing	104	44%
T2	Writing Tasks	Creating, Evaluating	37	15%
T3	Listening Tasks	Remembering, Understanding	48	20%
T4	Speaking Tasks	Applying, Creating	49	21%
Total			238	100%

Table 3
Digital Tools in 2013 Curriculum Textbook

Code	Digital Tool	Sample	Frequency	Percentage (%)
D1	Collaboration & Interaction	Google Docs, Padlet, Microsoft Teams	0	0%
D2	Multimodal Output	Flipgrid, Canva, Vocaroo	0	0%
D3	Simulates real-life communication contexts through technology	Blogs, podcasting tools, forums	0	0%
D4	Scaffolding & Support	Google Classroom, Wakelet	0	0%
D5	Feedback & Reflection	Edpuzzle, Google Forms, Peergrade	0	0%

D6	Access to Resources	YouTube, Quizlet, LingQ	19	100%
D7	Personalization & Differentiation	Kahoot, Duolingo, adaptive LMS	0	0%
D8	Digital Literacy Development	ICT projects, online research tasks	0	0%
Total			19	100%

Activities, Task Types, and Digital Tools in English Textbook “Life Today” Merdeka Curriculum by Susanti Retno Hardini and friends

The analysis shows that understanding (35%) is the most common activity in the book, encouraging students to explain, give examples, and organize ideas, while evaluating (20%) is the next most frequent, involving judgment, opinion, and critical thinking. This focus moves beyond memorization, helping students think more deeply and make informed decisions. Compared to the 2013 Curriculum textbook, this one includes more creating and remembering tasks as well, offering a more balanced mix of cognitive levels that support language development and real-life communication skills.

Reading tasks dominate the textbook (46%), followed by writing (21%), listening (20%), and speaking (12%), highlighting a strong focus on developing students' reading comprehension and analytical skills (Mavadat Saidi, Nilufar Karami, Morteza Marooy, 2021). Through activities like summarizing and analyzing, students learn to identify main ideas, organize information, and think critical skills supported by methods like Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning. While reading is the primary focus, the inclusion of writing and listening also supports broader language development, helping students connect classroom learning to real-world communication (Cang Trung Nguyen, Diem Thi Kieu Le, 2020; Nugraha, A. E., Al-Baekani, A. K., & Hakim, P. K., 2024).

Digital resources is the most common tool of the book (91%) like online texts, e-books, and multimedia, promoting flexible, independent learning and digital literacy. Collaboration tools, such as Google Docs and Microsoft Teams, make up 6%, encouraging teamwork and real-life communication, while 3% involve feedback and reflection tools like Edpuzzle and Google Forms, helping students assess their progress and build confidence. Overall, the textbook supports a balanced approach to digital learning by combining resource access, collaboration, and self-assessment to prepare students for both academic and real-world communication.

Table 4
Activities in Merdeka Curriculum Textbook

Code	Activity	Cognitive Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A1	Identify key terms	Remembering	31	17%
A2	Summarize a passage	Understanding	64	35%
A3	Write a dialogue	Applying	13	7%
A4	Compare two texts	Analyzing	16	9%
A5	Debate a topic	Evaluating	36	20%
A6	Compose a story	Creating	22	12%

Total **182** **100%**

Table 2
Tasks in 2013 Curriculum Textbook

Code	Category	Cognitive Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
T1	Reading Tasks	Understanding, Analyzing	64	46%
T2	Writing Tasks	Creating, Evaluating	29	21%
T3	Listening Tasks	Remembering, Understanding	28	20%
T4	Speaking Tasks	Applying, Creating	17	12%
Total			138	100%

Table 3
Digital Tools in 2013 Curriculum Textbook

Code	Digital Tool	Sample	Frequency	Percentage (%)
D1	Collaboration & Interaction	Google Docs, Padlet, Microsoft Teams	2	6%
D2	Multimodal Output	Flipgrid, Canva, Vocaroo	0	0%
D3	Simulates real-life communication contexts through technology	Blogs, podcasting tools, forums	0	0%
D4	Scaffolding & Support	Google Classroom, Wakelet	0	0%
D5	Feedback & Reflection	Edpuzzle, Google Forms, Peergrade	1	3%
D6	Access to Resources	YouTube, Quizlet, LingQ	30	91%
D7	Personalization & Differentiation	Kahoot, Duolingo, adaptive LMS	0	0%
D8	Digital Literacy Development	ICT projects, online research tasks	0	0%
Total			33	100%

CONCLUSIONS

This study found that the 2013 Curriculum English textbook focuses on building basic cognitive skills like remembering and understanding, mainly through reading and speaking tasks, while offering digital resources for independent learning. The Merdeka Curriculum textbook, however, encourages a wider range of skills including higher-order thinking such as analyzing and creating. It balances reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and integrates more diverse digital tools that promote collaboration and active engagement, aligning better with modern educational needs. Both textbooks need improvement in offering more varied and complex activities that develop critical thinking and

creativity. The 2013 Curriculum's limited digital resources may reduce students' tech engagement, while the Merdeka Curriculum's digital integration, though better, could be expanded. Future research should explore ways to enhance digital tool use and higher-level cognitive tasks to better prepare students for real-world communication and academic success. These findings provide useful insights for improving English language teaching materials and practices.

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