Task Types, Cognitive Levels, And Skill Integration in EFL Textbooks: A Comparative Study of Mongolian and Inner Mongolian Grade 7 English Textbooks

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500569

Received: 25 May 2026; Accepted: 30 May 2026; Published: 08 June 2026

ABSTRACT

The development of communicative competence has become a central objective of contemporary English language education, shifting instructional practices from grammar-centered teaching toward meaningful communication and integrated language use. Within this framework, textbook tasks play a significant role in shaping learners' cognitive engagement and communicative development. Although previous studies have explored English language textbooks in terms of skill distribution and communicative orientation, limited attention has been paid to the relationship among task types, cognitive demand, and skill integration within a comparative context. Addressing this gap, the present study comparatively investigates Grade 7 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia, namely Wider World 2 and Go for It, through the perspectives of Communicative Language Teaching and Learning (CLTL), the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), Bloom's Taxonomy, and the integrated-skills approach.

The study employed a quantitative content analysis design based on Brian McGrath's (2002) textbook evaluation framework. A total of 189 integrated language tasks were coded according to task type, cognitive level, primary and secondary language skills, and patterns of skill integration. Statistical analyses were conducted using Excel and SPSS to identify the pedagogical distribution and cognitive orientation of tasks across the two textbooks.

The findings revealed that both textbooks reflect CEFR A2-level guided learning principles through the predominance of closed and semi-open tasks, emphasizing controlled and comprehension-oriented learning. However, notable pedagogical differences emerged. Go For It relied mainly on receptive-to-written integration patterns, particularly listening-to-writing and reading-to-writing tasks, reflecting a structure-oriented and accuracy-focused approach. In contrast, Wider World 2 incorporated more open and interaction-oriented tasks, including listening-to-speaking and reading-to-speaking integrations, demonstrating a more communicative and learner-centered orientation. Furthermore, the analysis showed a clear relationship between task openness, cognitive complexity, and skill integration: closed tasks were associated with lower-order cognitive processes and limited integration, whereas open tasks promoted higher-order thinking and broader multi-skill interaction. The study highlights the importance of evaluating textbook quality not only through linguistic content but also through the cognitive and communicative opportunities embedded in task design.

Keywords: EFL textbooks, task types, cognitive levels, skill integration, CEFR, communicative language teaching and learning

INTRODUCTION

The growing role of English as a global language has substantially transformed the goals of foreign language education, shifting instructional priorities from grammar-focused knowledge acquisition toward communicative competence, meaningful interaction, and authentic language use. Influenced by Communicative Language Teaching and Learning (CLTL), task-based pedagogy, and competency-oriented educational frameworks,

contemporary English language education increasingly conceptualizes language learning as a process of active meaning construction through communication and cognitive engagement rather than the memorization of linguistic forms. Within this paradigm, the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing is regarded as an interconnected process requiring meaningful integration rather than isolated skill instruction.

This pedagogical shift has elevated the importance of textbook tasks in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Particularly in lower secondary education, textbooks function not only as sources of linguistic input but also as primary mediators of classroom interaction, cognitive participation, and communicative practice. Consequently, textbook evaluation has expanded beyond the analysis of grammatical sequencing and linguistic content toward broader concerns involving communicative orientation, cognitive demand, learner autonomy, and integrated language development. Although numerous studies have examined English language textbooks from perspectives such as skill distribution and communicative orientation, comparatively limited attention has been devoted to the interconnected relationship among task types, cognitive complexity, and skill integration within a unified comparative framework.

Addressing this gap, the present study comparatively investigates Grade 7 EFL textbooks used in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia, namely Wider World 2 and Go For It, through the theoretical perspectives of CLTL, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), Bloom's Taxonomy, and the integrated-skills approach. The study employed a quantitative content analysis design based on Brian McGrath's (2002) textbook evaluation framework. A total of 189 integrated language tasks were systematically coded according to task type, cognitive level, primary and secondary language skills, and patterns of skill integration. Statistical analyses were conducted using Excel and SPSS to identify the pedagogical distribution and cognitive orientation of tasks across the two textbooks.

The findings revealed that both textbooks strongly reflect CEFR A2-level guided learning principles through the predominance of closed and semi-open tasks, emphasizing controlled and comprehension-oriented learning. However, significant pedagogical differences emerged between the two textbook series. Go For It relied primarily on receptive-to-written integration patterns, particularly listening-to-writing and reading-to-writing tasks, reflecting a structure-oriented and accuracy-focused instructional approach. In contrast, Wider World 2 incorporated substantially more open and interaction-oriented tasks, including listening-to-speaking, speaking-to-listening, and reading-to-speaking integrations, demonstrating a more communicative and learner-centered orientation.

Furthermore, the analysis identified a clear relationship between task openness, cognitive complexity, and skill integration: closed tasks were associated mainly with lower-order cognitive processes and limited skill integration, whereas open tasks promoted higher-order thinking and broader multi-skill interaction.

The study argues that textbook quality should be evaluated not only through linguistic content but also through the cognitive and communicative opportunities embedded within task design. By integrating textbook evaluation methodology with quantitative content analysis, the study contributes to contemporary discussions on EFL textbook evaluation, communicative pedagogy, and integrated language learning in lower secondary education.

Research Questions

RQ1**.** What task types (closed, semi-open, and open) are represented in the Grade 7 EFL textbooks used in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia?

RQ2**.** How do the two textbooks differ in terms of cognitive complexity as reflected in Bloom's revised Taxonomy?

RQ3**.** How are language skills integrated across textbook tasks, and what patterns of skill integration emerge in the two textbooks?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Contemporary English language education has increasingly shifted from grammar-oriented instruction toward communicative competence, meaningful interaction, and integrated language use. Recent scholarship continues to support this shift, emphasizing that effective language learning materials should promote learner engagement, communicative competence, and higher-order thinking rather than mere linguistic accuracy (Tomlinson, 2023; Mishan & Timmis, 2015).

Influenced by Communicative Language Teaching and Learning (CLTL), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and competency-based educational reforms, language learning is now widely viewed as a process of active meaning construction rather than the passive acquisition of linguistic knowledge. Within this perspective, textbook tasks play a crucial role in shaping learners' communicative participation, cognitive engagement, and language development.

Communicative approaches emphasize that language is learned most effectively through purposeful interaction and negotiation of meaning. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), communicative competence develops when learners actively use language to accomplish meaningful goals. Similarly, TBLT conceptualizes tasks as meaning-focused activities requiring learners to use language for communicative purposes (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). Consequently, contemporary textbook evaluation increasingly focuses on the extent to which learning activities promote interaction, learner participation, and authentic language use.

A central dimension of textbook task design concerns task openness. Closed tasks generally require predetermined answers and controlled language use, whereas open tasks encourage learner-generated responses, communicative interaction, and multiple possible outcomes. Semi-open tasks function as an intermediate category, combining structural support with limited learner autonomy. Previous studies suggest that increasing task openness provides greater opportunities for meaningful communication, learner autonomy, and productive language use (Littlewood, 1981; Ellis, 2003).

The communicative orientation of textbook tasks is closely associated with cognitive complexity. Bloom's revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) conceptualizes learning as a progression from lower-order processes, such as remembering and understanding, to higher-order processes, including analyzing, evaluating, and creating. In language education, lower-order tasks typically emphasize recognition and controlled comprehension, whereas higher-order tasks require interpretation, justification, synthesis, and creative language production. As a result, textbook activities influence not only language practice but also the depth of learners' cognitive engagement.

Another important dimension is skill integration. Brown (2001) argues that authentic communication naturally requires the integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing rather than the isolated development of individual skills. More recent studies similarly suggest that integrated-skills instruction better reflects authentic language use and creates richer opportunities for cognitive engagement and communicative interaction (Oxford, 2023).

Integrated-skills instruction enables learners to process and produce meaning across multiple communicative modes, creating more realistic and communicatively meaningful learning experiences. Research has consistently shown that activities combining receptive and productive skills provide broader opportunities for interaction and higher-order thinking than isolated skill exercises.

These perspectives are further reinforced by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which conceptualizes language learners as social agents who use language to accomplish communicative tasks in real-world contexts (Council of Europe, 2001; 2018).

At the A2 level, corresponding to the Grade 7 textbooks examined in this study, learners are expected to participate in guided interaction, exchange simple information, and produce limited but meaningful language output. Consequently, CEFR-oriented instructional materials typically combine structured support with gradually expanding opportunities for communicative participation and integrated language use.

Despite the growing body of research on EFL textbook evaluation, communicative orientation, cognitive complexity, and skill integration are often examined separately. Moreover, relatively little comparative research has investigated how these dimensions interact within lower secondary EFL textbooks across different educational contexts, particularly in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. Addressing this gap, the present study adopts an integrated analytical framework combining task types, cognitive levels, and skill integration to examine how textbook task design shapes communicative and cognitive learning opportunities. Drawing on CLTL, CEFR, Bloom's Taxonomy, and the integrated-skills approach, the study conceptualizes textbook tasks as multidimensional pedagogical constructs that simultaneously influence communicative participation, cognitive engagement, and language development.

METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a quantitative comparative textbook analysis design to investigate task types, cognitive levels, and skill integration patterns in Grade 7 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. Grounded in contemporary approaches to textbook evaluation emphasizing communicative competence, cognitive engagement, and integrated language learning, the study combined perspectives from Communicative Language Teaching and Learning (CLTL), the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), Bloom's Taxonomy, and the integrated-skills approach within a multidimensional analytical framework.

The analysis focused on two lower secondary English textbooks currently used within the respective educational contexts: Wider World 2, used in Mongolian secondary schools, and Go For It, published by the People's Education Press and used in Inner Mongolia under China's national curriculum framework. Both textbooks were selected because they are designed for Grade 7 learners and reflect curriculum reforms emphasizing communicative and competency-based language education. At the same time, the two textbook series represent differing pedagogical traditions, making them suitable for comparative analysis.

The analytical framework was primarily adapted from Brian McGrath's (2002) textbook evaluation methodology, which emphasizes the systematic classification of textbook activities according to pedagogical and communicative criteria. In the present study, textbook tasks were examined across four interconnected dimensions: task type, cognitive level, primary and secondary language skills, and patterns of skill integration. This multidimensional framework enabled the study to investigate not only the frequency of textbook activities but also how task structures shape communicative participation, cognitive engagement, and integrated language development.

Task types were classified into three categories: closed, semi-open, and open tasks. Closed tasks referred to highly controlled activities involving predetermined responses and limited learner-generated language use, including multiple-choice, matching, true-false, and gap-filling exercises. Semi-open tasks included partially guided communicative activities allowing limited learner autonomy, such as guided discussions and pair work. Open tasks encouraged authentic communication, creative language use, and multiple possible responses through activities including role-play, presentations, discussions, and extended writing. This classification framework was informed by communicative and task-based pedagogical principles emphasizing the relationship between task openness and communicative interaction.

To examine cognitive complexity, tasks were further coded according to Bloom's revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), including the categories of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Lower-order cognitive processes involved recognition, recall, and controlled comprehension, whereas higher-order processes required interpretation, justification, synthesis, and creative language production. In addition, each activity was analyzed according to its primary and secondary language skills involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Skill integration patterns such as listening-to-writing (L→W), reading-to-speaking (R→S), and reading-to-writing (R→W) were systematically identified in order to examine how receptive and productive skills were integrated within textbook activities.

A total of 189 integrated language tasks were analyzed across the two textbooks, including 99 tasks from Go For It and 90 tasks from Wider World 2. All tasks were systematically coded using structured coding sheets

developed specifically for the study. Frequency counts and percentage distributions were subsequently calculated to identify patterns of task distribution, cognitive orientation, and skill integration. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using Microsoft Excel and SPSS through descriptive statistical procedures, including frequency and percentage analyses. Comparative analysis was then conducted to identify similarities and differences between the two textbooks in relation to communicative orientation, cognitive complexity, and integrated language learning. Although the study primarily employed quantitative content analysis, qualitative pedagogical interpretation was also incorporated to contextualize the educational significance of the identified task patterns. Overall, the methodological framework provided a systematic and multidimensional approach for examining the relationship among task openness, cognitive complexity, and skill integration in EFL textbooks, contributing to a deeper understanding of how textbook task design shapes communicative language learning across different educational contexts.

Coding Reliability and Validation

To ensure consistency throughout the coding process, a detailed coding guide was developed prior to analysis. The coding categories were derived from established theoretical frameworks, including McGrath's (2002) textbook evaluation framework, Bloom's revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), and the integrated-skills approach (Brown, 2001).

A pilot coding procedure was first conducted using a sample of textbook tasks to refine category definitions and coding criteria. After the initial coding phase, the researcher re-coded a randomly selected subset of tasks after a two-week interval to check coding consistency. The comparison indicated a high level of agreement between the two coding rounds, suggesting acceptable intra-rater reliability. To strengthen content validity, the coding scheme and category definitions were reviewed by an experienced university lecturer specializing in English language teaching and textbook evaluation. Feedback from the expert review was incorporated into the final coding framework. These procedures enhanced the transparency, consistency, and credibility of the analysis.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed that the two Grade 7 EFL textbooks demonstrated both important similarities and substantial pedagogical differences in terms of task structure, cognitive orientation, and skill integration. Although both Wider World 2 and Go For It reflected communicative and competency-based curriculum principles to varying degrees, the distribution of task types and integrated language activities suggested differing instructional priorities and methodological orientations.

Distribution of Task Types

One of the most significant findings of the study concerns the distribution of closed, semi-open, and open tasks across the two textbooks. As shown in Table 1, both textbooks relied heavily on closed and semi-open activities, reflecting the guided learning characteristics typically associated with CEFR A2-level instruction. However, substantial differences emerged regarding the proportion of open and communicative tasks.

Table 1 Distribution of Task Types in the Two Textbooks

Task Type	Go For It (n=99)	Wider World 2 (n=90)
Closed Tasks	56 (56.6%)	34 (37.8%)
Semi-open Tasks	31 (31.3%)	29 (32.2%)
Open Tasks	12 (12.1%)	27 (30.0%)

Table 1 demonstrates that Go For It relied predominantly on closed activities, which accounted for more than half of all analyzed tasks. These activities mainly consisted of matching exercises, multiple-choice questions, gap-filling tasks, and controlled comprehension activities emphasizing linguistic accuracy and recognition-based learning. In contrast, Wider World 2 incorporated a considerably higher proportion of open tasks, including discussion activities, role-play, presentations, and opinion-based communicative exercises.

This difference suggests contrasting pedagogical orientations between the two textbooks. The task structure of Go For It reflects a more controlled and structure-oriented instructional approach prioritizing comprehension and guided practice, whereas Wider World 2 demonstrates a stronger communicative orientation emphasizing learner participation, interaction, and productive language use. At the same time, the substantial presence of semi-open tasks in both textbooks indicates an attempt to balance structural support with gradually increasing communicative engagement, which aligns with CEFR-guided lower secondary instruction.

Cognitive Levels Embedded in Textbook Tasks

The analysis further revealed important differences in the cognitive complexity of textbook activities. Based on Bloom's revised Taxonomy, tasks were categorized according to six cognitive levels ranging from remembering to creating.

Table 2 Distribution of Cognitive Levels Across Textbook Tasks

Cognitive Level	Go For It	Wider World 2
Remembering	24 (24.2%)	12 (13.3%)
Understanding	38 (38.4%)	24 (26.7%)
Applying	19 (19.2%)	21 (23.3%)
Analyzing	10 (10.1%)	16 (17.8%)
Evaluating	5 (5.1%)	10 (11.1%)
Creating	3 (3.0%)	7 (7.8%)

As presented in Table 2, lower-order cognitive processes dominated both textbooks, particularly remembering and understanding activities. This pattern reflects the guided and scaffolded learning principles commonly associated with lower secondary EFL instruction at the A2 proficiency level. Nevertheless, clear differences emerged regarding higher-order cognitive engagement.

Go For It demonstrated a stronger emphasis on remembering and understanding activities, suggesting a greater focus on recognition, controlled comprehension, and language accuracy. In contrast, Wider World 2 incorporated noticeably higher proportions of analyzing, evaluating, and creating tasks. These activities frequently required learners to express opinions, interpret information, justify ideas, and engage in collaborative communication.

The findings therefore indicate that Wider World 2 provides broader opportunities for higher-order thinking and communicative meaning construction, whereas Go For It remains comparatively more focused on structured and comprehension-oriented learning. Importantly, the results also suggest that cognitive complexity increases alongside communicative openness, particularly in activities involving learner-generated responses and interactive communication.

Patterns of Skill Integration

Another significant finding concerns the patterns through which listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills were integrated within textbook tasks. The analysis demonstrated that the two textbooks differed substantially in their integration of receptive and productive language skills.

Table 3 Major Skill Integration Patterns Identified in the Two Textbooks

Skill Integration Pattern	Go For It	Wider World 2
Listening → Writing (L→W)	28	12
Reading → Writing (R→W)	24	15
Listening → Speaking (L→S)	11	22
Reading → Speaking (R→S)	9	19

Speaking → Listening (S→L)	4	13
Multi-skill Integration	6	18

Table 3 reveals that Go For It relied primarily on receptive-to-written integration patterns such as listening-to-writing and reading-to-writing activities. These tasks generally emphasized comprehension, controlled output, and structurally guided responses. In contrast, Wider World 2 incorporated substantially more interaction-oriented integration patterns, particularly listening-to-speaking, reading-to-speaking, and multi-skill communicative tasks.

The findings suggest that the two textbooks conceptualize integrated language learning differently. While Go For It emphasizes the transformation of receptive input into controlled written production, Wider World 2 prioritizes interactional communication and productive engagement through speaking-centered activities. The greater presence of multi-skilled tasks in Wider World 2 further indicates a stronger alignment with communicative and integrated-skills pedagogy.

Relationship Between Task Openness, Cognitive Complexity, and Skill Integration

Perhaps the most significant finding of the study concerns the interconnected relationship among task openness, cognitive complexity, and skill integration. The analysis demonstrated a consistent progression across these three dimensions.

Table 4 Relationship Between Task Type, Cognitive Level, and Skill Integration

Task Type	Dominant Cognitive Level	Typical Skill Pattern
Closed Tasks	Remembering / Understanding	Single-skill or receptive-focused
Semi-open Tasks	Applying / Analyzing	Partial integration
Open Tasks	Evaluating / Creating	Multi-skill integration

As shown in Table 4, closed tasks were predominantly associated with lower-order cognitive processes and limited skill integration. These activities typically focused on recognition, comprehension, and controlled responses involving isolated or receptive-oriented skill use. Semi-open tasks functioned as transitional activities combining moderate cognitive engagement with partial skill integration. Open tasks, by contrast, were consistently associated with higher-order thinking processes and broader multi-skill interaction.

This finding represents one of the most important contributions of the study because it demonstrates that communicative openness, cognitive complexity, and integrated language use are pedagogically interconnected rather than independent textbook features. Activities encouraging learner autonomy and communicative interaction also tend to promote higher-order thinking and broader language integration. From this perspective, textbook task design plays a critical role not only in language practice but also in shaping learners' cognitive participation and communicative development within EFL classrooms.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that the differences identified between Wider World 2 and Go For It extend beyond textbook design and reflect broader educational, curricular, and pedagogical traditions operating within the two contexts. While both textbooks demonstrate alignment with communicative and competency-based educational reforms, they appear to interpret these reforms in different ways, resulting in distinct patterns of task design, cognitive engagement, and skill integration.

One possible explanation for the stronger emphasis on controlled and receptive-oriented activities in Go For It relates to the long-standing influence of examination-oriented educational practices within the Chinese educational system. Although recent curriculum reforms in China have increasingly emphasized communicative competence, core literacy, and learner-centered instruction, assessment practices at lower secondary levels continue to place considerable importance on reading comprehension, language accuracy, and written

performance. As a result, textbook designers may seek to balance communicative objectives with examination requirements by providing a large number of structured and controlled activities. The predominance of listening-to-writing and reading-to-writing tasks in Go For It appears consistent with this broader educational context, where accurate language production and comprehension remain important indicators of academic achievement. Recent research on Chinese secondary school English textbooks has likewise reported a continued emphasis on controlled task formats and accuracy-oriented learning despite increasing communicative curriculum reforms (Liu, 2023).

In contrast, the greater proportion of open and interaction-oriented activities in Wider World 2 may reflect the influence of international communicative language teaching traditions and the increasing adoption of CEFR-informed curriculum policies in Mongolia. As an internationally published textbook series developed by Pearson, Wider World 2 is designed within a pedagogical framework that emphasizes learner participation, collaborative learning, and communicative language use. Consequently, the higher frequency of speaking-oriented and multi-skill activities may be viewed as an attempt to create learning environments that resemble authentic communication rather than examination preparation. This orientation aligns closely with the CEFR's action-oriented approach, which conceptualizes learners as social agents engaged in meaningful communicative tasks.

The findings also highlight an important relationship between curriculum policy and textbook implementation. Although both educational systems officially promote communicative competence, the results suggest that curriculum objectives may be operationalized differently at the textbook level. In Inner Mongolia, communicative goals appear to be integrated within a more structured instructional framework emphasizing accuracy and guided practice. In Mongolia, communicative competence appears to be interpreted through greater opportunities for interaction, learner autonomy, and productive language use. These differences demonstrate that curriculum reform does not automatically produce identical pedagogical outcomes, as textbook design is shaped by local educational priorities, assessment systems, and teaching traditions.

Another important implication concerns the relationship between task openness and higher-order thinking. The findings indicate that activities requiring learners to express opinions, justify responses, negotiate meaning, and collaborate with peers were more likely to promote analyzing, evaluating, and creating processes.

This supports the view that communicative interaction and cognitive engagement are mutually reinforcing dimensions of language learning rather than separate instructional goals. Textbooks that provide opportunities for authentic communication may simultaneously foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and learner autonomy.

The study therefore suggests that textbook evaluation should move beyond the traditional examination of linguistic content and grammatical sequencing. A comprehensive evaluation of textbook quality should also consider how tasks support communicative participation, cognitive development, and integrated language use. From this perspective, task design functions as a pedagogical bridge connecting language knowledge, communicative competence, and higher-order thinking.

Implications for Practice

The findings carry several implications for textbook writers, curriculum developers, and classroom practitioners. For textbook writers, a balanced combination of closed, semi-open, and open tasks may be necessary to ensure both linguistic accuracy and communicative development. While controlled activities remain important for scaffolding learning at the A2 level, greater inclusion of interaction-oriented tasks may provide broader opportunities for meaningful language use.

For curriculum developers, the findings highlight the importance of aligning curriculum goals, assessment practices, and textbook design. If communicative competence and higher-order thinking are considered educational priorities, these objectives should be reflected not only in curriculum documents but also in textbook tasks and assessment systems.

For classroom teachers, the results suggest that textbooks should be viewed as flexible pedagogical resources rather than fixed instructional scripts. Teachers may supplement controlled activities with communicative extensions, discussions, collaborative tasks, and project-based learning opportunities to enhance learner engagement and promote integrated language use.

CONCLUSION

This study comparatively examined task types, cognitive levels, and skill integration patterns in two Grade 7 EFL textbooks used in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia: Wider World 2 and Go For It. Drawing on Communicative Language Teaching and Learning (CLTL), CEFR, Bloom's Taxonomy, and the integrated-skills approach, the study explored how textbook task design influences communicative participation, cognitive engagement, and language learning opportunities.

The findings revealed that both textbooks largely reflected CEFR A2-level guided learning principles through the predominance of closed and semi-open activities. However, important pedagogical differences emerged. Go For It relied more heavily on controlled and receptive-oriented tasks, particularly listening-to-writing and reading-to-writing activities, reflecting a stronger emphasis on linguistic accuracy and structured learning. In contrast, Wider World 2 incorporated a greater number of open and interaction-oriented tasks, including speaking-focused and multi-skill activities, demonstrating a stronger communicative orientation.

A major contribution of the study is the identification of a systematic relationship among task openness, cognitive complexity, and skill integration. The findings indicate that open tasks tend to promote higher-order thinking and broader language integration, whereas closed tasks are more frequently associated with lower-order cognitive processes and limited communicative interaction. This suggests that textbook task design influences not only language practice but also learners' opportunities for communication, critical thinking, and integrated language development.

The study has important implications for textbook writers, curriculum developers, and language teachers. While controlled activities remain necessary at lower proficiency levels, a balanced progression toward more open and interaction-oriented tasks may better support communicative competence, learner autonomy, and higher-order thinking. The findings also highlight the importance of aligning curriculum goals, assessment practices, and textbook design to ensure that communicative objectives are effectively translated into classroom learning opportunities.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study focused on only two Grade 7 EFL textbooks, which

limits the generalizability of the findings to other textbook series and educational contexts.

Second, the analysis was restricted to textbook content and did not examine how tasks are implemented by teachers or experienced by learners in actual classroom settings. Finally, the study relied primarily on quantitative content analysis and therefore did not investigate learners' responses to different task types or their effects on language development.

Future Research

Future studies may expand the scope of analysis by including additional textbook series, grade levels, and educational contexts. Comparative investigations involving classroom observations, teacher perspectives, and learner experiences would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how textbook tasks function in practice. Further research could also examine the relationship between task design and learning outcomes in order to better understand how communicative, cognitive, and integrated-skills dimensions contribute to language development in EFL classrooms.

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