

Questions Analysis of the General English Language Exam for the Sixth Vocational Grade in light of Bloom's Taxonomy

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Abstract

The present study aims at identify the dominant cognitive six levels emphasized in the general English language exams for sixth vocational grade. It also explores the potential implications of the exam question types for effective teaching practices in the sixth vocational grade English language context. To achieve the purpose of the study the researcher adopted a qualitative approach, utilizing document analysis (exam questions). Tools of the study includes a content analysis form designed in the light of six levels of Bloom Taxonomy (remembering- understanding- applying- analysis- evaluating- creating) and a questionnaire devoted to EFL teachers. The study is limited on the exam of general English in 6 vocational departments in three academic years (2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023). Results revealed the increase of questions that assess lower cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy in all the academic years of all branches and the scarcity of the questions that assess high cognitive levels; one or two at most in each year. More questions needed for each branch to assess analytical, critical and interpretive levels of comprehension. Creativity and more writing tasks needed based on the curriculum objectives in each.

Keywords: Questions Analysis, General English Language Exam, Sixth Vocational Grade, Bloom's Taxonomy

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, vocational and technical training has become increasingly vital for equipping individuals with the necessary skills to enter and thrive in the workforce. Within this context, proficiency in English language has emerged as a crucial asset, enabling effective communication, collaboration, and access to information across diverse fields. Sixth vocational grade marks a critical juncture in students' development, where foundational English language skills are solidified and applied to specific vocational contexts.

In order to enhance students' critical thinking and decision-making skills, it is advisable to incorporate a variety of questions sourced from the textbook. One method of enhancing performance is by utilizing the examination questions as a means of improvement (Franklin, 1982). Nevertheless, there exist other categorizations within the domain of assessing and scrutinizing exam questions. One often used classification of cognitive capabilities is Bloom's Taxonomy, developed by Benjamin Bloom. The Bloom's Taxonomy of the cognitive domain is a useful tool for arranging exam questions. Marzano & Kindall (2007, p.02) assert that Bloom's Taxonomy has had a substantial impact on educational theory and practice. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated to be a useful instrument for those who adhere to the assessment paradigm. Utilizing the Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive abilities can assist educators in categorizing the skills of learners and taking them into account while creating examination inquiries.

Questions of the Study

- 1-To what extent do the General English Language Exams for sixth vocational grade students focus on the different cognitive levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating)?
- 2-Is there alignment between the skills assessed in the General English Language Exams and the stated learning objectives of the sixth vocational grade English Language Instruction?
- 3-Do the types of questions in the exams inform and align with effective teaching practices for developing English language skills in sixth-grade vocational students?

Objectives of the Study

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The Present Study Aimed to

- 1-Analyze the questions on the General English Language Exam for the Six Vocational Grade
- 2--Evaluate the questions using Bloom's Taxonomy.
- 3-Examine the correlation of exam questions with Bloom's Taxonomy

Significance of the Study

This study can contribute to a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the current assessment practices in sixth vocational grade English language education.

By identifying the dominant cognitive levels and question types, the study can guide teachers and curriculum developers to design more effective assessment tools and learning activities.

The analysis of alignment with curriculum objectives can ensure that assessments accurately measure the intended learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Study Design

The present study aimed to evaluate the questions of general English exams administered to six vocational departments in light of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, so the study adopted a qualitative approach, utilizing two methods; document analysis, and a questionnaire. The researcher selected a number of exams from six vocational departments applied in three academic years from **2020** to **2023**, and a questionnaire given to English teachers and supervisors in the vocational departments. Document analysis, which is a well-established qualitative technique, chosen specifically because it allows for in-depth examination of existing materials like documents, is a strategy commonly employed in educational research to analyze curricula, textbooks, assignments, and written exams. (Weber, 1990:12) Quantitative research uses quantitative techniques to describe, explain, document, analyze, and understand current situations. It involves a comparison or relationship and tries to find the relationship between existing variables. Numerical and statistical analyses are used to represent research findings, i.e., data can be represented using graphs, figures, and tables (Best and Khan, 2006: 24). For data collection, a set of questions from the general English exam for sixth grade vocational departments (Industry and Computer & Information Technology, Commerce, Agriculture, Tourism, Applied Arts) from **2020** to **2023**, first attempt, has been collected. The researcher designs a checklist that aims at stating the various categories of Bloom's Taxonomy addressed in each question of the general English exam specialized to vocational departments. The research has been limited to the six cognitive levels of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The researcher has also utilized a questionnaire submitted to teachers and supervisors, aiming to explore the EFL teachers' reactions on the content of the general English exam in light of Blooms' Taxonomy.

Sample of the Study

1. General English Language Exams administered to sixth grade vocational departments :(Industry, Computer & Information Technology, Commerce, Tourism, Agriculture, and Applied Arts) from **2020** to **2023**, first attempt. Each consisted of five main questions. Three exams were selected from each vocational department; the general exam of **2020-2021**, the general exam of **2021-2022**, and the general exam of **2022-2023**, first attempt. The following table (1) describes the content and number of questions for each.
- 2.-EFL teachers and supervisors who are responsible for six grades of vocational departments, (Industry, Computer & Information Technology, Commerce, Tourism, Agriculture, Applied Arts). The following table (2) describe the teacher sample.
- 3-Two vocational supervisors who participate in analyzing a sample of the general English exams of the academic year **2022-2023**, first attempt.

Table (1) A description of the whole sample of the study

| Year | Main questions | Subquestions |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 2020-2021 | 56 | 206 |
| 2021-2022 | 57 | 211 |
| 2022-2023 | 53 | 206 |
| Total | 166 | 623 |

Research Tools

Bloom's Taxonomy Checklist for Data Collection

Checklist Design and Content

Checklists are powerful tools for improving performance and reducing errors (Atkinson, 2017: 12). They provide clear directions for tasks, ensuring that the learners do not miss necessary steps (Strauss & Smith, 2021: 5).

The study checklist aims at stating the various categories of Bloom's Taxonomy addressed in each question of the general English exam specialized to vocational departments. The researcher has focused on the six cognitive levels of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The checklist includes the following four divisions:

1. The first division: consists of the numbers of the main questions.
2. The second division: consists of the five main language activities assessed in the exam: Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation & Oral Component and Writing.
3. The third division: consists of items of questions: This section further breaks down each activity into specific questions or subquestions presumably tested within the exam questions. For example, Reading Comprehension is divided into "Read the passage and answer the following questions" and "Read the passage and complete the following questions."
4. The fourth division: consists of Bloom's Taxonomy Levels: This section has a checkbox for each of the following six levels of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy:
A-Lower Thinking Skills (LTS) (remembering, understanding, and applying).
B-Higher Thinking Skills (HTS) (analyzing, evaluating, and creating).

Validity of the Checklist

Judging the validity of the checklist: To ensure the validity of the checklist for collecting data, the researcher has exposed it to a jury of language professors and instructors to evaluate the suitability of the content and design to the objective of the study. The jury ensures its suitability to evaluate the general English exam questions through the lens of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy.

Inter-Rater Reliability

To ensure the reliability and objectivity of the categorization process, an inter-rater reliability test will conduct. The researcher followed the following steps:

1. The researcher, familiar with the revised Bloom's Taxonomy, independently categorized a randomly selected subset of questions (approximately 10%) from the exam, which analysed by the researcher, and after a period of time of (15) days, it analysed again to find the percentage of agreement between the researcher and herself over time.
3. The researcher gave the same sample (questions) to the supervisors to be analysed, to find agreement between the researcher's analysis and the supervisors
4. Cohen's Kappa coefficient (κ) will be calculated to assess the level of agreement between the two coders.
5. A κ value of 0.70 or higher will be considered acceptable, indicating substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977:159).
6. If the κ value falls below the acceptable threshold, discrepancies will be discussed, and the coding scheme might be refined for consistency.

A Questionnaire of Teacher's Reflection on English General Exam in the light of Blooms' Taxonomy

Validity of the Questionnaire

To verify the validity of the questionnaire, it was presented in its initial form to a group of jury members with specialization in the field of education (teaching English), where they were asked to express their opinion on the suitability of the dimensions included in the questionnaire, the suitability of the items to those dimensions, and the suitability of the items to the whole questionnaire purpose. The jury members agreed on the validity of the items and showed some modifications in the linguistic level of the questionnaire. The researcher modified the questionnaire according to the jury members' advice.

Reliability of Questionnaire

Questionnaires are significant in gathering data in various research fields. However, it is crucial to assess the questionnaire's reliability to ensure the precision of its findings (DeVellis, 2017:176). The consistency of a questionnaire in measuring a certain construction determines its reliability (Streiner & Norman, 2008: 176).

There are three main techniques used to assess the reliability of a questionnaire:

1. **Test-Retest Reliability:** This approach includes giving the identical survey to the identical set of participants on two separate occasions, with a designated time gap between each administration. Statistical measures, like Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, are used to evaluate the consistency of the results. A strong test-retest reliability is indicated by a high correlation coefficient. (DeVellis, 2017: 172).
2. **Internal Consistency Reliability:** This approach evaluates how responses are consistent within one round of administering the questionnaire. The main focus is on determining if various elements in a questionnaire are assessing the same fundamental concept. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a commonly used measure of internal consistency, with higher values suggesting stronger internal consistency. (Carmines & Zellerman, 1988: 72).
3. **Inter-Rater Reliability** is important when dealing with questionnaires that require multiple raters to evaluate the same answers. It evaluates how well various raters understand and rate the items consistently. Cohen's kappa coefficient is employed to assess inter-rater reliability. (DeVellis, 2017: 173).

General Information about Research Questionnaire

1. The questionnaire aims to explore the EFL teachers' reflections on the content of the General English Exam in light of Blooms' Taxonomy.
2. It is intended to sixth vocational English departments.
3. It is directed to supervisors of English in vocational departments and teachers in Vocational schools.

Contents of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of two main parts :

Part one: it investigates teacher's personal information about:

Name, Gender, Years of experience and Department.

Part two: Questionnaire questions: it consists of six sections:

1. Section One, a general reflection on the exam questions, includes 5 items with various substitutions for each. The participants have to select the appropriate one according to their experiences.
2. Section two, reflection on reading questions, includes 6 items. Each item has five substitutions that range from Strongly Agree, Agree Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.
3. Section three, reflection on vocabulary questions, includes 5 items. Each item has five substitutions that range from Strongly Agree, Agree Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.
4. Section four, reflection on grammar questions, includes 5 items. Each item has five substitutions that range from Strongly Agree, Agree Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.
5. Section five, reflection on pronunciation questions, includes 4 items. Each item has five substitutions that range from Strongly Agree, Agree Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.
6. Section six, reflecting on spelling and writing questions, includes 5 items. Each item has five substitutions that range from Strongly Agree, Agree Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The evaluation of language proficiency in vocational education holds immense significance, shaping students' future careers and their ability to navigate increasingly complex professional landscapes. Among the core skills assessed, English language proficiency stands paramount, enabling effective communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving - facets crucial for success in diverse vocational fields. Within this critical realm, evaluating student learning through standardized exams plays a pivotal role. However, ensuring these exams effectively assess the intended skills and promote desired learning outcomes necessitates closer examination (Sarawati, 2015)

Bloom's Taxonomy

Historical context of Bloom's revised Taxonomy:

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom and a group of educational psychologists published a framework for classifying educational objectives known as "Bloom's Taxonomy." This original taxonomy categorized learning objectives into six cognitive levels: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Synthesizing, and

Evaluating. (Bumen, 2007; Grounlund, 1998; Lipscomb, 2001; Kropp, Stoker, & Bashaw, 1966; Mcbain, 2011; Oermann & Kathleen, 2013; Ozden, 2011; Poole, 2006)

While highly influential, the taxonomy faced criticism for focusing solely on cognitive skills and neglecting emotions, values, and psychomotor skills. Enter the 2001 revision led by Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl. Recognizing the limitations of the original, they:

Shifted the focus: From nouns (like "knowledge") to action verbs (like "remembering"), emphasizing cognitive processes over static states.

Introduced two new dimensions: Knowledge Dimension (factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive) and Process Dimension (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating). This allowed for more nuanced classification and analysis of learning objectives.

Made the taxonomy bidirectional: Moving between the Knowledge and Process Dimensions became possible, reflecting the dynamic nature of learning.

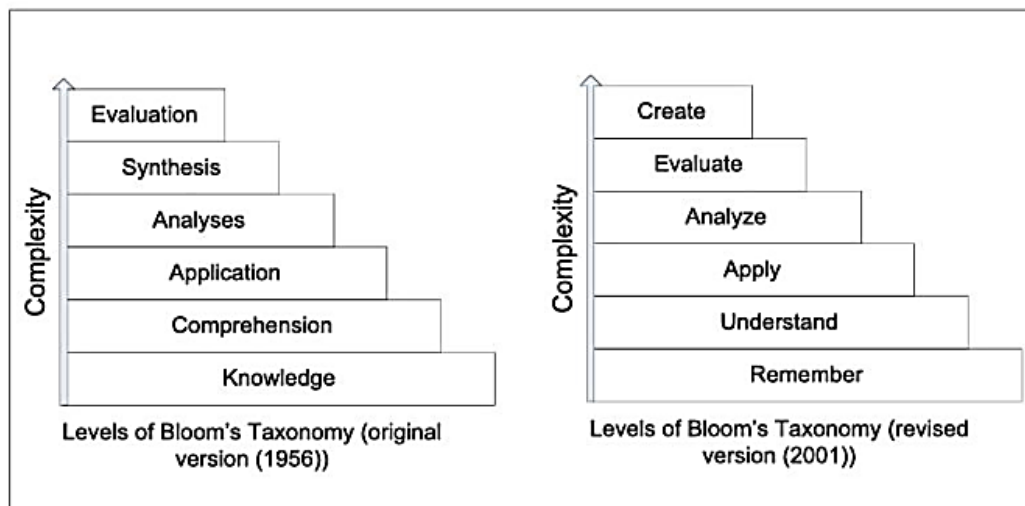
Emphasized higher-order thinking: The revised taxonomy placed greater weight on skills like analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, encouraging deeper understanding and application of knowledge.

This revision significantly impacted educational practices worldwide, including language assessment. Educators began using the revised taxonomy to: (Omar, et al 2011).

Design more engaging and effective assessments: Focusing on higher-order thinking skills led to tasks that demanded deeper understanding and analysis, not just rote memorization.

Improve the alignment between learning objectives and assessment: By using the taxonomy's framework, educators could ensure that assessments accurately measured what students were supposed to learn.

Promote learning across diverse contexts: The revised taxonomy emphasis on different knowledge and process types encouraged assessments that catered to various learning styles and abilities.



Blooms Taxonomy, Original and Revised (Adapted from Sousa (2006) pp. 249-250, cited in Dodge Jr & Further, 2013, p. 281)

STUDY RESULTS

Analyzing the Questions of the General English Exams of the Academic Years 2020-2021, 2021- 2022 and 2022-2023 \ Industry and Computer & Information Technology Branches

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|-------------|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| | Sum of | Remembering | Understanding | Applying | Analyzing | Evaluating | Creating |
|--|--------|-------------|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|

| Years | | Remembering | | Understanding | | Applying | | Analyzing | | Evaluating | | Creating | |
|------------|-----|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| | | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Sum | % percentage | Sum | % percentage |
| 2020- 2021 | 44 | 15 | 34.1 | 11 | 25 | 10 | 22.72 | 7 | 15.9 | 1 | 2.27 | 0 | 0 |
| 2021-2022 | 44 | 15 | 34.1 | 14 | 31.8 | 9 | 20.5 | 6 | 13.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2022-2023 | 42 | 14 | 33.3 | 11 | 26.2 | 9 | 21.4 | 5 | 11.9 | 2 | 4.8 | 1 | 2.38 |
| Total | 130 | 44 | 33.8 | 36 | 27.7 | 28 | 21.5 | 18 | 13.8 | 3 | 2.30 | 1 | 0.76 |

The table shows that the sum of questions over the three academic years is (130). Analyzing these questions in the light of six of Bloom's Taxonomy in the three academic years of Industry and Computer & Information Technology Branches revealed that remembering level has (33.8%) of the total percentage, understanding has (27.7%), applying has (21.5%), analyzing has (13.8%), evaluating has (2.3%), creating has (0.76%). More specifically, analyzing the questions of General English Exam in the academic year **2020-2021** in light of Bloom's Taxonomy revealed that the total questions are (44), and the percentage of remembering has (34.1%), understanding has (25%), applying has (22.72%), analyzing has (15.9%), evaluating has (2.27%) and creating has (0%). In the academic year **2021-2022**, the total questions are (44), and the percentage of remembering has (34.1%), understanding has (31.8%), applying has (20.5%), analyzing has (13.6%), evaluating has (0%), while creating has (0%). In the academic year **2022-2023**: The total questions are (42) and the percentage of analyzing the questions revealed that the percentage of remembering level has (33.3%), understanding has (26.2%), applying has (21.4%), analyzing has (11.9%), evaluating has (4.8%) while creating has (2.38%). Based on the previous data analysis, it is observed that remembering has the first rank of Bloom's Taxonomy as many questions in various language domains in the exam require more recall of facts. Thus, remembering accounts fairly one-third of the total questions each year. The questions aimed at testing understanding showed slight variations, with the highest percentage, in **2021-2022** has (31.8%) and the lowest in **2020-2021** has (25%). Thus, the exams heavily emphasize lower-order thinking skills (remembering and understanding), comprising over a percentage of (60%) of the questions each year mentioned above. The applying Taxonomy, consistently hovered around (21-22%), indicating a moderate emphasis on application of language skills. The analyzing level has a gradual decline from (15.9%) in **2020-2021** to (11.9%) in **2022-2023**, showing a reduced focus on breaking information into parts to explore understandings and relationships. Evaluating, which involves making judgments based on criteria and standards, is scarcely represented, peaking at (4.8%) in **2022-2023** and disappearing in **2021-2022**.

Analyzing the Questions of the General English Exams of the Academic Years 2020-2021, 2021- 2022 and 2022-2023 \ Commercial Branch

| Years | Sum of questions | Remembering | | Understanding | | Applying | | Analyzing | | Evaluating | | Creating | |
|-------|------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| | | Frequencies | %percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Sum | % percentage | Sum | % percentage |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Questions Analysis of the General English language Exam for the Sixth Vocational Grade in Light of Bloom's Taxonomy

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----|----|------|----|-------|----|-------|----|------|---|-----|---|------|
| 2020-2021 | 39 | 10 | 25.6 | 9 | 23.08 | 14 | 35.9 | 3 | 7.7 | 1 | 2.6 | 2 | 5.12 |
| 2021-2022 | 37 | 11 | 29.7 | 8 | 21.62 | 12 | 32.43 | 5 | 13.5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2.7 |
| 2022-2023 | 37 | 11 | 29.7 | 10 | 27.03 | 12 | 32.43 | 2 | 5.4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5.4 |
| Total | 113 | 32 | 28.3 | 27 | 23.9 | 38 | 33.6 | 10 | 8.8 | 1 | 0.8 | 5 | 4.4 |

The table has illustrated the analysis of the General English Exam questions of six cognitive levels (Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating) over three academic years (2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023). The total number of questions is (113) questions over the three years mentioned above. Bloom's levels distribution includes: Applying is the first rank with a percentage of (33.6%), remembering is the second rank with a percentage of (28.3%), followed by understanding with a percentage of (23.9%), then analyzing level with a percentage of (8.8%), creating level with percentage of (4.4%) and lastly, evaluating level with a percentage of (0.8%). To be more specific, in the academic year 2020-2021, the total number of questions is (39) and the questions analysis revealed that, applying is the first with a percentage of (35.9%) then remembering level with a percentage of (25.6%), understanding is at the third rank with a percentage of (23.08%) followed by analyzing (7.7%) and creating with (5.12%). At last, evaluating level has a percentage of (2.6%). The question analysis of the academic year 2021-2022, the total number of questions is (37). Bloom's Taxonomy distribution is as follows: Applying level is at first with percentage of (32.43%) then remembering is with the percentage of (29.7%), understanding is with the percentage of (21.62%), analyzing is with percentage of (13.5%) and lastly, creating is with percentage of (2.7%) while evaluating level is not handled in any questions (0%). The question analysis of the academic year 2022-2023, the total number of questions is (37%). Bloom's Taxonomy distribution is as follows: Applying level is at first with the percentage of (32.43%), followed by remembering level has (29.7%), then understanding level has (27.03%), analyzing has (5.4%), creating has (5.4%), and at last, no questions are handled for evaluating level. Based on data analysis, it is observed that the percentage of questions aimed at testing memory recall (remembering) ranges from (25.6%) to (29.7%), showing a slight increase over the three years mentioned before

Analyzing the Questions of the General English Exams of the Academic Years 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 \ Agriculture Branch

| Years | Sum of questions | Remembering | | Understanding | | Applying | | Analyzing | | Evaluating | | Creating | |
|-----------|------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| | | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Sum | % percentage | Sum | % percentage |
| 2020-2021 | 38 | 15 | 39.5 | 11 | 28.9 | 10 | 26.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5.3 |
| 2021-2022 | 38 | 15 | 39.5 | 11 | 28.9 | 9 | 23.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7.9 |
| 2022-2023 | 42 | 16 | 38.1 | 11 | 26.19 | 12 | 28.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7.1 |
| Total | 118 | 46 | 38.9 | 33 | 27.97 | 31 | 26.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 6.8 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

The table has shown that the total number of questions over the three academic years is (118). Analyzing these questions in light of six Bloom's Taxonomy in the three academic years of the agriculture branch, which is mentioned above, revealed that remembering level has a percentage of (38.9 %) of the total percentage, understanding has a percentage of (27.97 %), applying has a percentage of (26.3%), creating has a percentage of (6.8%), no question assesses evaluating or analyzing levels. To be more accurate, analyzing the questions of the General English Exam in the academic year **2020-2021** in light of Bloom's Taxonomy revealed that the total number of questions is (38), remembering level has a percentage of (39.5%), understanding has a percentage of (28.9%) , applying has a percentage of (26.3 %) analyzing has a percentage of (0%), evaluating has a percentage of (0%) and creating has a percentage of (5.3%). In the academic year **2021-2022**, the total number of questions is (38), remembering has a percentage of (39.5%), understanding has a percentage of (28.9%), applying has a percentage of (23.7%), creating has a percentage of (7.9%), at last analyzing and evaluating have a percentage of (0%). While in the academic year **2022-2023**, the total number of questions is (42). Analyzing the questions revealed that, remembering level has a percentage of (38.9%), understanding has a percentage of (27.97%), applying has a percentage of (28.6%), analyzing and evaluating levels are not assessed, and creating has a percentage of (7.1%). Based on the previous data analysis, it is observed that remembering has the first rank of Bloom's Taxonomy as many questions in various language domains in the exam require the recall of information. Thus, remembering accounts fairly one-third of the total questions each year. Questions aimed at assessing understanding level showed slight variations, with the highest percentage in academic years **2020-2021** and **2021-2022** (28.9%) and the lowest in **2020-2021** (25%). Thus, the exams heavily emphasize lower-order thinking skills (remembering and understanding). The applying Taxonomy, ranked highest in the academic year **2022-2023**, indicating a moderate emphasis on the application of language skills. The creating level is gradually increasing. While evaluating, which is involves making judgments based on criteria and standards, is scarcely represented peaking at a percentage of (4.8%) in **2022-2023** and being absent in **2021-2022**. The questions encouraging creating level or generating new information from the existing ones were almost negligible, appearing only in **2022-2023** at a minimal (2.38%). The overall higher-order thinking skills (analyzing, evaluating, and creating) are significantly negligible in the General Exams. There is a need for more questions that promote critical thinking, analysis, problem-solving, and creative skills.

Analyzing the Questions of the General English Exams of the Academic Years 2020-2021, 2021- 2022 and 2022-2023 \ Tourism Branch

| Years | Sum of questions | Remembering | | Understanding | | Applying | | Analyzing | | Evaluating | | Creating | |
|-----------|------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| | | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Sum | % percentage | Sum | % percentage |
| 2020-2021 | 44 | 16 | 36.4 | 14 | 31.8 | 12 | 27.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4.5 |

Questions Analysis of the General English language Exam for the Sixth Vocational Grade in Light of Bloom's Taxonomy

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----|----|------|----|------|----|------|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 2021-2022 | 51 | 16 | 31.4 | 15 | 29.4 | 18 | 35.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3.9 |
| 2022-2023 | 44 | 15 | 34.1 | 14 | 31.8 | 13 | 29.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4.5 |
| Total | 139 | 47 | 33.8 | 43 | 30.9 | 43 | 30.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4.31 |

The table has shown that the total number of questions over the three academic years is (139). Analyzing these questions in light of six Bloom's Taxonomy in the three academic years of the tourism branch revealed that, remembering level has a percentage of (33.8 %) of the total percentage, understanding and applying levels have a percentage of (30.9 %) of the whole questions, creating level has a percentage of (4.31%), no question assesses evaluating or analyzing levels. To be more accurate, analyzing the questions of the general English exam in the academic year **2020-2021** in light of Bloom's Taxonomy revealed that the total number of questions is (44); remembering level has a percentage of (36.4%), understanding has a percentage of (31.8%) , applying has a percentage of (27.3%), analyzing has a percentage of (0%), evaluating has a percentage of (0%) and creating has a percentage of (4.5%). In the academic year **2021-2022**, the total number of questions is (51); applying level is at first place with a percentage of (35.3%) followed by remembering level ,which has a percentage of (31.4%), understanding has a percentage of (29.4%) creating has a percentage of (3.9 %) ,analyzing and evaluating have a percentage of (0%). In the academic year **2022-2023**, the total number of questions is (44). Analyzing the questions revealed that remembering level has a percentage of (34.1%), understanding has a percentage of (31.8%), applying has a percentage of (29.5%), analyzing and evaluating levels are not assessed, while creating has a percentage of (4.5%). The previous data indicate a significant emphasis on lower-order thinking skills in the questions of the general English exams over the three academic years mentioned above. There is a notable absence of questions aimed at assessing higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing and evaluating. It could also be observed that the majority of the questions across all three years assess lower-order thinking skills: remembering, understanding, and applying. Thus, those three levels account for over (90%) of the percentage each year.

Analyzing the Questions of the General English Exams of the Academic Years 2020-2021, 2021- 2022 and 2022-2023 \ Applied Arts Branch

| years | Sum of questions | Remembering | | Understanding | | Applying | | Analyzing | | Evaluating | | Creating | |
|-----------|------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| | | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Frequencies | % percentage | Sum | % percentage | Sum | % percentage |
| 2020-2021 | 41 | 17 | 41.5 | 11 | 26.8 | 11 | 26.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4.9 |
| 2021-2022 | 41 | 16 | 39.02 | 12 | 29.3 | 11 | 26.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4.9 |
| 2022-2023 | 41 | 15 | 36.6 | 13 | 31.7 | 11 | 26.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4.9 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----|----|-------|----|------|----|------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Total | 123 | 48 | 39.02 | 36 | 29.3 | 33 | 26.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4.9 |
|-------|-----|----|-------|----|------|----|------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|

The table has shown that the total number of questions over the three academic years is (123). Analyzing these questions in light of six Bloom's Taxonomy in the three academic years of the applied arts branch revealed that remembering level has a percentage of (39.02%) of the total percentage, understanding has a percentage of (29.3%) , applying levels has a percentage of (26.8 %), creating has a percentage of (4.9 %), no question assesses evaluating or analyzing levels. To be more accurate , analyzing the questions of the general English exam in the academic year **2020-2021** in light of Bloom's Taxonomy revealed that the total number of questions is (41); remembering level has a percentage of (41.5%), understanding and applying levels have the same percentage (26.8%) , analyzing has a percentage of (0%), evaluating has a percentage of (0%) and creating has a percentage of (4.9%). In the academic year **2021-2022**, the total number of questions is (41); remembering level is in first place with a percentage of (39.02%) followed by understanding level ,which has a percentage of (29.3%), applying has a percentage of (26.8%), creating has a percentage of (4.9 %), at last analyzing and evaluating have a percentage of (0%). In the academic year **2022-2023**: the total number of questions is (41). Analyzing the questions revealed that remembering level has a percentage of (36.6%), understanding has a percentage of (31.7%), applying has a percentage of (26.8%), analyzing and evaluating levels are not assessed, while creating has a percentage of (4.9%).

Results of Analyzing the Questionnaire

General Information

The first part consists of questions about the general information of the teachers who participate in responding to this questionnaire. The participants are divided between 11 males (36.6%) and 19 females (63.3%) from various departments. Their ages vary from 25-30 (16.6%), 30-40 (26.6%), and 40-50 (56.6%). As for years of experience, (20 %) of them have (0-5) years of teaching experience, (30%) have 5 to 10 years and about (50 %) have 15 years and more.

| General Information | Branches | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | Industry | 19 | 38% |
| | Agriculture | 5 | 10% |
| | Commerce | 13 | 26% |
| | Applied arts | 5 | 10% |
| | Tourism | 5 | 10% |
| | Computer and Information Technology | 3 | 6% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |
| Years of Experience | 1-5 | 13 | 26% |
| | 5-10 | 14 | 28% |
| | 10-more | 23 | 46% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |
| Gender | Male | 13 | 26 % |
| | Female | 37 | 74% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

The Analysis of Teachers' Reflection on the Exam Questions

Section One\General Reflection on the Exam Questions

| No. | Questions | Responses | Sum | Percentage |
|-----|---|--|-----|------------|
| 1 | The difficulty level of the General English Language Exam for the Sixth Vocational Grade | Easy | 8 | 16% |
| | | Average | 38 | 76% |
| | | Difficult | 4 | 8% |
| 2 | Which skills do you think should be emphasized more in the General English Language Exam for the Sixth Vocational Grade | Reading | 23 | 46% |
| | | Writing | 4 | 8% |
| | | Grammar | 6 | 12% |
| | | Vocabulary | 13 | 26% |
| | | Pronunciation | 4 | 8% |
| 3 | The clearest strength of the General English Language Exam for the Sixth Vocational Grade | Assesses a wide range of language skills. | 9 | 18% |
| | | Follows specific national or regional standards | 13 | 26% |
| | | Provides a fair assessment of student knowledge | 28 | 56% |
| 4 | The clearest weaknesses of the General English Language Exam for the Sixth Vocational Grade | Overemphasis on rote memorization | 19 | 38% |
| | | Limited assessment of higher-order thinking skills | 13 | 26% |
| | | Focus on multiple choice questions | 8 | 16% |
| | | Limited opportunity for real-world application | 10 | 20% |
| 5 | The type of question in each section is varied according to the objectives of the section | Strongly Agree | 3 | 6% |
| | | Agree | 27 | 54% |
| | | Neutral | 16 | 32% |
| | | Disagree | 3 | 6% |
| | | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2% |

The table illustrates that in the first question, the teachers are asked about the difficulty level of the exam. Their responses are varied. 76% of teachers agreed that the questions are average, whereas (16%) of the teachers agreed that the questions are easy, and (8%) of them agreed that the questions are difficult. In the second question, teachers are asked about the skills more emphasized in the exam. (46%) of teachers agreed that reading is the skill that is more emphasized, (26%) views vocabulary as the most emphasized language activity, and (12%) views grammar as the most important. Writing and pronunciation are seen as less emphasized, receiving only (8%) of the responses. In the third question, teachers are asked to decide the clearest strength of the exam. The most significant strength, according to (56%) of teachers, is that the exam provides a fair assessment of student knowledge. And the option “Following specific national standards” has (26%) and (18%) of teachers viewed the option, “Assesses a wide range of language skills”. In the fourth question, teachers are asked about the clearest weaknesses of the exam. The most frequently identified weakness accepted by (38%) of the teachers is the overemphasis on rote memorization. (26%) accepted “limited assessment of higher-order

thinking skills" and (20%) of them accepted "limited opportunities for real-world application" as significant concerns. "The focus on multiple-choice questions" is seen as a weakness by (16%) of teachers. In the fifth question, teachers are asked about the variation of question types according to the objectives. (54%) of teachers agree that the types of questions vary according to the objectives of each section. (32%) of them are neutral. Only (6%) of respondents disagree, or (2%) of them are strongly disagree.

Section Two \ Reflection on Reading Questions

| No. | Questions | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | The reading questions accurately reflect the depth and variety of reading comprehension levels expected on the Instructional objectives | 12% | 50% | 32% | 6% | 0% |
| 2 | The reading exam questions is structured in a way that encourages students to apply knowledge learned through classroom instruction | 16% | 54% | 24% | 6% | 0% |
| 3 | The questions encourage students to use analysis skills emphasized in the Instructional objectives | 4% | 4% | 36% | 56% | 0 |
| 4 | The questions assess students' understanding of key concepts and themes | 8% | 60% | 30% | 2% | 0 |
| 5 | There is a clear connection between the reading questions and the instructional objectives and materials used in the classroom | 8% | 48% | 40% | 4% | 0 |
| 6 | The questions encourage students to use creative skills emphasized in the Instructional objectives | 6% | 38% | 46% | 8% | 0 |

The data obtained from the table above has revealed the following results:

In the first question, teachers are asked about the depth and variety of reading comprehension questions in the general English exam, (50%) of the respondents agree and (12%) of them agree strongly that the reading questions reflect the expected comprehension levels, though a significant portion (32%), neutral or strongly disagree (6%). In the second question, teachers are asked about the application of knowledge; (16%) strongly agree, (54%) agree, and respondents feel the questions encourage the application of classroom knowledge, indicating alignment with instructional strategies. (24%) neutral, and (6%) disagree. In the third question, teachers are asked about the use of analysis skills; (4% strongly agree and agree) that the questions encourage analysis skills, and (56%) disagree with the statement. In the fourth question, teachers are asked about the level of understanding of key concepts and themes in the questions, (8%) of the respondents strongly agree, (60%) agree that the questions assess key concepts and themes well, with minimal disagreement (30% neutral, 2% disagree). In question five, teachers are asked about the connection between the questions and instructional

objectives. Although (56%) of the respondents (8% strongly agree, 48% agree) agree there is a clear connection between exam questions and instructional materials, a significant number remain neutral (40% neutral, 4% disagree). In question six, teachers are asked about the questions' ability to encourage creative skills, a majority of respondents either neutral or disagree (46% neutral, 8% disagree) that the questions encourage creative skills, other respondents either agree or strongly agree (6% strongly agree, 38% agree).

Section Three \ Reflection on Vocabulary Questions

| No. | Questions | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | The vocabulary exam questions align with the vocabulary learning objectives outlined in the Instructional objectives | 10% | 62% | 28% | 0% | 0% |
| 2 | The questions cover the range of vocabulary items and word types emphasized in the Student -book objectives | 14% | 42% | 40% | 4% | 0% |
| 3 | There is a clear connection between the vocabulary exam questions and the vocabulary instruction provided in the text book | 16% | 46% | 34% | 4% | 0 |
| 4 | The questions assess a variety of vocabulary acquisition skills, such as word meaning, usage, collocations, and word families, in line with the Instructional objectives | 4% | 48% | 44% | 4% | 0 |
| 5 | The vocabulary exam questions assess students' ability to use vocabulary in context, as specified in the Instructional objectives | 10% | 62% | 24% | 4% | 0 |

The table illustrates the responses of teachers on the vocabulary questions of general English exams. In detail, in the first question, teachers are asked about the alignment of questions with vocabulary learning objectives. (72%) of the respondents (10% strongly agree, 62% agree) that the vocabulary questions align well with the learning objectives, but about (28%) are neutral, suggesting a need for more improvement and relatedness of question content to the instructional objectives. In question two, teachers are asked about the comprehensibility of questions to the vocabulary items and word types, while about (56%) of the respondents (14% strongly agree, 42% agree) that the questions cover the necessary range of vocabulary, the high neutral response (40%) and small disagreement (4%) indicate a potential gap in the questions' ability to cover all items and words. In question three, teachers are asked about the connectedness of questions to the vocabulary instructional objectives. (62%) of the respondents (16% strongly agree, 46% agree) that there is a clear connection between the exam questions and the vocabulary instruction, but a notable minority remains neutral (34%) whereas (4%) disagree. In question four, teachers are asked about the questions' ability to assess various vocabulary skills. 52% (4% strongly agree, 48% agree), agree that the questions assess a variety of vocabulary skills, but the high neutral response which is (44%) indicates an uncertainty about the comprehensiveness of the questions to the skills assessed. In question five, teachers are asked about

the use of vocabulary items in the appropriate context. 72% (10% strongly agree, 62% agree) agree that the questions assess the use of vocabulary in context, though a (24%) remain neutral and (4%) are disagree.

Section Four \ Reflection on Grammar Questions

| No. | Questions | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | The questions align with the grammar learning objectives outlined in the Instruction | 6% | 60% | 32% | 0% | 2% |
| 2 | The questions cover the range of grammatical structures and concepts that has been instructed | 12% | 56% | 32% | 4% | 0% |
| 3 | There is a clear connection between the questions and the instruction provided in the text-book | 12% | 56% | 28% | 4% | 0 |
| 4 | The questions assess students' understanding and application of grammar rules and conventions, as specified in the Instructional objectives | 12% | 52% | 34% | 2% | 0 |
| 5 | The questions assess a variety of grammatical skills, such as sentence structure, verb tense, agreement, and punctuation | 10% | 56% | 30% | 4% | 0 |

The above table has revealed the responses of teachers on the grammar questions of general English exams. In question one, teachers are asked about the alignment of grammar questions with the grammar learning objectives. 66% (6% strongly agree, 60% agree) believe the grammar questions align well with the learning objectives, though (32%) are neutral, suggesting a need for more focus on the relatedness of grammar questions to the learning objectives. In question two, teachers are asked about the handling of questions to the whole grammatical structure and concepts. (68%) of respondents (12% strongly agree, 56% agree) agree that the questions cover the necessary range of grammatical structures, but (32%) of respondents are neutral. other (4%) disagree. In question three, teachers are asked about the connectedness of questions to the instruction method of teaching grammar. (68%) of the respondents (12% strongly agree, 56% agree) agree that there is a clear connection between exam questions and the method of instruction applied in the classroom, but (28%) remain neutral and about (4%) disagree. In question four, teachers are asked about the questions' ability to assess understanding and application of grammar rules. 64% (12% strongly agree, 52% agree) agree that the questions assess grammatical rule understanding and application well, but about (34%) remain neutral, suggesting the variety of question structure according to the branch. In question five, teachers are asked about the variety of grammatical skills assessed, 66% (10% strongly agree, 56% agree) agree that the questions assess a variety of grammatical skills, but (30%) of respondents are neutral suggesting uncertainty about the comprehensiveness of the skills assessed.

Section Five \ Reflection on Pronunciation Questions

| No. | Questions | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | The questions align with the learning objectives outlined in the Text-book | 10% | 50% | 34% | 4% | 2% |
| 2 | The questions cover the range of phonetic features and pronunciation patterns that has been instructed | 8% | 50% | 30% | 12% | 0% |
| 3 | The questions appropriately leveled to match the Bloom's taxonomy | 8 % | 12 % | 22 % | 54% | 4% |
| 4 | There is a clear connection between the questions and the instruction provided in the Text-book | 12% | 52% | 28% | 8% | 0 |
| 5 | The questions assess students' ability to produce accurate sounds as specified in the Instructional objectives | 6% | 50% | 36% | 6% | 2 |

The data obtained from the table above has revealed the responses of teachers to the pronunciation questions of general English exams. In question one , teachers are asked about the alignment of pronunciation questions with the learning objectives, (60%)of the respondents (10% strongly agree, 50% agree) agree that the questions align well with the instructional objectives, but (34 %)of respondents are neutral, indicating the insufficient amount of question in assessing all the behavioral objectives stated in the curriculum. In question two, teachers are asked about the comprehensibility of the questions to the phonetic features and pronunciation patterns. (58%) of the respondents (8% strongly agree, 50% agree) agree that the questions cover the necessary phonetic features, but about (30%) are neutral and (12%) disagree indicating the focus of the questions on specific patterns. In questions three teachers are asked about the appropriateness of the questions in assessing various Bloom's Taxonomy, (58%) of respondents (54% disagree, 4% strongly disagree) see that the questions are not appropriately matched to Bloom's Taxonomy, suggesting reducing the inability of the questions to assess the various intended cognitive levels. In question four, teachers are asked about the connectedness of the questions to the instruction of pronunciation. (64%) of the respondents (12% strongly agree, 52% agree) see a clear connection between the questions and the instruction of pronunciation, though (28%) of the respondents are neutral and (8%) disagree. In question five, teachers are asked about the questions' ability to assess accurate sound production. (56%) of respondents (6% strongly agree, 50% agree) agree that the questions assess sound production as specified, although (36%) a neutral response..

Section Reflection on Spelling and Writing Questions

| No. | Questions | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | The questions align with the learning objectives outlined in the instruction | 6% | 60% | 30% | 4% | 0% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 2 | The questions cover the range of spelling rules, patterns, and conventions that has been instructed | 8% | 50% | 40% | 2% | 0% |
| 3 | The questions appropriately leveled to match the Bloom's taxonomy (Remembering &Applying) | 8 % | 48% | 38% | 6% | 0% |
| 4 | There is a clear connection between the questions and the instruction provided in the Text-Book | 18% | 50% | 30% | 2% | 0 |
| 5 | The questions assess students' ability to spell words accurately and consistently, as specified in the Instructional objectives | 8% | 44% | 38% | 10% | 0 |
| 6 | The questions encourage students to apply their spelling knowledge to real world writing tasks | 12% | 56% | 24% | 6% | 2% |

The table above has revealed the responses of teachers to the spelling and writing questions of general English exams, as follows: In question one, teachers are asked about the alignment of the questions with the instructional objectives. (66%) of the respondents (6% strongly agree, 60% agree) agree that the spelling questions align with the instructional objectives, though about (30%) of the respondents are neutral and (4%) of the respondents disagree. In question two, teachers are asked about the comprehensibility of the questions to the spelling rules, patterns, and conventions. (58%) of the respondents (8% strongly agree, 50% agree) agree that the questions assess the students' ability to use the necessary spelling rules and patterns, but about (40 %) remain neutral, indicating potential gaps or uncertainty. In question three, teachers are asked about the appropriateness of the questions to assess Bloom's Taxonomy (remembering and applying). (56%) of the respondents (8% strongly agree, 48% agree) that the questions are appropriately matched to Bloom's Taxonomy, but a considerable percentage is neutral (38%) or disagrees (6%), suggesting the need for more questions to assess various cognitive levels in Bloom's Taxonomy. In question four, teachers are asked about the connection to the instruction of writing. (68%) of the respondents (18% strongly agree, 50% agree) see a clear connection between the questions and the instruction, though (30%) are neutral and (2%) disagree, indicating a potential area for enhancement. In question five, teachers are asked about the ability of the questions to assess the accuracy of the spelling. (52%) of the respondents (8% strongly agree, 44% agree) agree that the questions assess accurate spelling, but about (38%) are neutral and (10 %) disagree. In question six, teachers are asked about the questions' ability to assess the application of spelling rules and writing skills .(68%) of the respondents (12% strongly agree, 56% agree) agree that the questions encourage the application of spelling knowledge and writing skills, though about (24 %) are neutral and a small percentage ,8% (6% disagree, 2% strongly disagree) disagree.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the theoretical and practical findings of this study, it can be concluded that:

- 1-The exam questions over the three academic years heavily emphasize lower-order cognitive levels. This indicates that there is a focus on recall and comprehension rather than higher cognitive levels.
- 2-Moderate emphasis on applying, which followed by remembering and understanding levels.
- 3-Higher-order cognitive levels, including analyzing, evaluating and creating, are significantly absent in the three chosen academic years. This absence indicates a lack of questions that require students to critically evaluate information or create a new content based on the presented knowledge which highlights a gap in fostering creativity and critical evaluation skills among students.
- 4-Reviewing all sections in the questionnaire (reading, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling), there is a highly agreement that the exam questions align well with the instructional objectives, especially, in the grammar and vocabulary activities, indicating the appropriateness of the questions of grammar and vocabulary to the instructional objectives and a more questions needed in the pronunciation, reading and writing activities based on the instructional objectives. (Iraqi Curriculum Framework, 2012: 13)

- 5-There is a strong connection between the exam questions and the instruction of the language activities provided in the text book that indicate well-structured questions in light of the adopted instruction.
- 6-While the questions assess variety of skills, more vocabulary questions needed to assess a variety of vocabulary acquisition skills which should be based on a content analysis of the text book itself.
- 7-In the pronunciation section, where the majority of respondents disagreed that the questions are appropriately leveled to match various Bloom's Taxonomy. This needs to vary the questions that align with various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.
- 8-Questions in the activities are generally agreed to support the application of knowledge in language tasks, especially in the spelling activity, indicating more questions that assess application of language skills needs in other activities..

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