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## Exploring the English Teachers' Knowledge of HOTS in Teaching English

<sup>1</sup>Santosh Kumar Behera, Lamhot Naibaho<sup>2\*</sup>, Geby Arni Siregar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education, Kazi Nazrul University, Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal, India

<sup>2</sup>English Language Education Department, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Letters and Languages, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

### Abstract

*This study explores the English teachers' knowledge of HOTS in teaching English. It was done at Junior High Schools in East Bekasi from December 2021 to March 2022. The method of the study was a quantitative method with a survey design. A set of questionnaires was used as an instrument in this study to collect information and data from respondents related to the studied topic. The population in this study consists of English language teachers in Junior High schools in East Bekasi. A total of 230 English language teachers were used as the study sample. The sample size was determined concerning the sample size determinant table. Data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. The collected data were analyzed descriptively using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings of this study are a) that the English language teachers' understanding of HOTS is at a moderate level (SD 0.506); b) the English language teachers' knowledge about HOTS is at a high level (SD 0.486); and c) the implementation of HOTS in the teaching of English language teachers is at a high level (SD 0.411). Then it is concluded that the role of teachers as a catalyst for effective teaching and learning requires teachers to constantly improve their new knowledge of the content of the curriculum taught by them. English language teachers who have a high level of expertise can implement a quality teaching and learning process and realize the goals of the national education system*

**Keywords:** English teachers; knowledge; HOTS

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' knowledge of thinking skills in the teaching and learning process among teachers is essential to be possessed. It is a must for teachers to improve their thinking skills. Teachers and students also need to improve their high-order thinking skills. Teachers still do not master thinking skills well, even though the matter has long been implemented in the education system (Singh et al., 2020; Palavan, 2020). Most teachers are not clear on applying elements of thinking skills in teaching and learning. However, some have been given formal exposure to critical and creative thinking skills through courses organized by the curriculum development center or internal courses by the school (Huang, Kuo & Chen, 2020; Marcos, Fernández, González & Phillips-Silver, 2020). It is concluded that understanding the concept of high-order thinking skills (HOTS) is very important, and teachers must master it. It is because the understanding of the concept of thinking can affect teachers' teaching effectiveness.

The implementation of thinking skills in English language teaching from teachers' perspective showed that the teachers' understanding of critical and creative thinking skills is at a high level (Petek & Bedir, 2018; Tuzlukova, Al Busaidi & Burns, 2017; Çakici, 2018). It offers that English language teachers 'agree' that there are still problems understanding the concept among them. Teachers find it challenging to translate critical and

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Corresponding: [santosh.behera@knu.ac.in](mailto:santosh.behera@knu.ac.in), [lamhot.naibaho@uki.ac.id](mailto:lamhot.naibaho@uki.ac.id), [gebysiregar2@gmail.com](mailto:gebysiregar2@gmail.com)

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creative thinking skills in teaching English to students. To ensure teaching effectiveness, English language teachers need to understand the concept of HOTS in depth. Teaching practices in the classroom do not emphasize thinking skills strategies such as questioning, discussion, and inquiry of findings. To improve thinking skills in the school, teachers need to diversify teaching methods so that students are more interested in learning. To teach integrated thinking skills, i.e., thinking skills are taught in an integrated manner with the content of the subject curriculum. However, 26% of teachers did not allocate their teaching and learning time to teaching thinking skills (Rietdijk, Weijen, Janssen, Bergh & Rijlaarsdam, 2018). Most teachers think that critical and creative thinking skills should be prepared for students, but only 36.4% of teachers feel they are ready to use critical and creative thinking skills in the teaching process (Din, 2020; Tondeur, Scherer, Baran, Siddiq, Valtonen & Sointu, 2019; Jaskyte, Taylor & Smariga, 2009). Therefore, thinking skills are not emphasized in teachers' teaching process in the classroom.

Teaching that is still traditional, teacher-centered teaching is one of the constraints in realizing students' thinking skills. It caused the objectives of the new secondary school curriculum not only not to be achieved but also caused the issue of passive students in the classroom during the teaching and learning process. Sedentary student behavior could be overcome by creating active interaction between teachers and students, students with students, and teaching aids (Hankonen et al., 2017). At the same time, it also gives some freedom to think creatively through the active involvement of students and makes it easier for students to share opinions and ideas. Success and excellence in a subject will not be a reality if teachers still use traditional methods and do not consider aspects of students' thinking skills. Thinking skills are an essential aspect of mastering a skill that influences student achievement (Valiandes & Neophytou, 2018; Gay, 2018) significantly. Teaching and learning that still leads to examinations are one of the issues in the problem statement of the researcher's study. It has weakened efforts to produce students who are balanced intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically as enshrined in the content of the national philosophy of education. The situation that occurred caused the teachers to emphasize less on the thinking skills aspect of the students because they focused more on the effort to complete the syllabus and the mastery of the technique of answering exam questions alone.

In the context of teaching and learning, questioning can promote teacher-student interaction effectively (Worku & Alemu, 2021; Durksen, Way, Bobis, Anderson, Skilling & Martin, 2017). The questions posed by the teacher can unearth the students' knowledge and strengthen the content of the lesson presented by the teacher. In addition, a skilled teacher is an effective questioner where the teacher can use questions that can guide students in giving clear ideas, develop thinking potential, and move students' imagination. Teachers need to diversify teaching methods so that students are more interested in learning and improve students' thinking skills in the classroom. Less than one-third of the total teaching time of teachers in the school emphasizes thinking skills for students (Rantala & Ouakrim-Soivio, 2019). It means that teachers do not teach students to master the skills of finding, understanding, analyzing, and using the information in more depth.

The thinking skills of English language teachers are still at the level of mechanical use and have not been absorbed in a planned manner (Singh & Marappan, 2020; Us Saqlain, Shafqat & Hassan, 2020). Therefore, teachers should be wise to use the strategy of HOTS in assigning an assignment to students by taking into account the different characteristics of a student himself to achieve teaching objectives effectively. The government is trying various innovations in teaching and learning to help teachers teach more effectively and give students a good understanding of the content of education delivered by their teachers. In addition, the innovation is aimed at cultivating HOTS among students throughout the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Ginaya, Kanca, Astuti & Nyoman, 2020; Zou, Luo, Xie & Hwang, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to explore the English Teachers' Knowledge of HOTS in Teaching English.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study design selected and used in this study is a descriptive survey method. The survey method is a study of what is happening, and it is a simple and popular method. The survey study design is a procedure in quantitative research. The researcher conducts a survey on a sample or entire population of people to describe attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics in that population. In this study, the researcher examines the aspects of understanding, knowledge, and implementation in the teaching of HOTS among English language teachers in secondary schools. The study conducted focused on quantitative data collection. Therefore, the questionnaire collects information and data from respondents related to the study. A population is a group of individuals with the same characteristics and criteria as the study's purpose. The sample is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher wants to study to generalize the study population. This study consists of

English language teachers in Junior High School in East Bekasi. A total of 230 English language teachers were used as the study sample. The sample size was determined concerning the sample size determinant table. The researcher will use a questionnaire instrument adapted from a study conducted by Tyas, E. H., & Naibaho, L. (2021). The questionnaire was modified according to the needs of this study. There are 10 question items used for each construct to obtain respondents' feedback on the implementation of HOTS for aspects of the level of understanding, level of knowledge, and the level of performance of HOTS in teaching. Each item has five answer choices, using a five-point Likert scale rated 1 to 5. In the context of this study, data analysis was performed involving quantitative data. Data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. The collected data will be analyzed descriptively using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Table 1. The interpretation of the mean score is as shown

Average Score	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.89	Very low
1.90 – 2.69	Low
2.70 – 3.49	Moderate
3.50 – 4.29	High
4.30 – 5.00	Very high

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

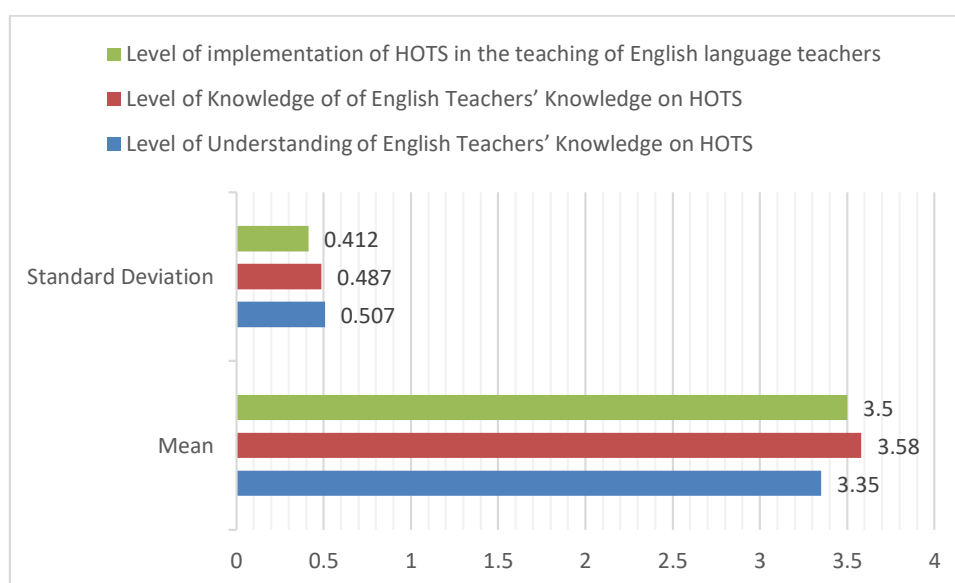


Figure 1. English Teachers' Knowledge of HOTS in Teaching English

The aspect of teachers' understanding of thinking skills is one factor that hinders the effectiveness of applying thinking skills in English language subjects (Li, 2016; El Soufi & See, 2019). However, this study shows that the level of knowledge of English language teachers on HOTS is at a moderate level, with a mean score of mean = 3.35 and a standard deviation of 0.507. The study of Zhiyong, Muthukrishnan supports the findings of this study, and Sidhu (2020) related to English Language Teaching Reform and Key Factors Determining EFL Teachers' Professional Development at a moderate level only. Teachers' understanding of the concept of critical and creative thinking skills is at a moderate level where teachers lack knowledge of aspects related to understanding how to incorporate critical and creative thinking skills in teaching as well as cognitive and metacognitive concepts (Gashan, 2015; Ismail, Muhammad, Kanesan & Ali, 2019; Shubina & Kulakli, 2019; Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020).

In conclusion, English language teachers' understanding of HOTS will affect the effectiveness of teaching in the classroom. The study's findings show that the level of understanding of English language teachers about HOTS is still at a moderate level. English language teachers disagreed (95.6%) and disagreed (4.4%) that the

courses they attended provided a good understanding of HOTS. English language teachers need to believe that they: a) Need to be exposed widely and in-depth to the concept of HOTS, such as aspects of the operation of HOTS in the classroom; b) In-depth exposure related to the teaching of HOTS based on modules or teaching materials that are easy to operate; and c) The content of the course on HOTS also needs to be improved to provide a clear understanding to teachers in various aspects to ensure the application of HOTS in English language teaching and learning can be made successfully. With this, the teaching of HOTS in English language subjects will be more effective, and students' thinking will also be well-directed.

The study's findings show that the knowledge of English language teachers about HOTS is at a high level. The overall mean for teachers' knowledge about HOTS is mean = 3.58. A teacher's knowledge is not only related to teaching in the classroom. It is also associated with planning, assessment, and thinking. Teachers need to have substantive, syntactic belief in subjects, curriculum, general pedagogy, teaching models, student-related knowledge, knowledge of self, educational context, goals, objectives, values of education, and a combination of knowledge bases. The results of this study are contrary to the findings of a survey conducted by Afifah and Retnawati (2019), which showed that teachers lack knowledge and are not skilled in applying thinking skills. Most teachers are still unclear about using the elements of thinking skills in teaching and learning even though they have already received formal exposure. Similarly, the study by Yusoff and Selman (2018) stated that teachers lack knowledge in conveying the process of teaching and learning literary ability but due to teachers are not skilled or knowledgeable with literary terms. However, the results also show that not all means for the items are at a high level.

Based on the findings in Wilson and Narasuman's (2020) study, which described the respondents have only general knowledge about critical and creative thinking skills. Despite having a high awareness of the level of use, teachers do not know in detail about critical and creative thinking skills, use unplanned and not based on aspects of critical and creative thinking skills that have been given guidelines in the critical and creative thinking skills. In addition, teachers need to have a solid knowledge of teaching strategies and techniques so that teaching and learning HOTS can be implemented effectively. Teaching strategies are essential because various approaches, such as the student-centered approach and material-centered approach, can achieve the objectives of teacher teaching and learning (Ghaizi et al., 2022).

Knowledge is the basis of teachers' abilities in teaching and learning. The knowledge required for a teacher is knowledge and learning to teach knowledge and pedagogical content, and student knowledge and learning (Sutherland, Stuhr & Ayvazo, 2016). In addition to that knowledge, teachers also need to know and understand how to apply various methods, techniques, and strategies to ensure that teaching and learning can be carried out correctly and effectively. Teachers who have sufficient pedagogical skills and knowledge in the field being taught will be able to carry out teaching tasks well and satisfactorily (Piedade, Dorotea, Pedro & Matos, 2020). In conclusion, when English language teachers have high knowledge of the concept of HOTS, then they will apply it in teaching better. English language teachers who have more knowledge will be able to explain something better. Concerning that, English language teachers should master the knowledge related to the concept of HOTS to enable them to understand in depth of HOTS and subsequently be able to implement it effectively in English language teaching and learning (Ginting & Kuswandono, 2020).

The success of English language teaching implementation depends on how teachers use skills for language proficiency (Yahya, 2003). Based on the study results, the mean overall level of mastery in implementing HOTS in teaching among English language teachers is at a high level, namely 3.57, and the standard deviation is 0.411. The results obtained are contrary to the study conducted by Yen and Halili (2015). It is found that teachers are more confident about the pedagogical skills of English than the pedagogical skills to teach HOTS. Similarly, the findings obtained by Seman, Yusoff, and Embong (2017) found that teachers do not practice HOTS in teaching and learning in the classroom.

However, teachers stated that they often use critical and creative thinking skills in the classroom. In contrast, another teacher stated that they are not sure and have never implemented aspects of critical and creative thinking skills in the school (Cáceres, Nussbaum & Ortiz, 2020). The situation exists due to course exposure, understanding of course content, and related language skills. Although the teachers involved have attended critical and creative thinking skills courses, implementation shows that they are still less confident in implementing aspects of critical and creative thinking skills in teaching due to certain factors. Teachers involved with curriculum change would be willing to implement innovations with more confidence and creativity if teachers had the knowledge and skills to deliver lessons. In addition, teachers expressed uncertainty, disagreement and strongly disagree that HOTS can develop the potential of individual students in English language teaching and learning (Savignon, 2001).

Meanwhile, some English language teachers stated that they develop the potential of individual students in learning HOTS (Gozali, Lie, Tamah & Jemadi, 2021). A skilled teacher is an effective questioner because he can use questions that guide students to give straightforward ideas, develop thinking potential, and move students' imaginations. Applying thinking skills through teacher questioning methods during teaching and learning is more petite. Students ask fewer questions in learning English, and it is because the 100 percent mastery of teachers in using questioning does not give space to students, which causes them to be passive during the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

In measuring teachers' implementation skills, most English language teachers chose to be uncertain, strongly disagree, and disagree (64.2%), stating that they have sufficient teaching resources for teaching and learning HOTS. The results showed that the mean for the item was the lowest at 3.17 but was at a moderate level. This situation may cause constraints to the efforts and determination of English language teachers to apply the elements of HOTS in teaching in the classroom due to the lack of teaching materials and resources for teaching and learning HOTS. Several variables and a successful teaching influence the teaching and learning process, and learning practice in one classroom would not necessarily be successful in another classroom (Müller & Mildemberger, 2021; Naibaho, 2021). The other classroom is different from the previous classroom regarding teacher readiness, student achievement level, teaching and learning resource materials used, and teaching time. Therefore, English language teachers need to be intelligent, creative, and innovative in choosing teaching aids to encourage students' thinking skills, creating effective teaching and learning HOTS process in the classroom. In addition to the use of appropriate teaching techniques and strategies such as thinking tools and the i-Think program implementation as well as the use of computers as one of the teaching aids is seen to be able to help the effectiveness of the performance of the teaching and learning HOTS process in English language subjects. By diversifying teaching strategies, learning becomes more exciting and realistic and can stimulate student learning through various teaching methods.

The study sample consists of 230 English language teachers who teach in secondary schools only. The schools involved are the National Junior High School in East Bekasi, consisting of urban and rural schools. The profile of respondents among teachers is described according to what is found in the questionnaire. Based on the descriptive analysis that has been conducted, the researcher found that the sample of male teachers is 56 people (23.91%) English language teachers. In comparison, the selection of female teachers is 175 people (76.08%). The findings found that the number of female teachers is more than half of the number of male teachers.

**Table 2. Research Sample Gender**

Criteria	Group	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	55	23.91
	Female	175	76.08
Total		230	

Furthermore, the results of this study will be analyzed descriptively in the form of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation used to analyze the five variables of the study, namely understanding, knowledge, and implementation in teaching HOTS among English language teachers. Interpret the mean score into five levels to determine the mean scores for each variable studied.

**Table 3. English Teachers' Knowledge of HOTS in Teaching English**

Aspect	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Level of Understanding of English Teachers' Knowledge of HOTS	3.34	0.501	Moderate
Level of Knowledge of English Teachers' Knowledge of HOTS	3.57	0.486	High
Level of implementation of HOTS in the teaching of English language teachers	3.49	0.411	High

Data analysis as in Table 3 shows that the overall mean score for the aspect of English language teachers' understanding of HOTS is a mean of 3.34, which is at a moderate level with a standard deviation of 0.506. Of the ten items submitted, it was found that the 10th item, "I understand the implementation aspects of using thinking skills in problem-solving and teaching writing," recorded the highest mean score, which is a mean of 3.75 with a standard deviation of 0.592. The lowest mean score is on the first item, "Courses I attended to provide a good understanding of HOTS," with a mean score of 1.95.

Based on Table 3, the overall mean score for the aspect of knowledge of English language teachers about HOTS shows a mean score = 5.36 with a standard deviation of 0.486, with the level of understanding of

English language teachers about HOTS being at a high level. Descriptive analysis of 10 items of knowledge aspects of HOTS showed that the 6th item, "I know how to involve students in the teaching and learning process actively," recorded the highest mean score of 3.84 with standard deviation ( $sp = 0.583$ ) at a high level of knowledge. The lowest mean score was on the 3rd item, "I know how to use various strategies and techniques to teach HOTS," with a mean score of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.689 at a moderate level of knowledge.

The overall mean score value for the level of implementation of HOTS in the teaching of English language teachers category is mean = 3.49 with a standard deviation of 0.411, indicating that the performance of HOTS in the learning of English language teachers is at a high level. Analysis of the data shows that the mean score of each item is between 3.12 to 3.91 (medium and high mean score). It was found that the 5th item, "I use teaching-learning resources to provide effective teaching and learning," recorded the highest mean score, which is mean = 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.466. The results showed that 75 people out of 230 study samples responded positively. Most of them gave an uncertain and adverse reaction to the 9th item, "I have enough time to perform activities that generate student HOB." This item recorded the lowest mean with a mean score = of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 0.750, which is at a moderate level.

#### IV. CONCLUSION,

The role of teachers as a catalyst for effective teaching and learning requires teachers to constantly improve their new knowledge of the content of the curriculum taught by them. English language teachers who have a high level of expertise can implement a quality teaching and learning process and realize the goals of the national education system. This study is a survey study, and it is limited to the scope of Junior High School in East Bekasi. However, the findings obtained can provide some insights and recommendations that can guide the implementation of HOTS in teaching and learning English language subjects. The education of HOTS is an element that teachers must apply as contained in the syllabus and description of the English language syllabus for secondary schools. It is hoped that this study can be a guide and reference to the parties involved in addressing the problems teachers face when implementing the teaching of HOTS in schools today. The attitude and confidence of English language teachers can be improved with support and cooperation, especially from the school administration.

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