



## An In-depth Analysis of Assessment Design: Alignment between Baluchistan English Language Textbooks and Pakistan National Curriculum

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### ABSTRACT

Textbooks are the learning and assessment materials developed on the curriculum. It provides practical opportunities for the implementation of the assessment design of the curriculum. This study examines the alignment between the assessment design in Pakistan's English language curriculum and Baluchistan's English language textbooks of secondary classes. It explores the levels of assessment design envisioned in students' learning outcomes, exercises, strategies, and guidelines in textbooks. The document analysis strategy is applied to Baluchistan's English language textbooks for secondary classes using Bowen's (2009) procedure. The results show that textbooks cover all SLOs envisioned in Pakistan's national curriculum. The SLOs are poorly clustered for lessons, causing low assessment design and ultimately affecting assessment practices. Most of the assessment strategies were developed on Bloom's taxonomy cognitive domain lower level indicated the low assessment design. The weightage and significance for developing assessment strategies were mostly given to "Grammar" and, to some extent, "Writing" competencies. Fewer strategies were developed for "Reading Comprehension and Thinking" Skill competency. "Oral communication" competency is nearly overlooked, and listening skills are completely ignored. Teachers' and students' guidelines regarding assessment are completely missing in textbooks.

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## 1. Introduction

The assessment design envisioned in the curriculum and interpreted in textbooks guides the learning process. The level of assessment design in textbook students' learning outcomes (SLOs), activities, exercises, contents, and guidelines for teachers and students shows the effectiveness of textbooks regarding learning and assessment. The effective textbooks cover all aspects of the curriculum provided, including assessment. The organization of appropriate assessment strategies in textbooks for each language skill are necessary for the development of language. Textbooks must include a variety of assessment techniques for the development of step-by-step language skills. Textbooks are crucial in curriculum implementation, serving as fundamental tools for teachers and students. They provide a structured, organized framework for delivering content and achieving educational objectives by providing assessment strategies. The curriculum breaks down complex topics into manageable units, facilitating a step-by-step learning and assessment process for students (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993). Textbooks contribute to standardization in education by providing a standard set of information and concepts. This ensures that all students receive a consistent and uniform education regardless of the teacher or school (Hargreaves, 2001).

Balochistan textbooks are developed on the standard-based curriculum of Pakistan. It designed the assessments in the student's learning outcomes and exercises. Textbooks are

designed to align with specific curriculum guidelines and educational standards. They help ensure that the content covered in the classroom corresponds to the educational authorities' intended learning outcomes and goals through assessment procedures (Tyler, 2013). Textbooks should align closely with the learning objectives of a course. The content presented in the textbook should mirror what students are expected to learn and be assessed on (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Textbooks offer many examples, explanations, and assessment exercises that help teachers structure their lessons and comprehensively understand the subject (Sadker & Sadker, 1991). Textbooks often come with supplementary materials such as workbooks, study guides, and online resources. These additional materials enhance the learning experience by providing extra practice, assessments, and multimedia content (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993). The level of assessment can be traced in the assessment design in the curriculum interpreted in textbooks. Textbooks contribute to the consistency of assessments by providing a common basis for testing. Teachers can create assessments that align with the content in the textbooks, ensuring students are evaluated on the material they have studied (Sadker & Sadker, 1991). The design of assessments, including tests, quizzes, and assignments, can significantly influence how students approach their learning. This aligns with constructive alignment (Biggs, Tang, & Kennedy, 2022). When assessments closely reflect the content and objectives outlined in the textbooks, students are more likely to focus on understanding and retaining the information presented in the textbooks. Textbooks often include activities, exercises, and examples that encourage active learning. Active learning has improved students' understanding and retention of information (Freeman et al., 2014).

Balochistan English language textbooks for secondary school students are designed with the anticipated assessment in mind. This includes the SLOs clustered for lessons, lesson exercises, and instructor directions. Students' learning outcomes (SLOs) were written with the assessment level in mind for each class. This helps teachers create instructions on assessing their students while using the classroom. Activities to supplement learning about a specific subject are suggested in the textbook exercises. It also supports teachers in creating exam items. While providing content for test items, these exercises assisted teachers in understanding the structure of test items. The third and most important element of assessment design is textbook teaching guidelines. It helps teachers with the assessment process and provides a thorough understanding of assessment approaches. Because textbooks are meant to interpret the curriculum, their writers provide detailed instructions on every aspect, including assessment.

### **1.1. Objectives of Study**

1. To explore the level of assessment design outlined in Baluchistan's English language textbooks for secondary classes.
2. To analyze the alignment between Pakistan's National Curriculum (2006) and Baluchistan's English language textbooks for secondary classes regarding assessment design.

### **1.2. Research Questions**

1. What is the level of assessment design in Balochistan English language textbooks for secondary classes?
2. How well do the Baluchistan English language textbooks for secondary classes cover the objectives outlined in the National Curriculum 2006?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Relationship Between Textbooks and Assessment**

The relationship between textbooks and assessments is complex, with textbooks often serving as foundational resources for designing and implementing assessments. Textbooks are the interpretation of curriculum in the form of related content. This content is used for both learning and assessment purposes. Textbooks serve as a basis for designing assessments by providing a structured content presentation. Assessments often align with the topics, concepts, and skills textbooks cover to ensure students are tested on their studied material (Sadler\*, 2005). The assessment tools designed in the official curriculum are explained in textbooks for learning and assessment practices. Many textbooks include assessment tools such as quizzes, exercises, and practice questions. Teachers can use these to create formative and summative assessments, allowing for continuous evaluation of student understanding (Wiggins, 1998). Learning objectives and outcomes are interpreted in textbooks as content,

exercises, and instructions covering the curriculum objectives. Textbooks typically articulate learning objectives and outcomes. Assessments measure how students have achieved these objectives, ensuring alignment between instructional materials and assessment criteria (Gronlund, 1998). The assessment design envisioned in the official curriculum for diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes can be operationalized through textbooks. Textbooks often include diagnostic assessments to gauge students' prior knowledge and formative assessments to monitor ongoing progress. These assessments are integral to adapting teaching strategies, and textbooks provide the structure for implementing them (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Textbooks contribute to the development of assessments that go beyond rote memorization. They often include materials that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and assessments are designed to measure these higher-order cognitive skills (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In some educational systems, standardized tests are closely tied to the content of widely used textbooks. These assessments may draw questions and content directly from popular textbooks, emphasizing the influence of instructional materials on high-stakes testing (Koretz, 2008). Textbooks play a role in supporting differentiated instruction and assessments for diverse learners. Teachers may adapt assessments based on the diverse instructional strategies and examples provided in textbooks (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006).

## **2.2. Textbooks Alignment with Curriculum**

Objectives, standards, benchmarks, and student learning outcomes are essential components in education, providing a framework for curriculum design and assessment practices. Textbooks should support the design and implementation of assessments. Questions, exercises, and activities within the textbook should align with the types of assessments specified in the curriculum, facilitating effective measurement of student understanding (Suskie, 2018).

### **2.2.1. Learning Objectives**

Learning objectives envisioned in the curriculum are interpreted in textbooks as content, exercises, and students' learning outcomes for achievements. Learning objectives specify what students should know or be able to do after completing a lesson, unit, or course. Learning objectives guide the creation of assessments by defining the desired outcomes. Assessments are designed to measure how students have achieved these objectives (Gronlund, 1998). Textbooks should closely align with the learning objectives outlined in the curriculum. Each chapter or section of the textbook should correspond to specific objectives, guiding students toward the intended knowledge and skills (Gronlund, 1998).

### **2.2.2. Educational Standards**

Educational standards outline the knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire at specific grade levels or in particular subject areas. Standards provide a basis for assessing student performance. Assessments are aligned with standards to ensure that students meet the established criteria for proficiency (McTighe & O'Connor, 2005). Textbooks should integrate the educational standards established by educational authorities. The content within the textbooks should reflect the key concepts and skills specified in these standards, ensuring that the material aligns with broader educational goals (McTighe & O'Connor, 2005).

### **2.2.3. Benchmarks**

Benchmarks are specific points of reference within educational standards, indicating the level of achievement expected at different stages. Benchmarks provide intermediate goals for assessment. Assessments may be designed to measure progress toward meeting benchmarks, allowing for more nuanced tracking of student learning (Marzano, 2003).

### **2.2.4. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

SLOs are specific, measurable statements that describe what students are expected to know or be able to do by the end of a course or program. SLOs serve as the basis for assessment design. Assessments are crafted to measure whether students have met the specified learning outcomes, providing a clear measure of educational success (Suskie, 2018). Learning objectives, standards, benchmarks, and student learning outcomes ensure alignment between what is taught and assessed. Assessments are crafted to directly address educational authorities' intended learning outcomes and standards.

### **2.3. Assessment Design Supported by Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcomes can be used for assessment practices, both formative and summative purposes. Formative assessments are informed by learning objectives and standards to monitor ongoing progress Black and Wiliam (1998), while summative assessments measure overall achievement against benchmarks and outcomes (Popham, 2008). Learning outcomes and standards provide a foundation for differentiated instruction and assessment. Teachers can adapt assessments to meet the diverse needs of students while ensuring that all assessments align with the overarching objectives and standards. Benchmarks and student learning outcomes contribute to a continuous improvement cycle. Assessment results evaluate progress toward benchmarks and learning outcomes, informing instructional adjustments and curriculum enhancements. Educational standards and student learning outcomes contribute to accountability in education. They provide clear expectations for student performance, and assessments are transparent measures of whether these expectations are met (Gronlund, 1998; Marzano, 2003; Stiggins, Arter, & Chappuis, 2004).

### **2.4. Learning Strategies in Textbooks Indicated Assessment Design**

Textbooks often provide various learning strategies that can inform and influence assessment design. These strategies are instructional techniques or approaches to help students comprehend and retain information effectively. Textbooks may introduce formative assessment techniques, such as quizzes, self-assessments, or reflection exercises, to help students gauge their understanding as they progress through the material. Teachers can design formative assessments that align with the strategies presented in the textbook, allowing for continuous monitoring of student comprehension (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Assessments can be designed to measure content knowledge, applying study skills, and effective time management, encouraging holistic student development (Weinstein & Mayer, 1983). Textbooks may advocate for active learning techniques like group discussions, problem-solving exercises, or case studies. These strategies engage students actively in the learning process. Assessments can incorporate elements of active learning, requiring students to apply knowledge collaboratively or solve real-world problems, aligning with the active learning strategies suggested in the textbook (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Textbooks might introduce metacognitive strategies, encouraging students to think about their thinking processes, set goals, and monitor their understanding. Assessments can include metacognitive components, such as reflective essays or self-assessment sections, to evaluate students' awareness of their learning processes and ability to regulate their cognitive activities (Flavell, 1979). Textbooks may suggest using concept mapping or visualization techniques to help students organize and connect information visually. Assessments can incorporate tasks that require students to create concept maps or diagrams, assessing their ability to represent and understand complex relationships within the subject matter (Novak & Cañas, 2008).

### **2.5. Textbook Exercises Support Formative and Summative Assessment Strategies**

Textbook exercises support formative and summative assessment strategies by providing opportunities for ongoing monitoring, feedback, identification of learning gaps, and culminating evaluations. These strategies, informed by textbook exercises, contribute to a comprehensive assessment approach that enhances the learning and evaluation processes.

#### **2.5.1. Formative Assessment Strategies**

Textbook exercises often include questions and problems for students to practice and apply their knowledge. Teachers can use these exercises formatively by regularly assigning and reviewing them to monitor students' ongoing understanding and identify areas needing additional instruction (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Textbook exercises provide an opportunity for teachers to offer timely and constructive feedback. This formative feedback can guide students in understanding their mistakes, refining their approaches, and improving before summative assessments (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Through formative assessments using textbook exercises, teachers can identify learning gaps or misconceptions early in the learning process. This information allows for timely intervention and adjustments to instructional strategies (Heritage, 2021). Textbook exercises often include self-assessment components, enabling students to reflect on their understanding. Formative assessment strategies can involve students reviewing their work, identifying errors, and setting goals for improvement (Sadler, 1989).

### **2.5.2. Summative Assessment Strategies**

Textbook exercises contribute to summative assessments by serving as a cumulative representation of what students have learned over a specific period. The variety and complexity of exercises can assess the breadth and depth of students' knowledge and skills (Stiggins, 1999). Some textbook exercises are designed to align with standardized testing formats. Regularly practising exercises that mirror the structure and content of standardized tests, students can become more familiar with the assessment format, potentially improving their performance (Linn, Baker, & Dunbar, 1991). As informed by textbook exercises, summative assessments measure mastery of specific learning objectives or standards. The exercises often align with the content covered throughout the curriculum, comprehensively evaluating student achievement (Gronlund, 1998). Summative assessments, drawing on textbook exercises, facilitate comparative evaluation among students. They provide a basis for ranking or grading students based on their performance about established criteria (Brookhart, 2011).

## **2.6. Relationship Between Curriculum, Textbooks and Assessment**

The relationship between curriculum, textbooks, and assessment is integral to the educational process. Curriculum defines what students are expected to learn, textbooks provide the instructional materials to support that learning, and assessment measures the extent to which students have acquired the intended knowledge and skills.

### **2.6.1. Curriculum and Textbooks**

The curriculum outlines the educational objectives, learning outcomes, and standards students should achieve. Textbooks are designed to align with these objectives, providing the content and instructional materials necessary to meet the curriculum's goals (Tyler, 2013). The curriculum serves as a framework for the organization and sequencing of content. Textbooks, in turn, follow this structure, presenting information logically and coherently that aligns with the curriculum's progression (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993). The curriculum often incorporates educational standards that outline specific content and skills. Textbooks are designed to meet these standards, ensuring that the material covered aligns with the broader educational goals set by authorities (McTighe & O'Connor, 2005).

### **2.6.2. Curriculum and Assessment**

The curriculum establishes learning objectives and outcomes that guide the assessment process. Assessments are designed to measure the extent to which students have achieved these objectives, providing a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum (Gronlund, 1998). Formative assessments are often integrated into the curriculum to monitor ongoing student progress. These assessments, such as quizzes or classroom activities, provide feedback to both teachers and students, informing instructional decisions and adaptations (Heritage, 2021). Assessment practices align with curriculum standards to evaluate students based on the intended learning outcomes. The alignment helps maintain consistency and coherence between the curriculum and assessment measures (Stiggins, 1999).

### **2.6.3. Textbooks and Assessment**

Textbooks often include formative assessment tools, such as practice questions or exercises, that enable students to check their understanding as they progress through the material. Teachers can use these tools to inform instructional decisions (Wiggins, 1998). Textbooks contribute to the alignment between instructional content and assessment objectives. Assessment items often reflect the types of problems and questions in the textbook, ensuring consistency in evaluating students' mastery of the material (Sadker & Sadker, 1991). Textbooks, especially in standardized subjects, are designed to prepare students for summative assessments. Exercises and examples in textbooks often mirror the format and content of summative assessments, helping students become familiar with the types of questions they may encounter (Linn et al., 1991). The relationship between curriculum, textbooks, and assessment is dynamic and interconnected. The curriculum sets the goals, textbooks provide the means for instruction, and assessment measures the achievement of those goals, creating a symbiotic relationship that shapes the educational experience. The references cited offer foundational insights into curriculum design, assessment practices, and the role of textbooks in education.

## **2.7. Problem statement**

There are several research studies in Pakistan regarding English language development. Nazeer, Shah, and Sarwat (2015) Stress on the assessment of English language textbooks to understand the quality and significance in achieving the pre-stated objectives. Assessment strongly impacts teaching and learning language skills. Habib and Umar (2017) cited Ashraf and Zaki (2019); Warsi (2004), who said that Pakistani students are weak in using English in real life. There will be several reasons, but one of them is textbook assessment design and its alignment with the curriculum. Asghar (2013) argued that students' language competency shows textbooks' effectiveness. S Baig, Siddiquah, and Javed (2020) explored through mixed-method research that the envisioned standard, Benchmarks, and students' learning outcomes in the curriculum are slightly covered in textbooks for the first competency, "reading and thinking skills." Sana Baig, Javed, Siddiquah, and Khanam (2021) conducted content analyses of Punjab textbooks regarding the SLOs organized in textbooks. The study finding shows that priority is given to only reading comprehension, which indicates a low level of exercises as most SLOs are covered only in lesson contents. Almas and Sajida (2019) stated that reading and writing skills are more focused than listening and speaking. This stance is supported by (Dar & Khan, 2014). Asif and Kang (2021) indicated that the course books of higher secondary classes in Sindh are restrictive, less productive, and do not fulfil the set targets of the curriculum. They also explored that the English language curriculum itself is not very effective. Habib and Umar (2017) explored the relationship between the curriculum and textbooks of secondary classes in Khaiber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. They explored a lack of alignment between Pakistan's curriculum and KPK textbooks, and listening skills are completely ignored. Aftab (2012), in her study, explored that textbooks in Pakistan consist of very controlled activities. She recommended teachers training for textbook writers to develop effective and curriculum-aligned textbooks. Panezai and Channa (2017) conducted a study about teachers' preparation for textbooks and the problems faced in teaching English using these textbooks in the Balochistan context and found teachers less trained in textbooks affect the teaching process.

These research studies indicated the low alignment between Pakistan's curriculum and textbooks. The lower level of textbooks regarding language development is also indicated. The importance of assessment design for assessment practices in language development is an important aspect to be explored. The alignment between Pakistan's English language curriculum and the Balochistan English textbook for secondary classes regarding assessment design has not yet been explored by any research study. Considering the importance of assessment design elaborated in literature, it was decided to explore the level of assessment design envisioned in Baluchistan's English language textbooks for secondary classes and to analyze the alignment between Pakistan's National Curriculum (2006) and Baluchistan's English language textbooks for secondary classes regarding assessment design.

## **3. Research Methodology**

The qualitative research design was adopted for the study as the document can only be analyzed in-depth through this process. The document analysis strategy was adopted to explore the assessment design and alignment of Balochistan English language textbooks of secondary classes with Pakistan's official curriculum. Document analysis is considered a qualitative research design because it emphasizes interpreting and understanding meanings, context, and relationships within documents. The study objective demands this approach as it is intended to explore the meaning of learning outcomes, textbook content, and exercises regarding assessment. The textbook's content relationship with assessment in the learning context also needs the qualitative approach. Document analysis is the process of systematically reviewing and interpreting documents to extract valuable information and insights. Researchers analyze the content, structure, and context of documents to understand the meanings embedded in them (Bowen, 2009). Qualitative research, including document analysis, often emphasizes the importance of understanding data in its natural context. Documents are analyzed within their historical, cultural, or organizational context to provide a deeper understanding (Yin, 2018). The researcher developed research tools in light of literature review and assessment theories, especially Bloom's Taxonomy.

The tools cover the action words of Bloom's Taxonomy used for students' learning outcomes for each competency of the English language curriculum. The SLOs intended by the official curriculum of Pakistan 2006, covered in Balochistan textbooks, consist of statements

with action words. The action words indicated the level of assessment. A tool was developed to explore the level of assessment strategies in the light of these action words of Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive domain. The tool explored the action words used in the strategies developed for each competency of exercises in Balochistan textbooks. Another tool was developed to explore the weightage and significance given to each competency by counting the strategies developed for textbook exercises. Two PhD in education professors, three assessment experts, five curriculum developers, and two language experts validated the tools.

The level of assessment design was also intended to be explored. Bowen (2009) document analysis procedure was adopted. The Balochistan English language Textbooks for secondary classes developed on the national curriculum 2006 of Pakistan were analyzed concerning assessment design. The level of students' learning outcomes, clustered in textbooks regarding assessment design, was explored, aligning with the national curriculum. The textbook exercises, teaching and assessment strategies, guidelines, and assessment and language skills development tasks were analyzed. The significance and weightage of the number of activities developed for each language skill were also explored.

### **3.1. Significance of the Study**

This study will be significant for curriculum developers to improve the assessment design in the curriculum. It will help textbook developers appropriately cluster SLOs and develop assessment strategies, activities, and guidelines for teachers and students regarding assessment. It will be helpful for policymakers in providing appropriate and equal weightage and significance to all language skills and improving the assessment design and practices. It will also help the student understand assessment and improve their assessment practices. The study findings add knowledge regarding language assessment, textbook assessment design, and assessment practices. It also shows new horizons regarding the policy of assessment design for all stakeholders.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. Textbooks Assessment Design**

The assessment design seen in textbooks may be traced back to the SLOs, which are clustered, grouped, and organized for the lesson, exercises within lessons, and teachers' guidelines. Learning outcomes envisioned and clustered in textbooks play a crucial role in assessment design. They serve as the basis for creating assessments that measure the attainment of specific language skills. Assessments aligned with learning outcomes provide meaningful student progress feedback (Nitko, 1996). Teachers were given directions in textbooks on how to assess their students in the classroom by the SLOs generated for specific classes. These instructions also indicated the level of assessment. The proposed exercises by textbook authors and curriculum developers in the textbook help the learning process for a specific subject and assessment. It also supports teachers in developing classroom assessment tasks and examination items. While providing content for test items, these exercises assisted teachers in understanding the format of the test items. The third and most important element of assessment design is the guidelines that textbook developers designed for teachers in order to conduct the assessment during and after instruction. It helps teachers with the assessment process and provides a thorough understanding of assessment approaches. The writers of textbooks provide detailed instructions on every aspect of learning, including assessment, because they serve as an interpretation of the curriculum.

Baluchistan's secondary English language textbooks consist of thirteen lessons. The framework of each lesson is broken down into three components. In the first section, the student learning outcomes (SLOs) are covered. Learning content to meet the preset SLOs is included in the second section. The third component is exercise, which consists of a series of tasks and activities centred around "Reading and thinking skills," "Writing skills," and "Oral communication skills." The pedagogical and assessment guidelines for teachers are missing in Balochistan English language textbooks for secondary classes. Textbook developers have not provided any rules for teachers regarding assessment methods that should be utilized in the classroom. It has been noted that textbooks address every student learning outcome (SLO) outlined in the National Curriculum 2006, demonstrating the degree of alignment between the curriculum and textbooks. However, these SLOs are poorly clustered and unsupportive for language skills development. These poorly clustered SLOs, on the one hand, impact the

instructional activities and, on the other hand, assessment practices. Exercises should align with established curriculum standards to ensure students meet the expected learning outcomes (Marzano, 2003).

Surprisingly, each lesson's Balochistan English language textbook exercises have the same pattern and structure. Every lesson begins with an activity that targets reading and thinking skills; the next three focus on writing skills; the fourth activity addresses grammar; and the fifth activity addresses oral communication. The same pattern and activities do not support students' motivation and language development. Most of the tasks concentrate primarily on "Grammar" and, to a lesser degree, "Writing Skills." Moreover, these exercises are not designed to develop the writing skills step by step. Every session of the textbook exercise includes one or two tasks concentrating on "Reading Comprehension and Thinking Skills." Sadly, practically every activity in both classrooms (grades 9 and 10) is based on the "Answer the following questions" format, demonstrating the poor quality of the activities for language development. The language competency "Oral communication" is nearly ignored because there is just one activity related to "Oral Communication" in each exercise, which is likewise vague. Moreover, in these "Oral Communication" exercises, listening skills are largely overlooked. As the textbook exercises indicated, the ignored listening skill. The class 9<sup>th</sup> English language textbook for Balochistan shows, "What is the story's central theme? (ELTB, 2023, p. 61)". "Share your innermost thoughts and feelings" (ELTB, 2023, p. 111). "Discuss your vacation itinerary in pairs" (ELTB, 2023, p. 88). Similarly, the 10<sup>th</sup> class Balochistan English Language Textbook shows, "Expressing refusal politely (ELTB, 2023, p. 36). Talk in the group (ELTB, 2023, P. 58). Seeking guidance (ELTB, 2023, p. 133). These activities demonstrate only speaking skills; unfortunately, listening skills are almost missing. Dar and Khan (2014); Habib and Umar (2017) studies also show the same result regarding the overlooked listening skill. Additionally, these activities likewise have a low criterion for developing speaking skills. This demonstrates the disparity in power across all language skills development.

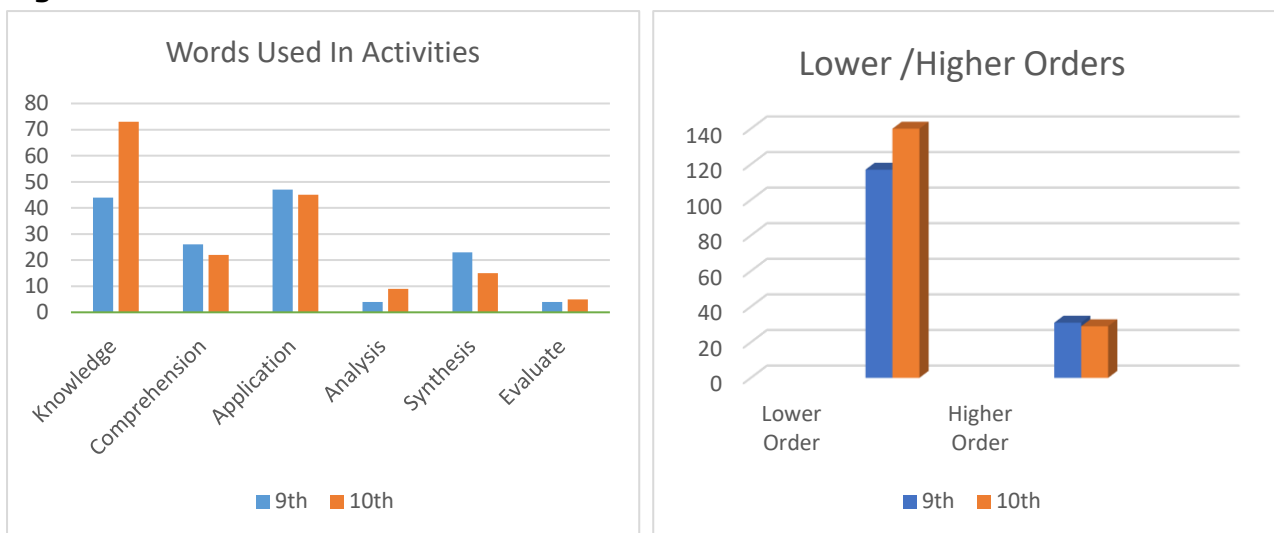
This imbalance of activities among language competencies designed in curriculum and language skills will ultimately affect language development. The textbook developers and reviewers should revisit and develop the textbooks for holistic language development. This inelegance is mainly due to the official document of the English language curriculum of Pakistan, which combined two distinct speaking (productive) and listening (receptive) language skills while giving listening a low priority. Receptive language skills involve understanding and interpreting language input. This includes listening (auditory comprehension) and reading (visual comprehension) skills. Individuals with strong receptive skills can effectively comprehend spoken or written language (Goh, 2002; Vandergrift, 2007). Productive language skills involve producing language, either orally or in writing. This includes speaking and writing. Individuals with strong, productive skills can express themselves clearly and effectively (Bygate, 1987; Hedge, 2001). Instructors are not given any guidelines on assessing their pupils during or after instruction in these exercises by textbook developers. Pakistan's English language curriculum clearly mentions the importance of guidelines and instruction for teachers regarding teaching and assessment and suggests including them in textbooks. The topics and exercises of textbooks are helpful to students in improving their reading, writing, and grammar skills. Still, the curriculum and textbooks ignore the equally important speaking and listening skills.

**Table 1: Bloom's Taxonomy Cognitive Domain Command Words Used in Textbooks for Activities**

<b>Command Words</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Lower / Higher Order</b>
Knowledge	44	73			Lower Order
Comprehension	26	22	117	140	LO
Application	47	45			
Analysis	04	09			Higher Order
Synthesis	23	15	31	29	HO
Evaluate	04	05			
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>169</b>			



**Figure 1**



The activities of Bloom's taxonomy of action words in secondary school English textbooks in Balochistan are broken down into the table: in word compression with lower stages 117, the higher-order (HO) total number of words is 31; this indicates that the assessment plan is weak and that most activities are developed on lower-order (LO) action words. The lower level of assessment design will ultimately affect the assessment practices. The table indicates that the majority of words used in class 10, higher stage (HO) words, are 29 compared to 140 in the (LO) lower stage. This indicates that most of the activities are composed of lower-order action words. The range of the activities is severely limited, and the assessment method as a whole is insufficient. As a result, the assessment procedures and students' higher-order thinking abilities will be impacted by the lower-level assessment design. Assessment designs should include higher-order action words to foster students' critical and analytical thinking capacity. Clearly defined learning objectives guide students in understanding the purpose of the exercises and what they are expected to achieve (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

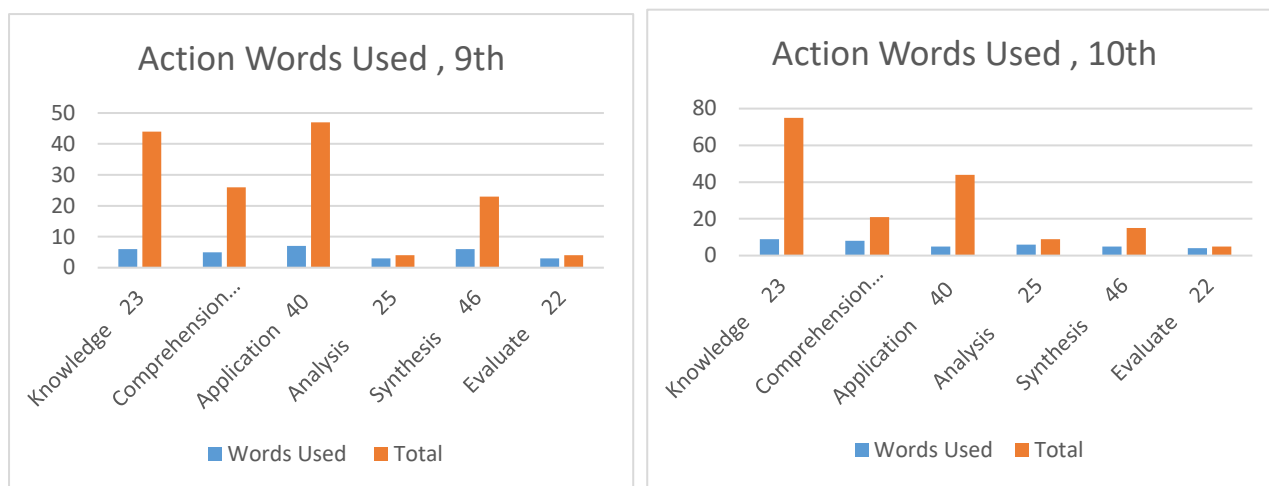
**Table 2: Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs Used for Activities in Class 9<sup>th</sup> Textbooks**

Command Words	Total	Numbers of Time, Action Words Used	Words Used	Total
Knowledge	23	"(Find,2, Identify, 2, Match,6, Read, 6, recall,1, Write, 27)"	6	44
Comprehension	21	"(Discuss,4, Make Sense, 4, Restate, 1, Summarise, 5, Answer,12)"	5	26
Application	40	"(Choose, 23, Construct,1, Develop,2, Use,21)"	7	47
Analysis	25	"(Debate, 2, Deduce, 1, Point out,1)"	3	04
Synthesis	46	"(Express, 4, Translate, 3, Makeup, 4, Plan,1, Produce, 1, Rewrite, 10)"	6	23
Evaluate	22	"(Argue,1, Decide, 2, Justify, 1)"	3	04

**Table 3: Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs Used for Activities in Class 10<sup>th</sup> Textbooks**

Command Words	Total	Numbers of Time, Action Words Used	Words Used	Total
Knowledge	23	"(Find, 3, Identify, 8, Match,1, Read, 4, Recall,1, Reproduce, 1, Select, 1, Tell,1, Write,55)"	09	75
Comprehension	21	"(Convert, 2 Discuss, 10, Explain, 1, Interpret, 1, Make Sense, 1, Paraphrase, 4, Summarise, 2)"	08	21
Application	40	"(Change, 2, Choose, 23, Construct, 2, Develop, 2, Use,15)"	05	44
Analysis	25	"(Compare,1, Contrast, 1, Deduce, 1, Differentiate, 1, Analyse, 4, Recognize,1)"	06	09
Synthesis	46	"(Compile, 3, Create, 3, Express, 2, Rewrite, 2, Translate, 5)"	05	15
Evaluate	22	"(Argue, 2, Compare and Contrast, 1, Decide, 1, Interpret,1)"	04	05

**Figure 2**



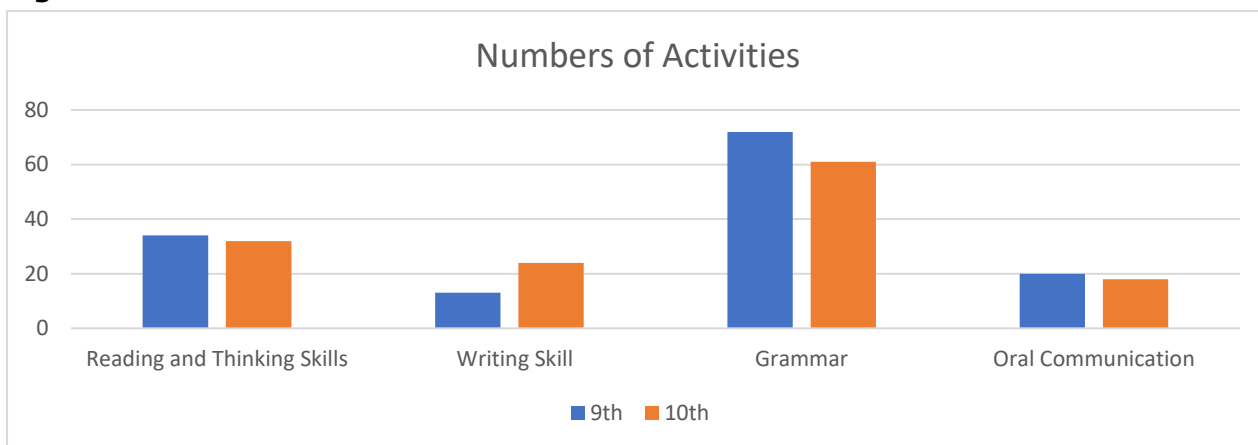
The tables above list the action words used in the secondary English textbook exercises of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> classes. The action words of Bloom's taxonomy cognitive domain are listed in the first column of the words table and the number of words used at each level. Each level of Bloom's taxonomy is represented in the word table by a group of action words. The textbook's author utilizes some words from each level while others are absent. The frequency of words used in textbook exercises is also explained in this table. For example, the 9<sup>th</sup> class table displays 23 action words from Bloom's action verbs table associated with the cognitive domain's "knowledge level". The textbook writers developed the exercises' tasks using a mere 06 words. Textbook developers do not use the remaining 17 words. Similarly, the tables explain other stages of Bloom Taxonomy cognitive domain. The tables also show the weightage and significance of each stage textbook developers give. Most weightage and significance is given to the "knowledge" stage as indicated by tables 44 activities are in 9<sup>th</sup>, and 75 are in 10<sup>th</sup>. This illustrates the activities' poor development and integrity and, ultimately, the assessment design. Some action words are repeated while others are absent, indicating the poor quality of assessment design in textbooks. Most action words used in textbook activities are from lower stages of Bloom's taxonomy cognitive domain. Assessments aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy stages, from remembering to creating, ensure a comprehensive evaluation of student's cognitive abilities, ranging from foundational recall to higher-order thinking and creativity (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

A low standard of assessment design in textbooks is indicated by the absence of other action words and the majority of words that belong to Bloom's cognitive domain lower stages being repeated. Ultimately, the lower-level assessment design will impact the assessment procedures and students' higher-order thinking abilities. Higher-order action words should be used in assessment design to foster students' critical and analytical thinking skills. Research suggests that Bloom's Taxonomy's cognitive domain describes lower and upper levels. Some experts say the latter three stages are higher while the first three are lower. According to the taxonomy author, only the first level, "knowledge", is lower (McMillan, 2017). The action verbs that fit within the knowledge, comprehension, and application domains of the lowest three stages of the Blooming Taxonomy are classified as the lower level of assessment design (Kakar, Kiazai, & Akhter, 2021).

**Table 4: Numbers of Activities in Textbooks Exercises Regarding Assessment of Each Competency**

Competency	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
1 Reading and Thinking Skills	34	32
2 Writing Skill	13	24
3 Grammar	72	61
4 Oral Communication	20	18
	Total: 139	Total: 135

**Figure 3**



This table displays the number of activities for each competency. Most activities are produced for grammar in both groups, as seen in the accompanying table. However, the level of exercises to develop "Reading and Thinking Skills" is appropriate. Writing activities ranked third, whereas "Oral Communication" (Speaking and Listening) activities are less common, with nearly one activity per exercise. These exercises aid in the partial development of speaking skills, even though listening skills are generally overlooked. Uneven and unclear assessment activities eventually impact the development of language skills. This demonstrates that the textbook authors did not pay close enough attention to the growth of speaking and listening skills. Additionally, it is implied that language skill development is not considered crucial for language's overall development. Developing all language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, is vital for comprehensive language proficiency, effective communication, and academic success (Bygate, 1987; Field, 2010; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Grabe & Stoller, 2019).

## 5. Conclusion

All SLOs outlined in Pakistan's English language curriculum are covered in Balochistan English language textbooks for secondary classes. SLOs are poorly grouped and organized in Balochistan English language textbooks while aligning with the curriculum, impacting the assessment design. Sadly, the exercises in every class have the same structure and critically impact the assessment practices. Every exercise begins with a task focusing on reading and thinking skills; grammar is covered in the second, writing skills in the third, and oral communication in the fourth activity. The level of activities in textbooks is not appropriate for language development. Every language skill is not given the appropriate weightage and significance. Textbook exercises emphasize "Grammar" and, to a lesser extent, "Writing" skills. Reading comprehension and thinking are two skills covered in one or two activities in each exercise to cover the "Reading Comprehension and Thinking Skills" competency. Low skills development resulted from combining two language skills into one competency, negatively affecting the assessment procedures. Each exercise contains an ambiguous activity about the competency "Oral Communication," which only covers speaking skills and ignores listening skills. This demonstrates the difference in the weightage and significance across all language skills. This inelegance is mainly due to Pakistan's English language curriculum document, which combined two distinct speaking (productive) and listening (receptive) skills while giving listening a low priority. The textbooks do not guide teachers in assessing their pupils during and after these exercises. There are no guidelines for teachers about assessment at all. Most words found in the grades 9 and 10 textbook exercises are classified into the first three stages of Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive domain. Some action words are repeated, and others are missing in textbook exercises. This illustrates the activities' poor level of design and, ultimately, the assessment design. The only curriculum assessment indicators offered to instructors, students, and administrators are the SLOs found in textbooks.

To put it briefly, textbook assessment design standards are relatively low. The cognitive domain lower level of Bloom's Taxonomy action words employed in exercise activities shows a low level of assessment design. The addition of higher-order action words will improve it. The exercises did not support language development. Textbooks overlook the

importance of suitable vocabulary for developing all language skills in activities. Activities about reading and speaking skills are of low quality. Listening skill is overlooked. All language skills must be steadily strengthened through revisiting and developing the tasks and activities in textbooks. Each language skill, including the overlooked listening skill, should be assigned a suitable weightage and significance. Textbook developers should re-clustered the students' learning outcomes (SLOs) and reorganize them for appropriate English language development, which will improve instruction and assessment. Every language skill should have a corresponding weightage and significance in textbook contents, exercises and teachers' guidelines. A Variety of assessment methods, techniques, and strategies must be designed in textbooks for each English language skill, listening, speaking, reading, and writing development. Textbooks need to offer instruction on assessment procedures for teachers. Improving the quality of assessment design in textbooks in the light of indicated evidence will improve the assessment practices. It will support teachers in instruction and assessment task development and practices. It will also help students in the learning process as well as self-assessment. The policymakers and administrators will achieve their aims of developing appropriate content for holistic language development for students by covering all these gaps.

#### 4.2. Limitations of the Study and Further Research

This study was limited to Balochistan English language textbooks of secondary classes and document analyses regarding assessment. Analyzing other classes' and subjects' textbooks would be more informative and valuable using document analysis, content analysis, teacher and student interviews, and other analysis procedures. Teachers' and students' perceptions regarding textbook assessment design would provide valuable information. Interviews from textbook development experts, curriculum developers, assessment experts, and teachers' trainers will be more effective in understanding textbook assessment design and its alignment with the curriculum. Analyzing the assessment design by applying different methods and understanding different stakeholders' points of view will improve the generalizability and limit the potential bias. The triangulation of different data analysis methods will improve the rigour and trustworthiness. A language assessment model for textbooks is suggested to be developed to improve assessment practice. A quantitative study regarding the assessment design in the textbook involving students, teachers, assessment experts, textbooks and curriculum developers would provide more sophisticated information regarding assessment. Research studies may have been conducted to understand the relationship between the SLOs designed and assessment strategies developed in textbooks.

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