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The Assessment of the Questions for 5.-7 Classroom Social Studies Textbooks in Turkey with Gallagher andAschner's Questions Classification

Türkiye'deki Ortaokul 5-7. Sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler Ders Kitaplarında Yer Alan Soruların Gallagher veAschner'ın Soru Sınıflamasına Göre Değerlendirilmesi

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Abstract: In this study, questions in 5th, 6th, and 7th grade social studies textbooks were evaluated using Gallagher and Aschner's question categorization to determine their level. A document analysis was conducted in this study. Descriptive analysis was used for data analysis. Depending on the Gallagher and Aschner question classification, four themes were identified: cognitive memory, convergent thinking, divergent thinking, and evaluative thinking. The ratioof questions to instructional time in the learning domains was evaluated to determine which level was most intensive. As a result, questions focus on cognitive memory and convergent thinking; divergent and evaluative thinking is undervalued; children's abilities in remembering, identifying, deciding, comparing, making connections, summarizing, offering examples, and interpreting are emphasized. In addition, the level of questions directed to children during and after instruction was found to vary and not be evenly distributed across learning areas.

Keywords: Social studies textbook, Gallagher and Ashner question classification, secondary school

Öz: Araştırmada 5., 6. ve 7. sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler ders kitabında yer alan soruların Gallagher ve Aschner'ın soru sınıflamasına göre değerlendirilmesi yapılmış; soruların hangi düzeyde oldukları tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Çalışmada doküman analizi yapılmış, verilerin analizinde ise betimsel analiz kullanılmıştır. Gallagher ve Aschner soru sınıflamasına dayalı olarak "alt düzey yakınsak, üst düzey yakınsak, alt düzey ıraksak ve üst düzey ıraksak" olmak üzere 4 tema belirlenmiştir. Öğrenme alanları bağlamında ise hangi düzeyin yoğunluk gösterdiğini tespit etmek amacıyla soruların derse ayrılan süreye oranı tespit edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda ders kitaplarında yer alan soruların alt ve üst düzey yakınsak alanla sınırlı kaldığı, alt ve üst ıraksak alana gerektiği kadar önem verilmediği; çocukların özellikle hatırlama, tanımlama, belirleme, karşılaştırma, ilişki kurma, özetleme, örnek verme, yorumlama becerilerinin ön planda tutulduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca ders sürecinde ve ders sonrasında çocuklara yöneltilen soru düzeylerinin her öğrenme alanında farklılaştığı ve dengeli dağılmadığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal bilgiler ders kitabı, Gallagher ve Ashner soru sınıflaması, ortaokul

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Introduction

A question is a second-hand, inquiry-based statement that makes people curious and enables them to think and gain knowledge through curiosity (Akbulut, 1999). Socrates, who strives to question assumptions and uncover contradictions and new information (Corley & Rauscher), uses questions, and he claims that questions are "a midwife that brings forth ideas from the mind" (Austin, 1949). Questions are essential for activating higher order thinking skills and recognizing children's thinking. In this regard, questions should be stimulating, arouse the student's curiosity, be in a gradual and logical sequence, and allow students to identify specific points (Garlikov, 2006).

Question levels have a special meaning when asking questions. Question level depends on the complexity of the cognitive process required to answer a question. The questions that ask students to repeat what they have learned are easy; whereas the questions that ask them to think about and justify what they have learned are difficult (Açıkgöz, 2014). In this context, questions are classified based on their cognitive level, and lower and higher-level questions are classified according to this cognitive level (Corley & Rauscher, 2013). High-level questions require students to analyze and interpret the information and support their answer with evidence, while low-level questions simply ask students to recall knowledge they have already received from the teacher (Corley & Rauscher, 2013; Newman, 1990). The categorization of questions is done for the following reasons: to ask cognitive questions at the targeted level, to improve students' cognitive level, to ask questions that are logical, consistent, and interconnected, and to acquire asking questions as a skill (Büyükalan Filiz, 2002).

Researchers to date have created numerous taxonomies (classifications) related to levels of cognitive learning. The best known of these is Bloom's Taxonomy, which divides thinking into six cognitive levels according to the degree of complexity. Knowledge, comprehension, and application form the lowest three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, while analysis, synthesis, and evaluation form the highest three levels (Forehand, 2005). Bloom's taxonomy is hierarchical, that is, it goes from the lowest to the highest level. Accordingly, in the knowledge phase, knowledge is remembered and recognized. In the comprehension phase, the knowledge acquired in the knowledge phase is assimilated, interpreted, and expressed. In the application phase, the knowledge acquired by the student is used to solve the problem situation encountered; generalizations are made, connections are made between information, results are predicted, and conclusions are drawn. Information is presented in the context of a cause-effect relationship; the elements that make up the information are distinguished and summarized in the analysis phase; the

original product is presented in the synthesis phase; an event or situation is criticized; and a judgment is made according to the criterion in the evaluation phase (Birgin, 2016). In the 1990s, Lorin Anderson, a former student of Bloom, revised the taxonomy with a team of cognitive psychologists. In the revision published in 2001, Bloom's six categories were changed from nouns to verbs. In addition, the knowledge level, which was originally the lowest level, was changed to remembering, understanding, synthesising, comprehending, and creating (Forehand, 2005).

Biggs and Colis (1982) created the Solo taxonomy (structure of observed learning outcomes) in contrast to Bloom's classification of cognitive domains. The Solo taxonomy consists of 5 levels: pre-structural, uni-structural, multi-structural, relational, and extended abstract. At the pre-structural level, the student receives the information; no learning occurs here. At the uni-structural stage, the student processes the information without going into detail, just listing, and naming it. At the multi-structural stage, students approach a situation or event from different aspects, but need help to make a connection and see the big picture. Students combine acquired knowledge, analyze it by associating it, and arrive at synthesis in the relational stage. In the extended abstraction stage, students generalize acquired knowledge and apply it to different domains. They can hypothesize and theorize. In this stage, students reach the level of metacognition (Keskin, Coşkun-Keskin, & Kırtel, 2016).

The subject of the study and another classification model is the question classification presented by Gallagher and Aschner in 1963. This classification helps to understand the levels and types of questions. It helps teachers to select questions at different cognitive levels to use in the teaching process (Wiseman & Hunt, 2008). Gallagher and Ashner's question classification consists of a 5-level model: (1) a cognitive memory (low-level convergent), (2) High-level convergent, (3) Low-level divergent, and (4) High-level divergent (evaluation) (5) Routine (Gallagher & Ashner, 1963; Liu, 2005; Newton, 2017; Smith & Szymanski, 2013). There are similarities between the Gallagher and Aschner's (1963) question classification model and the taxonomy of Bloom et al. (1956). Recall is considered the lowest level of thinking in Bloom and Gallagher & Ashner's taxonomy, whereas synthesis and evaluation are regarded as the highest. According to the Gallagher and Ashner model, questions with only one correct response are convergent and low-level questions. In contrast, questions with multiple alternative solutions are high-level questions. The model similarly levels up convergent and divergent questions as in Bloom's taxonomy (Smith & Szymanski, 2013). Convergent questions are simple and factual questions and presuppose knowledge. They depend on memory of knowledge already learned. Divergent questions are reflective, explicit, transparent, conceptual, abstract, and complex. Creativity involves mental processes such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation, and problem solving. These two types of questions are essential for learning. Reflective questions are the extension and elaboration of low-level questions. Therefore, they are mutually dependent (Liu, 2005). Gallagher and Aschner's classification levels of questions are detailed below in Figure 1.

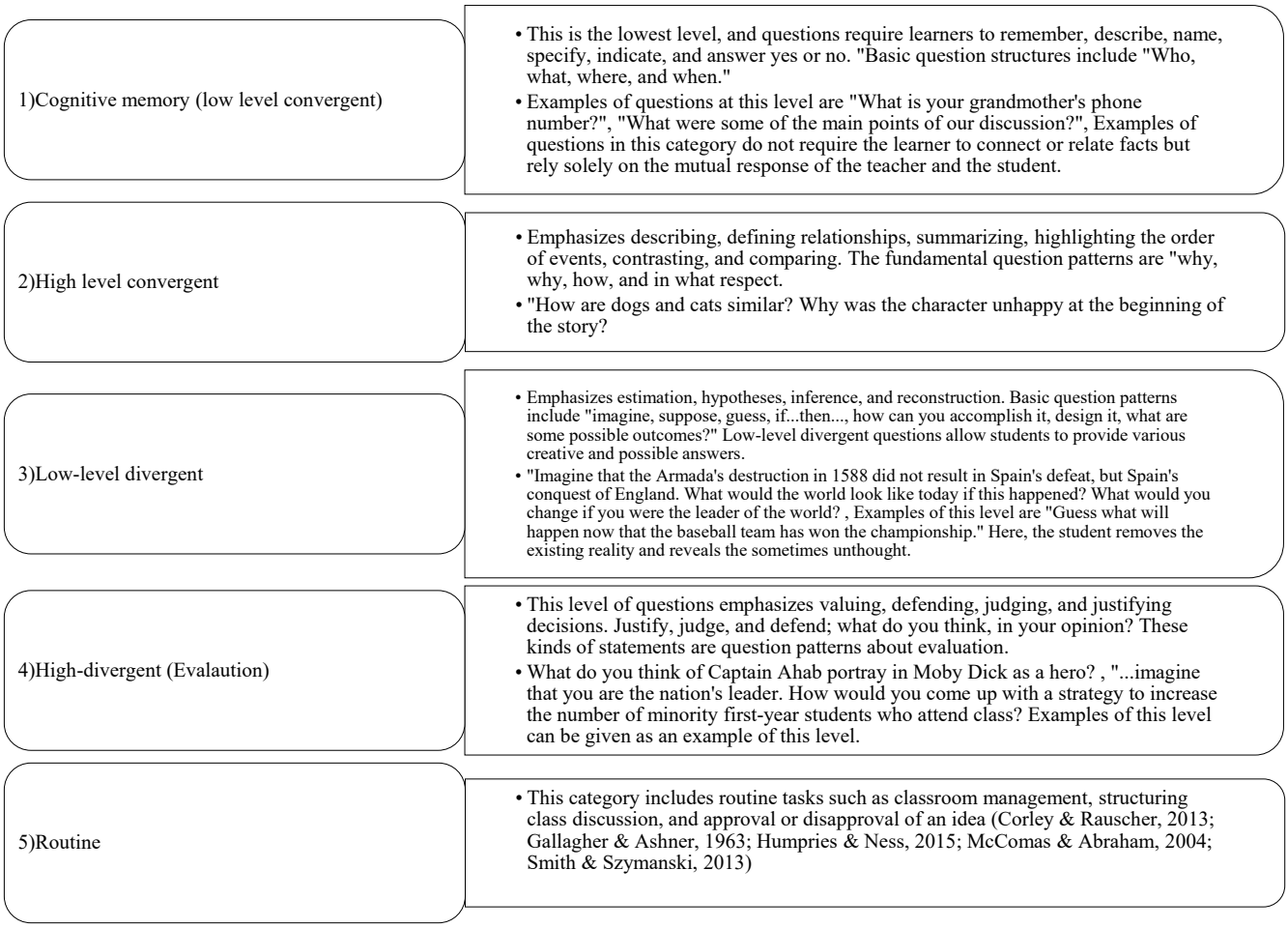

Figure 1. Gallagher and Aschner's classification levels of questions

Asking questions and the growth of higher order thinking abilities are closely related according to studies by Gallagher and Aschner (1963). Education should assist children to develop their cognitive abilities so they can succeed in daily life. Exercising higher order thinking skills is thereby made possible. Consequently, students must do more than simply recall information. Questions must be asked that go beyond students' basic knowledge assessed on a standardized test to help them move from simple recall of low-level information to higher-level evaluation and synthesis (Smith & Szymanski, 2013; Wiseman & Hunt, 2008).

One of the important parts of textbooks is questions. There are many questions in student textbooks, especially at the end of chapters and units, and these questions form the basis for supplemental materials such as workbooks (Armbruster & Ostertag, 1989). In the secondary social studies textbooks that are the focus of this study, questions about the different levels of thinking in each unit and learning area are distributed as preparation, text, activity, and assessment questions for the unit. The purpose of the preparation questions is to reveal students' prior knowledge. Text and activity questions aim to increase, reinforce, develop, and integrate student interest and attention.

On the other hand, the unit assessment questions should allow students to summarize the unit, make connections with previous units, and organize knowledge in their own way (Şanlı, 2020). However, in terms of developing students' cognitive abilities, the questions should be such that they stimulate high-level thinking, as mentioned above. The study of Hunkins (1967, 1968), which investigated whether the variable "question type" was in any way related to student performance, supports this view. Since the experimental and control groups of the 6th grade students in the study were asked questions that included information, analysis, and evaluation of the social studies book, the experimental group received questions that focused on analysis and evaluation. In contrast, the control group received information-based questions. The question types were scored according to Bloom's taxonomy. It was discovered that the experimental group outperformed the students who responded to knowledge-based questions in a substantial way (Gall, 1970). In this context, the aspect of developing student performance and thinking skills is emphasized. However, it has been discovered in numerous studies that the study's main focus —social studies textbooks— does not contain enough questions to encourage pupils to think critically and build higher order thinking skills, particularly at the level of knowledge and understanding. Accordingly, it was determined that the questions in social studies textbooks are insufficient to develop students' high-level thinking skills, direct them to research and enable them to think. It was emphasized that especially questions at the knowledge and comprehension level were directed to students, so the types of questions that enable higher-level thinking should be increased (Çetin, 2016; Demir ve Atasoy, 2018; Doğan ve Torun, 2018; Mindivanli Akdoğan ve Ceylan 2021; Oran ve Karalı, 2019; Şahin, 2012; Şanlı, 2020; Taşyürek, 2016; Uymaz ve Çalışkan, 2019). The reevaluation of social studies textbook questions, which are frequently utilized by students and teachers as tools, considering their contribution to students' thinking abilities and the course's purpose of developing an individual thinking profile, assumes special significance in this context. This is because questions are an effective way to encourage children to think and question and use their higher-order thinking skills. Gallagher and Aschner (1963), who developed a classification system similar to Bloom's Taxonomy, demonstrated a relationship between questions and higher order thinking skills. However, studies show that the questions asked of children in textbooks are still at the concept level. Considering all these factors, it is believed that the study will help textbook writers and educators who use the curriculum by addressing questions related to thinking skills in textbooks. The study's main aim is to assess the level of critical thinking required to answer the questions. In order to analyze the problems in the Social Studies textbook for the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, this classification was taken into account.

Research Questions

1. According to Gallagher and Aschner's question classification, what grade level are the questions in the social studies textbooks for students in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades?
2. In the context of the time allocated to learning areas, how do the questions in the fifth, sixth, and seventh - grade social studies textbooks, according to Gallagher and Aschner's question classification?

Method

Model of the Research

Document analysis was used because the questions in the study came from social studies books, which were also the source of the analysis. Document analysis involves the analysis of written material that contains information about the case or cases being studied. Documents such as diaries, letters, personal documents, and books can serve as data sources for the research; materials such as films, photographs, and videos can also be used as sources. The researcher can obtain the data he needs without observation and interviewing, thus saving time and money (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Data Source

The study analyzed all the topics from the learning areas of “Culture and Heritage, Individual and Society, Science, Technology and Society, People, Places and Environment, Active Citizenship, Global Contexts, Production, Distribution and Consumption”. For this purpose, an easily accessible case study was used as a sample. In this context, a close and easily accessible case was preferred in order to speed up the research and make it feasible (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). 5th, 6th and 7th grade textbooks written according to the 2018 social studies curriculum were used as a source. The authors, publishing organizations, places of publication, and page numbers of these books are listed below in relation to the number of learning areas covered in the book.

5th grade: Harut, Seçil Buket (2020), Primary School Social Studies Textbook, Ata Publishing, Ankara

- Individual and Society (20 pages,)
- Culture and Heritage (36 pages)
- People, Places and Environments (26 pages)
- Science, Technology and Society (20 pages)
- Production, Distribution and Consumption (28 pages)
- Active Citizenship (18 pages)
- Global Connections (20 pages)

Table 1. Abbreviations for questions in the textbook

Questions during the unit			End-of-unit evaluation questions (UEQ)		
Prep Question (PQ)	Text Question (TQ)	Visual Question (VQ)	Multiple Choice Question (MCQ)	Matching Question (MQ)	Gap-filling (GF)
Subject Question (SQ)	Activity Question (AQ)	Research Question (RQ)	Giving an Example (GV)	True-False (TF)	Definition Question (DQ)
			Research Question (RQ)	Open-ended Question (OQ)	Closed Ended Question (CQ)

6th grade: Şahin, Erhan (2020), Primary School Social Studies Textbook, Anadol Publishing, Ankara.

- Individual and Society (23 pages,)
- Culture and Heritage (31 pages)
- People, Places and Environments (37 pages)
- Science, Technology and Society (23 pages)
- Production, Distribution and Consumption (37 pages)
- Active Citizenship (26 pages)
- Global Connections (17 pages)

7th grade: Hikmet, Azer (2020), Primary School Social Studies Textbook, Ekoyay Publishing, Ankara.

- Individual and Society (21 pages,)
- Culture and Heritage (59 pages)
- People, Places and Environments (27 pages)
- Science, Technology and Society (21 pages)
- Production, Distribution and Consumption (27 pages)
- Active Citizenship (19 pages)
- Global Connections (21 pages)

Data Collection Process and Analysis

The social studies textbook explicitly used during the course by the social studies teacher, who is also the researcher of the study and the teacher of the course, was considered because the textbooks intended as data sources are different for each grade level. In the data collection phase, the document analysis was used, and in the analysis, the descriptive analysis was used. The purpose of the descriptive analysis is to clarify, summarize, and interpret the data in light of the predetermined themes. As a result, the dimensions of descriptive analysis consist of developing a framework for data analysis, processing the data in accordance with the stated theme framework, and defining and interpreting the results (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The study identified four themes as "low convergent, high convergent, low divergent, and high divergent" across these dimensions based on Gallagher and Aschner's question classification. The questions, the thinking levels, the page numbers on which the questions are located, and the thinking level corresponding to each question were listed on the form created by the researchers within these themes. The questions were divided into two categories: during the lesson and at the end of the lesson. Abbreviations were used for the questions to facilitate analysis.
The table below shows the abbreviations for the questions in the textbook.

In determining the level of the questions, consideration was given to whether the answer was given in the text, whether it was an open or closed question, whether it offered multiple answer choices, whether it included inferences, and whether it found a cause-and-effect connection. In the context of the learning domains, the relationship between the questions and the time allotted for the lesson was identified to determine what level of intensity was observed. Because the extent of learning outcomes in each learning area varies across grades 5, 6, and 7, the extent of learning outcomes in each learning area varies across grades 5, 6, and 7. For example, the time allocated to the goals of learning "Individual and Society" and "Science, Technology, and Society" varies. For the 5th and 7th grade, the number of instructional hours assigned to 13 learning outcomes in the "Individual and Society" learning area is 37 for the formel, the number of instructional hours assigned to 13 learning outcomes in the "Science, Technology, and Society" learning area is 47 for the latter. The data are presented in a table, and which question level, grade level, and learning area is most emphasized is examined. Direct quotes were used to interpret the question levels. Three researchers conducted a comparative study of the questions over a three-month period. As the data consists of publicly accessible information and a document analysis method were used in the study, the ethics committee report has yet to be obtained.

Validity and Reliability

In order to increase the reliability of the research, it is necessary to work with different researchers and confirm the results obtained. For this purpose, the opinions of 4 experts were consulted, 3 of whom were in the field of social studies education and 1 in the field of measurement and evaluation. The data obtained from the document analysis were thoroughly documented and communicated to the reader by the nature of the data in the context of transferability (external validity). For this reason, direct quotes to the levels of questions and examples of questions were used in the study. The data were coded by three researchers, each of whom checked for consistency (internal reliability). For this purpose, the consensus/discrepancy principle proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used because coding reliability needs to be examined when scoring is done by more than one researcher. For this reason, researchers first analyze the same data set and codes independently. Then, the reliability percentage is determined by numerically comparing the similarities and differences of the coding. In such studies, the coding reliability percentage must be at least 70%. (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). the correlation coefficient for consensus among the three researchers [agreement/ (agreement+disagreement) x 100] was calculated as 95%. Finally, confirmability was ensured by comparing the results with the raw data. In comparison it was examined which stage the questions corresponded to in Gallagher and Aschner's classification; questions on which no consensus could be reached were also excluded from the scope of the research.

Table 2. Levels of questions in 5th grade social studies textbooks

Level of Question → / No	Learning domain ↓	Low level convergent	High level convergent	Low level divergent	High level divergent	Total
1	Production, Distribution and Consumption	8	19	2	2	31
2	People, Places and Environments	3	20	2	1	26
3	Science, Technology and Society	8	16	1	1	26
4	Global Connections	3	19	3	-	25
5	Individual and Society	3	16	3	1	23
6	Culture and Heritage	6	13	2	-	21
7	Active Citizenship	8	6	4	2	20
Total		39	109	17	7	172

Results

In the study, questions in 5th, 6th, and 7th grade social studies textbooks were assessed under 4 themes of "low convergent, high convergent, low divergent, and high divergent" according to Gallagher and Aschner's question classification. For this purpose, each question level was tabulated within the learning areas. The questions in the social studies textbooks for grades 5–7, the questions asked during the lesson, and the questions used to assess students after the lesson are listed in the tables under two headings. In addition, an attempt was made to determine if the questions fell into the learning domains according to Gallagher and Aschner's question classification. Below are the results, tables, descriptions, and direct quotes.

Evaluation Of the Questions During the Unit

This was the heading of the questions in the 5th-7th grade social studies textbook that the teacher was to ask students during class. These questions consisted of "Activity, Text, Preparation, Research, Picture, and Topic Questions" The questions in the learning areas of "Culture and Heritage, Individual and Society, Science, Technology, and Society, People, Places, and Environment, Active Citizenship, Global Connections, Production, Distribution, and Consumption" were evaluated under the themes of "low-level convergent, high-level convergent, low-level divergent and high-level divergent." Tables containing the analysis of these questions in terms of level are given below.

Table 2 shows that the 5th grade questions were mainly related to the area of high-level convergent skills (109/172), followed by questions related to the area of low-level convergent skills (39/172), low-level divergent skills (17/172), and high-level divergent skills (7/172). In this context, almost 3/2 of the questions addressed to the students were related to the convergent domain at high level. Thus, students are mainly asked questions aimed at explaining an event or situation, establishing relationships, making comparisons, and questioning the why, how, and wherefore. The questions students are least likely to be asked during the course are divergent high-level questions, including high-level cognitive questions that focus on student judgment, defense, and evaluation of a topic. Below are examples of each question level.

The level of these questions are related **low level convergent**. For example;

- “Have schools been canceled due to snowfall?" (Page 98) Activity question (AQ)
- “I need to find out if schools have been canceled due to snowfall. Where can I find this information?” (Page 98) Activity question (AQ) **(Science, Technology and Society learning area)**
- "How does one explain the harshness of the Hammurabi Code?" (Page 41) Text Question (TQ)
- “What do you understand by the concept of culture?” (Page 49) Preparation question (PQ) **(Culture and Heritage learning area)**

The level of these questions are related **low level divergent**. For example;

- "How would you answer the question "Why was the Convention on the Rights of the Child needed?" (Page 23) (TQ) **(Individual and Society learning area)**
- "If you had a time machine like the one below, which years would you like to travel to? Why?" (Page 34) (PQ**) (Culture and Heritage learning area)**

Table 3. Level of questions in 6th grade social studies textbooks

Level of Questions → / No	Learning Domain ↓	Low level convergent	High level convergent	Low level divergent	High level divergent	Total
1	People, Places and Environments	24	22	-	-	46
2	Production, Distribution and Consumption	11	24	2	2	39
3	Active Citizenship	8	18	-	3	29
4	Culture and Heritage	5	19	1	1	26
5	Individual and Society	5	17	-	4	26
6	Science, Technology and Society	5	10	3	1	19
7	Global Connections	4	9	2	2	17
Total		62	119	8	13	202

Table 4. Level of questions in the 7th grade social studies textbooks

Level of Question → / No ↓	Learning Domain	Low level convergent	High level convergent	Low level divergent	High level divergent	Total
1	Culture and Heritage	25	68	4	5	102
2	Production, Distribution and Consumption	17	39	6	6	68
3	People, Places and Environments	5	37	3	1	46
4	Science, Technology and Society	13	24	4	4	45
5	Global Connections	13	19	8	4	44
6	Individual and Society	3	27	3	5	38
7	Active Citizenship	3	23	2	2	30
Total		79	237	30	27	373

The level of these questions are related **high level divergent**. For example;

- "You should also research the Çanakkale Folk Song and evaluate and write this folk song in terms of our national unity and solidarity." (Page 55) Research question (RQ) **(Culture and Heritage learning area)**
- "Identify a problem or need that concerns your community or the whole of humanity and find a solution according to the steps given." (Page 134) (RQ) **(Production, Distribution and Consumption learning area)**

Table 3 shows that the questions in the 6th grade were mainly related to the convergent domain at a high level (119/202), followed by questions related to the convergent domain at a low level (62/202), the divergent domain at a low level (13/202), and the divergent domain at a high level (8/202), respectively. In this context, as in 5th grade, the most frequently asked questions included making explanations, establishing relationships, making comparisons, and questioning the why, how, and wherefore of an event or situation, which is the high-level convergent domain. The questions that students were asked the least consisted of low-level divergent questions in which children gave alternative answers, made predictions, drew conclusions, generalized, inferred, and hypothesized the information.

Examples of all question levels are given below.

The level of these questions are related **low level convergent**. For example;

- "What should you do when you realize that a product you bought from the market has expired?" (Page 26) Preparation question (PQ)
- "Write the absolute position of Çanakkale." (Page 89) Visual question (VQ) Activity question (AQ) **(Individual and Society learning area)**

The level of these questions are related **high level convergent**. For example;

- "How does the temperature difference in our country affect people's lives?" (Page 91) Text question (TQ) Subject question (SQ) **(People, Places and Environments learning area)**
- "Why is it illegal to print and sell pirated CDs, DVDs and books?" (Page 145) (TQ)(SQ) (Science, Technology and Society learning area)

The level of these questions are related low level divergent. For example;

- "What might be the effects of the widespread use of 3D printers on future life?" (Page 137) (TQ) (SQ)
- "What are the implications of finding water on Mars for future life?" (Page 137) (SQ) **(Science, Technology and Society learning area)**

The level of these questions are related high level divergent. For example;

- "Evaluate the characteristics of the Arabian Peninsula in terms of their suitability for Islam." (Page 49) (SQ) **(Culture and Heritage learning area)**
- "Do we consciously use the soil, which has an important role in the survival of all living things?" (Page172) (SQ) **(Production, Distribution and Consumption learning area)**

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is seen that questions at the 7th-grade level, as in the 5th and 6th-grade levels, are primarily related to the high-level convergent domain (237/373). This question level was followed by questions about low-level convergent (79/373), low-level divergent (30/373), and high-level divergent (27/373) domains in descending order. In this context, questions posed to the students, as in the 5th and 6th-grade levels, were mainly related to higher-order convergent domains. They involve students making explanations and comparisons, establishing relationships between events or situations, and questioning an event or situation's why, how, and why. In this context, questions posed to the students, as in 5th and 6th-grade levels, mainly were related to the higher-order convergent domain. They involve students making explanations and comparisons, establishing relationships between events or situations, and questioning an event's why, how, and why. The questions students were asked the least belonged to the low-level and high-level divergent fields. They consist of lower and high-level divergent questions requiring children to give alternative answers, make predictions and conclusions, generalize, make inferences and assumptions, make choices, and make judgments.

Examples of all question levels are given below.

The level of these questions are related **low level convergent**. For example;

- "How much time do you spend in front of the TV and on the Internet during the day?" (Page 21) Preparation question (PQ) **(Individual and Society learning area)**

Table 5. The time allocated to the 5th, 6th and 7th grade social studies program and the evaluation of the questions in the unit process in the books according to the Gallagher and Ashner question classification.

No	Learning domain	Level of Question							
		Low level convergent		High level convergent		Low level divergent		High level divergent	
		Question/ Time	Rate	Question/Time	Rate	Question/ Time	Rate	Question/Time	Rate
1	Individual and Society	11/38	0,28	60/38	1,57	6/38	0,15	10/38	0,26
2	Culture and Heritage	36/70	0,51	98/70	1,4	6/70	0,08	9/70	0,12
3	People, Places and Environments	32/47	0,70	79/47	1,65	5/47	0,10	2/47	0,04
4	Science, Technology and Society	26/38	0,68	50/38	1,31	8/38	0,21	6/38	0,15
5	Production, Distribution and Consumption	36/51	0,70	72/51	1,41	10/51	0,19	10/51	0,19
6	Active Citizenship	19/28	0,67	47/28	1,67	6/28	0,21	7/28	0,25
7	Global Connections	20/40	0,5	47/40	1,17	13/40	0,32	6/40	0,15

- "On the map, mark the places where the Kay is first settled." (Page 37) Visual question (VQ) Subject question (SQ) **(Culture and Heritage learning area)**

The level of these questions are related **high level convergent**. For example;

- "What are the contributions of restoration projects to the relations between the Balkan states and Türkiye?" (Page 42) Text question (TQ) Activity question (AQ)
- "Which of the places shown in the photographs is more preferable for settlement? Why?" (Page 98) (PQ) (VQ) **(People, Places Environments learning area)**

The level of these questions are related **low level divergent**. For example;

- "What developments do you think will occur in the future in the protection, dissemination and transfer of knowledge?" (Page 133) (SQ)
- "If you were a scientist, in which field would you like to work? Why?" (Page 137) (SQ) **(Science, Technology and Society learning area)**

The level of these questions are related **high level divergent.** For example;

- "Which works of the scholars who grew up in the Turkish-Islamic civilization do you think contributed more to the process of scientific development? Discuss." (Page 137) (SQ)(TQ) **(Science, Technology and Society learning area)**
- "In the first Turkish states, the wife of the ruler also attended the assemblies. Evaluate this situation in terms of democracy and women's rights." (Page 184) (SQ) **(Active Citizenship)**

When the time allocated to the 5th-7th grade social studies program and the questions in the unit process in the books were evaluated according to Gallagher and Ashner's question classification, it was seen that the question levels were not distributed evenly in terms of learning areas. Levels differ in each learning area. Accordingly, in the learning areas of "People, Places and Environments" and "Production, Distribution, and Consumption," questions related to the low-level convergent domain; in the learning area of "Active Citizenship," questions related to the high-level convergent domain; in the learning area of "Global Connections," questions related to the lower level divergent domain; in the learning area of "Individual and Society," questions related to the high-level divergent domain are concentrated.

Evaluation of End-of-Unit Evaluation Questions

This section focuses on questions in 5th, 6th, and 7th-grade social studies textbooks that were asked to evaluate the students after the lesson. These questions consisted of "multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, giving examples, true-false, definition, research, open-ended and closed-ended" questions. The questions within the learning domains of "Culture and Heritage, Individual and Society, Science, Technology and Society, People, Places and Environments, Active Citizenship, Global Connections, Production, Distribution, and Consumption" were evaluated within the framework of the themes of "low-level convergent, high-level convergent, low-level divergent and high-level divergent."
Table 6 presents the analysis of these questions in terms of level are given.

Table 6. Levels of end-of-unit questions (formative assessment) in 5th grade social studies textbooks

Level of Question → / No	Learning Domain ↓	Low level convergent	High level convergent	Low level divergent	High level divergent	Total
1	People, Places and Environments	13	6	-	-	19
2	Science, Technology and Society	11	8	-	-	19
3	Individual and Society	10	7	-	1	18
4	Active Citizenship	8	8	-	-	16
5	Production, Distribution and Consumption	6	9	-	-	15
6	Culture and Heritage	6	9	-	-	15
7	Global Connections	2	9	-	1	11
Total		56	56	-	2	114

Table 7. Levels of end-unit questions (formative assessment) in 6th grade social studies textbooks

Level of Question → / No	Learning domain ↓	Low level convergent	High level convergent	Low level divergent	High level divergent	Total
1	Culture and Heritage	63	17	-	-	80
2	People, Places and Environments	49	14	-	-	63
3	Global Connections	45	6	1	1	53
4	Science, Technology and Society	38	13	1	-	51
5	Production, Distribution and Consumption	35	14	1	-	50
6	Active Citizenship	34	10	-	3	47
7	Individual and Society	31	9	3	1	44
Total		295	83	6	5	388

Table 6 shows that the end-of-unit questions at the 5th-grade level consisted of questions related to the low and high-level convergent (56/114). While low-level divergent questions are not asked, high-level divergent questions (2/114) are either given very little space or no questions at this level are asked to the students. In this context, the questions asked to children include recall, definition, determination, yes or no answers; explaining, relating, and comparing; the why, how, and why of an event or situation. On the other hand, questions that involve students giving alternative answers to a question, making predictions, drawing conclusions, generalizing, inferring, and hypothesizing, judging, defending, and evaluating a topic (low-level and high-level divergent) should be asked more.

Examples of question types that include these question levels are given below.

The level of these questions are related **low level convergent.** For example;

- "The course has an important place in learning about our history and culture." (Page 31) Fill in the blank (FB) **(Individual and Society learning area)**
- "One of our traditional desserts is..... " (Page 26) (FB) **(Culture and Heritage learning area)**

The level of these questions are related **high level convergent.** For example;

- "Give examples of historical monuments and natural assets in your city." (Page 59) Giving examples (GE**) (Culture and Heritage learning area)**
- "Looking at the physical map of Turkey, Serhat sees that a region he examines is generally green and shades of this color.
- According to this, which of the following cannot be said about the region Serhat examined?" (Page 86) Multiple choice (MC)
  A) It has low elevation.
  B) The landforms are simple.
  C) It generally has an elevation between 0-500 meters.
  D) Plateaus cover a large area**. (People, Places and Environments learning area)**

The level of this question is related **high level divergent.** For example;

- "What are the contributions of the Social Studies course to you as an active citizen?" (Page 31) Open-ended (OE) **(Individual and Society learning area**

When Table 7 is analyzed, it is seen that the end-of-unit questions in the 6th-grade social studies textbooks, as in the 5th-grade level, consist of questions related to the low-level (295/388) and high-level convergent (83/388) domains. Therefore, students are mostly asked questions involving knowledge and recall, followed by questions involving levels such as comparing, relating, explaining, giving examples, and interpreting. Within the scope of the learning area, it was determined that the question levels were unevenly distributed in each learning area. It was observed that questions related to the low-level convergent field were asked intensively, and this ratio was relatively high in the learning area of "Culture and heritage" (80/388). Examples of question types, including these question levels, are given below.

The level of these questions are related **low level convergent.** For example;

- "Individuals develop behaviors and assume responsibilities appropriate to their social roles." (Page 34) True/False Question (TFQ) **(Individual and Society learning area)**
- "What is it called to produce agricultural products out of season by creating suitableconditions?" (Page 194) Definition Question (DQ) **(Production, Distribution and Consumption learning area)**

The level of this question is related **high level convergent.** For example;

- Which of the following forms of government makes it easier to implement the ideas of national sovereignty, freedom, and justice? (Page 234) Multiple Choice Question (MCQ)
  A) Republic B) Monarchy C) Oligarchy
  D) Theocracy **(Active Citizenship learning area)**

The level of this question is related **low level divergent.** For example;

- "In many areas, scientific and technical advancements greatly benefit humanity, and over time, new inventions are created. Find out what scientific and technological advancements are now being produced in the following areas, and then write about how they might affect people's lives in the future (health, education, transportation, and communication)." (Page 152) Research Question (RQ) **(Science, Technology and Society learning area)**

The level of this question is related high level divergent. For example;

- "State the importance of social cohesion for us." (Page 37) Open-ended (OE) **(Individual Society learning area)**

Table 8. Levels of end-unit questions (formative assessment) in 7th grade social studies textbooks

Level of Question → / No	Learning domain ↓	Low level convergent	High level convergent	Low level divergent	High level divergent	Total
1	Science, Technology and Society	37	9	-	-	46
2	Production, Distribution and Consumption	31	7	1	-	39
3	Culture and Heritage	30	5	-	1	36
4	People, Places and Environments	28	6	-	-	34
5	Global Connections	27	9	1	-	37
6	Active Citizenship	27	5	-	1	33
7	Individual and Society	17	10	-	1	19
Total		197	51	2	3	244

Table 9. The time allocated to the 5th, 6th and 7th grade social studies program and the evaluation of the questions at the end of the unit in the books according to the Gallagher and Ashner question classification.

No	Learning domain	Level of Question							
		Low level convergent		High level convergent		Low level divergent		High level divergent	
		Question/Time	Rate	Question/Time	Rate	Question/Time	Rate	Question/Time	Rate
1	Individual and Society	58/38	1,51	26/38	0,68	3/38	0,07	3/38	0,07
2	Culture and Heritage	99/70	1,41	31/70	0,44	0/70	0	1/70	0,01
3	People, Places and Environments	90/47	1,91	26/47	0,55	0/47	0	0/47	0
4	Science, Technology and Society	86/38	2,26	30/38	0,78	1/38	0,02	0/38	0
5	Production, Distribution and Consumption	72/51	1,41	30/51	0,58	2/51	0,03	0/51	0
6	Active Citizenship	69/28	2,46	23/28	0,82	0/28	0	4/28	0,14
7	Global Connections	74/40	1,85	24/40	0,6	2/40	0,05	2/40	0,05

Table 8 shows that the end-of-unit questions in the 7th-grade social studies textbooks, as in the 5th and 6th-grade levels, consisted of questions related to the lower level (197/244) and high-level convergent domain (51/244). Similar to the 6th-grade level, the questions are intensively directed to the students concerning the low-level convergent domain. Only the students' recall, identification, and determination levels are measured. There need to be more inquiries about the low-level (2/244) and high-level (3/244) divergent areas. In terms of learning areas, it is seen that the question levels are not evenly distributed in each learning area; this ratio is relatively high in the learning area of "Science, technology and society" (46/244). On the other hand, it is revealed that questions about the low-level convergent domain are asked intensively, followed by questions about the high-level convergent domain. Below are examples of question types that include these question levels.

The level of these questions are related **low level convergent.** For example;

- "Communication is the transfer of feelings, thoughts or information to others through various means." (Page 31) True/False Question (T/F Q) **(Individual and Society learning area)**
- "The conquest of the Seigniory of facilitated the Ottoman Empire's transition to Rumelia." (Page 93) Fill in the Blank Question (FBQ) **(Culture and Heritage learning area)**

The level of these questions are related **high level convergent.** For example;

- What changes has digital technology caused in the production, distribution and consumption network?" (Page 179) Closed-Ended Question (CEQ)
- "Choose one of the international organizations of which Turkey is a member. Briefly explain the work of this organization." (Page 227) (CEQ) **(Global Connections learning area)**

The level of this question is related **low level divergent**. For example;

- "What should be a good planning for career choice? Explain." (Page 179) Open-ended question (OEQ) **(Production, Distribution and Consumption learning area)**

The level of this question is related **high level divergent.** For example;

- "What do you think is the most important factor in the Ottoman Empire becoming an important political power? Explain." (Page 95) (OEQ) **(Culture and Heritage learning area)**

In Table 9, the time allocated to the 5th-7th grade social studies program and the end-of-unit questions in the books were evaluated according to Gallagher and Ashner question classification. As a result, it emerged that the question levels in the context of learning areas were not distributed evenly and showed differences. Low-level convergent, high-level convergent, and high-level divergent question levels were concentrated in the learning areas of "Active Citizenship," and low-level divergent question levels were concentrated in the learning area of "Individual and Society."

When considered generally, it was found that the questions posed to students in social studies textbooks during the course

were related to "high-level convergent domain" at each grade level (5, 6, and 7). Therefore, students' skills such as "comparing, relating, explaining, transferring, summarizing, giving examples, and interpreting" are tried to be measured. In the context of the learning domain, the intensity of question levels (lower and higher level convergent; lower and higher level divergent) increased in the following learning domains: "Global connections" related to the lower-level convergent domain; "Active citizenship" associated to the higher-level convergent domain; "Individual and society" related to the lower level divergent domain; "People, places and environments" related to the higher level divergent domain. Additionally, it was found that students in the fifth grade were asked a few questions on the low-level divergent field. At the 6th and 7th-grade levels, unlike the 5th grade students needed to be asked more low-level divergent questions. According to the end-of-unit evaluation questions, it was determined that questions related to the low and high convergent domains were asked at the 5th-grade level. However, at the 6th and 7th-grade levels, the questions were primarily related to the low-level convergent domain. In the context of the learning domain, the intensity of the question level increases in the learning domain "Global Connections," related to the lower-level convergent domain; in the learning domain "Active Citizenship," related to the higher level convergent domain; in the learning domain "Individual and society" related to the lower level divergent domain; and in the learning domain "People, places, and environments" related to the higher level divergent domain. While questions related to the low and high-level divergent domains were included in the 6th and 7th-grade levels, it was observed that no questions related to the low-level divergent domain were mentioned in the 5th-grade level. During and after the lesson, it was observed that the question levels directed to the children differed in each learning domain and were not distributed evenly. The following can be said: The questions were limited to the low and high convergent domains. Low and high divergent domains needed to be given more importance. Children's remembering, defining, identifying, comparing, relating, summarizing, giving examples, and interpreting skills were prioritized.

Discussion

In the study, questions from the Social Studies textbook for the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades were assessed using Gallagher and Aschner's question classification, and an attempt was made to identify the difficulty level of the questions. The investigation led to the discovery that questions directed to students during the lesson were mainly related to the high-level convergent domain, while questions directed to evaluate students after the lesson primarily was related to the low-level convergent domain. It was also observed that questions related to the low and high-level divergent domains needed to be sufficiently included both during and after the lesson, and few questions were asked about this domain. Consequently, it has been found that the questions in the textbook are limited to the lower and upper convergent domains and that the lower and upper divergent domains need to be given more importance. Accordingly, the focus is on children's skills of remembering, defining, identifying, comparing, relating, summarizing, giving examples, and interpreting. Research shows that textbooks tend to emphasize low-level questions. This result overlaps with the results of Tarman and Kuran (2015). According to this, they attempted to determine whether and to what degree the pre-reading and assessment questions in the social studies textbooks represent the high-level cognitive domain skills by taking Bloom's taxonomy into consideration. They found that social studies textbooks must include more question types with high cognitive levels. Similarly, Çetin (2016) also stated in his study that teachers found questions in the 5th-grade social studies textbook insufficient in terms of developing students' higher-order thinking skills and directing them to research. Şahin (2012) stated that the textbook questions were moderately effective in making students think. Accordingly, he determined that some textbook questions were prepared to measure knowledge-level behaviors while some were prepared to measure high-level behaviors. He stated that the questions were ineffective in making students think, directing them to the relevant text, and attracting students' attention. Şanlı (2020) stated that the use of high-level questions is relatively low in the 4th-7th social studies textbook. Demir and Atasoy (2018) determined that measurement and evaluation in the 5th-grade social studies textbook were carried out with preliminary questions, questions between texts, and questions in the "I Evaluate Myself" section at the end of the unit. They discovered that the questions in the "Evaluating Myself" section generally consisted of 5 different question types: true-false, fill-in-the-blank, matching, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions; however, they emphasized that open-ended questions that provide high-level thinking should be increased. Göksu and Taşyürek (2016) stated that the questions in social studies textbooks are generally at the level of knowledge and comprehension. According to Doğan and Torun's (2018) research, the majority of students did not think the first questions in social studies textbooks were enough for leading them to conduct further research. Gezer and İlhan (2015) analyzed the assessment questions according to the SOLO taxonomy. Accordingly, in the 4th grade, questions primarily aim to measure the uni structural level (not in-depth). The number of assessment questions reflecting this level decreases towards 5th grade. Questions at the ultrastructural, relational (approaching a situation from different perspectives), and extended abstract levels (generalizing knowledge, transferring knowledge to various fields) are more common in Grade 5. Towards 6th grade, questions on the structural and multi-structural level decrease, while questions on the relational construct level increase. In 6th grade, questions on uni-structural and multi-structural levels decreased; questions on the relational level increased; extended abstract decreased in 6th-grade assessment questions; in 7th grade, uni-structural level is high, and the relational level is low in the assessment questions in the textbook. In his study, Seven (2001) claimed that all social studies instructors that took part in the research, especially in the preparation and evaluation questions section of social studies textbooks, gave more space to the knowledge level in their textbooks. He stated that they did not include enough questions that measured different behaviors, such as application and comprehension. Oran and Karalı (2019) examined the evaluation problems of the 7th-grade middle school social studies textbook according to Bloom's taxonomy and stated that the evaluation questions mainly were at the knowledge level. Öğreten (2017) examined the content of the 4th-grade social studies textbook in terms of gaining the basic skills in the social studies curriculum and consulted teacher opinions on this issue. In this context, it was determined that the questions for evaluating the gains were insufficient in measurement and evaluation.

Studies conducted abroad also show similar results to those in Turkey. Using Bloom's taxonomy, all of the questions in a part of the fifth-grade social studies textbook were examined by Davis and Hunkins (1965). They came to the conclusion that 87% of the questions needed knowledge, while only 9% required understanding. Alcala (1971) determined the frequency of questions using Bloom's taxonomy after analyzing the questions in social studies textbooks for third and fourth grade. He found out that of 1108 questions, 482 were at the knowledge level, 31 were at the synthesis level, and 49 were at the evaluation level. About 7,500 questions from science and social studies textbooks and teacher's helps for the fourth and fifth grades were examined by Armbruster and Ostertag in 1989. This research revealed that the textbooks continued to employ low cognitive-level inquiries that necessitated little inference. Vanderhook (2020) tried to determine how the questions in a 10th-grade social studies textbook were distributed regarding higher-order thinking skills. This study analyzed 287 questions (test and quiz). Moreover, no empirical evidence was found for developing higher-order thinking skills in the textbook. It was found that only 9.7% of the questions were high-level questions.

In the context of the learning domain, it was determined that the intensity of the question levels during the lesson increased in the learning domains of "People, Places, and Environments" and Production, Distribution, and Consumption" concerning the low-level convergent domain; in the learning domain of "Active citizenship" relating to the high-level convergent domain; in the learning domain of "Global Connections" concerning the low-level divergent domain; and the learning domain of "Individual and Society" concerning the high-level divergent domain. It was determined that the intensity of the end-of-lesson question levels increased concerning low-level convergent, high-level convergent, and high-level divergent in the learning domain of "Active citizenship" and concerning low-level divergent in the learning domain of "Individual and Society." In this context, question levels directed to children during and after the lesson differed in each learning domain and were not distributed evenly. Oran and Karalı (2019) also analyzed the 7th-grade Social Studies textbook evaluation questions according to Bloom's taxonomy. They considered "Individual and Society, Culture and Heritage, and People, Places, and Environments" learning areas. They determined that the questions in this learning area were mainly at the knowledge level.

In light of all these results, the following suggestions can be made:

- The questions in social studies textbooks should be aimed at measuring not only lower-level cognitive skills but also higher-level cognitive skills, and in this regard, a balanced distribution of question levels should be used in each unit.
- Research should be performed in order to ascertain the cognitive levels at which the questions in social studies textbooks are presented.

Author Contributions

In every step of the article's creation, all authors took part equally. The last version of the manuscript was read and approved by all authors.

Ethical Declaration

Because the study was carried out with available data and the document analysis method, an ethics committee report was not requested. In this respect, the Ethics Committee's approval of the study is not required, and all procedures outlined by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) were followed.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest with any organization or individual relevant to the study, stated the authors.

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