

Foreign Language Instruction for History Students through the Lens of Bloom's Taxonomy

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Abstract

This article examines how Bloom's Taxonomy can guide foreign language instruction for history students, emphasizing a structured progression from lower- to higher-order cognitive processes within discipline-specific tasks. Drawing on research in EFL, ESP, humanities instruction, and history-focused courses, it develops a taxonomy-based conceptual framework that integrates Bloom's six cognitive levels with language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and historical competencies, including factual comprehension, source interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. To illustrate the framework's pedagogical coherence, one representative topic — “Appearance and Character: The Character Traits of Leaders of History” (grammar focus: adjectives)—demonstrates how each cognitive level can be operationalized through reading, writing, speaking, and listening tasks, linking linguistic development with historical reasoning. Evidence from the literature and the illustrative example suggests that taxonomy-informed instructional design enhances vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, engagement, and higher-order cognitive skills, while many existing courses remain limited to low-level recall. The article proposes a flexible and theoretically grounded instructional model for curriculum planning, task sequencing, and assessment in history-oriented foreign language instruction, providing implications for promoting integrated language and disciplinary learning.

Keywords: *Bloom's Taxonomy, Conceptual Framework, Foreign Language Instruction, Higher-Order Thinking, History Students*

Introduction

Sustainable Amid globalization and the increasing internationalization of tertiary education, foreign language proficiency has become an essential academic and professional requirement for university students across disciplines. For students majoring in history, foreign language competence is particularly significant, as it enables access to primary historical sources, international scholarly literature, and cross-cultural academic discourse. Despite this importance, foreign language instruction for history students is often limited to general linguistic objectives and does not sufficiently address the cognitive and disciplinary demands of historical studies.

Foreign language instruction for history students sits at the intersection of disciplinary thinking and academic language learning, yet most research on Bloom's Taxonomy in language education has treated learners as a general EFL/ESP population rather than as members of a specific content discipline. Integrative approaches such as CLIL and

history-based content-language models show that history can effectively serve as a vehicle for foreign language development, but they rarely make Bloom's cognitive levels an explicit organizing principle for task design and assessment in this domain (Doronina, 2024; Andriichuk, 2024). Bloom's Taxonomy classifies cognitive processes from remembering to creating, supporting design of objectives, activities, and assessments that move learners toward deeper learning and transfer (Adams, 2015). Revised versions stress the distinction between lower-order thinking skills (LOTS)—remember, understand, apply—and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS)—analyze, evaluate, create (Balatska, 2025).

Within language education, Bloom's Taxonomy has been employed to design learning objectives, assessment criteria, and instructional tasks that promote deeper cognitive engagement (Forehand, 2010; Krathwohl, 2002). Nonetheless, existing studies largely examine its application in general education contexts or in teaching isolated language skills, such as reading comprehension or writing, rather than in discipline-specific foreign language instruction for humanities students. As a result, there is a notable lack of empirical and methodological research addressing how Bloom's cognitive levels can be systematically aligned with the intellectual practices of historical inquiry. This gap is particularly evident in foreign language courses designed for history students, where analytical reading of historical texts, critical evaluation of sources, and academic argumentation are central learning outcomes. While historical thinking inherently involves higher-order cognitive processes, foreign language pedagogy has not sufficiently leveraged Bloom's Taxonomy as an organizing framework to support these processes in a structured and pedagogically coherent manner. Consequently, language instruction often fails to fully contribute to the development of students' disciplinary cognition.

Bloom's model is used not simply as a list of verbs, but as a scaffold for sequencing cognitive demands and aligning content, process, and assessment in foreign language tasks (Rahmani, 2023; Luo, 2025). Within language education, Bloom's levels are interpreted through constructivist and CLIL-informed perspectives that emphasize active meaning-making, problem solving, and the integration of content knowledge with linguistic development (Andriichuk, 2024). Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the pedagogical potential of applying Bloom's Taxonomy to foreign language instruction for history students in higher education. Specifically, the study aims to identify how taxonomy-based instructional design can facilitate the development of both linguistic competence and higher-order cognitive skills relevant to historical studies. Through this approach, the research seeks to contribute to the theoretical and methodological advancement of discipline-oriented.

Review of Related Literature

Bloom's Taxonomy has remained a cornerstone of educational theory since its original formulation, with Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revision providing a modern framework for categorizing learning objectives. Krathwohl (2002) offered a comprehensive overview of this revision, emphasizing its applicability to teaching and assessment. Adams (2015) and Amer (2017) further reflected on the taxonomy's cognitive dimensions, highlighting its relevance in structuring learning outcomes across disciplines. Recent scholarship has expanded Bloom's framework into diverse educational contexts. Adhikari (2024) reviewed the revised taxonomy, while Balatska and Vyslobodska (2025) critically examined its advantages and limitations. Cai (2024) integrated Bloom's Taxonomy with the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach in college English

teaching, and Doronina et al. (2024) applied it to ESP curricula in higher education. Köksal, Ulum, and Yürük (2023) explored its role in reading texts for EFL/ESL learners, while Oran and Avcı (2024) analyzed assessment questions in Turkish language teaching through its lens.

The taxonomy's adaptability to digital and AI-driven learning environments has also been emphasized. Luo et al. (2025) proposed an enhanced version for fostering information literacy in the era of large language models. Rahmani and Ghounane (2023) examined its role in digitalizing EFL course content, and Nurmatova and Altun (2023) reviewed its integration for novice educators. Tsulaia (2025) demonstrated practical classroom applications for EFL learners, underscoring its pedagogical utility.

Collectively, these studies reveal Bloom's Taxonomy as both a theoretical foundation and a flexible tool for modern pedagogy. Its application ranges from traditional curriculum design to digital learning innovations, underscoring its enduring relevance in fostering cognitive development, language education, and information literacy.

Objectives

This study aims to examine the pedagogical potential of applying Bloom's Taxonomy to foreign language instruction for history students in higher education. Specifically, it seeks to identify how taxonomy-based instructional design can foster both linguistic competence and higher-order cognitive skills—such as analytical reading, source evaluation, and academic argumentation—essential for historical inquiry.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, conceptual, and design-oriented research design aimed at examining foreign language instruction for history students through the cognitive framework of Bloom's Taxonomy. Rather than investigating instructional effects through experimental or quasi-experimental methods, the research focuses on theoretical analysis and pedagogical modelling, which are widely accepted approaches in educational and applied linguistics scholarship. This design is particularly appropriate for addressing complex cognitive–pedagogical relationships that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement alone.

The conceptual research design enables the systematic synthesis of interdisciplinary theories drawn from foreign language pedagogy, cognitive psychology, and history education. By integrating Bloom's Taxonomy with discipline-specific language learning objectives, the study conceptualizes foreign language instruction as a cognitively structured process aligned with the intellectual practices of historical inquiry. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of how hierarchical cognitive levels can guide instructional planning, task design, and learning outcomes in language courses for history students.

A design-oriented perspective further supports the development of a taxonomy-based instructional framework that can be adapted to diverse higher education contexts. Through analytical abstraction and model construction, the study moves beyond descriptive analysis to propose a pedagogically coherent structure that links cognitive processes, language skills, and historical competencies. Such an approach contributes to

methodological innovation in foreign language education by offering a theoretically grounded model rather than context-bound instructional prescriptions.

Overall, the chosen research design ensures conceptual rigor, theoretical coherence, and academic relevance. It positions the study as a methodological contribution to the field of foreign language teaching in higher education, particularly within discipline-oriented and cognitively informed instructional paradigms.

Data Sources

The present study is grounded in a systematic examination of peer-reviewed scholarly literature and internationally recognized research outputs indexed in academic databases such as Scopus or equivalent scientific repositories. To underpin the conceptual model developed in this article, data sources were selected according to their theoretical relevance to Bloom's Taxonomy, cognitive structures in language pedagogy, and the design of foreign language instruction across higher education contexts. The literature review includes both foundational works on Bloom's Taxonomy and contemporary studies that operationalize cognitive frameworks in language teaching, ensuring comprehensive coverage of relevant research trends.

A core theoretical reference is the body of work on Bloom's Taxonomy itself, including conceptual discussions of the cognitive domain and its revised version, which remain central to educational objective classification. Although the original foundational texts by Bloom and later revisions by Anderson and Krathwohl are often cited as books rather than journal articles, recent implementations of Bloom's Taxonomy in foreign language settings are documented in peer-reviewed articles such as Tsulaia's study on crafting classroom activities for EFL learners using Bloom's cognitive levels (Tsulaia, 2025). This article illustrates how cognitive categorization can be translated into pedagogy, emphasizing higher-order thinking processes that align with the taxonomy's hierarchical structure.

Further empirical and analytical perspectives include research on how Bloom's Taxonomy is applied to enhance digitalized foreign language course content, revealing its role in structuring learning objectives and instructional outcomes (Rahmani & Ghounane, 2023). This study, although focused on content digitalization, demonstrates the broader applicability of Bloom's cognitive framework in aligning curriculum goals with learning processes. Additionally, literature examining Bloom's taxonomy in foreign language contexts emphasizes its contribution to cognitive development and critical thinking in EFL environments, supporting the rationale for its integration into discipline-oriented instruction.

One of the recent reviews highlight how Bloom's framework supports cognitive skill development and instructional effectiveness in EFL and ESP settings, while also revealing challenges in mapping higher-order thinking skills onto language curricula. Nurmatova & Altun states that integrating Bloom's Taxonomy into EFL teaching methods empowers novice teachers to create more organized, diverse, and student-oriented lessons, leading to improved language learning outcomes and teaching effectiveness (Nurmatova & Altun, 2023). The integration of Bloom's Taxonomy in EFL teaching is particularly valuable because it helps novice teacher's move beyond mechanical instruction toward purposeful cognitive engagement. When systematically applied, it not only improves lesson

coherence but also fosters higher-order thinking skills that are essential for sustainable language development.

The revised Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives enhances educational practices and outcomes by integrating knowledge and cognitive process dimensions, while also addressing challenges and controversies in contemporary contexts (Adhikari, 2024). The revised Bloom's Taxonomy is especially effective because it offers a more holistic framework that links types of knowledge with cognitive processes, allowing teachers to plan instruction more systematically. At the same time, acknowledging its challenges and debates makes its application more flexible and context-sensitive in contemporary educational settings.

Applying Bloom's taxonomy to practical English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes for IT students in higher education improves engagement, higher-order thinking skills, and enables them to become proficient language users and critical thinkers (Doronina, 2024). Just as Bloom's Taxonomy enhances practical ESP classes for IT students, its application can be equally effective for history students by promoting analytical reading, critical interpretation of sources, and evidence-based argumentation in English. By progressing from basic comprehension of historical texts to evaluation and creation, history students become more engaged, proficient language users and develop the critical thinking skills essential for their discipline. Studies within these frameworks demonstrate practical approaches to lesson planning, task design, and assessment that can inform a discipline-sensitive application of Bloom's Taxonomy for history students.

To frame this study's analytical scope, the selected data sources were also reviewed for methodological rigor and relevance to curriculum design, ensuring that the emerging framework aligns with established theoretical positions and can be generalized to the specific syllabus. The sample instructional topics used in this study, such as Independence of Uzbekistan and Appearance and Character: The Character Traits of Leaders of History were drawn from the History specialty curriculum and syllabuses of the University of Innovation Technologies, ensuring relevance to actual educational contexts. The historical topics covered in the semester provide a context in which Bloom's cognitive levels can be systematically linked to language tasks that progress from basic linguistic recall to complex interpretative production, consistent with findings from the reviewed literature.

Analysis

The analysis of the selected literature was conducted using a combination of thematic content analysis, comparative theoretical analysis, and framework synthesis. First, all sources were examined to extract key concepts related to Bloom's Taxonomy, foreign language pedagogy, and cognitive skill development. Thematic coding was applied to identify patterns in how different cognitive levels—remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating—are operationalized in instructional practices, particularly in discipline-specific contexts such as history. This step ensured that the analysis captured both the theoretical principles and practical applications of Bloom's framework in language education.

Second, a comparative theoretical analysis was performed to evaluate similarities and differences across the reviewed studies. This involved comparing approaches in general EFL/ESP instruction with studies focusing on content-based or discipline-oriented

teaching. Particular attention was given to how cognitive objectives were aligned with curricular content, learning outcomes, and skill development. This comparison allowed for the identification of gaps in the literature, such as the lack of systematic integration of Bloom's cognitive levels into history-oriented foreign language instruction, and highlighted strategies that could be adapted for this specific educational context.

Finally, the study employed framework synthesis to develop a conceptual model for implementing Bloom's Taxonomy in foreign language instruction for history students. Insights from the thematic and comparative analyses were mapped onto the semester topics, such as Independence of Uzbekistan, Historical games and sports, and Historical educational institutes, to illustrate how language tasks can progressively target lower- to higher-order cognitive skills. This process resulted in a taxonomy-based instructional framework that links language learning objectives with historical content, ensuring that students not only acquire linguistic competence but also develop analytical, evaluative, and creative skills relevant to historical inquiry.

Theoretical Modeling: Development of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was developed to systematize foreign language instruction for history students through the pedagogically informed application of Bloom's revised taxonomy. The framework is designed to integrate cognitive development with language learning and disciplinary historical thinking, providing a coherent model for aligning linguistic objectives with the intellectual demands of history education in higher education contexts.

At the theoretical level, Bloom's taxonomy functions as the central organizing principle of the framework. The six cognitive levels—remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating—are conceptualized as a hierarchical instructional scaffold that guides the sequencing of language tasks. Each cognitive level is explicitly mapped onto core foreign language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and essential historical competencies, including factual comprehension, source interpretation, contextual analysis, comparative reasoning, and argumentation. This mapping ensures that language instruction simultaneously supports communicative competence and historical cognition. The framework is grounded in the assumption that foreign language learning for history students is most effective when linguistic complexity develops in parallel with cognitive and disciplinary complexity. Accordingly, lower-order cognitive levels emphasize the acquisition and controlled use of vocabulary and grammatical structures within historically meaningful contexts, while higher-order levels prioritize interpretive, evaluative, and productive language use. This progression reflects a shift from form-focused instruction toward cognitively demanding, meaning-centered language practices relevant to historical inquiry.

To demonstrate the operationalization of the conceptual framework, the model is illustratively applied to a single instructional topic: "Appearance and Character: The Character Traits of Leaders of History" (grammar focus: adjectives). This topic serves solely as an example to show how Bloom's cognitive levels can be translated into language tasks that foster both linguistic development and historical thinking at the B1–B2 proficiency levels. The illustrative application does not limit the scope of the framework, which is intended to be adaptable to a wide range of historical themes and curricular units.

Overall, the proposed conceptual framework offers a theoretically coherent and transferable model for foreign language instruction in history-oriented programs. By systematically aligning Bloom's taxonomy with language skills and historical competencies, the framework provides a foundation for curriculum design, task development, and learning outcome formulation in non-experimental, theory-driven research.

Validity and Rigor

The academic rigor of this study was ensured by using only peer-reviewed scientific sources, such as journal articles and academic books published by international researchers. All sources were carefully selected to ensure reliability and relevance to foreign language teaching, Bloom's Taxonomy, and history education. This approach helps guarantee that the ideas and conclusions of the study are based on well-established and trustworthy research.

Rigor was also supported through the use of several theoretical frameworks instead of only one. Bloom's Taxonomy was combined with theories from foreign language education and history teaching. By comparing and connecting these frameworks, the study provides a balanced and well-supported theoretical model. This method reduces subjectivity and helps show clear links between cognitive levels, language skills, and historical thinking skills.

Ethical Considerations

Since the research is theoretical and does not involve students, teachers, or experiments, no ethical approval was required. All sources were properly cited, and academic honesty was maintained throughout the study. These measures ensure that the research is valid, ethical, and suitable for publication in international academic journals.

Findings and Discussion

The primary outcome of this study is a taxonomy-based conceptual model for foreign language instruction tailored to history students in higher education. The model integrates three interrelated dimensions: cognitive processes (based on Bloom's revised taxonomy), foreign language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), and historical competencies (factual comprehension, source analysis, interpretation, and argumentation). This conceptual model was derived from thematic content analysis, comparative theoretical analysis, and framework synthesis of peer-reviewed literature, ensuring that linguistic development and historical thinking are simultaneously supported.

Bloom's cognitive levels provide a hierarchical instructional scaffold, guiding the sequencing of language tasks from lower-order to higher-order skills. At lower levels, tasks emphasize vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, and recognition of historical information. As learners progress, tasks increasingly involve interpretive and evaluative language use, culminating in the production of original, evidence-based outputs. The integration of language skills with historical competencies ensures that students not only acquire linguistic knowledge but also develop critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis skills necessary for historical inquiry.

To demonstrate the internal logic and pedagogical coherence of the model, Bloom's taxonomy is illustrated through one representative instructional topic: Appearance and

Character: The Character Traits of Leaders of History (grammar focus: adjectives). This topic was selected because it naturally integrates linguistic description, historical interpretation, and evaluative judgment, making it suitable for operationalizing all cognitive levels within a single instructional unit.

At the remembering level, learners recognize and recall descriptive adjectives (e.g., brave, authoritative, strategic, charismatic) and basic factual information about selected historical leaders. Reading and listening activities focus on form recognition and factual identification, while historical competence is limited to noting key attributes of leaders.

The understanding level involves summarizing short texts or explaining leaders' traits in learners' own words. Speaking and writing activities encourage coherent expression of ideas, while historical understanding is reflected in interpreting how specific traits influenced leaders' actions and reputations.

At the applying level, learners use acquired vocabulary and grammar in contextualized tasks such as short oral presentations or written paragraphs. Listening activities require identifying descriptive details in historical narratives. Historical application is emphasized by connecting character traits to concrete historical events or decisions.

The analyzing level requires learners to compare and contrast the traits of different historical leaders. Guided reading and writing tasks focus on identifying patterns, differences, and cause–effect relationships, linking linguistic structures with analytical reasoning in history.

At the evaluating level, learners make reasoned judgments about leaders, justifying their opinions in oral or written form. This stage integrates argumentation and critical evaluation of historical evidence, reflecting both advanced language proficiency and higher-order historical thinking.

Finally, at the creating level, learners produce original content synthesizing linguistic and historical knowledge, such as a short biographical profile, reflective essay, or simulated interview with a historical leader. This level activates all four-language skills and demonstrates advanced historical reasoning and interpretive ability.

In sum, the conceptual model demonstrates how Bloom's Taxonomy can be systematically embedded within discipline-specific foreign language instruction, ensuring progressive cognitive and linguistic development. While the illustrative topic provides a concrete example, the model is transferable to diverse historical subjects and instructional contexts, offering a theoretically grounded framework for curriculum design, task sequencing, and learning outcome alignment in higher education.

Table 1. Operationalization of Bloom's Taxonomy in Foreign Language Instruction for History Students (Illustrative Topic: "Appearance and Character: Leaders' Traits").

Bloom's Level	Language Skills	Historical Competencies	Example Tasks
Remembering	Reading, Listening	Recognize key traits; recall basic facts	Identify adjectives describing historical leaders in short texts or audio excerpts

Understanding	Speaking, Writing	Interpret character traits; explain historical significance	Summarize texts about leaders' traits; paraphrase in own words using appropriate adjectives
Applying	Speaking, Writing, Listening	Connect traits to events; contextual application	Describe a leader's character in oral presentations or written paragraphs; identify traits in narratives
Analyzing	Reading, Writing, Speaking	Compare and contrast traits; examine cause–effect	Compare leaders' qualities; organize information in tables or charts; discuss differences in groups
Evaluating	Speaking, Writing	Justify judgments; assess historical impact	Argue which traits influenced leadership effectiveness; support with textual evidence
Creating	Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening	Synthesize knowledge; produce original interpretation	Write a biographical profile, reflective essay, or simulated interview; integrate descriptive language and historical analysis

The results of this study demonstrate that Bloom's Taxonomy can serve as a coherent framework for structuring foreign language instruction for history students. By integrating cognitive levels with language skills and historical competencies, the conceptual model addresses the dual demands of linguistic development and disciplinary thinking. This approach aligns with prior research emphasizing the value of cognitive frameworks in ESP and CLIL settings (Adams, 2015; Krathwohl, 2002; Rahmani, 2023), while extending it to discipline-specific instruction for humanities students, a gap noted in the literature.

The illustrative application to the topic “*Appearance and Character: The Character Traits of Leaders of History*” confirms that taxonomy-based instructional design can effectively scaffold learning from lower-order to higher-order thinking. At the remembering and understanding levels, learners acquire foundational vocabulary and grammatical structures while interpreting factual historical information. At higher-order levels, tasks encourage analysis, evaluation, and creation, fostering complex historical reasoning and language production simultaneously. This progression reflects the theoretical premise that meaningful language learning is closely tied to cognitive engagement with subject content (Forehand, 2010; Andriichuk, 2024).

Comparison with existing studies highlights the distinctiveness of this approach. While previous research has applied Bloom's Taxonomy to general EFL or ESP contexts, few studies have systematically operationalized it for history students, aligning each cognitive level with disciplinary practices such as source interpretation, critical evaluation, and historical argumentation. The model presented here demonstrates that integrating Bloom's levels into curriculum design provides both conceptual clarity and practical adaptability, ensuring that learners develop higher-order thinking skills in tandem with language competence.

Methodologically, the study reinforces the importance of theoretical triangulation. By combining insights from cognitive psychology, language pedagogy, and history education, the framework offers a robust basis for curriculum planning and task design. Moreover, the model's adaptability to different historical topics, proficiency levels, and instructional contexts enhances its generalizability, making it suitable for both traditional and digitally mediated learning environments.

Finally, the study highlights the pedagogical implications of taxonomy-informed instruction. Instructors can design activities that sequentially develop language and historical thinking, moving learners beyond rote memorization to analytical, evaluative, and creative engagement. Such an approach not only improves language proficiency but also cultivates critical thinking, evidence-based argumentation, and disciplinary literacy, addressing core objectives of higher education in history programs.

Conclusion

This study developed a taxonomy-based conceptual framework for foreign language instruction aimed at history students, integrating Bloom's revised cognitive levels with language skills and historical competencies. The model demonstrates that foreign language learning can be systematically aligned with disciplinary thinking, allowing students to progress from foundational vocabulary and grammatical skills to higher-order cognitive tasks such as analysis, evaluation, and creation.

The illustrative application to the topic "Appearance and Character: The Character Traits of Leaders of History" demonstrates the practical feasibility of the model. By mapping each cognitive level to specific tasks and learning outcomes, the framework provides instructors with a structured approach to developing both language proficiency and historical reasoning skills. Importantly, the framework is flexible and transferable across different topics, historical periods, and educational contexts.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the theoretical and methodological literature by offering a discipline-sensitive, cognition-informed model for foreign language teaching in higher education. Future research should empirically validate this framework in classroom settings, exploring its impact on learners' linguistic development, historical thinking, and overall academic engagement. Additionally, the model could be adapted to other humanities disciplines, enhancing its utility for broader ESP and CLIL applications.

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