

# Examination and Comparison of the Tasks Related to the Era of Dualism in the Hungarian Language Textbooks of History Used in Slovakia and Hungary in 2022

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#### **Abstract**

The present research paper aims to examine and analyse what tasks are included in the History coursebooks published to be used today (2022) in Hungary and Slovakia in schools with Hungarian language tuition. The research does not cover the examination of History textbooks at all grades of primary school education. Still, it is restricted to steps 7 (in Hungary) and 8 (in Slovakia) and focuses on chapters dealing with the Era of Dualism (1867–1918). The tasks that can be found in the textbooks will be examined both from qualitative and quantitative perspectives. In the second part of the research, these tasks will be categorised according to the appropriate level of Bloom's taxonomy, according to which skills and competencies are addressed to be developed. Finally, the tasks found in History textbooks used in Slovakia (in schools with Hungarian language tuition) and Hungary will be compared in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Keywords: Textbook review, Era of dualism, Bloom's taxonomy, Comparison

#### 1 Literature review

First, we need to clarify what we mean by the term textbook. We illustrate the possible interpretations of the concept of the textbook with a few examples provided by scholars in the distant and fairly recent past. According to the Hungarian Pedagogical Lexicon: "a textbook is a book that supports teaching and learning, which covers the knowledge of science, literature, art, industry, commerce, etc., which we want to master or make [students] master." (Magyar Pedagógiai Lexikon, 2, 1934, p. 784)

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According to the proposition of the Volk und Wissen Verlag publishing house (1967, p. 64) "a textbook is understood to be an educational tool in the form of a book or a booklet, from which students acquire knowledge and skills, and can draw firm attitudes and convictions in the course of the teaching and educational process guided by the teacher."

According to Ellington & Harris (1986, p. 169), a textbook is "a book in the service of education which contains the material of a subject or field of expertise in a systematic, comprehensible and progressive form, and which can thus be used as a basic source of knowledge to be acquired in the teaching or learning of that subject or field of expertise."

According to Ábrahám (1993, p. 3), "The concept of a textbook can be defined in different ways: we can say that any book that serves to increase knowledge is a textbook. This is an extensive interpretation, as we could also call the telephone directory a textbook". Collins Dictionary defines a textbook as "a book containing facts about a particular subject that is used by people studying that subject" (Collins Dictionary, 2022, Definition of "textbook").

We can see that there are differences between textbook definitions from different periods, but there are some aspects that can be found in most definitions. Karlovitz (2000) examined the different textbook definitions and concluded that:

"The textbook is an important (the most important) education tool. It contains and publishes curriculum-subject material for a longer period, i.e., it is an informative document and a source of knowledge, but its effect on developing skills and abilities is also emphasised. It provides the learning material in a didactic format adapted to the users' age and level of development, making it learnable and teachable. It is primarily for the learners but also underpins and supports the teacher's work and the entire educational process." (Karlovitz, 2000)

According to Hummel (1988), the school textbook assumes numerous functions. One of them is to provide the child with one of his/her first contacts with the printed word and the book. This is significant in developing countries where the school textbook is often the first book in the home and may serve the parents and students. It is one of the first, if not the first, sources of reading matter.

Karlovitz (2000) emphasises the fact that:

"an important and interesting criterion (and also a requirement) is the textbook's characteristic of being easily accessible and, at the same time, the cheapest of the teaching tools, and thus a 'democratic' medium that ensures equal opportunities". Karlovitz has written some studies on textbook theory, which are primarily intended for teachers. According to Schüttler, Karlovitz's books are primarily aimed at teachers because "since the early 1990s, the textbook market has expanded to an incredible extent, the former "ontextbook" world has been replaced by a diversity that was once considered unimaginable and in which it is increasingly difficult to navigate." (Schüttler, 2003)



The demand for textbook analysis first appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to be precise, within the framework of the peace and socialist movements. Even then, researchers knew, regardless of the textbook writers' intentions, textbooks contained various errors, distortions or even hidden messages, which was especially true in the case of history, geography, and language textbooks, where various national prejudices, hidden or unconcealed enemy images, as well as excessive national glorification or contempt for other peoples were evident (F. Dárdai, 1999; Karlovitz, 1988).

According to Weinbrenner (2016, qt. in Tóth, 2017, p. 284), textbook research is only context research. According to Weinbrenner's complex model, the textbook can be interpreted as a process, a product, or a social factor. According to product-oriented textbook research, the textbook is nothing more than a tool for education and visual communication whose content can be examined in longitudinal (historical) and cross-sectional (comparative) dimensions. These can be aimed at questions of scientific theory, subject matter, didactics, pedagogy, and implementation (book design). Stein (qt. in Tóth, 2017, p. 284) was the one who took textbook research out of the narrow world of pedagogy and placed it in a broader school policy framework since, in his opinion, textbooks can be examined from three perspectives: (1) as information carriers – content dimension, (2) as teaching tools based on didactic principles and embedded in the educational (teaching-learning) process – pedagogical dimension, and (3) as communication tools in socio-political conditions – school policy dimension. Simon (2017, p. 20) shows what themes emerge as research directions in textbook analysis: "theoretical questions and methodology of textbook research, [...] characteristics of textbook texts [...], and textbook policy".

Simon (2017, p. 20) draws our attention to the fact that "Hungarian textbook writing and curriculum development in Slovakia has remained unreflected for a long time; it is only recently that the first textbook analysis volumes have started to appear not too long ago [...], and it is gratifying that the topics of these textbook analysis volumes have recently been broadened".

The number of studies examining Hungarian history textbooks in Slovakia has also increased. Engel & Vajda (2021, p. 133–136) analysed the didactic role of images. In their research, they worked with three history textbooks currently used in Slovakia's 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of primary schools. The authors first examined the structure of the textbooks, then grouped the images in the textbooks according to their functions in the teaching process and paid particular attention to the maps included in the textbooks.

Engel & Vajda (2021, p. 149) concluded that "due to the size of the textbook illustrations, the negligible amount of questions, tasks and exercises connected to them, and their low didactic preparation, the images under study have a purely decorative role, so they cannot be considered as a source, but only as illustrations."

We can agree that even if they are criticised (Marsden, 2001), textbooks occupy an important place in the school system (Simon, 2017; Bruillard, 2021). Karlovitz (2001, 80–88) distinguishes five types of textbooks based on their function dominance (textbook engagement). There are (1) traditional (descriptive, informative) type textbooks, (2)



information processing and action textbooks, (3) programmed textbooks, (4) panoramic textbooks, and (5) textbooks with the tools of modern technology.

In our case, the textbooks of interest are the traditional textbooks (1) and the type of information processing and action textbooks (2). Traditional textbooks serve to store and communicate knowledge (information). It is a one-way flow of information, where the textbook is the informant, the communicator, the holder and transmitter of knowledge, and the learner is the "receiver", the recipient of knowledge, in fact (at least in the majority of traditional textbooks) a passive recipient. This type includes (a) information-storing or descriptive textbooks, (b) information (curriculum) transferring, i.e., information-communicating textbooks, and (c) "minimum textbooks", which are limited to communicating only the most critical information, are very concise and restrained, economical and inexpensive. However, when they are used, other books and the additional contribution of teachers are also needed (Karlovitz, 2001, p. 80).

The textbooks that process and apply the curriculum aim to develop skills in which transformational roles (application, practice) dominate. Textbook questions and tasks, which we are also examining, can fulfil several didactic functions: (a) they direct attention to the most important parts, the parts "to be learned"; (b) they have a reinforcing effect; (c) they prompt observation; (d) they are to develop skills (for example, to improve reading skills); (e) they create concentration with other parts of the material (beyond the subject) or with material from other subjects; (f) they relate the text to the learners' lives and daily practice; (g) they recall previous experiences and learning; (h) they inspire collecting work; (i) they encourage to review knowledge; (j) they help organisation and repetition; (k) they provide practice; and (l) they refer to sources of further information (Karlovitz, 2001, pp. 81–82).

The presentation of Bloom's taxonomy (1956) and the revised Bloom taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl, 2001) is essential for our study since, during our research, we want to match the questions and tasks found in the textbooks under study to the different levels of Bloom's taxonomy, depending on which cognitive levels they develop.

Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives means the hierarchical classification of learning objectives, i.e., the systematisation of the knowledge of history according to specific principles to make history teachable and, on the part of learners, learnable and understandable. It considers that teaching history in the school context has a set of conditions (e.g., cognitive) external to history studies and influences how students learn. There can be various ways in which they can be systematised and structured in order. It may be based on cognitive expectations or on logical and rational orders. The hierarchical classification of cognitive learning objectives is based on the concept developed by Benjamin S. Bloom in 1956. Bloom created six interdependent levels that specify the sequence and method of learners' cognitive actions (Vajda, 2018, p. 100).



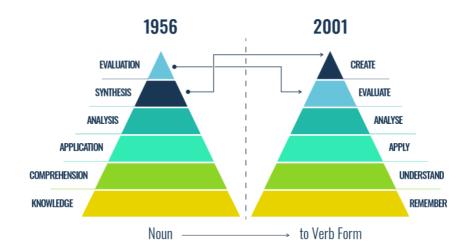


Fig. 1: Bloom's taxonomy (left) and the revised Bloom taxonomy (right)

Source: <a href="https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BloomsTax-Update-diagram-2-02.png">https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BloomsTax-Update-diagram-2-02.png</a>

The left side of Figure 1 shows the taxonomy created by Bloom in 1956, while the right side of Figure 1 shows the taxonomy revised in 2001 by a research group led by Bloom's colleague David Krathwohl and one of Bloom's students, Lorin Anderson.

# 2 Defining the Aim of The Research

Our research aims to map what type of cognitive activity the tasks in the selected chapters of the textbooks under study promote and what skill areas they develop. Our research focuses on the era of Dualism; therefore, we will examine issues related to this topic in both Hungarian elementary school history textbooks used in Slovakia and elementary school history textbooks used in Hungary. The following two textbooks are currently in use in Slovakia and Hungary, respectively:

- Bednárová, M., Krasnovský, B., & Ulrichová, B. (2011): Történelem az alapiskolák 8. és a nyolcosztályos gimnázium 3. osztálya számára. Vydavateľstvo Matice slovenskej s. r. o., ISBN 978 80 8115 046 3
- Tóth, A. (2020): Történelem 7. az általános iskolások számára. Oktatási Hivatal. ISBN 978 963 436 2302.

## 3 A Brief Introduction to the Textbooks

The first step is to examine the structure of the textbooks. After that, we will only deal with the chapter that discusses the era of Dualism, and within that, only with the questions related to it; that is to say, nothing else will be examined within the scope of this paper.



The two textbooks mentioned are of different length. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbook used in Slovakia is 90 pages (without cover, a concise encyclopedia, resources and table of contents). Hungary's textbook used in 7<sup>th</sup> grade is 234 pages (also without cover, table of contents, sources and a concise encyclopedia). According to pedagogical documents, the era of Dualism is taught in the eighth grade in Slovakia and the seventh grade in Hungary.

In the case of Slovakia, the chapter on Dualism is titled "The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy' and is ten pages long in its totality. In comparison, in the case of Hungary, the chapter is titled "The "Era of Dualism" and is twenty pages long, not counting the first and the last pages of the chapter, which only show one picture each.

In the case of Slovakia, no information was found on the number of hours recommended for processing the topic. In contrast, in the case of Hungary, it is 7 hours, as described in the framework curriculum.

# 4 Aspects of the Examination of Questions and Tasks

We do not consider a question or a task sentence that begins with an interrogative word but does not have a question mark at the end and is answered. E.g., "What the Slovak journalists wrote about the situation after the Austro-Hungarian agreement in the newspaper *Budapesti tudosítások* [Budapest News]". See Figure 2.

#### A források üzenete:

Mit írtak az osztrák-magyar kiegyezés utáni helyzetről a szlovák újságírók a Pešťbudínske vedomosti (Budapesti tudósítások) újságban:

"Ismételten és határozottan kijelentjük, hogy mi szlovákok készek vagyunk a magyarokkal együtt kéz a kézben megvédeni Magyarországot minden veszélytől, a másik oldalon kötelességünknek tartjuk magunkkal szemben, hogy a szerbekkel, az oroszokkal és a szlávokkal, a magyarországi horvátokkal, sőt a románokkal szolidáris egyetértésben küzdjünk az elmagyarosítás túlkapásai ellen, de ugyanúgy a magyarokkal és valamennyi ausztriai szlávval is szolidáris egyetértésben követeljük a nemzetiségi jogokat a germanizálás túlkapásaival és hegemóniájával szemben."

#### The message of the sources:

What Slovak journalists wrote about the situation after the Austro-Hungarian reconciliation in the newspaper *Budapest News*:

"We reiterate and firmly declare that we Slovaks are ready, hand in hand with the Hungarians, to defend Hungary from all dangers, and on the other side we consider it our duty, in solidarity with the Serbs, the Russians and the Slavs, the Croats of Hungary, and even the Romanians, to fight against the excesses of Germanisation, but we also demand, in solidarity with the Hungarians and all the Slavs in Austria, nationality

rights against the excesses and hegemony of Germanisation."

Fig. 2: Bednárová, Marcela – Krasnovský, Branislaw – Ulrichová, Barbora (2011): Történelem az alapiskolák 8. és a nyolcosztályos gimnázium 3. osztálya számára, p. 64. (Translated by the author of the present paper.)

If several instructions (questions and tasks are mixed) within an item (question or part), it is counted for as many items as there are instructions. In question 6, shown in Figure 3, for example, there is one instruction (task) and four questions, which is counted as five items.



#### Kérdések és feladatok. Gondolkozzunk

- Hogyan változott a szlovákok helyzete a dualizmus korában?
  Véleményetek szerint milyen érvényesülési lehetőségek nyíltak a szlovák értelmiségiek előtt?
- 2. Kik voltak a hlaszisták és milyen nézeteket vallottak?
- Képzeljétek el, hogy a dualizmus korában élő tanítók vagytok. Szerkesszetek a császárnak címzett rövid levelet, amelyben leírjátok az életkörülménveiteket!
- 4. Hogyan függött össze Andrej Hlinka személye a černovái tragédiával?
- 5. M. Kuniak festménye alapján írjátok le a Černovában történt tragédiát!
- 6. Alaposan vegyétek szeműgyre a postai bélyeget! Mílyen eseményre utal? Mit jelképez a rózsa? Ki látható a képen? Miért 2007-ben adták ki?

[Questions and tasks. Let us think.

1. How did the situation of Slovaks change in the era of Dualism?

In your opinion, what opportunities were opened up for Slovak intellectuals?

- 2. Who were the Hlassists and what were their views?
- 3. Imagine that you are a teacher in the era of Dualism. Write a short letter to the Emperor describing your living conditions.
- 4. How was the person of Andrei Hlinka connected with the tragedy at Černová?
- 5. Based on a painting by M. Kuniak, describe the tragedy at Černová.
- 6. Look carefully at the postage stamp. Which event does it refer to? What does the rose represent? Who is in the picture? Why was it issued in 2007?

Fig. 3: Bednárová, Marcela – Krasnovský, Branislaw – Ulrichová, Barbora (2011): Történelem az alapiskolák 8. és a nyolcosztályos gimnázium 3. osztálya számára, p. 68.

If an instruction looks like a task but is one or more questions, it is considered to be a question or question. See Figure 4. Although the instruction says "Determine", it is clear that this instruction contains two questions: "What do the Slovaks want to defend themselves against?" and "Why are they willing to fight?".

#### Megfejtjük a forrásokat:

- \* Tanulmányozzátok a részletet!
- Állapítsátok meg, mi ellen akarnak a szlovákok védekezni és miért hajlandók küzdeni!

#### We decipher the sources:

- Study the details!
- Find out what the Slovaks want to defend themselves against and why they are willing to fight!

Fig. 4: Bednárová, Marcela – Krasnovský, Branislaw – Ulrichová, Barbora (2011): Történelem az alapiskolák 8. és a nyolcosztályos gimnázium 3. osztálya számára, p. 64.

If an instruction is a question, but the answer is not given in the textbook, it is considered a task. E.g., "Do research and find out what railway lines were ready in 1848." (Tóth, Attila (2020): Történelem 7 az általános iskolások számára, p. 33.) Questions containing the instruction words "List", "Name", and "Fill in" clearly link the tasks to Bloom's Level 1, the level of factual knowledge (Vajda, 2020, p. 30). Some verbs can be assigned to several levels, but the definitions given in Table 1 serve as the basis for our investigation.



The levels of Bloom's taxonomy:	Examples of verbs related to levels:
Level 1: level of factual knowledge	define, list, describe, name
(remember)	
Level 2: Level of understanding (understand)	interpret, describe, explain, identify
Level 3: Level of action/use (apply)	apply, use, select, depict, outline
Level 4: Level of analysis (analyse)	analyse, divide, calculate, compare, differentiate
Level 5: Level of summarisation (synthesise)	arrange, collect, assemble, present, create, plan,
	propose, summarise
Level 6: Level of evaluative judgement	evaluate, argue, summarise, judge
(evaluate)	

Table 1: Sit Bloom's Taxonomy Levels and Related Action Verbs (Vajda, 2018, p. 101)

# 5 Results of the Examination of the Questions and Tasks

Of the 56 items in the examined chapter of the Hungarian textbook used in Slovakia, 22 correspond to Level 1 of Bloom's taxonomy, 12 to Level 2, 6 to Level 3, 7 to Level 4, 5 to Level 5, and 4 to Level 6. The results are presented in Figure 5.

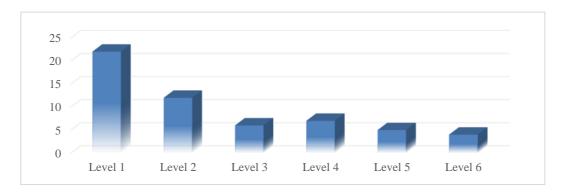


Fig. 5: Results of the question and task analysis according to the levels of Bloom's taxonomy in the history textbook used in Slovakia.

Of the 178 items in the examined chapter of the textbook used in Hungary, 93 corresponded to Level 1 of Bloom's taxonomy, 40 to Level 2, 26 to Level 3, 13 to Level 4, 5 to Level 5, and 1 to Level. The results are presented in Figure 6.



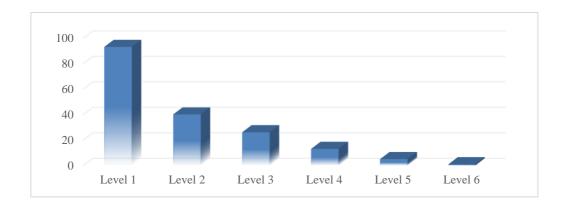


Fig. 6: Results of the question and task analysis according to the levels of Bloom's taxonomy in the history textbook used in Hungary.

The percentage distribution of the items in the two textbooks is shown in Figure 7. We can see that 39% of all items in the examined chapter of the Hungarian textbook used in Slovakia correspond to Level 1 of Bloom's taxonomy. In comparison, this number is higher (52%) for the examined textbook chapter used in Hungary. The percentage distribution of items corresponding to Level 2 of Bloom's taxonomy is almost the same: 21% for the Hungarian textbook used in Slovakia and 22% for the textbook used in Hungary. The percentages are 11% and 15% for Level 3, 13% and 7% for Level 4, and 9% and 3% for Level 5. 4 items for Level 6 of Bloom's taxonomy were found in the examined chapter of the Hungarian textbook used in Slovakia (7%). Only one item for Level 6 of Bloom's taxonomy was found in the textbook used in Hungary (1%).

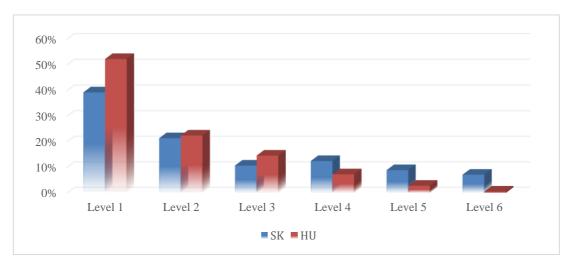


Fig. 7: Percentage distribution of the questions and tasks analysed according to the levels of Bloom's taxonomy in the history textbook used in Slovakia (blue) and in Hungary (red).



		Page:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	Revision	Questions	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	7
		Tasks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
]	In-chapter	Questions	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
sk		Tasks	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
j sk	Synthesis	Questions	0	0	0	5	0	0	11	0	0	9	25
		Tasks	0	0	0	5	0	0	8	0	0	4	17
		Project-based tasks	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
	Total:		4	0	3	10	2	0	20	3	0	14	56

Table 2: Detailed results of the questions and tasks analysed in the history textbook used in Slovakia.

The chapter dealing with the era of Dualism (pages 62–71) of the Hungarian history textbook for eighth graders in Slovakia contains 56 questions and tasks on ten pages. The questions and tasks have been grouped according to whether they aim at checking or revising existing knowledge (revision), at processing new course material (in-chapter), or at organising and synthesising the knowledge already acquired (synthesis). The results of the research are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that out of the 56 questions and tasks, seven were for revision, 5 related to the given chapter, and 44 were aimed at synthesising. It can be stated that there were an average of 5.6 tasks/questions per page. The chapter on the era of Dualism (pages 30–49) of the seventh-grade history textbook used in Hungary contains a total of 178 questions and tasks on 20 pages.

HU		Page:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	Revision	Questions	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	6
		Tasks	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
	In-chapter	Questions	6	1	1	4	4	3	1	1	3	3	27
		Tasks	1	2	2	2	7	2	2	3	2	4	27
	Synthesis	Questions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
		Tasks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
		Project-based tasks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total:		8	5	4	6	11	6	4	4	11	11	70
		Dean	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
		Page:	11				15	10		0			
	Revision	Questions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
		Tasks	6	0	0	8	4	2	3	3	4	0	30
	In-chapter	Questions	0	8		3				3	2		
HU		Tasks			4		6	4	5	7		0	33
	Synthesis	Questions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	/	0	22	29
		Tasks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	8	10
		Project-based tasks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total:		8	8	4	11	11	7	8	13	8	30	108

Table 3: Detailed results of the questions and tasks analysed in the history textbook used in Hungary.

The grouping of questions and tasks was carried out here as described above. The results of the research are presented in Table 3.



Table 3 shows that of the 178 questions and tasks, 16 were for revision, 117 were related to the given chapter, and 45 were synthesis ones. It can be stated that there was an average of 8.9 tasks/questions per page.

### 6 Conclusion

In respect of the classification according to Bloom's taxonomy, it can be stated that the number of items in the examined chapter of the textbook used in Hungary is higher for four Bloom levels (Level 1-4) than the number of items in the examined chapter of the Hungarian textbook used in Slovakia. It is worth mentioning that only one item was found for Level 6 in Bloom's taxonomy in the Hungarian textbook, and four items found for Level 6 of Bloom's taxonomy were found in the examined chapter of the Hungarian textbook used in Slovakia. The results are presented in Figure 8.

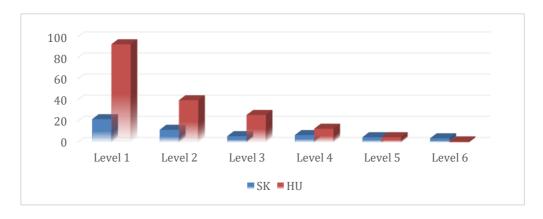


Fig. 8: Number of the questions and tasks analysed according to the levels of Bloom's taxonomy in the history textbook used in Slovakia (blue) and in Hungary (red).

As the result of our study, we established that the two countries discuss the era of Dualism in different grade levels. While the relevant topic is part of the core material of the 7th grade in Hungary, in Slovakia, it is discussed by students in the 8th grade. In addition to the grade, we also found a difference in the length of the textbook since the era of Dualism is 10 pages in the Hungarian textbook in Slovakia. In comparison, the same chapter in the Hungarian textbook is 20 pages long, i.e. double the length of the Hungarian textbook of the Slovak textbook. In this context, it should be mentioned that in Hungary, the number of mandatory hours per week of classes in history is 2, while in Slovakia, this number is only 1 in the examined grade.

A discrepancy was also found between the number of questions and answers in the relevant chapters. There are 56 questions and tasks (items) in the chapter on Dualism in the eighthgrade history textbook in Hungarian used in Slovakia. This represents an average of 5.6 items per page. In the case of the coursebook chapter taught in Hungary, the number of items is



178, and the average number of items per page is 8.9. In this respect, it can be concluded that more tasks are included in the textbook used in Hungary.

The items in the chapters under study were also categorised according to whether they aim at checking or revising existing knowledge (revision), processing new course material (inchapter) or organising and synthesising the knowledge already acquired (synthesis). The data are presented in Figure 9.

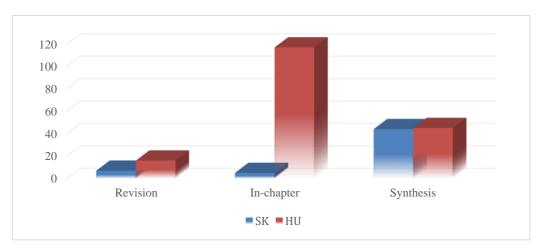


Fig. 9: Result of the analysis according to the function of questions and tasks

The chapter on the era of Dualism in the Hungarian-language eighth-grade history textbook used in Slovakia contains seven revision items, five in-chapter items, and 44 synthesising items. In contrast, in the case of the textbook used in Hungary, there are 16 items for revision, 117 in-chapter items, and 45 for synthesis. It can be noticed that although the total number of items is much higher in the textbook used in Hungary, the number of items for synthesis is nevertheless almost the same. The most significant difference was found in the case of items within the chapters. From this, it can be concluded that the Slovak history textbook provides little space for deepening, memorising, and applying what has been learned during the teaching of the period of Dualism, making it less possible to deepen and develop actual knowledge.

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