

INTEGRATING SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN ALBANIAN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION MATERIALS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract

The development of socio-emotional competences (SEL), as outcomes of social-emotional learning (SEL), is increasingly recognized as a powerful determinant of students' personal, social, and academic development. As a vital institution in contemporary and dynamic society, schools play a critical role in providing opportunities for the development of emotional awareness, empathy, self-management, social skills, and responsible decision-making. The purpose of this study is to analyze the presence of socio-emotional elements in Albanian language textbooks for grades I–V in North Macedonia, with a focus on literary and narrative content. Guided by the CASEL core competencies, 85 text units, including stories, poems, dialogues, and theatrical fragments, were systematically analyzed. Each content was examined according to indicators such as: emotional awareness, expression and self-management, cooperation, empathy, conflict resolution, building positive relationships, reflective questions, SEL practical exercises, illustrations, and representation of diversity. The analysis revealed that, in addition to being more present, emotional awareness and expression are also more stable. In relation to the former, cooperation, conflict resolution, and diversity in the analyzed contents appear to be treated less frequently. The visual presentation supports the intuitive emotional understanding in over 60% of the content. The findings highlight that practical SEL exercises and application in real-life contexts and diversity are underrepresented. The study findings highlight the potential that language content offers for fostering holistic socio-emotional development. Therefore, the intentional and more comprehensive integration of SE elements is strongly emphasized. Simultaneously, the findings offer practical implications for curricula designers, authors, and educators to target socio-emotional development through language and literature.

Keywords: socio-emotional learning, primary education, mother tongue textbooks, emotional competence

Introduction

Context and importance of the topic

In an effort to keep pace with the developments of contemporary society and the processes of globalization, the importance of developing socio-emotional learning not only does not fade, but becomes increasingly emphasized and enduring. The development of socio-emotional competencies is considered essential for the formation of self-aware individuals capable of coexisting in increasingly changing, complex, and diverse societies. They enable students to exercise mental flexibility and adaptability in dynamic contexts, equipping them with emotional stability. These competencies take on a protective and empowering role in facing continuous and unpredictable challenges.

More and more international organizations, such as OECD (OECD, 2025) and CASEL, confirm that socio-emotional competence not only positively influences psychological and social well-being but also significantly improves academic results, while Sucaromana considers it the main

predictor of academic achievement, even more than cognitive intelligence (Sucaromana, 2012). They emphasize that early socio-emotional education directly affects students' academic performance and their capacity to successfully engage in modern society.

Along the same lines, a large systematic review of 40 studies, involving over 33,700 students in grades 1 to 12, showed that students enrolled in universal social-emotional learning (SEL) programs showed significant improvements in academic achievement, including grades and standardized test scores, compared to their peers who did not enroll in such programs (Ha, 2025). The findings of this meta-analysis particularly highlighted the impact, particularly on elementary school students, specifically those whose courses lasted more than a semester. The findings confirm the importance of providing socio-emotional learning in a consistent, structured, and integrated manner across the core curriculum. In this regard, Jones et al.'s (2023) meta-analysis of 213 universal SEL programs, involving 270,034 students from kindergarten through high school, found that participants in these programs showed significant improvements in socio-emotional skills, attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance, with an 11 percentage point increase in academic achievement compared to control groups (Jones, 2023).

The idea that building socio-emotional skills through SEL programs is a strategic investment in students' long-term success, both personally and academically, is also supported by Cipriano (2025). She emphasizes that direct SEL instruction should not be seen as supplementary, but as an essential component of every student's school experience. Cipriano's position focuses attention on the necessity for socio-emotional competencies not to remain confined to specific modules or sporadic interventions, but to be seamlessly integrated into everyday school life and content.

Since school provides a comprehensive environment for development, where socio-emotional education stands in a complementary relationship with academic education, the integration of socio-emotional content into the daily learning experience is essential. Texts in the mother tongue are crucial to this process. They significantly contribute to students' overall development by providing opportunities for introspection and emotional awareness through literary content.

The relevance of school textbooks in developing socio-emotional competencies

Socio-emotional competences (SEL) consist mainly of two fundamental dimensions: emotional and social development. This integrative concept, defined by Cefai and Cooper, is described as an educational process through which the individual develops intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, in addition to resilience in the academic, emotional, and social spheres. This process relies on structured, relationship-based, and context-sensitive curricular approaches. (Cefai, 2009).

Textbooks represent a key factor in the development of socio-emotional competencies. They not only convey the official content of the lesson but also transmit messages, values, and norms that directly or indirectly influence the emotional and social formation of students. In this context, the mother tongue subject plays a special role in transmitting emotional and social competencies through stories, poems, conversations, reflective texts, and illustrations. It provides space for emotional reflection, sensitivity, and the broader development of socio-emotional competencies.

The connection between the development of socio-emotional skills and literacy is essential and cannot be overlooked. As Ahiyya emphasizes, it is important to understand how SEL contributes to the improvement of literary skills and, at the same time, how the process of reading nurtures and strengthens socio-emotional competencies (Ahiyya, 2023). During classroom read-aloud activities, students have the opportunity to engage in reflections and emotional responses related to the experiences of literary characters. This process, beyond simply listening and decoding

words, fosters verbal communication skills and active listening, strengthening emotional sensitivity and awareness. This approach not only builds students' self-confidence but also naturally integrates the development of socio-emotional and literary skills into everyday learning (Ahiyya, 2023). Cross-curricular integration emphasizes the need for textbooks, especially those in the mother tongue, to include content that promotes the holistic development of students.

Mother tongue as a didactic context for the development of socio-emotional competencies: rationale and analytical relevance

The mother tongue is not simply a tool for learning to write and speak. Since it integrates cultural identity, emotional sensitivity, and natural and stable communication, it provides a didactic foundation for the development of socio-emotional competencies. Kareem and Farhadi's study highlights that starting school in the mother tongue not only strengthens children's cultural and identity understanding but also provides a strong foundation for emotional development and self-confidence (Kareem, 2024).

Textbooks are a fundamental source of knowledge and an essential tool in the learning and teaching process. They also serve as agents of socialization, providing a social and educational value (Huang, 2022). In particular, language education books present significant potential for SEL. They offer diverse activities, texts, illustrations, and materials that encourage discussion on issues such as self-understanding, respectful dialogue, and multimodal exposure to different cultures, while helping students integrate into the global world (Efron, 2020).

Sandell, as referenced in (Majadly, 2024), emphasizes that language textbooks enable students to encounter different perspectives and develop empathy, particularly when they incorporate multicultural texts that promote social awareness and demonstrate how past events influence present behavior. This context is also supported by Boyles, who highlights the use of texts that teach socio-emotional skills through dynamic characters who overcome challenges and serve as role models for students (Boyles, 2018), as well as Cappiello and Dawes, who suggest diversifying texts that aim to develop socio-emotional competencies through the inclusion of different literary genres to stimulate social competence among students (Dawes, 2012).

We chose mother-tongue textbooks for analysis based on this theoretical framework. Students engage with this subject on a daily basis due to its consistent inclusion in the primary curriculum, which directly influences their academic and developmental experiences. Another reason for analyzing these textbooks comes from their narrative and creative nature. These texts foster critical thinking and the growth of students' worldviews while providing a variety of contexts in which socioemotional skills can be investigated.

It also aims to fill the gap in systematic analysis and structured review of how the current curriculum addresses socio-emotional development through instructional materials, as well as in what form socio-emotional competencies are integrated into the literary and didactic content of mother tongue books in primary education, focusing on the Albanian and local context.

Methodology

Aim of the study

Through content analysis, the study aims to identify and measure the presence of themes, messages, and elements related to socio-emotional learning, as well as to analyze the way they are

integrated into mother tongue textbooks in primary school. For this purpose, we examined Albanian language textbooks for grades I–V in the Republic of North Macedonia. This analysis allows us to assess how often key indicators appear, such as emotional awareness, recognition and expression of emotions, sensitivity and empathy, self-control and management of emotions, cooperation, conflict resolution, building positive relationships, reflective questions, diversity, and activities that directly support socio-emotional learning.

Analytical framework and assessment instrument

In this qualitative research, we were guided by a rubric with indicators drawn from the international CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) framework. The rubric was designed to include elements of the five core competencies of CASEL, which are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. A three-point rating system was used to assess each indicator: 0 for not present, 1 for partially or indirectly present, and 2 for clearly and directly present.

Corpus of the content analysis

The data source consists of native language textbooks for grades I, II, III, IV, and V, designed and approved by the Ministry of Education and used in public schools in the Republic of North Macedonia. Initially, all teaching content with a literary or narrative character, such as stories, poems, plays, dialogues, and similar texts, was reviewed. Units that exhibit or contain components of socio-emotional learning (SEL) were identified from this thorough review. Once these units were selected, an in-depth analysis was conducted to assess the types of SEL elements they contained, the degree of their presence, and the way these elements were woven into the content. The selection was done purposefully (purposeful sampling), focusing on content that clearly displayed emotional and social dimensions in structure and message. In total, 85 content items from five grade books were analyzed, distributed in a balanced manner across different text types.

The process of content analysis

The analysis process was carried out in several phases. After identifying all the content that were assessed as containing potential for socio-emotional elements, we applied the rubric with indicators built on the CASEL model. The data were systematized in tables, which made it possible to analyze and identify the presence of socio-emotional elements in the contents such as texts, poems, fairy tales, dialogues, and theatrical pieces. The data were coded with 0 for absence, 1 for partial presence, and 2 for presence of at least one of the indicators. Although a structured rubric was followed, in order to reduce researcher bias, the evaluation and coding were carried out individually by the three researchers. In addition to this coding, we also added data on the total amount of content, data that help us rely on the percentage of socio-emotional indicators included. In order to assess the extent, frequency, and to describe the differences and similarities between the indicators, a descriptive statistical analysis was carried out in which data on the presence and inclusion of socio-emotional elements were presented.

Methodological limitations and ethics

Content analysis of native language textbooks for grades I–V was conducted. The analysis only includes books in one subject, which limits the results to this scope. Since a content analysis was conducted on public books, we did not require formal ethical approval.

Results

Analysis of data regarding the degree of inclusion of SE elements in first grade content indicates that among the most common indicators are the recognition of emotions and their expression. The indicators appear equally in 9 out of 12 analyzed units (75%). These elements form the foundation of emotional awareness and self-management, which are essential in the early stages of children's development.

Table 1. Evaluation of the inclusion of SEL competence elements in the first-grade language textbook

Unit ID	Unit Title	Genre	Emotional Recognition	Emotional Expression	Empathy	Cooperation	Conflict Resolution	Positive Relationships	Reflective Questions	SEL Exercises	Illustrations	Diversity
1	Ditëlindja (Birthday)	Text	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2
2	Bisedë për ndjenjat (Conversation about Feelings)	Conversation	2	2	1	0	1	0	2	1	2	1
3	Xhuxhët dhe borëbardha (The Dwarfs and Snow White)	Fairy tale	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	1
4	Po të qeshin të gjithë fëmijët (If All Children Smile)	Poem	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	0	0
5	Vajza dhe ujku (The Girl and the Wolf)	Fairy tale	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	0
6	Tigri që vrapon (The Running Tiger)	Text	2	2	2	0	1	0	2	2	2	0
7	Nënë (Mother)	Text	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0
8	Babi im (My Dad)	Text	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
9	Skënderbeu (Skanderbeg)	Poem	2	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
10	Të vegjlit (The Little Ones)	Poem	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	0	0
11	Lodra e vjetër (The Old Toy)	Text	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	0
12	Ruaj një vend për mua (Save a Place for Me)	Theatrical piece	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	1

Empathy, as a very important component of social interaction and interpersonal sensitivity, appears in 83.3% of the units. This indicates a stable basis for this aspect in the book's contents. Although the promotion of elements such as cooperation and positive relationships is key to building a supportive social climate and strengthening empathy and positive interaction skills, these indicators seem to be somewhat included. The outcomes show that teamwork, mutual support, and developing healthy relationships are only partially covered, with only a 50% presence. Conflict resolution appears with a more moderate level of coverage. Topics that assist students in developing conflict resolution and constructive decision-making techniques are moderately present in about 58.3% of the units. Similarly, 54.2% of the units include reflective questions, which play an important role in promoting emotional awareness, critical thinking, and reflection on one's own feelings and those of others

From the pedagogical premise that books for young children should be accompanied by illustrations, a widespread presence of this indicator in the content was expected. Illustrations—visual tools that support the intuitive understanding of emotional content—appear in 62.5% of the analyzed units, indicating a substantial representation of this component within the teaching materials. At the same time, regarding the practical application of acquired socio-emotional competencies, we can say that they are presented with lower intensity, that is, in 41.6% of cases. This percentage dictates the need for more topics that will not limit the student to theoretical absorption.

Among all the indicators, diversity emerges as the component with the degree of representation. Only 25% of the content addresses instances in which cultural, social, or ethnic diversity is presented, dimensions that are vital for the development of sensitivity and tolerance at an early age.

Table 2. Evaluation of the inclusion of SEL competence elements in the second-grade language textbook

Unit ID	Unit Title	Genre	Emotional Recognition	Emotional Expression	Empathy	Cooperation	Conflict Resolution	Positive Relationships	Reflective Questions	SEL Exercises	Illustrations	Diversity
1	Përsëri në shkollë (Back to School)	Text	2	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
2	Një faqe ditari (A Diary Page)	Text	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
3	Breshka dhe Lepuri (The Tortoise and the Hare)	Fairy tale	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
4	Vizatuesja e vogël (The Little Illustrator)	Text	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
5	Dy shoqet (The Two Friends)	Text	0	0	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1
6	Libri (The Book)	Poem	2	1	0	2	2	2	1	0	1	0
7	Pema e familjes (The Family Tree)	Text	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	2
8	Alfabeti i shqipes (The Albanian Alphabet)	Text	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	2	0
9	Në fshat (In the Village)	Text	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	0	2	0
10	Kush banon këtu? (Who Lives Here?)	Text	2	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	2
11	Letra e Babadimrit (Santa's Letter)	Text	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
12	Gjashtë vëllezërit peshkatarë (The Six Fisher Brothers)	Play	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	1
13	Pinoku mbjell monedha (Pinocchio Plants Coins)	Fairy tale	2	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	1	0
14	Princesha mbi bizele (The Princess and the Pea)	Fairy tale	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
15	Mësuesja e madhe natyrë (The Great Teacher—Nature)	Text	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	1	0
16	Loli dhe trau i ekuilibrit (Loli and the Balance Beam)	Text	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	0
17	Keci me veshë të mëdhenj (The Kid with Big Ears)	Text	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0

The analysis of the extent of socio-emotional (SE) elements in the identified content, based on the inclusion of the selected indicators, allows us to conclude that their representation varies depending on the type of units and their pedagogical purpose.

The **second-grade** content also includes elements of emotional awareness and emotional expression. In most cases, these elements reach the maximum score (2) in 17 units, with recognition of emotions appearing in 79.4% of the content and emotional expression in 73.5%. These high percentages indicate a consistent effort to help students build a solid foundation for emotional development, which begins with early awareness and identification of feelings.

Empathy is present in 13 of the 17 units, with 6 units receiving the maximum score of 2. In this book, empathy is approached consistently, supporting the development of sensitivity and the ability to understand others' feelings. Although the 61.8% coverage can be considered solid, there remains room for improvement in several units.

A comparison between cooperation and conflict resolution shows that they appear at different levels. While conflict resolution occurs in only 47.1% of units, cooperation is present in 67.6% of units, indicating inadequate coverage of social interaction and dispute resolution skills.

In this analysis, positive relationships are included in 58.8% of second-grade books, reflecting the continuous attempt to enhance and deepen beneficial interactions.

Meanwhile, SE elements that involve practical application in real life remain at a low level. Reflective questions appear in 35.3% of the units, while SE exercises are included in only 29.4% of the material containing SE indicators.

Although this book shows a broad visual coverage of 61.8%, diversity is notably underrepresented. With only 20.1% representation, the content indicates a clear gap in addressing acceptance and understanding of differences among people.

Table 3. Evaluation of the inclusion of SEL competence elements in the third-grade language textbook

Unit ID	Unit Title	Genre	Emotional Recognition	Emotional Expression	Empathy	Cooperation	Conflict Resolution	Positive Relationships	Reflective Questions	SEL Exercises	Illustrations	Diversity
1	Përsëri në shkollë (Back to School)	Text	2	2	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	1
2	E papritura e Dianës në ditën e parë të shkollës (Diana's Surprise on the First Day of School)	Text	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0
3	Dy hartimet (The Two Compositions)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
4	Puthjet e humbura (The Lost Kisses)	Text	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
5	Hajdi dhe Klara (Heidi and Clara)	Text	2	2	2	2	0	2	1	2	2	1
6	Shoqja ime e veçantë (My Special Friend)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
7	Gjërat që më frikësojnë mua (Things That Scare Me)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
8	Vjeshta e artë (The Golden Autumn)	Text	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
9	Kali i vjetër (The Old Horse)	Text	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	0
10	Gazmoret e Çapaçulit (The Mischievous Ones of Çapaçul)	Fun Story	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	0
11	Letër në dimër (Letter in Winter)	Text	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	1	1
12	Alarmet e qytetit Sdikuisht (The Sirens of Sdikuisht)	Text	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	1	1
13	Nata e parë e fluturimit (The First Night of Flight)	Tale	2	2	1	2	0	2	1	0	2	1

Unit ID	Unit Title	Genre	Emotional Recognition	Emotional Expression	Empathy	Cooperation	Conflict Resolution	Positive Relationships	Reflective Questions	SEL Exercises	Illustrations	Diversity
14	Sheqerkat që më rënduan në xhep (The Candies That Weighed Down My Pocket)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
15	Kësulëgjelbra (The Green-Hooded)	Tale	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	0
16	Çdo mëngjes përshëndes nënën time (Every Morning I Greet My Mother)	Text	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1
17	Lindja e Simbës (The Birth of Simba)	Tale	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
18	Kopshti i Gjigandit (The Giant's Garden)	Text	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1
19	Bukuroshja e fjeur (The Sleeping Beauty)	Tale	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	1
20	Djali me saksinë pa lule (The Boy with the Pot Without Flowers)	Text	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	0	2	1
21	Librat janë gjithçka (Books Are Everything)	Text	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
22	Kthimi i Ymer Agës (The Return of Ymer Aga)	Text	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	2	1
23	Diku dhe Loli në kopshtin zoologjik (Diku and Loli at the Zoo)	Text	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	0	2	1
24	Për herë të parë në kamp (For the First Time at Camp)	Text	2	2	0	2	1	2	1	1	2	1
25	Shoku im (My Friend)	Poetry	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	0
26	Gjergj Elez Alia (Gjergj Elez Alia)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	1	2	0

The contents of the **third-grade** textbook show the widest inclusion of SE elements. A significant presence of maximum points is shown in the 26 analyzed units in the textbook content, where at least one of the SE indicators is present.

While emotional recognition with 94.2% and expression and management of emotions with 92.3% demonstrate a strong foundation for developing emotional sensitivity in students, empathy, present in 71.2% of the units, shows a solid tendency for the development of the skills to understand and feel others. Cooperation is provided with a noticeable extension with 76.9%, compared to conflict resolution, which remains more limited with 1/2 of the elements. This percentage underlines the need for a broader inclusion of skills for effective social interaction.

Positive relationships, present in 67.3% of the units in the third-grade content, aim to build a supportive spirit, although the practice is applied at a low rate, as reflected by the low percentages. Reflective questions with 48.1% and socio-emotional exercises with 53.8% demonstrate limited opportunities for the direct application of knowledge.

In the visual aspect, illustrations appear in 86.5% of the units, compared to diversity which is presented in only 36.5% of the units.

Table 4. Evaluation of the inclusion of SEL competence elements in the fourth-grade language textbook

Unit ID	Unit Title	Genre	Emotional Recognition	Emotional Expression	Empathy	Collaboration	Conflict Resolution	Positive Relationships	Reflective Questions	SEL Exercises	Illustrations	Diversity
1	Dita e parë e shkollës (The First Day of School)	Text	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	2	2
2	Një diskutim në klasë (A Classroom Discussion)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2
3	Tri gëzimet (The Three Joys)	Text	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
4	Vajza e kopshtarit (The Gardener's Daughter)	Text	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2
5	Ani pianistja (Ani the Pianist)	Text	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1
6	Është fat të kesh një shoqe si Fatbardha (It's Lucky to Have a Friend Like Fatbardha)	Text	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2
7	Gjuha e nënës (Mother Tongue)	Text	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	2	1	2
8	Agimesha e ngjuar në shtatë shpella (Agimesha Trapped in Seven Caves)	Play	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1
9	Jam mik i zogjve! (I'm a Friend of Birds!)	Poetry	1	1	2	2	1	2	0	1	2	0
10	Kujtoj qenin tim (I Remember My Dog)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
11	Luani dhe dhelpra e mençur (The Lion and the Clever Fox)	Fairy Tale	2	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	0
12	Rosaku i vogël i shëmtuar (The Little Ugly Piglet)	Fairy Tale	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1

Compared to previous grades, there is a noticeable clear reduction in the inclusion of socio-emotional education elements in **fourth grade**. Specifically, the number of units with these indicators is significantly lower, reflecting a more limited degree of their integration in this grade. However, the core SE element of self-awareness appears in 91.6% of the units along with recognition and expression of emotions with 83.3%. Empathy, present in all units (100%), shows a consistent presence relative to cooperation (83.3%) and conflict resolution (70.8%). While positive relationships show a deliberate focus on interactions in the environment with 79.2%, reflective questions (66.6%) and socio-emotional exercises (41.6%) are less represented.

In the identified fourth-grade content, illustrations, as a supporting element of SE, appear in 75% of the units, while diversity, present in only 66.7%, is among the least represented indicators.

Table 5. Evaluation of the Inclusion of SEL Elements in Fifth-Grade Language Textbook Content

ID	Unit Title	Genre	Emotion Recognition	Emotion Expression	Empathy	Cooperation	Conflict Resolution	Positive Relationships	Reflective Questions	SEL Exercises	Illustrations	Diversity
1	Shoqja e re e klasës (The New Classmate)	Text	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
2	Paniku (Panic)	Text	2	2	1	1	2	0	2	2	2	1

ID	Unit Title	Genre	Emotion Recognition	Emotion Expression	Empathy	Cooperation	Conflict Resolution	Positive Relationships	Reflective Questions	SEL Exercises	Illustrations	Diversity
3	Zjarr në katin e pestë (<i>Fire on the Fifth Floor</i>)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
4	Luli i vocër (<i>Little Luli</i>)	Text	2	2	2	0	1	0	1	1	2	1
5	Pazari i këpucarit (<i>The Cobbler's Market</i>)	Poetry	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	0	0
6	Shqetësim i kotë (<i>Needless Worry</i>)	Text	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	0	0
7	Ymer Aga (<i>Ymer Aga</i>)	Text	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	1
8	Rruga (<i>The Road</i>)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
9	GOOOOOOL! (<i>GOOOOAL!</i>)	Text	2	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	1	0
10	Racizmi shpjeguar vajzës sime (<i>Racism Explained to My Daughter</i>)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
11	Sa dëshiroj (<i>How Much I Wish</i>)	Poetry	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	0
12	O nënë! (<i>O Mother!</i>)	Poetry	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
13	Fati i sundimtarit (<i>The Ruler's Fate</i>)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	1
14	Përhëndetja e Hektorit me Andromakën (<i>Hector's Farewell to Andromache</i>)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
15	Macja jonë Kiti (<i>Our Cat Kiti</i>)	Text	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	0
16	Sirena e vogël (<i>The Little Mermaid</i>)	Fairy tale	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
17	Magjia e natës në mal (<i>The Magic of the Night in the Mountain</i>)	Text	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	2	0

In the content analysis of the fifth-grade textbooks, a wide and consistent incorporation of socio-emotional (SE) competency markers is noted. In particular, the dimensions of self-awareness and empathy are represented in a balanced manner, each appearing in 94.1% of the units. Recognizing and expressing emotions, as an essential component of students' emotional development, is fully included (100%), demonstrating a strong focus on cultivating emotional awareness skills.

Among the elements that directly contribute to the development of positive social interactions, cooperation (79.4%) and conflict resolution (76.5%) appear in a significant number of learning units, reflecting systematic efforts to build functional social skills. Positive relationships, although at a lower percentage (64.7%), continue to be an integral part of the content, contributing to the promotion of pro-social behaviors over time.

The practical involvement of students in the development of SE competencies is achieved through reflective questions (50%) and structured socio-emotional exercises (61.8%), showing an increase from previous grades, showing a positive trend towards active student engagement. Illustrations, present in 64.7% of the units, also play a supporting role in reinforcing SE concepts. However, even in these units, diversity is still an under-represented dimension, with only 35.3% inclusion.

Discussion

To provide a clearer picture of SE indicators in books I–V, we present visual summaries showing where these elements are consistently integrated and where they are fragmented

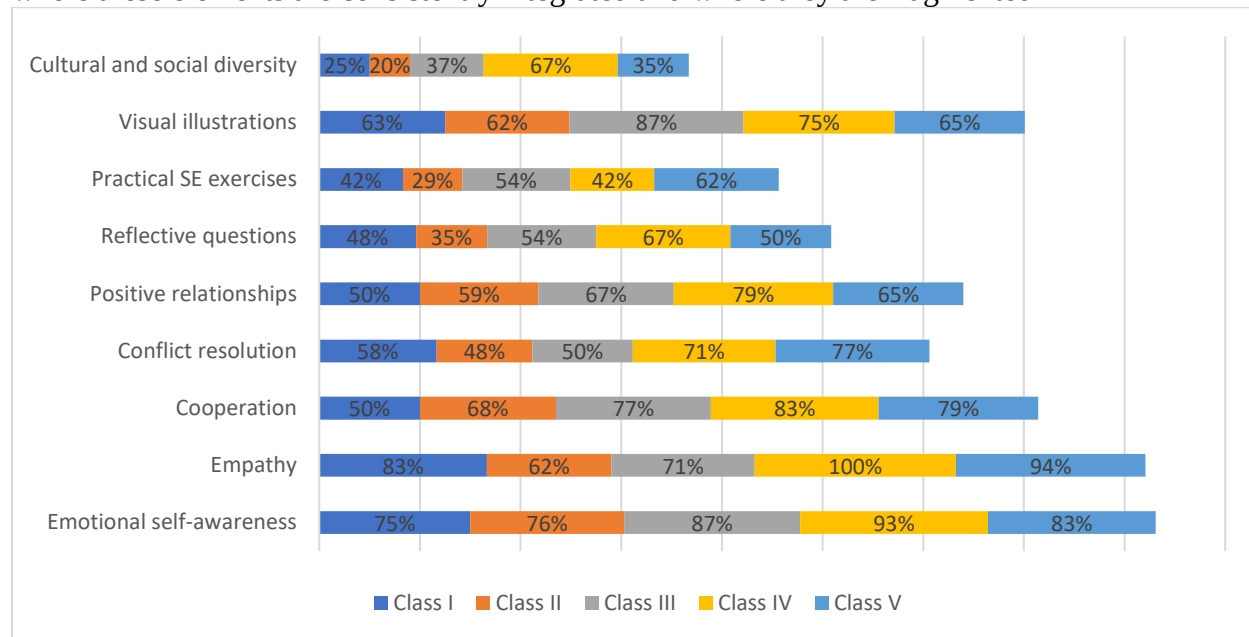


Figure 1. SE Elements by Class

The analysis of the results regarding the inclusion of SE elements in language books for grades I–V confirms their presence. Because the inclusion does not seem to be intentionally planned, the indicators vary from one grade to another. Instead of following a structured approach to social-emotional learning (SEL) that systematically fosters socio-emotional competences, the inclusion mainly reflects the thematic character of the content. Awareness and expression of emotions as the basis of emotional development in the early stages are emphasized particularly in the first grade, compared to empathy and cooperation, elements that are presented with moderate intensity. The limited inclusion of practical exercises and reflective questions from the results suggests that the approach to SE development is more theoretical than experiential.

SE elements are more widely present in the third and fourth grades. Awareness and expression of emotions reach over 90%, while empathy and cooperation also show consistent inclusion. While the illustrations support the content, practical involvement and conflict resolution remain limited. The content in the fifth-grade books aims to consolidate the basic emotional elements. As in previous grades, awareness and expression of emotions are fully included, while empathy and cooperation maintain a high presence. Along with cultural and social diversity as a component that continues to be under-represented, positive relationships and reflective activities continue to be less structured part of the learning process.

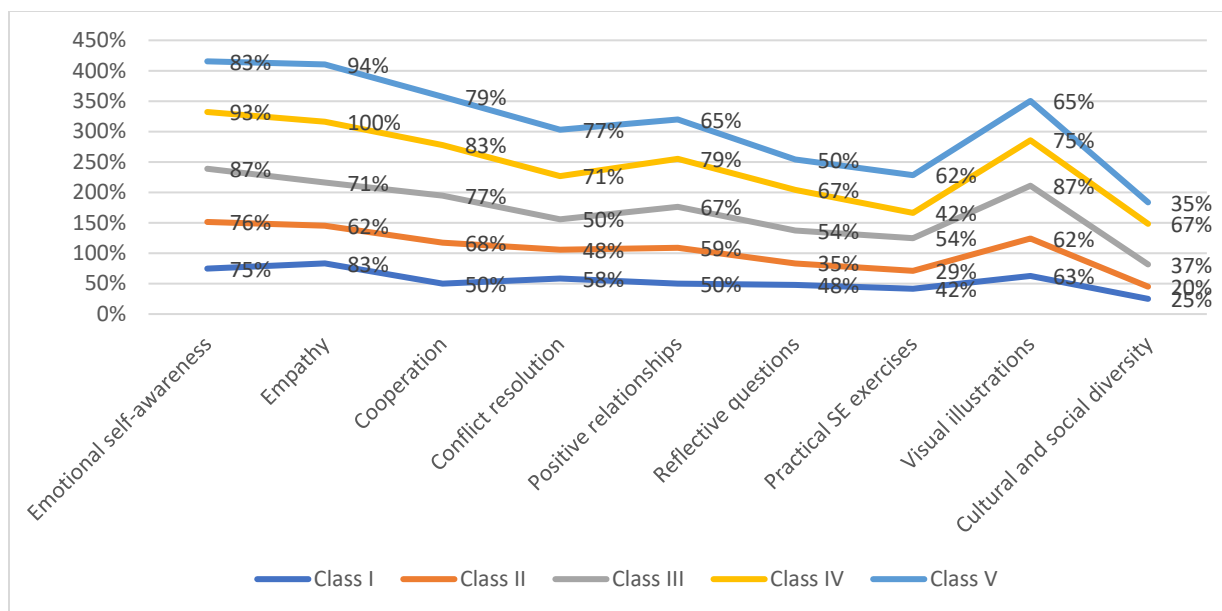


Figure 2. Trends in Social-Emotional Competency Scores Across Primary Grades

The inclusion of emotional awareness elements across all grade levels should be consistent. Empathy, collaboration, conflict resolution, and diversity show fluctuating inclusion across grade levels. This variability in the presence of elements implies that SE components are added inconsistently, without a clear trend reflecting deliberate methodological planning. As these factors are mostly intuitive and lack a systematic methodological approach, there is room for improvement in consciously integrating emotional and social components into both the learning material and the learning process.

Conclusion

The analysis of the content of language books for grades I-V of the primary cycle provides data that allow to conclude that SE elements are present, but their inclusion is inconsistent and not always guided by a clear pedagogical purpose. The basic dimensions of development, related to awareness and expression of emotions, are more consistently included compared to empathy, cooperation, positive relationships and conflict resolution. Reflective and practical components are presented at unsatisfactory levels, while cultural and social diversity is the least represented aspect in these contents.

The variability in the presence of socio-emotional elements indicates that their integration is fragmented and methodologically inconsistent. Therefore, a more deliberate and systematic approach is needed to integrate socio-emotional competencies into textbook content, enabling students to develop both knowledge and the skills to understand, experience, and manage emotions in real-life situations. Increasing the awareness of curriculum designers about the impact of socio-emotional development on student well-being and achievement help ensure that this process is structured and purposeful.

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