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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**INTEGRATING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) THROUGH THE
“TRIPLE FOCUS” FRAMEWORK IN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY*****Dilobar Nishanbekovna Sulaymanova****PhD, Teacher of Uzbek Language and Literature**Jizzakh Presidential School.**E-mail: dilobarsulaymanova5@gmail.com**Jizzakh, Uzbekistan***ABOUT ARTICLE**

Key words: social emotional learning (SEL), CASEL, high quality learning and teaching (HQLT), language education, Triple focus, inner focus, other focus, outer focus, ethical citizen, collaborative learning.

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Abstract: This article explores how integrating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into language education, specifically using the HQLT (High Quality Learning and Teaching) method, the curriculum goes beyond the mechanics of grammar and employs the “Triple Focus” model of Inner, Other, and Outer Focus as a demonstration of how language lessons can address the systemic issues of the digital era. This approach increases students’ emotional awareness, enabling them to engage more effectively with the digital world, understand complex global connections, and become ethically active learners. When the process of language teaching is underpinned by emotional scaffolding and collaborative learning, it is proven that students not only excel in the classroom but also build the resilience and ethical foundation to thrive in the 21st century.

Introduction. According to modern linguodidactics, it’s assumed that language education is no longer about rote grammar acquisition, but “language learning is a social and emotional process. “Language learning is an inherently social and emotional process. To ignore the psychology of the learner is to ignore the very heart of the learning process itself” (Mercer, MacIntyre, 2016) [1]. Recent research highlights the critical role of social and emotional learning (SEL) in promoting academic achievement, facilitating access to higher education,

supporting degree completion, and enhancing long-term economic outcomes (Denham Brown, 2010; Jones, Doolittle, 2017) [2].

There is general agreement among educators regarding the importance of fostering students' social and emotional competencies. A large-scale survey of more than 20,000 public school teachers found that 99% support the incorporation of social-emotional learning (SEL) as part of academic teaching (Krachman et al., 2017, p. 5) [3]. The findings further indicate that the implementation of SEL at both school and district levels can reduce negative behaviours and effectively support students experiencing social-emotional challenges (Jayatissa, 2024, p. 294) [4].

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a key developmental process through which children acquire essential knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to understanding emotions, setting goals, showing empathy, developing relationships, and making responsible decisions (Kendziora, Yoder, 2016, p.1) [5].

CASEL identifies five core SEL competencies based on extensive research:

- self-awareness,
- self-management,
- social awareness,
- relationship skills,
- responsible decision-making.



Figure 1. Interactive CASEL Wheel

Source: CASEL (2023a)

Together, these competencies form the basis of effective social and emotional learning (Jayatissa, 2024, p. 296) [6]. By fostering both internal self-control and external empathy,

students are better positioned to navigate life's challenges with confidence and to build meaningful, lasting connections with those around them.

Evidence from a major meta-analysis by Durlak et al. (2011) shows that classrooms integrating SEL achieve an 11-percentile-point gain in academic performance, confirming that emotional support is a key driver of academic performance [7]. This empirical success validates that the move toward embedding SEL within language instruction is a critical necessity for developing the "Ethical Citizen." By prioritizing these competencies, educators can equip students with the emotional resilience and ethical frameworks required for responsible engagement in a multilingual society.

Materials and methods. The current pedagogical paradigm in language education increasingly recognizes that linguistic proficiency cannot be isolated from the social and emotional contexts of the learner. To develop a learner who is socially responsible and emotionally resilient, instructional strategies must move beyond syntactic mastery toward a holistic development model. Central to this evolution is the "Triple Focus" framework, which provides a structured approach to self-awareness, empathy, and systems thinking. The theoretical foundation of this pedagogical shift is rooted in the "Triple Focus" framework developed by Goleman and Senge (2014) [8]. While traditional language instruction often prioritizes syntactic accuracy, the "Triple Focus" approach demands a triad of awareness:

- inner focus (emotional self-regulation within the learning process),
- other focus (the empathetic engagement required for intercultural dialogue),
- outer focus (the systemic understanding of global challenges).

By synthesizing these dimensions, language education transcends mere functional literacy, instead facilitating the development of the "Ethical Citizen" who is equipped to navigate the moral complexities of a technologically-driven society. When applied to modern topics in language education—such as digital communication and technological nomenclature (e.g., the etymological origins of the term "drone")—the curriculum (Azimova et al., 2022) allows educators to fulfill the dual requirements of academic rigor and character development [9].

As demonstrated in the unit "Ijtimoiy tarmoqlar" ("Social Networks"), the curriculum prompts students to engage in a reflexive analysis of their digital habits [10]. It requires students to evaluate the risks of digital dependency and the subsequent social isolation that can arise from unchecked usage. This is treated as a Metacognitive Exercise. Rather than simply learning the vocabulary of technology, students are required to understand their affective states (emotions) regarding their digital interactions.

Inner Focus:

In today's world, a major challenge for students is the constant pull of social media, which often leads to "digital dependency" and a scattered mind. To address this, our curriculum goes beyond simple grammar; it asks students to look inward. We use a strategy called Metacognitive Regulation, which simply means helping students think about their own thinking and habits (Schraw, Dennison, 1994) [11].

Instead of just following digital routines, students perform a "reflexive analysis" of their screen time. They identify the specific emotional triggers—like the sudden spike of anxiety or the deep-seated need for likes and validation—that make them reach for their phones.

Result and discussion. The result of this intervention is a significant boost in self-regulation. When students learn to accurately name their feelings in the target language (a skill known as "emotional granularity") (Barrett, 2004), they gain power over them [12]. This awareness creates a vital cognitive buffer—a mental "pause button"—between the digital trigger (like a digital notification) and the automatic reaction (checking the device). By building this mental space, students don't just become better at the language; they develop the focus and calm needed to reduce digital stress and reclaim their attention in a busy world.

Other Focus:

A significant issue in modern communication is what scientists call the "disinhibition effect" (Suler, 2004) [13]. Due to the visual anonymity of social networks, people tend to lose their natural sense of empathy. Without physical cues like a smile or a concerned look, it becomes much easier for students to engage in hostility or ignore traditional rules of etiquette ("muloqot odobi") [14]. This often leads to a rise in online conflict and a breakdown in respectful dialogue.

To counter this, our curriculum introduces "Other Focus"—a strategy that shifts the student's attention toward the feelings of others. During lessons, students engage in perspective-taking exercises [15]. They are asked to analyze digital interactions and consider how their specific choice of words affects a person on the other side of the screen. By reviewing texts related to communication and social behavior, students practice "stepping into someone else's shoes" in a virtual environment where body language is invisible.

The outcome of this pedagogical shift is a measurable improvement in Digital Citizenship. Students move from being passive observers of online negativity to becoming active, socially aware participants. Scientifically, this practice strengthens the brain's ability to process social information without physical feedback.

From a linguistic perspective, students achieve a unique mastery: the ability to engage in empathetic disagreement. They learn the specific language needed for conflict resolution—how to disagree with an idea while still respecting the person. This ensures that their online presence is characterized by constructive dialogue rather than hostility, turning the language classroom into a training ground for a more polite and connected society.

Outer Focus:

Most students tend to perceive social networks as simple, isolated platforms for entertainment. They often fail to see these networks as massive, global infrastructures driven by complex algorithms and data security risks. Without a systemic perspective (the ability to see how individual parts fit into a larger whole), learners may not realize that their online actions have consequences that reach far beyond their own personal profiles. These digital behaviors create a “ripple effect” that can influence the entire information environment. To address this, the curriculum integrates “Outer Focus”: this strategy guides students to look at the world around them—the infrastructure of social networks, the ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the “ripple effect” of how information spreads. Within the HQLT framework, lessons incorporate themes of technology and global trends to enable students to examine the underlying structures and governance of the digital world. The focus extends beyond the surface-level content on a screen to the systemic forces that generate and regulate it.

The scientific result of this approach is known as Critical Systems Literacy. Students evolve from being mere consumers of content to becoming Ethical System Participants. They learn to analyze how a single individual action – such as sharing a post or clicking a link – affects the entire information ecosystem. By the end of the lessons, students show a measurable improvement in Responsible Decision-Making. They become more cautious about privacy and security, and they learn to use technological terms and tools with a sense of ethical duty. This ensures that they navigate the global systems of the 21st century not just with skill, but with the wisdom of a true Ethical Citizen.

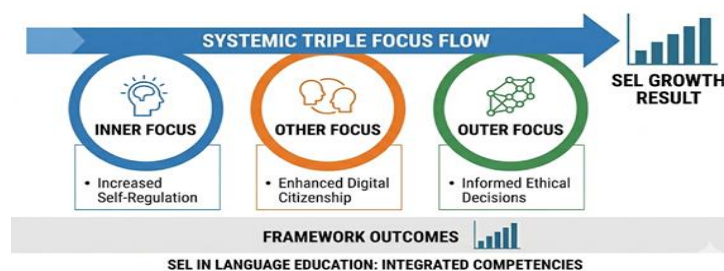


Figure 2. Triple Focus Framework: Interconnected Domains

This systemic understanding is not achieved through logic alone; it is deeply tied to the student's emotional state and social environment. Because of this connection, academic achievement is enhanced through SEL in two primary ways:

1. Scaffolding - providing individual emotional support for lower-attaining students bolsters their "Self-efficacy" preventing academic anxiety.
2. Collaborative Learning - utilizing the social intelligence of student leaders fosters a peer-support ecosystem, promoting social cohesion and collective resilience.

Conclusion. The shift from a purely mechanical view of language acquisition toward a socially and emotionally grounded pedagogy represents a transformative movement in contemporary linguodidactics. As this article has demonstrated, integrating the "Triple Focus" framework into language instruction offers an effective means to mitigate the fragmentation of attention and the decline of empathy inherent in the digital age. By fostering Inner Focus, educators empower students to transition from digital dependency toward metacognitive regulation. Through Other Focus, the pedagogical approach bridges the gap created by visual anonymity, replacing toxic disinhibition with empathetic, constructive dialogue. Finally, by establishing an Outer Focus, learners are equipped with the systemic perspective necessary to comprehend their roles and responsibilities within the global information ecosystem.

The efficacy of this framework is predicated on the principle that academic achievement is linked to the learner's emotional state. By utilizing SEL-driven scaffolding and fostering collaborative ecosystems, educators move beyond the rote instruction of grammar to build the foundational self-efficacy and collective resilience essential for student success. Ultimately, the integration of language education and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) extend beyond the production of proficient speakers; it cultivates Ethical Citizens who possess the linguistic precision, emotional intelligence, and systemic integrity required to lead and thrive in an increasingly interconnected world..

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