

SOCIAL SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE NATIONAL LITERARY PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify behavioral problems and socially competent interactions among the characters in the 36 books of the *Programa Nacional do Livro e Material Didático* (PNLD/MEC), delivered to public schools in 2019 for students from the 1st to the 3rd years of Elementary School. The analysis was carried out using a cataloging form and the categorization of the classes and subclasses of Social Skills (SS) proposed by Z. Del Prette and Del Prette. Socially competent interactions are present in nine of the 36 books, presenting 59 occurrences, with a predominance of the Assertiveness class (17) and the Interpersonal Problem Solving class (14). Behavioral problems appeared in residual frequency (three). The presence of social interactions in the books confirms the viability of their use as a resource for teachers to promote positive social behavior among. It is worth noting that SS were shown to be reduced in the PNLD/2019 selection.

Keywords: social skills; children's literature; elementary school; PNLD

Habilidades sociales y literatura infantil en el programa nacional literario

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar problemas de comportamiento e interacciones socialmente competentes de los personajes en los 36 libros del Programa Nacional del Libro y Material Didático (PNLD/MEC), entregados a las escuelas públicas en 2019 para alumnos del 1º al 3º curso de la Enseñanza Fundamental. El análisis se realizó por intermedio de una ficha de catalogación y de la categorización de las clases y subclases de Habilidades Sociales (SS) propuestas por Z. Del Prette y Del Prette. Las interacciones socialmente competentes están presentes en nueve de los 36 libros, presentando 59 ocurrencias, con predominio de la clase Asertividad (17) y de la clase Solución de Problemas Interpersonales (14). Los problemas de comportamiento aparecieron en frecuencia residual (tres). La presencia de las interacciones sociales en los libros ratifica la viabilidad de su uso como recurso de los profesores en la promoción de comportamiento social positivo. Cabe poner de relieve el hecho de que las SS se mostraron de modo reducido en la selección del PNLD/2019.

Palabras clave: habilidades sociales; literatura infantil; enseñanza básica; PNLD

HABILIDADES SOCIAIS E LITERATURA INFANTIL NO PROGRAMA NACIONAL LITERÁRIO

RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo identificar problemas de comportamento e interações socialmente competentes dos personagens nos 36 livros do Programa Nacional do Livro e Material Didático (PNLD/MEC), entregues às escolas públicas em 2019 para alunos do 1º ao 3º anos do Ensino Fundamental. A análise foi realizada por meio de uma ficha de catalogação e da categorização das classes e subclasses de Habilidades Sociais (SS) propostas por Z. Del Prette e Del Prette. As interações socialmente competentes estão presentes em nove dos 36 livros, apresentando 59 ocorrências, com predominio da classe Assertividade (17) e da classe Solução de Problemas Interpessoais (14). Os problemas de comportamento apareceram em frequência residual (três). A presença das interações sociais nos livros ratifica a viabilidade de seu uso como recurso dos professores na promoção de comportamento social positivo. Cabe chamar atenção o fato de que as SS mostraram-se de modo reduzido na seleção do PNLD/2019.

Palavras-chave: habilidades sociais; literatura infantil; ensino fundamental; PNLD

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INTRODUCTION

Children's literature has always traditionally been a major means by which children experience literature. Silva and Gonçalves (2020) advocate that it is an important pedagogical tool that helps children to develop personality traits, creativity, autonomy and empathy. According to Zilberman and Lajolo (2022), literature also sets up perspectives for the children's point of view, and helps them deal with everyday life situations. Aware of such qualities, Arroyo (2021) noticed that children's literary materials go beyond stimulating social and emotional development. They are an also important resource for cognitive development and collaborate with other pedagogical tools in the promotion of reading, writing, and school curricula contents.

In Brazil, national production of literature for children was inaugurated in the late 19th century. However, it was with the adventures of the Sítio do Pica-Pau Amarelo (The Yellow Woodpecker Farm), published by Monteiro Lobato in the beginning of the 20th century, that children's literature came into the spotlight. Focusing on the works of Brazilian writers, Zilberman and Lajolo (2022) highlight environmental and social issues. They affirm that, using national themes, Monteiro Lobato managed to explore imagination, plot, visual expression, and theme values in order to stimulate the development of Children's Literature in the country.

Considering the importance of literature in the formation of readers, Brazil has been investing in Basic Education (BE). The proposal is that children and adolescents have access to pedagogical and literary works so that they can become readers who are able to handle complex situations in everyday life in full exercise of their citizenship and professional potential (Common Curricular National Base, 2017).

The "Programa Nacional do Livro e do Material Didático" (PNLD), or National Program for Books and Pedagogical Materials, created by the Ministério da Educação e Cultura (MEC), or Ministry of Education and Culture in 1985 and amplified in 2017, is a major tool in this public policy. In 1997, the MEC created the Programa Nacional Biblioteca na Escola (PNBE), School Library National Program, whose objective was to promote access to culture and foster the practice of reading among students and teachers by means of the distribution of literature work collections, research works, and reference works. (Domingues & Klayn, 2022). In 2017, Decree number 9.099 unified the two programs and created the new PNLD, which became the Programa Nacional do Livro e do Material Didático, because, in addition to pedagogical materials, it also distributed pedagogical books and literature works. In addition, the new program was associated to the recently validated Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) with the intention to support implementation. It was also established that the PNLD should comprehend

Child Education and provide materials for community, confessional, and philanthropical non-profit institutions that are connected to the Public Power (Brasil, 2016).

According to the MEC, the chosen books will boost the capacity for reflection among students regarding themselves, others, and the world around them. They are also expected to promote peaceful coexistence with diversity and multiple forms of expression, by means of a closer relation with the reality in which students are inserted and the literary culture.

However, it is important to emphasize that the country has faced challenges for the implantation of libraries and reading rooms. In 2009, data by the School Sensus pointed out that, out of the 152.251 Basic Education schools, 99,8 thousand (65,5%) had no libraries and, out of the 25.923 high school institutions, 7,1 thousand (27,3%) did not have libraries either (INEP, 2009). These numbers indicate that, regarding all schools, libraries were lacking in 60% of them. In order to fix this problem, Law no. 12.244, from May 24th, 2010 (Brasil, 2010), established a deadline of ten years for public and private schools to create their libraries, with at least one title for every enrolled student. Eight years later, a research from the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (INEP/2018) or Anísio Teixeira National Institutes for Educational Research and Studies, revealed that, out of the 180 thousand Brazilian schools, 98 thousand or 55% were not equipped with a library or a reading room, which demonstrates a small increase in comparison with the scenario in 2009 (Haje, 2018). The Education Commission of the House of Representatives approved Law Project 9.484/18 (Brasil, 2018) which extends to 2024 the deadline for all students to set up libraries.

In the context of strengthening and expansion of the PNLD, researches have been realized with the objective to investigate the relations between child literature and school interaction in basic education. We highlight here two research works: the one by Santos, Leite, Del Prette and Dias (2023) with a sample of 52 countries and 31 teachers (from public and private schools) children aged between three and six years old, from five cities in the countryside of São Paulo, in addition to 6 childhood psychotherapists and 16 researchers in the area of human development and Social Skills (SS).

The research's intervention was a questionnaire made up of open questions related to the following aspects: a) whether parents and teachers read children's books for their children and students; b) if yes, which ones were the children's favorites; c) whether books were thought to contribute to the development of SS and coexistence values; and d) if yes, which titles were considered to be contributors.

In the data analysis, it was possible to perceive that parents and teachers chose books with classic themes and psychotherapists prioritized interpersonal

development. The emphasis the first group gave to cognitive and academic aspects made the authors point at the need to make parents and teachers aware of the power of children's books in full development, including SSs. The authors also pointed at the diversification of children's books.

Soares et al. (2024) realized a study with the objective to investigate the interactions among the characters in the children's books which integrated the Programa Biblioteca na Escola, or School Library Program. The books targeted students from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years and were distributed between 2017 and 2019. The sample was made up of 77 books and, out of these, 42 presented 168 interactions among characters. The books were characterized according to the classes and subclasses of SSs, according to Z. Del Prette and Del Prette (2022). The analysis of results identified that the social skill known as Assertiveness was present in 156 interactions. Regarding making requests, refusing requests, and Civility, there were 16 interactions, which was the smallest number of interactions. As a conclusion of the study, it was emphasized that children's books can be used as a psycho-educational resource in the acquisition of SSs, and prove a very valuable tool in the process of literacy development.

The described research works corroborate the importance of the presence of children's books in stimulating school interaction in Basic Education. Arroyo (2021) advocated that fiction storytelling for the choice of books by students has long-lasting results of empathy. In addition, students that have the chance to experience the telling of individual or collective stories by their teachers assimilate the complex social world and bring a vast repertoire of interpersonal relations to the school environment. According to Arroyo (2021), literary expression bears a comprehension of the world from the childhood point of view, allowing children to express their emotions and feelings by means of symbolic language.

To Zilberman (2019), such gain amplifies itself if the teacher, after the reading of a story, realizes activities such as drawing, writing, role-playing, and connecting the stories to curricular content that lead students to further reflect on the approached theme. Furthermore, when teachers encourage students to be in a character's shoes or retelling a part of the story that seemed particular relevant, they allow students to express their point of view, which brings into the scene a whole diversity of interpretation of facts, in addition to promoting changes of attitude regarding the situations that were narrated in the book.

In the present study, we listed the author's considerations, and understanding that Children's Literature might unite reading and learning and benefit the development of imagination, the acquisition of new vocabulary and the comprehension of curricular

content. We also emphasize that the use of Children's Literature in classrooms leads to the acquisition of SSs, according to Bolsoni-Silva and Loureiro (2020). We understand social skills as a set of behaviors that are seen as pro-social and that help individuals be more successful in their interpersonal relationships and include the acquisition and execution of behaviors that are appreciated in a given culture (A. Del Prette & Del Prette, 2024). On the other hand, behavioral problems can be categorized as either externalizing, such as disobedience and aggressiveness, or as internalizing, such as shyness, anxiety, and depression. To Bolsoni-Silva and Loureiro (2020), gender, family income, and relations among peers, and coexistence environments can be triggers of externalizing or internalizing behaviors.

Examples of vicarious models, that is, things we learn by observing others, can lead to the internalization of competent and non-competent behaviors (A. Del Prette & Del Prette, 2024). One example of the importance of this learning could be perceived during the COVID-19 pandemic. In their studies, Alves and Dipp (2023) observed that children with competences and socio-economic skills obtained before the pandemic displayed better re-adaptation to school life, which is something that was not observed in the other children, who tended to manifest internalizing or externalizing behavioral problems. This study reinforces the analysis of Alves and Dipp (2023). They affirm that learning how to understand oneself, having control over one's attitudes, and emotional balance when handling oneself and others are essential skills to be used throughout life, which includes disruptive moments such as the ones experienced during the pandemic.

Arroyo (2021) sustains that the stories told in literary works can be tools for teachers in the development of new positive social interactions and in the comprehension and adoption of rules for coexistence. The school environment becomes the ultimate means for the acquisition of social skills by children with the establishment of relations of friendship, and the development of strategies to handle academic demands (A. Del Prette & Del Prette, 2024). Also, according to Rodrigues et al. (2022), the responsibility of schools goes beyond the task to provide suitable conditions for learning. The role played by school is also related to the facilitation of the expression of feelings by students, and most importantly, to self-control regarding coexistence relations that are established within the school environment, which will only be possible if the school promotes the acquisition of SSs.

Z. Del Prette and Del Prette (2022) take on the participation of families and schools in the development of SSs. They advocate that the amplification of a repertoire of social skills takes place by means of interactions and the environment where an individual is inserted, primarily at home and then at school.

At schools, SSs have also been linked to academic performance, such as in the longitudinal study realized between 1996 and 2002 by Miles and Stepeck (2006). In this study, the authors monitored annually 400 children aged from four to six years, during the first stage of the study. They concluded that the ones that presented better school performance in the first year of Basic Education also display a greater incidence of pro-social behaviors and better academic performance in the third and fifth year of Basic Education. The research works by Z. Del Prette and Del Prette (2017) corroborate this finding by revealing that children that exhibit positive interpersonal characteristics are more likely to excel in basic education. On the other hand, when these characteristics are absent, the children tend to go through learning difficulties.

Rodrigues et al. (2022) demonstrate that in the period between Child Education and the early years of Basic Education, students do not display stable patterns of demand for social information, thus gravitating towards a flexibility for modifications by new behaviors and new learning. Children's books are a resource that can be useful though little explored by parents and educators. They introduce young readers to new social interactions and to a comprehension of the importance of positive social relations. Regarding the access of students in basic education to literary works, as well as the development of research works in the field of SSs and the affirmation of its importance in the social and cognitive development of children and adolescents, this study poses the following research question: do the children's books distributed by the PNLD/2019 to public schools for students from the first the third year of Basic Education actually present socially competent interactions and/or behavioral disagreements among characters? In order to answer it, the study aims at identifying socially competent interactions among the characters in the stories in the books distributed by the PNLD to schools in 2019. The choice of books that were distributed in 2019 was a result of the Covid 19 pandemic and by the needs of high school education between 2020 and 2021.

METHOD

The study presented here is of descriptive, transversal, and qualitative design for the analysis of the children's books distributed by the PNLD, of 2019, to students from the first to the third year of Basic Education. There was a categorization of classes and subclasses of SSs, and the reference was the SS classification by Z. Del Prette and Del Prette (2017).

The books were selected in accordance with the following criteria: (a) books distributed by the PNLD of the Ministry of Education in 2019 and (b) books for use by teachers from the 1st to the 3rd year of Basic Education. The universe in which this research was conceived is formed by 36 books of children's literature of the Literary PNLD for the referred year, and they were edited

between 1998 and 2012. They were given to a school of the Fundação de Apoio à Escola Técnica (Faetec), or Foundation for Support to the Technical School, which is connected to the State Bureau for Science and Technology of the State of Rio de Janeiro. The books were lent for consultation.

Researchers created a record sheet in order to register the items established for the classification of stories: title, author, publishing house, year, character, summary, characters' lines, and SS classes that had been classified in a system of seven classes according to Z. Del Prette and Del Prette (2017). They are: Civility; Empathy, Assertiveness, Interpersonal Problem Solution, Self-control, and Emotional Expressiveness, Making Friends, Academic Social Skills. The sheet was the basis for judges to analyze the frequency of classes and subclasses of SSs that were characterized in the literary works of the Literary PNLD of 2019.

The full reading of the 36 Literary PNLD books/2019 was realized with the intention to identify the classes and subclasses of SSs and how often they happened in the stories, in addition to classifying externalizing and internalizing behaviors, thus creating the cataloguing sheet for each book. The classes, subclasses, and behaviors were assessed by two judges and the researcher. One of the judges is a post-doctor in Psychology and the other ones are taking doctoring courses in the area. The books were classified by means of the cataloguing sheet that is described in the material items.

The classes and subclasses of SSs and internalizing and externalizing behaviors were identified and registered according to how often they appear in the interactions and lines by the characters. The results were tabulated and later converted into percentages.

RESULTS

Table 1 indicates the occurrence of SSs in the books distributed by the PNLD/ 2019 and reveals that only nine of the 36 books present interactions that can be thus classified. That represents a reduced proportion (25%) of the children's stories targeting the segment that goes from the first to the third year of Basic Education in that year whose content was capable of stimulating the interactions with the SSs.

It is possible to observe that, in the 2019 edition, there is a reduced number of story books with interactions among characters. The material is characterized by the presence of information on the contents proposed by the BNCC (2017) such as Language (seven books),

Table 1 - Occurrence of Social Skills in the Books distributed by the PNLD 2019 (N=36).

Descriptors	Frequency	%
Books without occurrences	27	75
Books with occurrences	09	25

Source: the authors

Sciences (nine books), History (eight books), Art and Poetry (three books).

Table 2 presents classes and subclasses of SSs identified in the nine selected books and reveals the frequency of competent social interactions among the characters in the stories, in addition to the manifestations of behavioral issues.

The class with the largest number of subclasses was Assertiveness, with a total percentage of 28.1%, right after the Interpersonal Problem Solution class with 23.72%. Then, it was possible to observe two classes of SSs with the same value: Civility and Making Friends, with 20,33% each. Two other classes of SSs also appeared timidly, they are Self-control, Emotional Expressiveness, and Empathy, with a percentage of 3.38%. the Academic SS class did not appear in any of the books. Regarding behavioral issues, only two of the 36 books presented a predominance of externalizing behaviors, without presenting any internalizing problems.

The **Self-control and Emotional Expressiveness**

social skill and its subclasses were represented in two dialogues: Expressing positive and negative emotions: *“The festival this year will be amazing! Everyone is invited, no exceptions.”* (Book - Festival da Primavera do Araquã/2011, or Araquã’s Spring Festival) and Showing sportsmanship: *“I skipped all these!”* (Book – Apostando com o Monstro/2008, or Betting Against The Monster).

For the **Civility** social skill, we have two examples of subclasses: Asking questions: *“Where are you going?”* and Answering Questions: *“All right, partner, you can go on your trip, but do not forget our people.”* (Book - Txopai and Itôhã/1999) and the subclass: Using Phrases such as please, thank you, I’m sorry, excuse me: *“I only had money to buy a tiny piece of bread, which would not be enough for our hunger – he explained apologetically.”* (Book - Mapa dos Sonhos/2009, or Map of Dreams).

Regarding the **Empathy** social skill, it was possible to observe two interactions in the subclasses: Understanding a situation (assuming a perspective): *“Silence, all of you! He has the right to defend himself. We all have the right to*

Table 2 - Classes and Subclasses of Books that Present Social Skills and Behavioral Issues in The PNLD 2019 (N=9)

Classes and Subclasses – Child Social Skills	Frequency	%
Self-control and emotional expressiveness	02	3,38
Display of sportsmanship	01	1,69
Expressing positive and negative emotions	01	1,69
Civility	12	20,33
Asking questions	05	8,45
Answering questions	05	8,45
Using phrases such as please, thank you, I’m sorry, excuse me	02	3,38
Empathy	02	3,38
Understanding the situation (assuming the perspective)	02	3,38
Assertiveness	17	28,81
Defending one’s personal rights	02	3,38
Agreeing and disagreeing with opinions	08	13,52
Expressing negative feelings (anger and displeasure)	07	11,83
Making friends	12	20,33
Offering free information (self-revelation)	01	1,69
Suggesting activities	07	11,83
Offering help	02	3,38
Asking personal questions	01	1,69
Starting and keeping conversation (blending in)	01	1,69
Solution of Interpersonal Problems	14	23,72
Implementing and assessing an alternative	01	1,69
Choosing, implementing, and assessing an alternative	02	3,38
Thinking before making decisions	01	1,69
Calming down in view of a problem situation	01	1,69
Identifying and assessing possible alternatives for solution	09	15,21
Total occurrences	59	100
Behavioral issues – Externalizing	03	5,07

Source: the authors

defense.” (Book - Livro das Combinações/2012, or Book of Combinations) and “All is well! That is what I always say. From up here, I can see everything.

Do not hurt Araquã, our great protector. He was the one who saved us from the cruel hunter!” (Book - Festival da Primavera do Araquã/2011, or Araquã’s Spring Festival).

In the **Assertiveness** social skill, it was possible to identify the following examples of the subclass Defending One’s Personal Rights: “I won!” (Book – Betting Against The Monster), of the subclass Agreeing and Disagreeing with Opinion: “Good idea!” (Book- Betting Against The Monster/2008) and of the subclass Expressing Negative Feelings (anger and displeasure): “We have nothing to eat – mom complained. – But we have a map.” (Book – Map of the Dream/2009).

In the **Making Friends** subclass there are the following subclasses: Offering free information (self-revelation): “Parents, I got here before you did, but I have to go now.” (Book - Txopai and Itôhã/1999), Suggesting activities: “Let’s bet who can jump over the most rocks at once?” (Book – Betting Against The Monster/2008), Offering help: “Monster, from now on, no more betting against people. If you do that, you will have my friendship.” (Book – Betting Against The Monster/2008), Asking personal questions: “Why are we of different colors?” (Book - Por que somos de cores diferentes? /2006, or Why Are We of Different Colors?), Starting and Keeping Conversations (Making Friends): “I hope we can have lots of fun and make new friends in this excursion.” (Book – Why Are We of Different Colors? /2006).

The SS class **Interpersonal Problem Solution** presented the following subclasses: Implementing and Assessing an Alternative: “If I win, I will put a horn on your head.” (Book – Betting Against The Monster/2008), Choosing, Implementing, and Assessing an Alternative: “You know what, Marta? We will answer that question later, when we are all together.” (Book – Why Are We of Different Colors? /2006), Thinking Before Making Decisions: “Well, I have the tool; we call it a chisel. I can lend it to you. But you are not strong enough to do this job, Rubens.” (Book - Rubens, o semeador/2011, or Rubens, The Sower), Calming Down Regarding a Problem Situation: “Calm down! Calm down, little birds! The villain in this forest has already been kicked out, let’s celebrate!” (Book - Araquã’s Spring Festival/2011).

Regarding behavioral problems, only two books presented them and they concerned externalizing behaviors. For example, “Old timer, let’s see who can eat the most watermelons?” (Books: Betting Against The Monster/2008) and “You cannot say no.” and “Stay put” (Book – Book of Combinations/2012).

DISCUSSION

In the present study, we observed that the children’s books that were distributed by the Literary PNLD/2019

had a preference for informational content of pedagogical nature, such as water cycles and the development of writing that were prescribed by the BNCC (2017). Thus, only nine of 36 books presented competent skilled interactions. On the one hand, this is a reflection of what is expected regarding the use of children’s stories with content-focused, educational objectives and, on the other hand, the still restricted recognition of its functionality in the transmission and acquisition of social skills.

Despite being reduced, the presence of competent, skilled interactions in the material distributed by the PNLD /2019 made it an important resource for the socio-emotional capacitation of children from the first to the third year of Basic Education. According to Arroyo (2021), children’s literature can be a resource that allows children to think, listen, read, write, or imagine, while extrapolating the functional and instrumental perspective that books can represent in the school environment. Thus, when teachers resort to children’s literature they help students articulate what they hear with their own everyday-life experiences, while creating new interpretations, concepts, and information. Furthermore, it stimulates imagination, cooperation, respect, experiences, and learning that the students will keep for the rest of their lives (Zilberman & Lajolo, 2022).

Specifically concerning the SS theme and the research discoveries, it is important to emphasize that only the academic SS class, which takes as reference the positive relations between social competence and school performance, was not thematized (Z. Del Prette & Del Prette, 2022). Maybe this is associated to the fact that the selected stories do not present situations that are related to the school context. Therefore, situations that demanded actions or behaviors associated to the teaching-learning process were not explored. The theme seems underappreciated in the realm of the assessed stories and the lack of Educational SSs represents a loss in the possibility to approach them in a game-like way in the classroom.

This is a relevant fact because the school environment can be a predictor of interpersonal relations, with a highlight on teacher/student and student/student, after a consideration of the direct and indirect agents of the context in which the teaching and learning process establishes itself. Bolsoni-Silva and Loureiro (2020) emphasize that deficits in the SS repertoire of the students might harm their interpersonal relations in the school environment and consequently compromise academic performance. Rodrigues et al. (2022) confirm this thesis and report that students with academic difficulties find less acceptance by their peers and consequently end up behaving more aggressively and have difficulty in task orientation, according to parents and teachers.

On the opposite pole to the Academic SSs, the

class with the most frequency was Assertiveness. Thus, in the interactions among the characters, it was possible to notice the defense of one's own rights, the chance to agree or disagree with opinions and being able to express negative feelings such as anger and displeasure. According to Z. Del Prette and Del Prette (2022), having an assertive performance since childhood and continually experiencing it in the everyday life of development generates a perspective that it will last long. To Soares et al. (2024), assertive children acquire the ability to express themselves. Their beliefs are respected and they defend their rights in an honest, direct way without the need to sabotage other people's rights. This SS is fundamental for childhood development because, according to Soares et al., (2024), when children begin to think with assertiveness, they realize that their actions will have consequences and will provoke reactions in other people. So, the expressive presence of the Assertiveness SS in the analyzed stories represents an important advancement for children in terms of stimulation to development during one's childhood and in the future. Studies realized by Soares, Buscacio, Fernandes, Medeiros and Monteiro (2017) with students in the private and public education networks who were aged between 14 and 61 years corroborate this idea by demonstrating that the earlier SSs are acquired, the more possibilities of positive interpersonal interactions people will have throughout their lives.

The SS class of Interpersonal Problem Solution was the second most reported one in the classification of interactions among the characters in the catalogued books. It is important to remember that interpersonal problems are part of the everyday lives of everyone, including children. According to its cognitive and emotional development, it is expected that they will be able to autonomously handle their interpersonal problems. The Interpersonal Problem Solution SS leads to the identification and comprehension of alternatives to be implemented, as well as a change in behavior regarding the conflict situation (Z. Del Prette & Del Prette, 2022).

Thus, the presence of this SS in the assessed stories provide the children with the opportunity to notice in the characters the will to fix problems, without trying to escape their responsibilities or make hasty decisions. It is expected that the presence of SS of Interpersonal Problem Solution in the assessed stories contributes to the development of a cautious and reflexive position regarding the posed challenges and the constructed solutions, because, according to research by Z. Del Prette and Del Prette (2022), acquiring this skill leads children to learning how to handle stressful situations and decrease impulsiveness. To the authors, having the competence to fix interpersonal problems or even to make decisions, directly involves the way a person has to think, feel and act in certain situations.

Two SSs were classified in third place: Civility and Making friends. In the Civility SS, established by the behavioral expression of social rules that are culturally appreciated, children understand the importance of coexistence rules as important in the family and school context. For a long time, this SS was an exclusive responsibility of the family; today, schools also assumed the task of showing their students the importance of living in good terms with everyone (Z. Del Prette & Del Prette, 2022). When they are approached, they might lead to the development of friendly attitudes in addition to helping in the resolution of conflicts among peers. According to Santos et al., (2023) children that have the Civility SS as a reference in their everyday life tend to better develop social competence and assertiveness.

The Making Friends SS was also in third place in the assessed stories and refers to a process of emotional expressiveness which allows children to create emotional bonds, some of which might last a whole life (Z. Del Prette & Del Prette, 2022). Its frequency in the Literary PNLD/2019 books deserves appreciation. According to Soares et al. (2019) the school environment, in addition to promoting academic formation, is a place for social interaction of great relevance. In this sense, stories that demonstrate the importance of fraternal bonds contribute to the promotion of the Making Friends SS, resulting in good social relations and even monitoring the appearance of negative behaviors such as bullying.

The Self-control and Emotional Expressiveness/empathy SSs were not frequently approached. The Empathy SS also obtained two classifications in the subclass Understanding the Situation (assuming a perspective). According to Soares et al. (2019), this skill is associated to the children's capacity to understand the cause of the feelings they are having, as well as the way they affect human behavior. In this process, children develop sensibility and preoccupation with the emotions of others (empathy) and manifest pro-social behavior. The reduced number of interactions among the characters regarding the Empathy SS was something relevant for the study, because Empathy is very important in the school environment, which is a space for socialization. The Empathy SS in the school context gives children the opportunity to be in other people's shoes and understand situations without being judgmental (Z. Del Prette & Del Prette, 2022). When parents and teachers provide the children with role models while being understanding, supportive, and demonstrating interest for the situations the children are going through, they help children experience real empathy regarding their peers (Soares et al., 2019).

The Self-control and Emotional Expressiveness also obtained two classifications in the dialogues among the characters: displaying sportsmanship and expressive negative and positive emotions. When children are capable of expressing their feelings and naming their

emotions, they facilitate their own understanding and develop conditions to handle, for example, situations involving fear and fright, turning these feelings into something definable and manageable. Thus, they have the chance to understand and provide feedback to adults regarding their behavior and how it happens. Therefore, the small number of interactions needs to be highlighted so that literary works can be selected in order to help children identify this skill, which is so necessary for command over occasionally conflicting emotional reactions that happen in the school and family environment (Soares et al., 2019).

The low frequency of externalizing behaviors (three) and none of the internalizing behavior in the selected stories is worthy of much concern, they are behaviors that are experienced countless times at school and at home. Bolsoni-Silva and Loureiro (2020) sustain that disobedience, aggressiveness, impulsiveness (externalizing behaviors) and shyness, anxiety, and depression (internalizing behaviors) imply anti-social characteristics that can be quite challenging and pose a threat to the children's adaptation capacity. It is important to remember that the externalizing behavior problems which were assessed in the books portray reactions that are motivated by moments of lack of emotional control and anger, and they do not present a significant number of interactions to be highlighted for children.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study analyzed the presence of behavioral issues and socially competent interactions among the characters in the stories in the PNLD/ MEC books which were distributed to schools in 2019 by the School Library Program for students from the first to the third year of Basic Education. Researchers also identified that socially competent interactions among the characters appear in only nine of the 36 distributed books, which reveals the emphasis of the pedagogical contents in the selected materials. Nevertheless, the presence of the referred interactions confirms the functionality of the assessed books for the development of Ss, the importance of Children's Literature in the initial years, and it also corroborates the inducing role played by the PNLD in overcoming the challenges of the universalization of libraries and reading rooms in Brazilian schools.

The promotion of good behaviors in children, however, beyond access to books, demands the recognition by the teachers of Ss in the dialogues of the characters in the selected literary works and the capacity to work with them. Thus, we propose the diffusion of training in Social Skills for teachers and for students, using children's books as a resource for acquisition, comprehension, and experience of these skills within the school context. Another important recommendation is that research works are produced with the teachers who work with students from the first to the third year

of Basic Education. Thus, it will be possible to know which books are more often used in the classroom and whether the stories in those books portray characters that are socially competent.

As a limitation of the present study, we emphasize that it restricted itself to the last Literary PNLD that was received by the schools, in 2019. In this sense, we recommend the realization of research works that amplify the analyzed period and, therefore, the number of assessed books, in order to verify whether the current findings actually represent a trend and do not restrict themselves to the selection of their year. Another limitation is due to the fact that the study assessed the interactions among the characters only in the written context. Another research work can be realized with the objective to analyze what illustrations manage to communicate. In this age group, non-verbal communication is an aspect of great representativeness.

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Data availability: The entire dataset supporting the results of this study has been published in the article itself.