

SOCIAL AWARENESS IN AN INDONESIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

KESADARAN SOSIAL DALAM BUKU TEKS BAHASA INGGRIS SMP INDONESIA

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Abstract

Social awareness is a central component of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) because it supports empathy, perspective-taking, respect for diversity, and responsible participation in social life. In English language education, textbooks function not only as linguistic resources but also as carriers of social and interpersonal values. However, previous studies have more often examined moral or cultural values in general than the specific representation of social awareness in English textbooks. This study investigates how social awareness is represented in English for Nusantara Grade IX, an Indonesian junior high school English textbook, by using the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework. Employing qualitative content analysis, the study analysed both verbal elements, including dialogues, narratives, instructions, and tasks, and visual elements, including illustrations and photographs. The findings identified 215 instances of social awareness, of which 173 instances (80.5%) were verbal and 42 instances (19.5%) were visual. The most frequent sub-skills were taking others' perspectives (54 instances) and recognising situational demands and opportunities (52 instances), while showing concern for the feelings of others (9 instances) and identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones (10 instances), appeared least frequently. The findings indicate that the textbook strongly emphasises interpersonal understanding and adaptability, mainly through context-rich dialogues and narratives, while visual elements play a supportive rather than independent role. The study concludes that although the textbook meaningfully incorporates social awareness, its representation remains uneven. More balanced integration across all CASEL sub-skills, especially those related to emotional care, diversity, and unjust social norms, is needed to better support holistic SEL development in English language learning.

Keywords: social and emotional learning, social awareness, textbook analysis, CASEL framework, English for Nusantara

Abstrak

Kesadaran sosial merupakan komponen utama dalam Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) karena mendukung empati, pengambilan perspektif, penghargaan terhadap keberagaman, dan partisipasi yang bertanggung jawab dalam kehidupan sosial. Dalam pendidikan bahasa Inggris, buku teks berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai sumber linguistik, tetapi juga sebagai pembawa nilai sosial dan interpersonal. Namun, penelitian sebelumnya lebih sering mengkaji nilai moral atau budaya secara umum daripada representasi khusus kesadaran sosial dalam buku teks bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana kesadaran sosial direpresentasikan dalam English for Nusantara Grade IX, sebuah buku teks bahasa Inggris SMP di Indonesia, dengan menggunakan kerangka Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Dengan menerapkan analisis isi kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis unsur verbal, termasuk dialog, narasi, instruksi, dan tugas, serta unsur visual,

termasuk ilustrasi dan foto. Temuan menunjukkan 215 kemunculan kesadaran sosial, terdiri atas 173 kemunculan verbal (80,5%) dan 42 kemunculan visual (19,5%). Sub-keterampilan yang paling dominan adalah taking others' perspectives dan recognising situational demands and opportunities, sedangkan showing concern for the feelings of others dan identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones muncul paling sedikit. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun buku teks telah mengintegrasikan kesadaran sosial secara bermakna, representasinya masih belum seimbang dan perlu diperkuat pada aspek kepedulian emosional, keberagaman, dan norma sosial yang tidak adil.

Kata kunci: pembelajaran sosial emosional, kesadaran sosial, analisis buku teks, kerangka CASEL, English for Nusantara

Introduction

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has become increasingly important in education because it contributes not only to academic achievement but also to learners' emotional, interpersonal, and ethical development (Durlak et al., 2011; Zins et al., 2004). During adolescence, SEL is particularly significant because students are negotiating identity, belonging, peer expectations, and emotional regulation in increasingly complex social contexts (Blakemore & Mills, 2014; Taylor et al., 2017). Among the five core competencies proposed by CASEL, social awareness occupies a crucial position because it enables learners to understand others' perspectives, empathise across differences, and respond appropriately in social interactions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020).

English language classrooms provide a strong context for the development of social awareness because language learning is inherently social. It involves not only grammar and vocabulary but also interaction, interpretation, and participation in

sociocultural meaning-making (Byram, 1997; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978). Activities such as group discussions, reading tasks, collaborative problem-solving, and narrative interpretation allow students to practise empathy, perspective-taking, cooperation, and respect. In addition, research has shown that integrating SEL into educational contexts can positively influence students' cooperation, emotional well-being, and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011, 2022).

The urgency of social awareness is amplified by current adolescent realities. Although young people are often described as digitally fluent, increased screen-based interaction may reduce sensitivity to face-to-face emotional cues and weaken empathy-related capacities (Uhls et al., 2014). At the same time, social and emotional difficulties among adolescents continue to draw concern globally, including issues related to loneliness, bullying, and emotional disconnection (Chavers & Del Tufo, 2024; UNESCO, 2015). These realities make it necessary to reconsider the role of school

subjects, including English, in fostering socially responsible and emotionally responsive learners.

One of the most influential but often underestimated resources in this process is the textbook. Textbooks do not simply deliver language content. They also model relationships, values, norms, identities, and social expectations (Apple, 2012; Cunningsworth, 1997; Gray, 2010). In the Indonesian context, English textbooks have been shown to carry moral and cultural values, but these values are often implicit, unevenly distributed, or insufficiently reflective of diversity and meaningful social engagement (Puspitasari et al., 2021; Riadini & Cahyono, 2021; Rokhayati, 2016; Serasi et al., 2022). What remains underexplored is how social awareness, as a specific SEL competency, is embedded in English language learning materials, especially through both verbal and visual representation.

This study addresses that gap by examining the representation of social awareness in English for Nusantara Grade IX, a textbook published under the Merdeka Curriculum. It asks two questions: (1) How is social awareness incorporated into the textbook? and (2) What aspect of social awareness is most prevalent? By focusing on the eight sub-skills of social awareness proposed by CASEL, this study aims to contribute to the growing discussion on how

English language materials can support not only communicative competence but also students' socio-emotional development.

Method

This study employed qualitative content analysis to examine how social awareness was represented in English for Nusantara Grade IX (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Qualitative content analysis was selected because it allows researchers to identify recurring categories, interpret patterns of meaning, and analyse both explicit and implicit representations in textual and visual data. The data source was the Grade IX textbook English for Nusantara, published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology under the Merdeka Curriculum (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022). The textbook consists of six chapters covering themes relevant to junior high school students' experiences. It was selected because it is nationally relevant and potentially aligned with both the CASEL framework and the values of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila. The analysis covered both verbal and visual content. Verbal data included dialogues, narratives, instructions, and tasks. Visual data included illustrations and photographs. A rubric adapted from the CASEL framework was used to code occurrences of the eight sub-skills of social

awareness. Each relevant unit of analysis was documented based on chapter location, content type, excerpt or description, and the corresponding social awareness category. The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the researcher identified all potential representations of social awareness across the textbook. Second, each instance was categorised according to the relevant CASEL sub-skill and classified as either verbal or visual. Third, the coded data were compared to identify overall patterns, dominant sub-skills, and underrepresented aspects. This multimodal approach was important because meaning in textbooks is communicated not only through written language but also

through visual cues such as facial expression, gesture, and scene composition (Puspitasari et al., 2021).

Result and Discussion

How do English Textbooks Incorporate Social Awareness?

This section presents the findings for the first research question: How do the English textbooks incorporate social awareness? The analysis focuses on the two major modes of representation, verbal and visual, and examines how each mode communicates the eight CASEL social awareness sub-skills in English for Nusantara Grade IX.

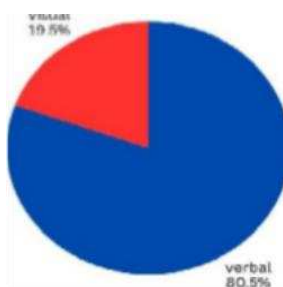


Figure 1. Frequency of verbal and visual representations of the eight social awareness skills in percentages.

A total of 215 instances of social awareness were found in the English for Nusantara Grade IX textbook, with 173 instances (80.5%) presented verbally and 42 instances (19.5%) presented in visuals. The numbers presented in Figure 2 show the findings of verbal versus visual representation of social awareness in the textbooks. The textbooks rely on verbal representation heavily as a medium to communicate social

awareness. This verbal content takes the form of presentations such as dialogues, narratives, instructions, and written tasks to give learners prominent language models for the skills of empathy, perspective-taking, and identifying strengths of others. The verbal elements not only introduce the aspect of social awareness, but also offers the students opportunities to practise social awareness through formally structured and guided

interaction.

In contrast, visual representations, mainly illustrations and photographs, are less frequent but play a supporting role in reinforcing the verbal content. They often depict facial expressions, body language, and situational contexts that align with the text, helping learners interpret non-verbal cues and social settings. However, these visuals rarely function as standalone conveyors of social awareness. Instead, they tend to complement the messages already established verbally. This pattern suggests that the textbook prioritises text-based modelling of social awareness while using visual elements primarily as supplementary aids to strengthen understanding.

Verbal Appearances of Social Awareness

The analysis of English for Nusantara Grade IX revealed that social awareness skills are embedded in both verbal and visual

forms, though verbal appears far more frequently. Out of the 215 identified instances, 173 (80.5%) were verbal and 42 (19.5%) were visual. This clear dominance of verbal content suggests that the textbook prioritises text-based modelling of social awareness skills, embedding them in spoken or written exchanges that reflect authentic communicative contexts. Verbal elements are presented through a combination of dialogues, narratives, instructions, and tasks, but with a clear imbalance among these forms. Dialogues and narratives account for the overwhelming majority of verbal appearances, while instructions and tasks are far less common and, in some cases, only appear in one or two chapters. This pattern indicates a strong emphasis on demonstrating social awareness in contextually rich, language-driven interactions rather than through isolated exercises or explicit teaching materials.



Figure 2. Frequency of verbal appearances in English for Nusantara Grade IX

The choice to prioritise dialogues and narratives may be due to their ability to simulate real-life interactions, where learners can observe and interpret social cues, responses, and turn-taking strategies. For example, in a typical dialogue, characters not only exchange information but also respond to each other in ways that convey empathy, adapt to situational demands, or acknowledge one another's contributions. Similarly, narratives provide extended contexts where learners can follow a character's thought process, feelings, and actions over time, making it possible to illustrate complex social dynamics. In contrast, instructions and tasks, while still valuable, tend to be more static and explicit, offering ready-made expressions without the layered social and linguistic negotiation found in dialogues and narratives. As a result, while the textbook does include these less interactive forms, they function more as supplementary tools rather than the primary means of teaching social awareness.

d. Listen to Audio 4.2 about Galang and his friends' project and then answer the questions. Number one has been done for you.



Picture 4.3 Galang and his friends' project

Monita	: Okay, so we agreed to make a wall decoration from plastic bottles and caps. I've got an idea with the caps.
Galang	: What is it? Tell us.
Monita	: This is the thing that we are going to sell (showing the bottle cap fish).
Andre	: A fish?
Made	: It does look like a fish. What is it made of?
Galang	: Yeah, what is it made of?
Monita	: Well, this fish is made of a circular plastic cap. The cap is the head and the body of the fish. There is a toy eye on the cap. The body of the fish is also painted. The tail is made of triangular paper.
Made	: I see.
Monita	: Then we glue them onto blue paper. We can add some green ornaments from paper as the plants.
Andre	: Ah, I got it. Well, that's one idea. Galang, have you got another idea?

Figure 3. Chapter 4, page 217.



Figure 4. Chapter 3, page 171.

Dialogues form the backbone of verbal representation, often featuring more than one social awareness skill on the same page. For another instance, in a conversation between Monita, Galang, Andre, and Made, the characters discuss a group project using recycled materials. Within this short exchange, multiple skills are displayed: Galang and Andre ask clarifying questions to understand Monita's perspective, while Made acknowledges her idea positively, recognising her contribution to the group. This layering of skills within a single dialogue mirrors authentic communication, where social awareness is rarely expressed in isolation but rather as a set of interconnected responses. Dialogues in the textbook are crafted to model these interactions in a way that is natural, situationally relevant, and easy for learners to emulate.

Narratives are the second most frequent form of verbal representation in English for

Nusantara Grade IX, providing extended, descriptive scenarios that allow learners to observe how social awareness unfolds naturally over time.

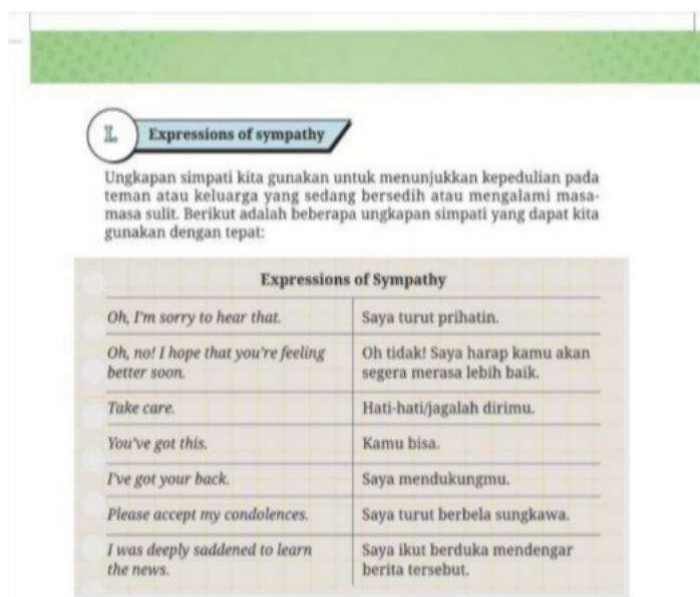
Unlike dialogues, which capture short, immediate exchanges, narratives develop a storyline in which characters encounter challenges, make choices, and respond to evolving situations. This gives students a richer understanding of social awareness not only working in real life but also operating where situations are ambiguous and required skills occur simultaneously. The Time Travel Car narrative is one example, where Monita experienced an unexpected series of possibly risky experiences. Monita sees a strange green flash outside her room, and though she is afraid, she investigates the flash. She finds a mysterious car with someone saying, "Get in!" Throughout this episode, Monita was flexible and courageous, modifying her behaviour with new information that came to light. She

remained calm and acted appropriately while experiencing pressure. Monita maintained awareness of her fear, and it helped her situate her curiosity in context, as she first gathered situational information before acting. Ultimately Monita acted and subjected herself to a potentially dangerous unknown situation. Monita was able to flexibly change her behaviour in the moment, evidenced by her social awareness skill of assessing situational demands and opportunities, immediately recognizing what the moment needed her to manifest as social awareness, and acting accordingly both quickly and effectively. By embedding such examples in engaging, imaginative narratives, the textbook

not only makes the skill memorable but also provides cultural and contextual grounding for how students might express similar adaptability and decision-making in their own lives.

In contrast, instructions are far less common and mainly appear in Chapter 0, where the textbook provides lists of phrases for specific social functions. For example, the “expressions of sympathy” list includes sentences such as “Oh, I’m sorry to hear that,” “I hope that you’re feeling better soon,” and “Please accept my condolences.” While these lists make the targeted skill explicit, they do not provide the interactional depth or contextual richness of dialogues or narratives.

Figure 5. Chapter 0, page 11.



Expressions of Sympathy	
<i>Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.</i>	Saya turut prihatin.
<i>Oh, no! I hope that you're feeling better soon.</i>	Oh tidak! Saya harap kamu akan segera merasa lebih baik.
<i>Take care.</i>	Hati-hati/jagalah dirimu.
<i>You've got this.</i>	Kamu bisa.
<i>I've got your back.</i>	Saya mendukungmu.
<i>Please accept my condolences.</i>	Saya turut berduka sungkawa.
<i>I was deeply saddened to learn the news.</i>	Saya ikut berduka mendengar berita tersebut.

Finally, tasks are the least frequent verbal form, often appearing only once or twice per chapter and generally serving as follow-up activities rather than primary learning materials. This distribution shows that while the textbook does offer direct instruction on social awareness, it overwhelmingly prefers to embed these skills in contextually rich verbal interactions.

Taken together, in English for Nusantara Grade IX, verbal appearances accounted for 80.5% overall in all instances of social awareness, making this the most common mode of presentation. The skills are mostly presented in dialogues and narratives that give rich, contextualised examples of real communication. It is common for dialogues to have more than one skill associated with the same interaction, such as characters asking clarifying questions to better understand a

peer's perspective while also acknowledging their contributions. Narratives take longer to present the scenarios, so students may be able to follow the experiences, thoughts, and decisions of one character over an extended period and see how social awareness unfolds in complex situations. Instructions appear far less often, mostly in Chapter 0, where phrase lists present expressions for specific social functions like sympathy or encouragement without the depth of interactive dialogue. Tasks are the least common verbal form, usually appearing only as supplementary activities. This distribution shows that the textbook prioritises teaching social awareness through immersive, language-rich contexts, where students can see how these skills operate naturally in conversation or storytelling.

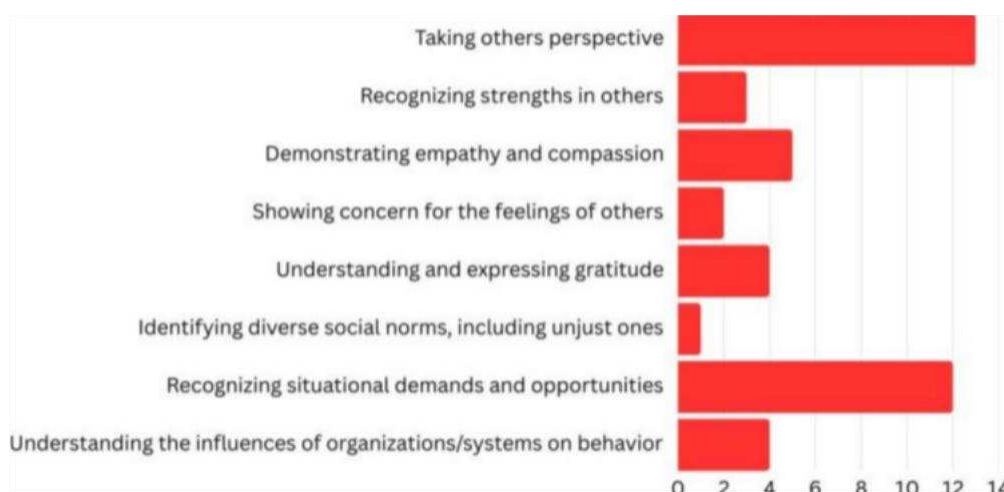


Figure 6. Frequency of visual appearances in English for Nusantara Grade IX.

In English for Nusantara Grade IX, visual accounts for 19.5% of the total identified instances, with 42 occurrences across six chapters. Almost all of these visuals are in the form of illustrations rather than photographs, and they typically accompany verbal text. The most common format is the comic strip style, where illustrations are paired with speech bubbles to present dialogues between characters. This format visually supports the verbal exchange, showing facial expressions, gestures, and environmental context that enhance the understanding of the social awareness skill being conveyed. For example, when a dialogue models empathy or perspective-taking, the illustrations often depict the speaker leaning forward, smiling, or making eye contact, which reinforces the verbal message. By integrating these cues, the visuals help learners interpret not only the words but also the non-verbal aspects of

communication.

One notable finding is that out of all the illustrations analysed, only one across the six chapters is entirely text-free yet still conveys social awareness implicitly. This is unusual in the textbook's overall pattern, where visuals almost always rely on the accompanying dialogue to communicate meaning. The single text-free illustration still managed to portray a social awareness skill through the arrangement of characters and their actions in the scene, demonstrating that the visual mode alone can communicate values such as empathy, cooperation, or concern when the composition is deliberate. However, such independent use of visuals is rare in this textbook, indicating that the design prioritises verbal content as the primary vehicle for meaning, with visuals serving mainly to reinforce rather than originate social awareness content.

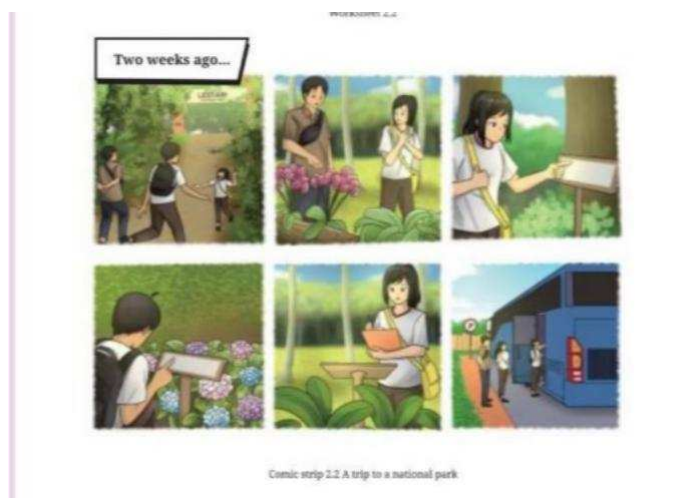


Figure 7. Chapter 2, page 84.



Figure 8. Chapter 1, page 35.

An example of how the visual and verbal modes work together effectively can be seen in Chapter 1, page 35, where Monita and Andre, the main recurring characters, discuss the endangered Bekantan monkey. In this dialogue, they talk about the major threat to the species, identifying habitat destruction as the primary cause. Monita explains that habitat destruction means the loss of mangrove trees, which are essential to the Bekantan's survival. Andre responds in agreement, and Monita adds that saving the Bekantans requires saving the mangroves. The conversation then transitions to planning their next science project, showing collaboration and shared interest.

The accompanying comic strip not only depicts the characters talking but also includes illustrations of dead forests to visually represent the severity of the

problem. Monita's body language, particularly her shrugging shoulders and disappointed expression, communicates frustration with human activities that harm the environment. This combination of imagery and dialogue reinforces the social awareness skill by appealing to both cognitive understanding and emotional response.

What is the Most Prevalent Aspect of Social Awareness Represented in English Textbooks?

The previous section established that English for Nusantara Grade IX represents social awareness primarily through verbal content, with dialogues and narratives serving as the main vehicles for communication, supported by a smaller proportion of visual elements. While that

analysis focused on how social awareness skills are presented, the next section delves deeper into which aspects of social awareness are most prominently featured. This section addresses the second research question: What is the most prevalent aspect of social awareness represented in English textbooks? By identifying the most frequent sub-skills among the eight CASEL-defined categories, it becomes possible to understand the textbook's emphasis and priorities in fostering students' social awareness. Such priorities also need to be seen in light of the Merdeka Curriculum, which aims to nurture student agency, character, and holistic development.

Out of the 215 total instances of social awareness identified across the six chapters, the data show clear variation in the

frequency of the eight CASEL sub- skills. The most prevalent sub-skill is Taking Others' Perspectives, with 54 total instances (41 verbal and 13 visual). These appear mainly in character dialogues or narratives, where learners can observe how individuals make an effort to understand another's viewpoint. Visuals, although less frequent, support these messages through gestures and body language.

This pattern reflects the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP) dimension of *berkebhinekaan global* (global diversity), which emphasises appreciating and respecting multiple perspectives. By modelling this sub-skill, the textbook contributes directly to government policy objectives of equipping students to become open-minded and tolerant citizens in a multicultural society.

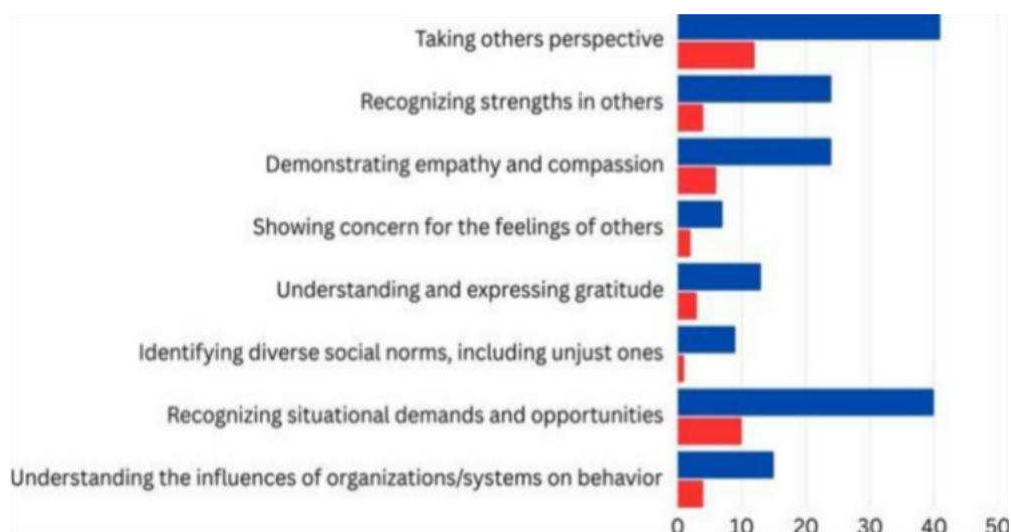


Figure 9. Comparison of the eight social awareness sub-skills in English for Nusantara Grade IX.



Awesome! But I guess because Bekantans live in trees.

They (eat / ate) leaves, not fish. Am I right?

Yes, you're right. Bekantans eat almost all parts of the plant.

They (consume/ consumes) young leaves, fruits, and flowers!

Comic Strip 1.3

b. Listen again to Audio 1.3. Put the ideas in the correct groups based on the dialog above.

Bekantans' behaviors	1) Go down to the forest floor 2) _____ 3) _____
Bekantans' diets	4) Young leaves 5) _____ 6) _____

Worksheet 1.3

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Figure 10. Example of Taking Others' Perspectives.

Taking Others' Perspectives, which appears 54 times across the analysed chapters, is often embedded in dialogues and narratives where characters actively seek to understand a peer's point of view before responding. In these instances, characters frequently ask clarifying questions or express genuine curiosity about another's ideas, showing a willingness to consider perspectives different from their own. One example is found in a comic strip in Chapter 1, page 32, where Andre and Monita discuss facts about Bekantans. Andre applies logical reasoning to guess the animal's diet and politely seeks confirmation from Monita,

while Monita responds by validating his reasoning and adding further information. This exchange

Closely following is Recognising Situational Demands and Opportunities, with 52 instances in total (40 verbal and 12 visual). Like the first sub-skill, the chart reveals a dominant blue bar, reflecting the textbook's reliance on verbal interaction to model adaptability and context-aware responses. Together, these two sub-skills account for nearly half (49.3%) of all coded instances, suggesting that the textbook places a strong emphasis on interpersonal adaptability and perspective-taking as everyday practices. This

focus is consistent with the Merdeka Curriculum, which highlights student agency and the ability to act flexibly in diverse situations, and with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP) dimensions of mandiri (independence) and gotong royong (collaboration). However, in contrast, Showing Concern for the Feelings of Others (9 instances) and Identifying Diverse Social Norms, Including Unjust Ones (10 instances) have the shortest bars in the chart for both blue and red, indicating minimal representation in either verbal or visual form. This imbalance suggests that while the textbook supports adaptability and collaboration in line with policy priorities, it places less emphasis on the PPP dimensions of berakhlak mulia (noble character) and berpikir kritis (critical thinking), which call for greater attention to emotional care and reflection on social norms.

The second most prevalent sub-skill is Recognising Situational Demands and Opportunities, which appears 52 times in the analysed chapters. This skill is commonly expressed in narratives and dialogues, where characters adapt their language and/or actions to suit the requirements of a given situation. One example can be found in a comic strip featuring Monita and Galang, where Monita responds to Galang's difficulty in using a search engine by taking the initiative to guide him through the process.

She provides clear, step-by-step instructions, adjusting her pace and explanations according to Galang's responses. This exchange is practical and situation-based, as Monita's behaviour directly addresses the immediate need for support while maintaining a collaborative tone. The interaction models how recognising situational demands involves not only understanding what the moment requires but also modifying one's communication style to ensure the other person can follow along.

The accompanying visuals reinforce this learning moment by showing Monita leaning toward the computer, gesturing to the screen, and maintaining an approachable expression, while Galang's attentive posture and focused gaze indicate his engagement. In the context of government policy, this sub-skill reflects the Profil Pelajar Pancasila dimensions of mandiri (independence) and gotong royong (collaboration), as learners are guided to act responsibly, adaptively, and cooperatively in diverse situations. It also supports the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on preparing students to be flexible problem-solvers who can navigate challenges with resilience and empathy. Other sub-skills with relatively high representation include Demonstrating Empathy and Compassion (29 instances) and Recognising Strengths in Others (27 instances). As shown earlier in Figure 5, one clear example is a full page in

Chapter 0 dedicated to expressions of sympathy, where learners are provided with multiple phrases for showing care and emotional support in different situations. This design makes the skill explicit and easy to reference, allowing students to directly practise empathetic language in their own interactions.

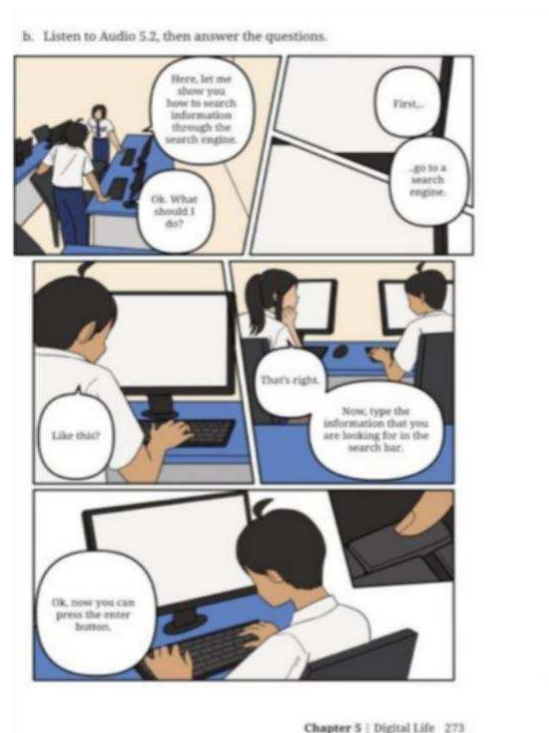


Figure 11. Example of Recognising Situational Demands and Opportunities.



Figure 12. Example of Recognising Strengths in Others.

Recognising Strengths in Others appears in both direct verbal praise and collaborative contexts, where one character acknowledges another's abilities. A narrative example from Chapter 4 demonstrates this clearly when Monita, faced with the challenge of returning to her own time, acknowledges Professor Mahmud's expertise in building the time travel car and seeks his help. In this situation, Monita recognises the professor's skill, entrusts him with the problem, and works with him to find a solution. This exchange illustrates how recognising strengths can be both a verbal and behavioural act, where acknowledgement is paired with collaboration. Such instances resonate with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila dimension of berakhlak mulia (noble character), which emphasises compassion and kindness, as well as gotong royong (collaboration), which values collective problem-solving. In this way, the textbook reflects the Merdeka Curriculum's aim of integrating character education into academic content, showing that empathy and recognition of others' strengths are vital components of holistic learning.

In contrast to the more frequently represented sub-skills, some aspects of social awareness appear only rarely in English for Nusantara Grade IX, receiving limited attention within the overall content. Among

these, Understanding and Expressing Gratitude and Understanding the Influences of Organisations/Systems on Behaviour are present more often than other underrepresented sub-skills, but still occur far less than the most common ones. Their limited appearance indicates that while politeness and awareness of institutional influence are acknowledged, they are not central to the textbook's approach to teaching social awareness. This underrepresentation creates a partial gap with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila dimensions of berakhlak mulia (through gratitude practices) and berpikir kritis (through analysing systemic influence). From the perspective of government policy, strengthening these elements would enhance the textbook's alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum's vision of nurturing reflective, empathetic, and socially responsible learners who are able to appreciate kindness and critically engage with the systems that shape their lives.

A more concerning finding is the very low representation of Identifying Diverse Social Norms, Including Unjust Ones, which appears only 10 times in the analysed chapters. This sub-skill is especially important in the Indonesian context, where the country's vast geography and cultural diversity bring together hundreds of ethnic groups, languages, and traditions.

Recognising and valuing these differences, and understanding when norms might be unfair or discriminatory, is vital for developing inclusive attitudes in young learners. Yet, the textbook rarely raises these issues in significant depth. When cultural differences or fairness are mentioned, they are often addressed briefly without offering opportunities for discussion or critical thought. This limited presence reduces the potential for students to cultivate broader awareness of Indonesia's multicultural and multiethnic realities, as well as the diversity found globally. In terms of policy, this represents a missed opportunity to reinforce the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP) dimension of berkebhinekaan global (global diversity) and berpikir kritis (critical thinking), both of

which are essential to the government's character-building agenda under the Merdeka Curriculum. Greater inclusion of such content would not only reflect Indonesia's national motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), but also prepare learners to critically engage with issues of equity and justice in society.

The least represented sub-skill overall is Showing Concern for the Feelings of Others, with only nine instances recorded in the entire textbook. This scarcity is striking, given that showing concern is a foundational element of empathy and positive interpersonal relationships. When it does appear, it is often in the form of a small supportive gesture that is secondary to the main interaction.



Figure 13. Example of Showing Concern for the Feelings of Others.

For example, in one narrative, Monita is taken to the security office after causing a commotion. The officer, while sceptical of her story, pauses to ask if she would like some water. This act of kindness, though minor, demonstrates emotional consideration in a tense situation. However, such moments are rare and receive little elaboration in the text. The minimal attention given to this sub-skill suggests it is the least prioritised aspect of social awareness in the textbook, which could limit students' opportunities to learn and practise showing active care for others in everyday interactions. From a policy perspective, this underrepresentation indicates a gap in fulfilling the Profil Pelajar Pancasila dimension of *berakhlak mulia* (noble character), which explicitly encourages compassion, empathy, and care for others. Strengthening this sub-skill would also enhance the textbook's alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on character education, ensuring that learners are not only adaptable and collaborative but also sensitive to the emotional well-being of those around them.

To summarise, the dominance of Taking Others' Perspectives (54 instances) and Recognising Situational Demands and Opportunities (52 instances) reflects the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasises student agency, collaboration, and adaptive learning. These skills also align

closely with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP) dimensions of *berkebhinekaan global* (global diversity), *gotong royong* (collaboration), and *mandiri* (independence). By modelling perspective-taking and adaptability in dialogue and narrative form, the textbook contributes to character building as envisioned in national education policy. However, the underrepresentation of Showing Concern for the Feelings of Others (9 instances) and Identifying Diverse Social Norms, Including Unjust Ones (10 instances) suggests an incomplete realisation of PPP's *berakhlak mulia* (noble character) and *kritis* (critical thinking) dimensions. These gaps indicate that while the textbook supports interpersonal adaptability and inclusivity, it provides fewer opportunities for students to develop deeper compassion, empathy, and critical reflection on social issues. Strengthening these sub-skills would ensure a more balanced alignment with both the Merdeka Curriculum's vision of holistic education and the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (PPP) framework's aim of nurturing learners who are empathetic, reflective, and socially responsible.

Dominant Social Awareness Sub-skills

Among the eight CASEL sub-skills, the most prevalent was taking others' perspectives, with 54 instances. The second most frequent was recognising situational

demands and opportunities, with 52 instances. These findings suggest that the textbook places considerable emphasis on helping students understand others' viewpoints and adapt their behaviour to different circumstances. This emphasis is pedagogically understandable. Perspective-taking is central to communication, especially in language learning contexts that require interpreting intentions, responding appropriately, and participating in dialogue (CASEL, 2020; Gehlbach, 2004). Likewise, recognising situational demands and opportunities is useful in helping learners navigate changing contexts, cooperate with peers, and act appropriately in classroom and everyday interaction (Elias, 1997). These two sub-skills align well with communicative language teaching because they are inherently interactional.

At the same time, two sub-skills were notably underrepresented: showing concern for the feelings of others appeared only 9 times, and identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones appeared only 10 times. This matters because it reveals the textbook's imbalance. It is willing to promote understanding and adaptation, but much less willing to confront emotional vulnerability, unfairness, or diversity-related tension in deeper ways. That is a real weakness. A textbook that teaches students to understand another perspective without

sufficiently addressing emotional care or unjust social norms produces a shallow version of social awareness. It may encourage politeness, but not necessarily compassion or critical social understanding. In a context where bullying, exclusion, stereotype, and everyday inequality remain relevant educational issues, that omission is not minor. It narrows the moral and social possibilities of language education.

What the Pattern Means

Overall, the textbook represents social awareness in meaningful ways, but not evenly. It is stronger at modelling interpersonal understanding and behavioural adaptability than at fostering deeper emotional responsiveness and critical awareness of social injustice. This imbalance reflects a broader pattern in educational materials, where safe and general values are easier to include than emotionally demanding or socially critical ones (Jagers et al., 2021; Puspitasari et al., 2021). The dominance of verbal representation also indicates that the textbook assumes social learning happens primarily through language-based explanation and interaction. That assumption is partly valid, but incomplete. Social awareness is also communicated through visual attention, emotional cues, silence, posture, and contextual inference. By underusing independent visual representation,

the textbook limits opportunities for students to interpret social meaning multimodally. For curriculum developers and textbook writers, the implication is clear. Social awareness should not be reduced to generic politeness or occasional teamwork dialogue. It should be distributed more evenly across empathy, gratitude, diversity, fairness, and systemic understanding. More importantly, these dimensions should be integrated into stories, tasks, and visuals that actually require students to interpret, reflect, and respond, not just repeat phrases.

Conclusion

This study examined how social awareness is represented in English for Nusantara Grade IX through the lens of the CASEL framework. The findings show that the textbook does incorporate social awareness in a meaningful way, with 215 identified instances across verbal and visual modes. However, this representation is strongly dominated by verbal content, especially dialogues and narratives, while visual representation remains supplementary. The most prevalent sub-skills were taking others' perspectives and recognising situational demands and opportunities. These findings indicate that the textbook is relatively strong in modelling interpersonal understanding and adaptive behaviour. However, social awareness is not represented evenly.

Important dimensions such as showing concern for the feelings of others and identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones, appeared much less frequently. The main conclusion is simple and uncomfortable: the textbook is not empty of SEL, but it is still selective in the kind of SEL it promotes. It offers a socially aware learner who is cooperative and adaptable, but not yet sufficiently critical, emotionally attentive, or responsive to unfairness and diversity in deeper ways. That limitation should be addressed in future textbook development. English language materials need to move beyond linguistic goals and surface-level moral messaging toward more balanced, deliberate, and multimodal integration of social awareness.

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