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Education Across Borders

Reimagining Education in the Modern Age

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Bitola, 2026



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UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MACEDONIA



FAN S. NOLI UNIVERSITY

University St. Kliment Ohridski – Bitola,
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LITERARY TEXT ANALYSIS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: THE USE OF INTERTEXTUAL, INTRATEXTUAL AND EXTRATEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

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Abstract

The process of understanding and analyzing a literary text for the purpose of finding deeper meaning in primary education depends on the ability of students to make connections between the text and their past experiences related to the type, content and the theme depicted in the text as well as their prior knowledge on the topic explored. Moreover, this process depends on the schema-building approach and scaffolding provided by the teacher. The aim of this paper is to address issues of intertextuality as part of the comprehension strategies in the primary education and mediating the process of creating inner text during the reading. The paper also seeks to answer the question whether teachers encourage different kinds of connections (intertextual, intratextual and extratextual) in the literary text analysis approach depending on the students' age. We have conducted survey about the intertextual, extratextual and intratextual connections in the process of literary analysis in order to collect the necessary data for this descriptive research with a random sample of primary school language teachers in the Republic of North Macedonia (total N=75). The results obtained by the descriptive analysis and χ^2 test have shown that the teachers practice different kinds of intertextuality encouraging techniques and connections depending on the students' age in the process of literary text analysis in class. These findings will help scholars build a broader picture of the schema-building approach for the purpose of making intertextual, extratextual and intratextual connections during and after the reading of a literary text. They will also contribute to raising teachers' awareness of the complexity of creating inner text by the reader.

Keywords: literary text analysis, intertextuality, intertextual, extratextual and intratextual connections, primary education

1. Introduction

Literary reading in primary education involves complex processes through which students construct meaning by integrating textual information with prior knowledge and experience. Contemporary approaches to reading comprehension emphasize the importance of active engagement with texts and the role of instructional support in facilitating interpretive understanding.

One key dimension of literary comprehension is the formation of textual connections. Readers establish coherence by relating elements within a text, linking a text to other texts, and situating textual meanings within broader experiential and cultural contexts. These processes—commonly described as intratextual, intertextual, and extratextual connections—contribute to deeper levels of comprehension and interpretive awareness. In primary education, the development of such connections is closely tied to instructional practices, as students' cognitive and interpretive capacities are still emerging.

Teachers play a central role in mediating students' engagement with literary texts through scaffolding strategies that support schema activation, guided interpretation, and meaning construction (Cho, Y. A., & Ma, J. H., 2020). While theoretical accounts of textual connectedness are well established, empirical research examining how these connections are encouraged in classroom practice remains limited, particularly with regard to differences across grade levels.

Given the developmental variation in students' reading abilities, further investigation is needed to understand how instructional practices related to intertextual, intratextual and extratextual connections are implemented in primary education. Empirical insight into these practices can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of literary pedagogy and inform the development of effective, age-appropriate instructional approaches.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the extent to which Macedonian primary school language teachers encourage intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections during literary analysis. Drawing on lesson plan analysis and teacher surveys, the research explores both the prevalence of these instructional practices and the factors influencing their implementation, including teachers' theoretical knowledge, available resources, and professional development experiences. By examining how textual connections are integrated into classroom practice, this study aims to illuminate current strengths, identify areas for improvement,

and inform pedagogical strategies that support comprehensive literary analysis and the development of higher-order literacy skills among primary-aged learners.

2. Literature review

2.1. *Intertextuality, intratextuality and extratextuality*

Intertextuality marks a decisive epistemological shift in literary theory: from conceiving texts as autonomous, self-contained artifacts to understanding them as relational, dialogic, and historically situated fields of meaning. Rather than originating solely from an authorial consciousness, textual meaning is produced through a network of prior discourses, cultural codes, and interpretive acts. This shift is grounded in Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, which posits language as inherently social and irreducibly shaped by previous utterances. Bakhtin's concept of *heteroglossia* foregrounds the coexistence and tension of multiple voices, registers, and ideological positions within any text, thereby destabilizing notions of linguistic purity or singular meaning (Bakhtin, 1981).

Julia Kristeva extends Bakhtin's insights by coining the term *intertextuality*, defining the text as a "mosaic of quotations" constituted through absorption and transformation of other texts. In Kristeva's formulation, meaning does not reside in authorial intention or textual closure but emerges from the interaction of intersecting discourses within a cultural and semiotic space (Kristeva, 1980, 1986). This reconceptualization displaces the author as the origin of meaning and situates the text within a dynamic system of signification.

Roland Barthes further radicalizes this perspective by explicitly rejecting authorial authority and framing the text as a multidimensional space in which multiple writings converge. For Barthes, meaning arises through the play of signifiers activated by the reader, transforming reading into an active process of interpretation rather than passive reception (Barthes, 1977, 1981). Gérard Genette responds to the expanding scope of intertextual thought by offering a systematic taxonomy of textual relations under the broader category of *transtextuality*. Within this framework, intertextuality—defined narrowly as the presence of one text within another—is situated alongside paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality, thus providing analytical precision while maintaining structuralist rigor (Genette, 1997).

Shifting attention from textual structures to readerly activity, Michael Riffaterre conceptualizes intertextuality as a hermeneutic mechanism. For Riffaterre, meaning emerges through the reader's recognition of textual anomalies that signal the presence of an intertext, making interpretation contingent upon cultural competence and interpretive labor rather than textual transparency (Riffaterre, 1984). In contrast, Harold Bloom reintroduces a strong sense of authorial agency by framing intertextuality as an agonistic struggle between poets and their precursors. Bloom's theory of the *anxiety of influence* recasts intertextual relations as acts of creative misreading, revision, and resistance, thereby reinscribing intention and psychological conflict into intertextual dynamics (Bloom, 1997).

Umberto Eco offers a complementary cultural-semiotic approach, situating texts within an expansive network of encyclopedic knowledge and shared cultural codes. For Eco, intertextuality operates through the reader's navigation of cultural competence, interpretive frames, and semiotic conventions, emphasizing meaning as a cooperative enterprise between text and reader rather than a fixed semantic property (Eco, 1979).

In contrast to intertextuality's outward-facing orientation, *intratextuality* focuses on the internal dynamics of a single text, treating it as a complex system of self-referential signs, motifs, and discursive patterns. Intratextual analysis explores how meaning emerges from internal coherence, repetition, and variation, revealing fractal-like layers of significance that exceed both authorial intention and linear interpretation (Palmer, 2002). This perspective underscores the text's internal heterogeneity and its capacity to generate meaning through recursive structures.

Extratextuality, by contrast, addresses the relations connecting texts to forces beyond the textual system, including historical conditions, social institutions, ideological formations, and authorial contexts. While classical structuralism tended to bracket these elements in favor of immanent analysis, poststructuralist, sociological, and discourse-oriented theories foreground extratextual factors as constitutive rather than supplementary. Although Genette deliberately excludes extratextuality from his transtextual taxonomy, its theoretical significance is articulated by thinkers such as Michel Foucault, who reconceptualizes authorship as a discursive function shaped by institutional practices and regimes of knowledge (Foucault, 1998), and Pierre Bourdieu, who situates texts within a field of cultural production structured by power, capital, and social positioning (Bourdieu, 1993). Barthes similarly acknowledges extratextual dimensions through his analysis of ideology and myth as systems that naturalize cultural meanings within texts (Barthes, 1991).

Extratextual elements extend beyond material and socio-cultural factors, encompassing the ways readers construct meaning through cognitive processes. Reader response research has shifted from theories of the “ideal reader” to empirical studies of actual reading behavior. Cognitive linguistic approaches reveal that readers actively shape textual meaning as embodied experiences, integrating physical cues, multimodal signals, and prior knowledge to form dynamic mental representations of texts. Frameworks such as multimodal metaphor, conceptual blending, and text world theory highlight how the body, cognition, and context interact in the construction of meaning (Liu, 2025: 1770).

Texts are thus understood as nodal points within broader networks that connect linguistic structures, historical trajectories, cultural memory, institutional forces, and interpretive communities. From this view, intertextuality is not merely a literary device or analytical tool but a foundational condition of textuality itself, reflecting the complex entanglement of discourse, culture, and power in the production of meaning.

2.2. *Inter/intra/extratextuality in the pedagogical practice*

Research suggests that recognizing intertextual links enhances both reading comprehension and literary appreciation by enabling readers to situate individual texts within broader networks of meaning (Barzilai, Zohar & Hagani-Mor, 2018). Through intertextual engagement, readers are encouraged to identify recurring themes, narrative patterns, and stylistic features across texts, which supports deeper interpretation and more nuanced understanding. This process promotes higher-order cognitive skills, such as comparison, synthesis, and evaluation, and allows readers to perceive literary works not as isolated artifacts but as part of an ongoing cultural and literary dialogue. As a result, intertextual awareness contributes to more sophisticated literary analysis and fosters critical engagement with texts. It also enables students to grasp genre conventions, recognize allusions, and construct interpretive frameworks that support understanding literature within broader cultural, historical, and social contexts (Short, 1999). By engaging with multiple texts, students learn to identify shared structural features, recurring motifs, and conventional narrative patterns that characterize specific genres. This awareness enhances their ability to anticipate textual developments and interpret meaning more effectively. Furthermore, recognizing allusions and references to other texts fosters literary competence by situating individual works within wider traditions of storytelling and discourse. Such intertextual awareness supports students’ capacity to make informed interpretations and to approach literature as a dynamic and interconnected system of meanings rather than as a collection of isolated texts. Primary-aged learners who engage in intratextual analysis demonstrate improved inferencing and narrative comprehension skills, as these practices support active meaning construction during reading (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Duke and Pearson emphasize that effective comprehension instruction encourages students to attend closely to relationships within a text, such as connections among events, characters, and ideas. Through strategies including prediction, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing, students learn to generate inferences, monitor their understanding, and integrate information across different parts of a text. These intratextual processes strengthen narrative understanding by helping learners recognize causal relationships, character motivations, and thematic development. As a result, systematic engagement with intratextual analysis not only enhances students’ ability to interpret texts accurately but also supports the development of transferable comprehension strategies essential for sustained reading success.

Teaching children to make such connections supports deeper comprehension and enhances memory retention by actively engaging them in the construction of meaning during reading (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007). Keene and Zimmerman argue that when students are encouraged to connect new textual information to prior knowledge, personal experiences, or previously read texts, they are more likely to process information at a deeper cognitive level. This active engagement strengthens understanding by helping learners organize ideas, clarify meaning, and resolve ambiguities within the text. Moreover, making connections facilitates memory retention by anchoring new information to existing mental schemas, thereby increasing the likelihood of long-term recall. As a result, explicit instruction in connection-making strategies contributes not only to improved comprehension but also to more durable and meaningful learning outcomes. According to Rosenblatt’s (1994) reader-response theory, meaning is constructed through the interaction between reader and text. When students are encouraged to draw on their own experiences while reading, their understanding becomes more meaningful and grounded (Beers & Probst, 2013). The findings also indicate that literary discussions with younger students are predominantly structured around lower-level comprehension questions focusing on basic plot understanding, elementary characterization, and identification of time and setting within the text. In contrast, instruction with older students more frequently involves higher-order analytical questions addressing specific plot events, multidimensional character analysis, and the interpretation of texts through extratextual connections (Andonovska-Trajkovska, 2017).

Recent pedagogical approaches have emphasized the importance of viewing reading as an active, dialogic process in which meaning is constructed through continuous interaction between readers and texts. One such approach is exemplified in the project *Intra-textual Entanglements* (Truman, 2016), which foregrounds holistic and participatory engagement with literary texts. It involves pedagogical practices of shared reading and

creative expression that make use of symbols and signs from different semiotic systems in order to demonstrate that readers develop an active relationship with the texts they read. Readers also write in the margins while reading, thereby developing a creative dialogue with themselves as well as with the text under analysis. On the other hand, readers who later read the same text may be guided by what is written in the margins and thus form certain expectations about the text even before they begin reading, as well as during and after the reading process. The term *intra-textual entanglement* refers to the understanding that texts do not function merely as structures composed of separate, independent units that can be analyzed in isolation, but rather as wholes that need to be approached holistically, because the elements that constitute them are mutually intertwined and influence one another within this complex entanglement. In this case, intertext is used as a means through which the reader creates the meaning of the text, as well as a way to demonstrate that a multitude of forces operate within the text, whose influences are intertwined and together construct the intratext.

3. Methodology of research

The research is descriptive, as it describes contemporary practices related to textual connections that are implemented in instructional practice in the literary text analysis with primary school students. The aim is to explore the extent to which teachers encourage various forms of intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections in literary analysis, both in general and with regard to students' age. To obtain the data for this descriptive study, a survey and content analysis of the lesson plans of the teachers were conducted among a random sample of primary school language teachers in the Republic of North Macedonia (N = 75) from Bitola, Prilep, Struga, Ohrid, Kavadarci, Strumica, Makedonski Brod, Kichevo and the surroundings of the mentioned cities, focusing on the use of these types of connections in the literary analysis process.

The main hypothesis is as following: H = Macedonian language teachers encourage various kinds of textual connections (intertextual, intratextual and extratextual) in the literary text analysis approach depending on the primary school students' age. Auxillary hypotheses: H1: Macedonian language teachers encourage various kinds of intratextual connections in the literary text analysis approach depending on the primary school students' age; H2: Macedonian language teachers encourage various kinds of intertextual connections in the literary text analysis approach depending on the primary school students' age; H3: Macedonian language teachers encourage various kinds of extratextual connections in the literary text analysis approach depending on the primary school students' age.

In addition, the aim of the research was to establish teachers' familiarity with inter/intra/extratextual connections, to describe the types of textual connections applied in the literature classroom, the types of texts that teachers commonly use for exploring textual connections, the challenges that teachers face when employing textual connections and the teachers' opinion about the advantages of making textual connections in the literary text analysis in primary education.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis regarding the influence of the students' age on the implementation of the textual connections is based on data obtained through a content analysis of teachers' lesson plans, which offer a methodological overview of literary text analysis lessons and include detailed examples of the questions posed to students. These questions were systematically categorized according to the types of connections they elicited (intratextual, intertextual, and extratextual).

To examine whether a statistically significant association exists between students' age (grade level) and the extent to which Macedonian primary school language teachers encourage intratextual, intertextual, and extratextual connections during literary text analysis, a series of chi-square tests of independence were conducted at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (a chi-square value exceeding 12.592—the critical value for six degrees of freedom at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ —warrants rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis). No statistically significant association was found between grade level and the encouragement of intratextual connections, $\chi^2(6, N = 75) = 2.63, p = .85$. Similarly, the relationship between grade level and the encouragement of extratextual connections was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(6, N = 75) = 8.00, p = .24$. In contrast, a statistically significant association emerged between grade level and the encouragement of intertextual connections, $\chi^2(6, N = 75) = 15.65, p = .016$, indicating that teachers' use of intertextual connections varies according to students' age (Fig. 1).

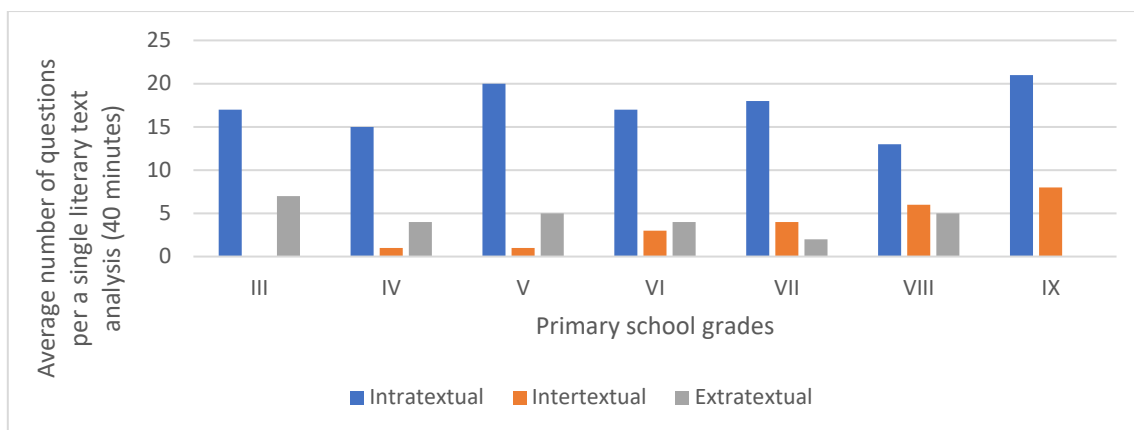


Figure 1. Intratextual/ intertextual/ extratextual connections in the literary text analysis in primary school regarding the students' age

The survey conducted with a semi-structured questionnaire examined teachers' knowledge of intertextuality theory and the extent to which intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections are systematically incorporated into literary analysis. The following section presents a detailed account of the results obtained from the analysis of the survey data.

The data illustrate teachers' self-reported familiarity with the concepts of intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections. The distribution of responses suggests that most participants have a moderate to high level of familiarity with these theoretical constructs. Specifically, the highest frequencies were observed at levels 3 and 4 for all three types of connections, indicating that teachers generally recognize and understand these concepts to a considerable extent. The results indicate that teachers generally have moderate to high familiarity with intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections (Fig. 2). Intertextual connections are the most recognized, with the highest number of respondents rating their familiarity at level 4. Intratextual connections show similar but slightly lower familiarity, while extratextual connections display a more varied distribution and fewer teachers reporting high familiarity. This suggests that extratextual connections may be less emphasized or less understood in teacher training and practice. These findings highlight the importance of further supporting teachers in developing a comprehensive understanding of all three types of textual connections to improve literary text analysis.

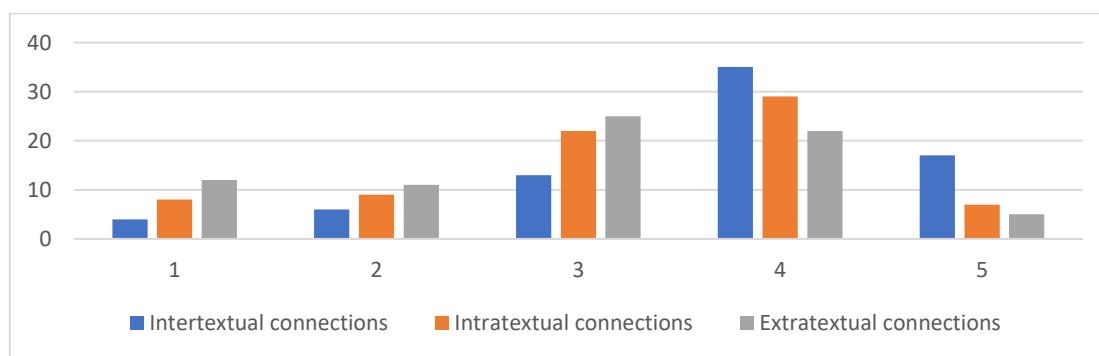


Figure 2. Teachers' familiarity with inter/intra/extratextual connections

Teachers indicated that they employ a variety of instructional strategies to support students in recognizing and constructing intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections during literary text analysis such as:

- Intertextual connections: Strategies include project-based learning, side-by-side comparison of texts, facilitated discussions of paired texts, literary circles, and the use of graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams to visually map relationships between texts.
- Intratextual connections: Techniques involve storytelling, character visualization through both verbal descriptions and imagery, tracking character development, making predictions during and after reading, sequencing events, employing graphic organizers, exploring themes and motifs, and applying diverse questioning methods to deepen textual understanding.
- Extratextual connections: Approaches focus on encouraging text-to-self connections, text-to-world connections, discussions of author background, linking texts to historical contexts, and connecting texts to other school subjects to foster broader contextual comprehension.

The survey reveals that 89% of teachers do not explicitly teach students to identify intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections during literary text analysis, i.e. they don't name the teaching activities referring to the textual connections. Only 1% consistently provide such instruction, while 10% do so occasionally (Fig. 3). This indicates that explicit focus on these textual connections is largely missing from classroom practice. The limited implementation may stem from gaps in teacher training or curricular emphasis, potentially hindering students' development of critical analytical skills. The inconsistency in instructional approaches suggests a need for targeted professional development to better equip teachers with strategies for integrating these connections into literary analysis. Enhancing explicit teaching of these concepts could significantly improve students' interpretive abilities and deepen their engagement with texts.

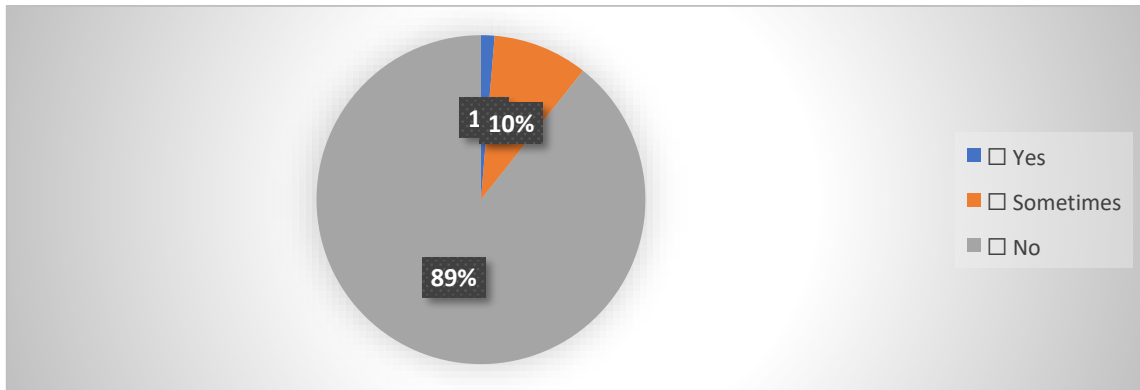


Figure 3. Explicitly teaching students how to identify textual connections in the process of literary text analysis

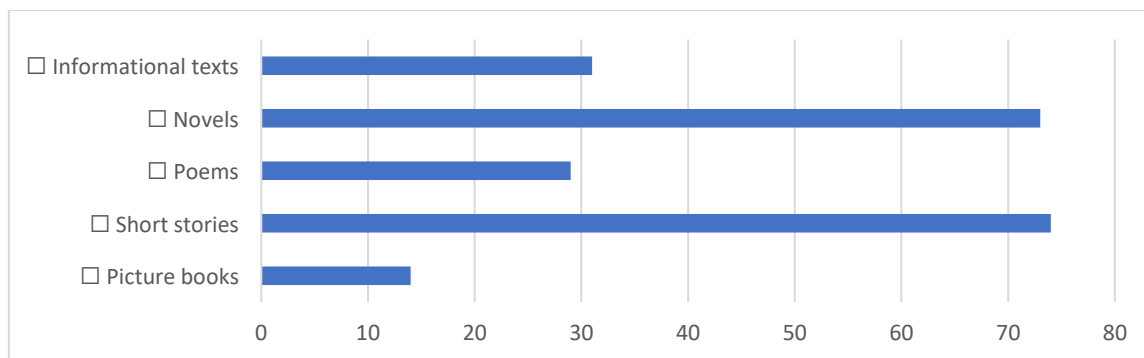


Figure 4. Types of texts that teachers commonly use for exploring textual connections

The analysis of survey data indicates that Macedonian primary school language teachers most frequently use narrative literary genres when fostering intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections. Novels and short stories were reported as the primary instructional texts by 74% of respondents, while poems (29%), informational texts (31%), and picture books (14%) were used considerably less often (Figure 4).

The predominance of novels and short stories can be attributed to their narrative complexity, thematic richness, and opportunities for character and plot development, which facilitate the exploration of both intratextual and intertextual relationships (Kristeva, 1980; Genette, 1997). This preference is consistent with pedagogical traditions that position narrative comprehension at the center of literary instruction (Rosenblatt, 1994).

In contrast, the lower frequency of poetry use may reflect the challenges associated with its condensed and symbolic language, despite its potential for intertextual interpretation (Attridge, 1995; Andonovska-Trajkovska, Iliev, Atanasoska, 2017). Similarly, the modest use of informational texts suggests that nonfiction genres are less commonly integrated into connection-based literary analysis, possibly due to curricular constraints or perceptions of their relevance to literary study. The limited use of picture books may relate to their association with early literacy instruction and their multimodal structure, which may be perceived as less suitable for advanced textual analysis (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006).

Overall, these findings indicate a strong reliance on narrative texts in primary literary education while also pointing to the potential benefits of incorporating a wider range of genres. Expanding the use of poetry, informational texts, and multimodal narratives may enhance students' ability to recognize diverse forms of textual connectivity and support the development of broader interpretive skills (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

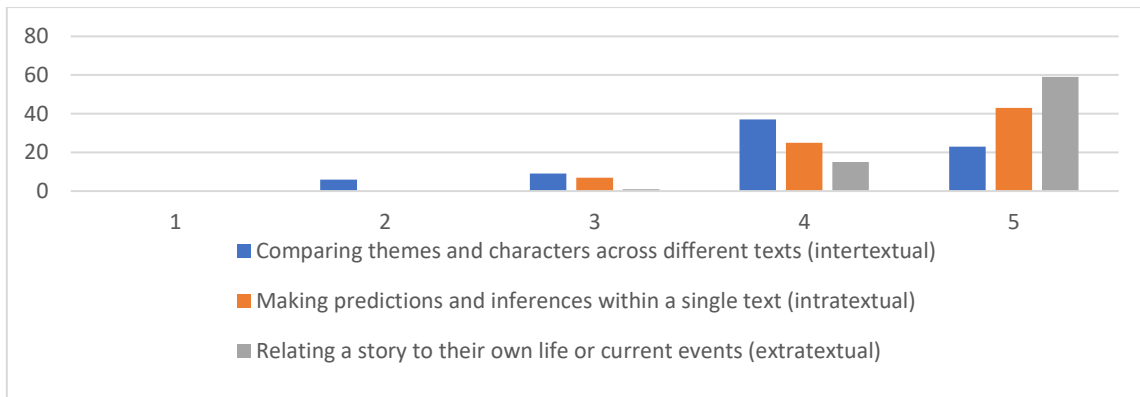


Figure 5. Students' engagement in the process of making textual connections

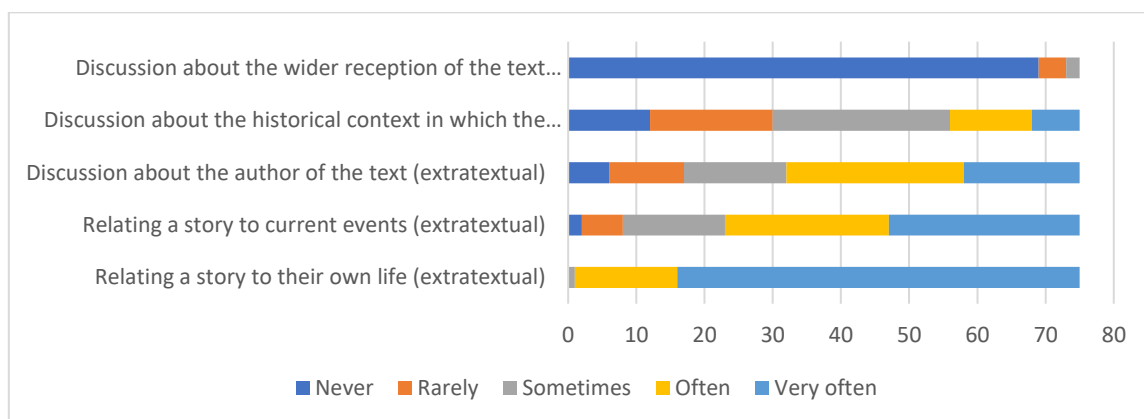


Figure 6. Types of extratextual connections in primary education

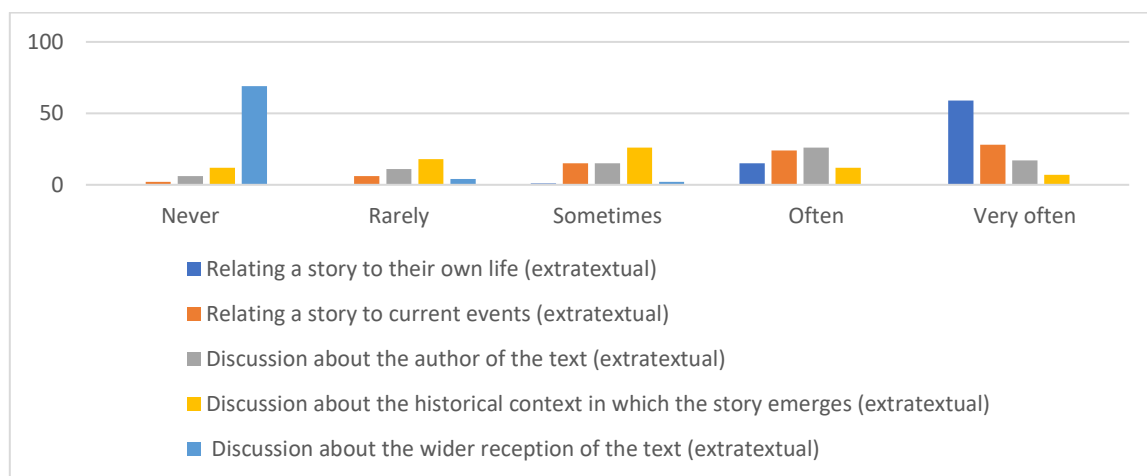


Figure 7. Types of extratextual connections

Across figures 5, 6, 7 clear patterns emerged in the frequency and nature of students' engagement with intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual reading activities. Overall, *extratextual connections were reported most frequently*, followed by intratextual strategies, while intertextual activities were reported least often.

Students most frequently engaged in *relating texts to their own lives and to current events*, with responses heavily concentrated in the "often" and "very often" categories. Other extratextual practices showed greater variability. *Discussion of historical context and discussion of the author* occurred with moderate frequency, typically reported as "sometimes" or "often." *Discussion of the wider reception of the text* exhibited the greatest polarization, with substantial proportions of respondents indicating either very frequent or no engagement.

Intratextual activities, such as making predictions and inferences within a single text, were also reported as occurring frequently, though less consistently than relevance-based extratextual practices. In contrast, *intertextual activities*—including comparing themes and characters across texts—were reported less consistently, with responses clustering around mid-range frequency levels.

Taken together, the findings indicate that literacy instruction is strongly oriented toward *student-centered and relevance-based comprehension practices*, particularly those that emphasize personal experience and contemporary connections. The prominence of text-to-self and text-to-world activities aligns with reader-response and sociocultural perspectives, which position meaning-making as grounded in readers' lived experiences and social contexts (Rosenblatt, 1994; Gee, 2008). These practices are widely associated with increased engagement and accessibility, especially for diverse learners.

Intratextual strategies also appear well embedded in instructional practice, reflecting their foundational role in comprehension development. Skills such as inference-making and prediction are central to cognitive models of reading and are commonly emphasized in comprehension-focused instruction (Kintsch, 1998; Duke & Pearson, 2002).

By contrast, the less frequent and less consistent use of *intertextual, historical, authorial, and reception-oriented practices* suggests that more disciplinary and analytical approaches to reading may be underemphasized. Prior research indicates that these practices require greater instructional scaffolding and subject-matter knowledge, which may limit their routine inclusion in classroom instruction (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). The polarization observed in discussions of textual reception further suggests variation in pedagogical orientation, with some classrooms engaging deeply in interpretive and cultural analysis while others omit this dimension entirely.

Overall, the results point to an instructional landscape in which engagement and relevance are prioritized, while opportunities for cross-textual comparison and historically grounded analysis occur less systematically. While relevance-based strategies support motivation and comprehension, balancing them with intertextual and contextual approaches may better support the development of higher-order analytical skills and disciplinary literacy.

The survey results identify key challenges teachers face when teaching intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections in literary analysis (Fig. 8). The most frequently reported challenge was a lack of appropriate teaching materials, indicated by 64% of respondents. This was followed by a lack of professional development opportunities, reported by 54% of teachers. Fewer respondents cited limited curriculum time (21%) and students' reading comprehension levels (17%) as significant challenges. These findings suggest that material resources and teacher training are primary barriers to effective instruction of literary connections in Macedonian primary schools. The predominance of reported material shortages underscores the need for the development and dissemination of targeted teaching resources that facilitate the integration of intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections. Equally important is the substantial proportion of teachers citing insufficient professional development, highlighting a gap in ongoing training that could enhance pedagogical strategies and teacher confidence in this area. The lower emphasis on limited curriculum time and students' reading abilities suggests that while these factors are relevant, they are less critical obstacles compared to resource and training deficits. Addressing these challenges through comprehensive professional development programs and improved material provision could support more consistent and effective teaching practices, ultimately enhancing students' literary analytical skills.

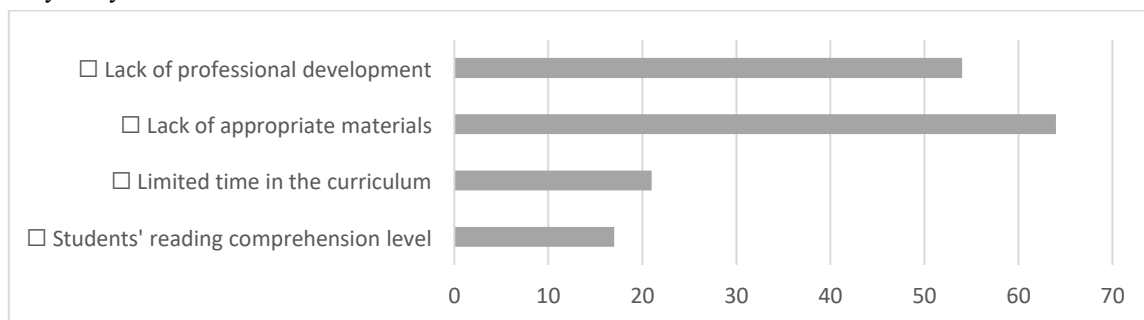


Figure 8. Challenges that teachers face when employing textual connections

The results presented in Figure 9 indicate that the intervention is associated with multiple educational benefits. Deepened comprehension emerged as the most strongly endorsed outcome, suggesting that the approach effectively supports meaning construction and higher-level engagement with content, in line with constructivist learning perspectives. The high rating for critical thinking further indicates that the intervention promotes higher-order cognitive processes, including analysis and evaluation, which are widely recognized as essential educational outcomes.

Encouraging curiosity was also rated positively, reflecting the intervention's potential to foster intrinsic motivation and exploratory learning. In contrast, literacy development showed a more moderate impact, suggesting that literacy gains may be more indirect or require longer-term implementation. Overall, the findings

indicate that the intervention is particularly effective in enhancing comprehension and critical thinking, while highlighting literacy development as a potential area for further instructional support.

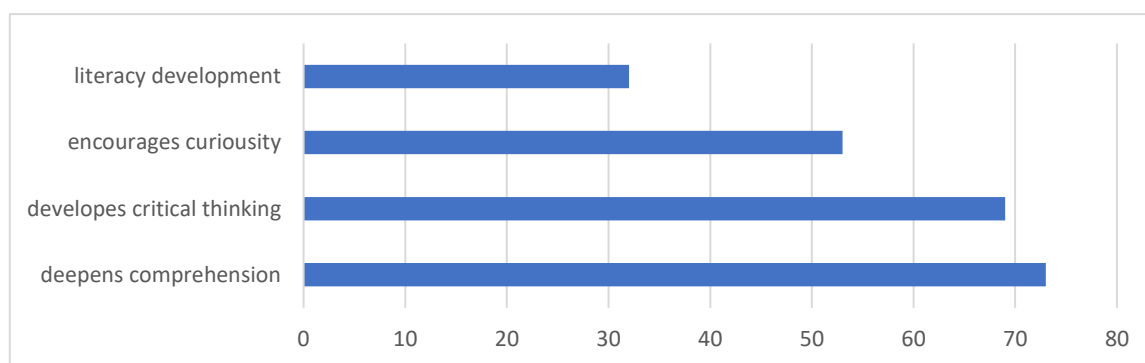


Figure 9. Advantages of making textual connections

Conclusion

The research indicated that Macedonian language teachers actively employ a range of textual connections in literary instruction; however, the extent and nature of their use vary considerably by connection type. While intratextual and extratextual connections are widely and consistently encouraged across grade levels, intertextual connections are used less frequently and show a statistically significant association with students' age. This suggests that teachers tend to reserve more complex cross-textual analysis for older primary students, likely due to its higher cognitive demands and the need for more advanced interpretive skills.

Survey results further reveal that although teachers report moderate to high theoretical familiarity with intertextual, intratextual, and extratextual connections, this knowledge is not consistently translated into explicit instructional practice. The finding that the vast majority of teachers do not systematically teach students to identify these connections points to a disconnect between conceptual awareness and pedagogical implementation. This gap underscores the need for targeted professional development that moves beyond theoretical understanding toward practical, classroom-ready strategies.

The study also highlights a strong instructional emphasis on relevance-based extratextual practices, particularly text-to-self and text-to-world connections. While such approaches align with reader-response and sociocultural theories and effectively support student engagement and motivation, the less consistent integration of historical, authorial, and reception-oriented contexts may limit opportunities for deeper disciplinary and critical analysis. Similarly, the predominance of narrative genres—especially novels and short stories—suggests both the strengths of current practice and opportunities to broaden textual repertoires through greater inclusion of poetry, informational texts, and multimodal materials.

Teachers' reported challenges further contextualize these findings. The lack of appropriate teaching materials and insufficient professional development emerged as the primary barriers to more systematic instruction of textual connections, outweighing concerns related to curriculum time or students' reading abilities. Addressing these structural and institutional constraints is therefore essential for fostering more balanced and effective literary instruction.

Synthesizing these findings, the results suggest that while current practices successfully promote engagement, comprehension, and critical thinking, there remains considerable potential for strengthening intertextual instruction and for achieving a more balanced integration of all three types of textual connections. Future research should explore longitudinal effects of explicit instruction in textual connections, examine classroom practices through observational methods, and investigate how targeted professional development and resource provision can enhance teachers' instructional confidence and consistency. Such efforts would contribute to more robust literary analysis practices and support the development of higher-order literacy skills among primary school students.

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