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## **Trabajo Fin de Grado**

# **CONFLICT AS AN INTRINSIC AND CONSTRUCTIVE ELEMENT IN THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED IN PRIMARY EDUCATION ENGLISH TEACHING**

**El conflicto como elemento intrínseco y constructivo en  
las relaciones sociales involucradas en la enseñanza del  
inglés en Educación Primaria**

**Student: Belén Cazorla Álvarez**

Supervisor: Esteban Francisco López Medina

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## **RESUMEN**

El conflicto es una realidad intrínseca tanto en la sociedad como en el contexto educativo. Concretamente en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, se ven involucrados varios grupos que interactúan, dando lugar a disputas. En esta realidad el conflicto se manifiesta a partir de diversas fuentes: creencias educacionales, ansiedad por el idioma extranjero, cultura, trabajo en grupo, deberes, expectativas académicas y percepción de la autoridad. No obstante, de acuerdo con la literatura actual, el conflicto tiene un carácter constructivo que se puede trabajar en los centros a partir de técnicas de resolución de conflictos: reglas de convivencia, consenso, conciliación, negociación, mediación y talleres de resolución de problemas. Así, se mejora la convivencia y se consigue un clima más cómodo, beneficiando el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. También se incluye en este documento un proyecto que organiza el trabajo del conflicto en el aula transversalmente. A partir de las perspectivas macro y micro se plantea un enfoque didáctico del conflicto en las áreas que usan el inglés como medio de enseñanza. Se concluye recalcando la importancia de trabajar aspectos personales y emocionales en la educación.

## **ABSTRACT**

Conflict is an intrinsic reality both in society and in the educational context. Specifically in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language, various interacting groups are involved, giving rise to disputes. In this reality, conflict manifests itself from a variety of sources: educational beliefs, foreign language anxiety, culture, group work, homework, academic expectations and perceptions of authority. However, according to current literature, conflict has a constructive character that can be worked on in schools using conflict resolution techniques: rules of coexistence, consensus, conciliation, negotiation, mediation and problem-solving workshops. In this way, coexistence is improved and a more comfortable climate is achieved, benefiting the teaching-learning process. Also, included in this document is a project that organises conflict work in the classroom in a cross-curricular manner. Based on the macro and micro perspectives, a didactic approach to conflict is proposed for the areas that use English as a teaching medium. This paper concludes by stressing the importance of working on personal and emotional aspects in education.

## **PALABRAS CLAVE**

Conflicto, gestión de conflictos, relaciones sociales, Enseñanza del Inglés, Educación Primaria.

## **KEY WORDS**

Conflict, conflict management, social relationships, English as a Foreign Language, Primary Education.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rich diversity inherent to human condition is reflected in the variety of lines of thought, beliefs, interests or personalities that can be identified in the current society. These differences forge a person's identity and as a result, they are a given in social interactions. Although this diversity may enrich interpersonal relations, it is a widely-known fact that it often leads to disputes.

As a matter of fact, *conflict* refers to the “competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons)” (Merriam-Webster, n.d., Definition 2a). According to this definition, it could be understood that social relationships and conflicts are two concepts that cannot be conceived one without the other. Consequently, tensions and disagreements arise in every community where socialisation is present.

Education is not an exception; the educational community is composed of a significant number of individuals with diverse roles who are constantly interacting. Thus, conflicts also occur in schooling contexts. In fact, Jares (1997) claims that conflicts are in schools' everyday nature and could actually be described as a fundamental trait inherent to schools. The convergence of different generations, positions of authority and degrees of experience and training make tensions inevitable. According to Saiti (2015), the phenomenon of conflict could easily be described as ordinary in schools because these centres are believed to be “living” organisations due to the diversity of educationally related groups and the considerable amount of time that these people spend there.

Students, teachers and school administrators are directly involved in the school reality. In addition, there are other agents that strongly influence the teaching and learning process and thus are also implicated in the educational system, such as educational authorities or parents. Disputes often arise between but also within these groups. The social relationships built in the school context might be difficult as they are not free from disagreements and thus tensions could be generated. Nowadays, the current society has undergone a series of social changes that have led to an increase in divisiveness among individuals. Social relationships in schools are becoming more and more complex, hence the remarkable ease with which conflicts occur (Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas, 2011).

English learning and teaching has stopped being a novelty in the last decades. In fact, it has become a widespread reality due to the importance given to this language in the current society (Mahu, 2012). Precisely due to its extended and popular character, numerous people from different education-related realities are involved in the English as a Foreign Language (hereinafter, referred to as 'EFL') teaching. Consequently, conflict is unlikely to be avoided.

The topic of conflict in schools has been widely studied in the education-related literature. However, there are limited resources about the actual case of tensions in the EFL schooling. The fact that English is becoming even more important as time goes by (Nishanthi, 2018) conveys the relative urgency of the matter.

Moreover, as already mentioned, the conflict issue concerns a significant number of members from the educational community. Either by their motivation for English learning and teaching, as occurs with parents and the educational authorities, or by their active role in the process, like in the case of teachers or students (Crystal, 2003). That is why it is extremely important to address the topic focusing on the different social relationships involved in this foreign language teaching. These groups could benefit from some reflection and research on the topic. The more thoughtfully the concept of conflict is explored, the more effective conflict management will be (Ghaffar, 2009).

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons, there are two main motives that could explain the interest in the topic. In the first place, the issue of conflicts in schools lacks a general perspective. Although it has been studied either by focusing on the sources of conflict or on social relationships, the combination of both elements could provide an interesting approach to the topic. Secondly, EFL teaching is extremely popular in the present day. However, the research on the topic often covers approaches, methodologies and class resources. It should be taken into consideration that the teaching and learning process comprises several dimensions, and the social and emotional aspects involved in EFL teaching could be considered as particularly compelling.

This paper aims to address the topic of conflicts in the social relationships involved in EFL teaching in Primary Education from both a theoretical and a practical perspective. For this purpose, an overview of the literature review on the topic is provided, including the legal implications of conflict in education, the main sources of conflict and some conflict management techniques and strategies. The information is used to develop a teaching proposal focused on identifying and effectively managing the tensions that may arise in the learning and teaching process. Finally, a critical reflection is included to link the paper to the Primary Education degree and its competences, to show its limitations and future directions and to introduce some conclusions and a personal reflection.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE DISSERTATION**

### **2.1. General Objectives**

- A. To summarise and integrate the contents which reflect the competences acquired in the Primary Education Teaching Degree.
- B. To apply the content and didactic learning strategies to different areas of knowledge.
- C. To develop reflective (argumentative), critical (analytic and synthetic) and scientific (documented and terminologically accurate) thinking skills.
- D. To develop a project which is at university education level.
- E. To develop skills and techniques for appropriate oral and written communication.
- F. To use ICTs (Information and Communications Technologies) relevant to the teaching profession.

### **2.2. Specific Objectives**

- a) To identify conflict as an intrinsic element with a constructive value in schools and in the educational community and specifically in the English as a Foreign Language environment in Primary Education.
- b) To understand the role of conflict in social relationships and to analyse the main sources of conflict in English as a Foreign Language teaching and learning in Primary Education.
- c) To provide an overview of the main conflict management strategies and techniques and their potential implementation in schools.
- d) To develop an organised proposal in the form of a project in order to approach conflicts in the social relationships involved in English as a Foreign Language teaching in Primary Education.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW / THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of conflict has been widely examined due to its importance from a sociological and developmental perspective. As a result, almost every author who has studied the concept has offered a new definition. For instance, according to Thomas (1992), a conflict is “the process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his” (p.2). Kolb and Putnam (1992) identify it as “conflict may be said to exist when there are real or perceived differences that arise in specific organisational circumstances and that engender emotion as a consequence” (p.3). Appelbaum, Abdallah and Shapiro (1999) state that a conflict is a “process of social interaction involving a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, and other preferences and desires” (p.5).

From all these authors' contributions it could be concluded that conflict is a very difficult term to define. However, there are common elements that could be highlighted. For example, conflict is considered as a social process which is also linked to emotions. Moreover, it is associated to tensions due to differences.

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1977), individuals can be easily influenced by a series of systems in their surrounding environment. At the beginning he determined four levels where these systems can be classified, and some years later he added the fifth one (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). These levels comprise the microsystems, the mesosystems, the exosystems, the macrosystems and the chronosystem. Only the first two are going to be mentioned to illustrate the idea of this paper. The first level includes the microsystems, which are the people closer to the children, such as family, school or peers. The second one refers to the mesosystems, which are the relationships between the microsystems. Consequently, the conflicts between the children and the people closer to them and the ones within those people have a direct impact on the children and by extension on their educational experience.

In 2008, Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols, reported that “in Europe today, there is a desire to improve language learning opportunities for all young people in order to increase European cohesion and competitiveness” (p.10). As a consequence, there has been an exponential increase in the interest in this language and its teaching in all the different educational stages, leading to the involvement of several education-related groups in EFL teaching and thus ensuring that conflict is unavoidable.

However, conflict could be considered as potentially beneficial. Deutsch (1994) refers to a “dual concern” model that considers the “concern for self” and the “concern for the other”, which can be ranked “high”, “low” or “in between”. According to these criteria, this author differentiates three motivational orientations towards conflict: cooperative, individualistic or competitive, and these perceptions will determine the nature of the conflict. Despite its bad



reputation, being conflict often considered as a destructive element, it can also be constructive, leading to beneficial consequences such as problem solving and personal and social changes.

Ghaffar (2009) firmly declares that conflict is necessary. In order to support his affirmation, he provides a series of requisites. For instance he mentions how it helps people to identify, understand and work with diversity. It also contributes to socialisation and interaction by encouraging people's participation and problem awareness and solving. Ghaffar hence believes that conflict is not the problem. He places the emphasis on how disputes are handled. According to him, incompetent conflict management, also in the case of schools, leads to severe and unpleasant consequences.

Throughout this theoretical framework, two main conflict-related aspects will be examined: its intrinsic character and its constructive value. In addition, the following sections are intended to serve as a framework for the didactic proposal later developed. Firstly, in section 3.1., the role of conflict in educational law and its legal implications in teaching will be addressed in order to understand it as an inherent element of education. In section 3.2., the main sources of conflict in the social relationships involved in English teaching in Primary Education will be discussed in order to provide a wide range of specific situations in which this intrinsic element appears in schools. Finally, section 3.3. will show different methods or strategies for learners to acquire some tools on how to resolve conflicts so that its constructive potential can be used.

### **3.1. The legal implications of conflict in education**

Conflicts are introduced in the Spanish educational legislation on countless occasions. Both conflict prevention and resolution are considered in Primary Education according to the diverse laws that regulate the learning and teaching process in this stage.

The educational law regulating the current academic year is the *Ley Orgánica por la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa*, or LOMCE, although there is a more recent law in the country. The latter will be implemented in the following academic years and it will be introduced later in this section. The LOMCE includes conflict and its management as an essential principle and it is specified for each of the educational stages in the system. Moreover, Article 124, "*normas de organización, funcionamiento y convivencia*", establishes that schools have to have a document that ensures a healthy environment and students being respected (Ley Orgánica 8/2013).

The Autonomous Community of Madrid's legislation also contemplates the issue. Firstly, it is mentioned in the Decree for the Primary Education Curriculum. It is in the article 4, where the objectives of the stage are established. The law states that along Primary Education children are supposed to acquire the necessary skills for the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts, which will allow them to function autonomously in the domestic environment, as well

as in the social groups in which they interact. Besides, the prevention and resolution of conflicts are also introduced as cross-curricular elements, as a present feature in several subjects and as a whole-stage content and standard. They are deemed as essential to learn how to live in society, cooperatively and respecting diversity (Decreto 89/2014).

In 2016 the Community of Madrid published a more specific decree with regulations to create a commission in charge of school coexistence (*Observatorio para la Convivencia Escolar*). Its main objective is to coordinate the prevention and resolution of conflicts in schools. The document establishes the involvement of representatives from all the groups in the educational community: parents, teachers, students, headmasters, authorities, administration, health service and social policies... The commission serves as an educational resource which designs action plans and regulations for dealing with conflicts (Decreto 58/2016).

In 2019, another document was published in Madrid: a decree for the regulation of coexistence in schools which establishes the rights and duties of all those involved in the educational process. This decree mentions the coexistence plan (*Plan de Convivencia*) as a compulsory part of the annual plan of schools. It establishes the values and specific measures to prevent and resolve conflicts, but also to deal with those who disobey the rules. Moreover, an annual evaluation of the plan and the coexistence in the centre will be carried out. Besides, the decree determines the creation of a "coexistence commission" in each school (Decreto 32/2019).

Finally, as mentioned above, there is the latest Spanish educational law, which is yet to be implemented. It introduces a series of changes with respect to the previous legislation. The LOMLOE (*Ley Orgánica de Modificación de la Ley Orgánica de Educación*) mentions the importance of mediation in conflict management and the acceleration of the procedures for the conflicts resolution in schools (Ley Orgánica 3/2020)

It could be concluded that conflicts are given enough importance at least in the theoretical dimension of the educational system in Spain. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in the EFL subject, it is introduced as a cross curricular element and a present reality inside and outside the school. The aim is to provide students with resources so they are able to deal with these tensions. However, to be able to work on them, conflicts should be understood and explored.

### **3.2. Sources of conflict**

Conflicts and their causes need to be identified in order to prevent them and to reach an optimal resolution. There are many sources of conflict related to the teaching of English as a foreign language, but following extensive research on the subject, the most common ones have been selected from the literature in the field and included in this section. All of these causes are addressed in relation to the social relationships potentially involved in the conflict.

### **3.2.1. Educational beliefs**

It has already been stated the essential role that has been given to the English language in the current society (Mahu, 2012). In the last decades, the educational paradigms for second language teaching have changed. Consequently, many programmes have been developed and studied with different theories supporting their principles (Lin, 2008). Experts have carried out research with the aim of finding the most effective approaches to meet the social demands. The obtained results have been useful for schools to implement several initiatives for EFL. Besides, parents are concerned with the English issue because they look for their children's best interest in a society that aims to achieve multilingualism (Council of Europe, 2014).

As a matter of fact, one of the many causes of tension in education is that these people from different realities feel the better prepared to give an opinion on how EFL teaching should be. It is often forgotten that it is necessary to negotiate and agree on some obligations and rights. Resistance and demandingness are detrimental to the teachers-parents relationship, unintentionally affecting children (Larrosa Martínez & García-Fernández, 2014).

There are several ways in which parents can be involved. For instance, they can communicate with the teachers and even visit the centre or volunteer for school activities. At home they can help to develop priorities and they provide supervision. In the specific case of EFL, parents can support extracurricular activities, illustrate the importance of education, and also helping learners to develop habits, like establishing TV norms and reading to children. Both can be done through the foreign language to provide English input (Ballantine, 1999).

Several authors have studied the correlation between parents' involvement and children's educative process. Pena (2000) stated that the general atmosphere in the school becomes more positive and the learning climate is better, improving teacher efficacy. Thijs and Eilbracht (2012) mentioned how students whose parents care about their education develop healthier relationships with their teachers and hence reduce the occurrence of conflicts. Moreover, their academic performance is better, their attitudes towards the school become more positive and they are cognitively more perceptive. Besides, parents' involvement will probably imply building a close and friendly relationship with the teachers, which positively affects the children due to the importance these two groups and their relationship have in their development from an ecological point of view (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Conversely, conflicts between these two groups of educators are inevitable but they can be aggravated if there is not a strong partnership. These tensions directly affect students' performance and attitudes towards the teachers and their education, limiting their success opportunities (Lasater, 2016).

Amelio (2019) states that there are some tensions between parents and teachers regarding the values each group wants to transmit. She maintains that teachers' actions in primary

education directly or indirectly convey their sets of beliefs, which may not coincide with the parents'. She determined four potential conflicts. Firstly, parents criticising teachers' lessons without foundation. It may also be the case that parents do not consider the English lessons as relevant and therefore teachers feel undervalued. Thirdly, parents may believe their children's versions of disputes and thus they automatically dismiss teachers' own perspectives. Lastly, teachers feel frustrated with parents' lack of interest when decisions have to be made. However, Hiatt (1994) claims that tensions also arise when parents are actually interested, because of the role each group assumes towards educational decisions. Teachers may consider themselves as the most qualified to establish the best educational experience and parents defend their position as decision makers in children's education.

Lake and Billingsley (2000) reported that when parents and teachers do not share the same perspective about learners' necessities, tensions arise. Disagreements are unavoidable, but power struggles, breaking trust and depreciating the other group instead of maintaining a conciliation attitude do not contribute to conflict solving. Knopf and Swick (2007) presented the existence of several stereotypes about parents' involvement. For instance, parents may be believed "not to care" whereas they just demonstrate it differently. It might also be thought that they do not have time or motivation to be involved. However, this could be changed if they had a meaningful relationship with the teacher. The last stereotype states that parents are not interested in leadership roles, without considering that sometimes they are not even offered this role. Undoubtedly, these misconceptions may lead to conflicts in the EFL subject context.

Christenson (2004) proposes several barriers in the parent-teacher relationship that may act as conflict triggers. Some examples are stereotypes, families adopting a passive role in the educational process, teachers' lack of interest in parents' wishes and beliefs, fear of interaction or conflict, an accusative and win-lose attitude when decisions are made, differences about children's performance and unwillingness to hold different values and beliefs.

Conflicts are also likely to occur in the teacher-student relationships as each group's opinions may not always coincide. Nair et al. (2014) proved that students understand the important role English has nowadays and this fact affects their motivation and their attitude towards EFL. Learners with strong positive views are more likely to experience an effective learning process. It could be deduced then that those students who do not find the English language as useful may develop a negative attitude that leads to tensions and disagreements in the classroom.

In the particular case of Spain, Pérez Murillo's (2013) results proved that Spanish students are aware of the importance the English language has in the current society. Even though they consider this foreign language as useful for their future career, they think that they do not have opportunities to speak in English outside the school. Acknowledging Spain as a monolingual

country in most of its regions, learners know their effort has to be harder. As the author's research demonstrated, learners' perception of their low proficiency makes some of them dislike the foreign language. The extra effort and their self-evaluation can act as conflict sources, especially if the teacher is oblivious to the students' perceptions.

### **3.2.2. Foreign language anxiety**

It is widely known that language learning and acquisition go accompanied by affective factors (Arnold, 2011). Besides, in Spain, English is studied as a foreign language. As a consequence, there are a series of affective factors that appear while this language is learnt but not when the mother tongue is acquired, language anxiety being one of the most frequent ones.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis for second language acquisition is widely recognised thanks to Krashen's contributions and how he incorporated it into his famous five Hypotheses (1982): the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the comprehensible input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. According to him, these emotional factors, the "affective filter", influence language acquisition and how the learners receive the input they need, making it more comprehensible and hence useful. It is thus necessary to aim for a comfortable environment where learners develop a low filter.

Du (2009) compiles Krashen's contributions and mentions four groups into which affective factors in second language acquisition are summarised: attitude, motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. The latter is divided into three components in learning contexts. Firstly, communication apprehension, which is associated to interaction and certain personality traits. Secondly, test anxiety, which is related to assessment and the learner's self-assessment. Lastly, fear of negative evaluation, linked to the opinions and expectations of others.

Chan and Wu (2004) carried out their investigation in different elementary schools in Taiwan and their conclusions were that children feel anxious in five different situations: assessment-related settings, speaking in front of people, incomprehensible input, spelling and speaking to native speakers. They also introduced some sources of anxiety, such as low proficiency, anxious personality or pressure from students themselves.

After summarising the main ideas related to foreign language anxiety, it is necessary to relate these findings to the conflict issue and the social relationships where it can be found. In this case, parents, students and teachers could be all involved in this particular source of conflict.

The teacher-student conflict regarding foreign language anxiety may be the most noticeable one as it is commonly found in the classrooms. Even if it may be treated as obvious, teachers' awareness of these feelings cannot be taken for granted. Chan and Wu (2004) proved in their research that teachers seem unconscious of this reality or if they are, they tend to

underestimate it. A teacher-centred approach where students do not have an active role, teachers' criticism or the way they correct students and indicate their mistakes is often a source of tensions, as it contributes to increase students' anxiety (Huang, 2012). It could also happen that teachers mistakenly attribute some students' low proficiency to lack of skills, motivation or a deficient background, instead of taking into consideration language anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986), which leads to disagreements and incomprehension and causing conflicts.

Parents-students conflicts should also be considered regarding these apprehension feelings. Their participation and involvement in their children's education has proven to be directly related to the learners' anxiety. It could work both in favour and against it. In the first case, Chan and Wu (2004)'s study reported that parents' expectations or their lack of support could lead to the increase of apprehension and consequently to a potential environment for conflict.

### **3.2.3. Culture**

Learning a foreign language definitely implies being in contact with a different culture (Mazari & Derraz, 2015). In many schools today this cultural approach is adopted in both an implicit and an explicit way in language teaching. Thus, culture is an inherent element of the EFL subject in the Primary Education schools. Consequently, it may be a source of conflict where teachers, students and even parents are involved.

Molina (2011) carried out an interesting research about cultural differences. In her study she collected data from 32 schools in Spain and Portugal by conducting a series of interviews to people from five different sectors in the educational reality: students, parents, teachers, administrators and secretarial and maintenance personnel. For the purpose of this paper only the results of the first three groups will be mentioned.

All students were considered as a single group even though they came from different stages (the last years of Primary and Secondary Education). For this reason, it is impossible to know exactly what the elementary students said. However, the lack of differentiation means that there were not salient responses from them. The most relevant findings were that students do observe differences in attitudes towards foreign students and that language definitely acts as a barrier to communication. Parents' results showed that they think that foreign students slow down the class' pace and only half of the interviewed ones proposed ideas for cultural activities for the schools. Finally, teachers commented some facts that occur in everyday situations regarding culture. According to them, foreign students tend to be more reserved or shy and the major barrier is the language. They also talked about differences between the students' parents, noticing that foreign ones tend to be less involved in the schools' dynamics.

From the above-mentioned research it can be concluded that cultural differences can be a source of student-student, teacher-student, teacher-parents and parent-parent conflict in Spanish schools. Moreover, language was given an important role in the causes of foreign students' difficulties. English would be the second or the third language most foreign students face so their shyness increases and their self-assessment of their language performance deteriorates. Thus, these conflicts also occur and are even aggravated in the EFL classroom.

Al-Issa (2005) introduces the idea that culture does not only refer to language but also to social patterns, norms and behaviours for interaction. These non-linguistic differences could lead to disputes between teachers and students and within students, especially when a third language like English is introduced. In fact, this author considers the teacher-student relationship as a cultural element and consequently an area where cultural differences could be spotted.

Besides Molina's research, Pena's contribution (2000) also supports the idea that those parents with a different cultural background do not have the same participation as the rest of the parents. Their involvement is affected by these differences and their perception about them. This fact could lead to consequences such as teachers interpreting it as indifference or lack of effort or even parents feeling frustrated, discouraged or not understood.

Finally, it should be emphasised that cultural differences do not necessarily go associated to conflicts. It may be the case that teachers do not feel that they understand their students' culture and therefore become anxious and that is what causes conflict (Palmer, 2015).

#### **3.2.4. Group work**

Group work is a clear example of a situation where a socialisation process takes place as all parts have to interact to each other. The extensive literature review about the topic usually explores the benefits and the disadvantages of this collaborative approach. However, this section will focus on the group work in EFL lessons and only the aspects related to the potential conflicts that may arise between students will be covered.

Every language learner has a different story, personality and life experience which significantly affect their English learning. As a consequence, classes are quite heterogeneous in terms of the students' level of English. This diversity can be perfectly seen during group work and is often a source of many different types of tensions. Alfares (2017) conducted a study designed to know students' opinions about group work. His results regarding the difficulties students experience when working with others were interesting regarding potential conflicts. This author reported that mixed-ability groups often lead to those students with a higher level being continuously asked for help and thus end up frustrated, not benefited from group tasks and they might neglect their own learning and participation. It can also happen to the contrary,

where students with a lower level do not feel helped and thus feel ignored. In both cases conflicts may arise. Besides, shyness and its consequent lack of participation often cause tensions when doing collaborative tasks.

Chan and Wu (2004) suggest that group work can generate conflict in two ways. Firstly, they explain that collaborative tasks are related to students' "fear of negative evaluation", in this case from their classmates. Students may feel ashamed when they have to show their oral or written work especially in the second or third language, as the others sometimes make fun about it. Also according to these authors, competition between groups when games are introduced in the lessons may lead to clashes over each students' contribution to the activity. Students blame each other when they do not win the game or put pressure on each other making them nervous and anxious.

### **3.2.5. Homework**

Homework is defined as "any work or activities which learners are asked to do outside school time, either on their own or with parents or carers" (Kidwell, 2004, p.6). It could be considered a widely debated matter in the last years and one of the most controversial issues in education.

Although it may seem a student-centred aspect, parents and teachers are also implicated on it, including the tasks from the EFL subject. Firstly, parents are involved in their children's homework due to three motives: their belief that they have to participate on it, their potential contribution leading to better results and what they consider as invitations to be involved. Their contribution often comprises two types of activities: "basic obligations" like interacting with the teacher about the homework; and "involvement in learning activities at home", such as trying to help the learners to understand (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). Second, teachers are responsible for designing, planning and setting the assignments but also for checking the homework and provide feedback (comments, marking...) (Rosário et al., 2015). Conflicts between these education-related groups are unavoidable considering the controversial nature of homework and the fact that many people from different realities are involved on the issue.

Ávila Daza and Garavito (2009) observed that parents' assistance with their children's tasks positively affected the students' EFL learning process and lead to both parents and children interacting collaboratively and learning from each other. However, the authors highlighted the fact that one of the major reasons why families do not work together was the parents' lack of time. Conversely, Alanne and Macregor (2007) established that homework may leave students without leisure activities and family time. Because of these two potential situations, the household becomes a place of increasing stress and rising tensions.



Language is also one of the main reasons why parents-students conflicts arise over EFL homework. English is a foreign language for most students and by extension for their parents. Cojocariu and Mares (2014) describe in their research “the main barriers to parental involvement” (p.654), and they include the fact that parents’ insecurity about their skills and knowledge to help their children is a factor that conditions their involvement. Parents who are not fluent in the language find it more difficult to get involved (Thelamour & Jacobs 2014).

Parents can assist their children with their EFL homework beyond helping them to complete the tasks. Hurtado Torres and Castañeda-Peña (2016) mentioned how parents provide students with information through interactions and materials for their EFL learning. Besides, they support learners emotionally, promoting the development of positive attitudes towards EFL and organising the homework conditions. Therefore, if parents’ attitudes towards the language or the subject are hostile, children will adopt them, negatively affecting their tasks .

The homework issue is also one of the clearest causes of students-teacher conflicts in schools. According to Kidwell (2004), learners often consider their homework boring, excessive and unreasonable. Moreover, they may find themselves incapable of doing it or they might consider it as an evidence of their weaknesses and lack of language skills. Piaget (1964) established that learning is subordinated to development, hence why children may feel frustrated if they are unable to do the exercises when they are not cognitively ready. These feelings of stress are projected onto homework and teachers. Davidovitch and Yavich (2017) also wrote some reasons why students reject tasks. Firstly, they are linked to children’s self-esteem, with them getting nervous and anxious when they are corrected aloud and when teachers check their completion. Learners become dependent on the teacher’s approval. Secondly, homework has been used as a punishment and thus a negative connotation has been attached to it. Besides, quantity has been a widely debated part of homework, as students may feel overwhelmed by the time they spend doing it and their motivation decreases (Valle et al., 2015).

Amiryousefi (2016) conducted research aimed to know teachers’ and students’ perception about homework, specifically about the EFL assignments. His results evidenced that although students usually understand the need for homework, they think that the tasks are often boring, mechanical or do not fulfil their teaching purpose. Besides, they do not believe that their tasks prepare them for meaningful interactions as they prioritise a grammatical approach rather than a communicative one where listening and speaking skills are considered. On the other hand, teachers often feel like their students do not devote time to doing the exercises or do not take them seriously. It is obvious then that conflicts are likely to occur as both learners and teachers have different stances and often lose sight of the other group’s necessities and desires.

Finally, parents-teachers conflicts are also common in the homework issue. Patall, Cooper and Robinson (2008) stated that it is in early stages when parents' involvement truly affects learners. All parents have an opinion on how homework should be. In fact, parents even question whether there should be tasks at all. Amiryousefi (2016) collected information on the subject and presented the perspectives of both proponents and opponents of the issue. The main benefits are the assistance they give for the students' learning, their positive impact on the learners' academic performance and the information they provide for parents and teachers about the children's progress and characteristics. On the other hand, there are some drawbacks such as the facts that it takes a significant amount of time, it may not match the students' academic and personal necessities and its consideration as a stress source, as a cause of demotivation for learning and as a discriminatory factor for disadvantaged children.

It can also happen that parents' role regarding homework may lead to tensions. They may feel uncomfortable being the ones forcing the children to complete the assignments or they may not know when they are not helping students as much as they should or on the contrary, if they are helping too much (Kohn, 2007). Epstein (2010) mentioned the lack of communication and parents consequently feeling uninformed about the tasks and the help they can provide, the absence of resources at home or the parents being untrained for helping their children.

### **3.2.6. Academic expectations**

Children's educational success is generally measured by levels of academic achievement. Independently of it being high or low, this achievement determines career opportunities, strengths and weaknesses and social status. Consequently, grades are considered highly relevant, although there are some learning experiences which cannot be measured and are thus commonly forgotten (Bisquerra Alzina, Pérez González & García Navarro, 2015).

Parents are related to a greater or less extent to their children's education. It could be deduced then that they can be interested in the students' academic achievement and therefore in marks and results. In some cases their expectations are extreme, either because they are too low or because they are too high. Both situations can cause conflicts because primary education students' academic achievement is significantly affected by psychosocial elements and factors like parents' support, as Peralta Sánchez and Sánchez Roda's research proved (2003). This idea is supported by Ballantine (1999), who stated that what parents state and do shows the importance they give to education. These beliefs will affect the students' own principles and parents' expectations will be transmitted to the children, who will assume them as their own.

Pressure by parents' expectations was identified as a foreign language anxiety source by the Chan and Wu (2004). If parents do not appropriately encourage their children and become

involved in their education, this anxiety is not going to be reduced. Children need to perceive their parents' support instead of feeling pressured to achieve high academic attainment.

Parenting styles have been widely studied in the literature about children's development. In this section only the investigations related to parents' academic expectations for their children are covered. As cited in Torío López, Peña Calvo and Rodríguez Menéndez (2008), Baumrind was the first researcher to formulate a theoretical proposal in 1967 about the patterns parents follow when educating their children and the consequences they have on children. She stated that there are three parenting styles which differ in control, affect and communication: authoritarian discipline, permissive discipline or authoritative discipline. However, this author's theory was reformulated in 1983 by MacCoby and Martin (as cited in Torío López, Peña Calvo and Rodríguez Menéndez, 2008). They proposed two criteria for classifying the different learning styles: demandingness and control and responsiveness and affect. Besides, they redefined Baumrind's styles introducing an additional one. According to these authors, parents can be authoritative (high demandingness and high responsiveness), authoritarian (high demandingness and low responsiveness), permissive (low demandingness and high responsiveness) and neglectful or uninvolved (low demandingness and low responsiveness). The level of demandingness is closely ligated to their expectations. Parents who have high levels of demandingness are more likely to bring their children into conflict.

### **3.2.7. Authority perception**

Authority is a difficult concept to define, especially in schools where there are multiple perspectives on what it is and how it should be represented. Indeed, this complexity is one of the most common sources of tensions in education. In this section potential conflicts will be analysed with the focus on teachers due to the importance of their role in the authority issue.

First of all, it should be remarked that nowadays teachers are being constantly questioned, not only by parents and students, but also by media, politics, experts and by the society in general. Their profession has changed, losing the prestige and social recognition it had. Teachers are not trusted as easily and intrinsically and they do not inspire the same conviction (Tahull Fort & Montero Plaza, 2013). English teachers are even less valued nowadays, as can be seen in the constant pressure they have to ensure a prestigious education. Conflicts arise when teachers are unable to respond to parents' demands and expectations. As Díaz, Fernández, Gómez and Halbach highlighted (2005), English teachers feel insecure about whether they are valued by parents, students or school administrators. Besides, they do not feel that the effort they make to introduce bilingual programs is appreciated by other members in the community.

Prior to describing authority-related conflicts, it is required to contextualise the reality in Spain. *El Defensor del Profesor* is a national service where teachers can report those situations where

they need assistance. In the 2019-2020 academic course, this service registered 1594 cases. 40% of these cases occurred in the Primary Education stage (El Defensor del Profesor, 2020). The most common problems were disrespecting the teacher, teacher harassment and administrative problems. Pereda, Prada and Actis (2010) also collected the most frequent situations in Spain. For instance, parents demanding a more individualised attention for their children, teachers' harassment or parents blindly believing their children's version, so students feel more powerful and do what they want, with teachers' authority being hard to perceive. All those situations where parents or teachers are discredited or undermined end up in conflict.

Regarding the parent-teacher relationship, authority often appears as a power struggle between two groups who are interested in the children's EFL education but consider their own role, perception and expertise as the most valuable one. It may be the case that one group feels dismissed or directly brushed aside. A lack of trust leads to both sides disrespecting each other and considering the other as unable to educate the children (Knopf & Swick, 2007).

In the case of student-teacher authority-related conflicts in the classroom, as the following research will prove, it is less common in the Primary Education stage than in the subsequent years. For elementary students, teachers are their mentors, instructors, care givers but also disciplinarians. A negative relationship with the teacher is a barrier, whereas a positive one acts as a motivator, encouraging social, behavioural and academic competences (Davis, 2001).

Although power and authority have been used interchangeably, they are not synonyms. Pace and Hemmings (2005) describe authority as a "social construction" all the members in the educational community help to construct. Lago and Roso (2017) stated that the ideal authority is constructed by teachers themselves due to their subject knowledge, their expertise, their personal charisma and their role in the school. In the particular case of EFL teaching, having a foreign language as a mean of instruction raises learners' anxiety, negatively affecting their learning. Besides, teachers act as "speakers" due to their language skills, while the learners have a "hearer" role. Thus, language teachers gain more authority in the lessons (Chen, 2017).

According to Lago and Roso (2017), an abusive control where children are put aside does not contribute to an environment where learners feel comfortable enough to make the most of the learning experience. Moreover, strict disciplinary measures reinforce negative attitudes and the role of conflictive students. Thus, students' self-esteem is affected and their academic performance becomes deteriorated. However, conflicts also arise when the discipline that the authority has established is not respected.

In relation to parents' opinions about how this authority issue should be managed in the school, it is necessary to first establish that the perception of how teachers' authority should be has changed greatly in the last decades. Nowadays, what parents seem to agree on is that

“authority extremes” should be avoided. Teachers should not be so authoritarian that children learn out of fear nor so lax that they act as friends to students (Pereda, Prada & Actis, 2010). The best option for both students and teachers is a half-way point between these two postures.

Finally, educational conflicts related to the perception of authority also occur between teachers. Tahull Fort and Montero Plaza (2015) conducted a series of interviews with teachers, parents and students in Catalonia in order to show a hidden phenomenon: tensions between educators in schools. As a reality that is not acknowledged in schools and is socially unknown, the bibliography on the topic is scarce. This author highlights how most of the teachers interviewed avoided answering questions about intragroup conflicts. However, some of them recognised these problems as a reality nobody wants to acknowledge but is fully well known. Teachers' collaboration is framed by their educational values and perspectives on their profession. These ideas shape their work and occasionally act as conflict sources. It is a problem when it becomes an authority contest between teachers or when they work separately and uncoordinatedly, focusing on their own interests (Tahull Fort & Montero Plaza, 2015).

### **3.3. Conflict management and conflict resolution techniques and strategies**

Schools have fundamental functions in the current society. Educational quality goes beyond the academic dimension, including teaching and learning processes related to personal, affective, social, moral and aesthetic development (Gómez, Matamala & Alcocel, 2002). In fact, interpersonal relations and human behaviours are the base of the educational work in schools (Saiti, 2015). Creating an atmosphere where positive relationships are built and people collaborate together is one of the centres' main purposes. Coexisting in the school reality entails socio-linguistic relationships within and between the groups constituting the community. These interactions have a significant impact on the learners' ethic, socio-affective and cognitive development (García-Hierro & Cubo, 2009). When this coexistence is altered, conflicts between the different groups arise. It is necessary to work on these conflicts to avoid complications, like time making them bigger or causing other people in the community to be implicated and thus affected (Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas, 2011).

Eunson (2011) explained the difference between the concepts of “conflict resolution” and “conflict management”, which tend to be confused. According to this author, the first concept refers to eliminating the conflict by removing its indicators and therefore its causes. The second one implies leveraging the potential benefits of conflicts, eliminating disputes but maintaining the option of making them present if it were necessary. Both management and resolution aim to restrain the destructive elements that accompany conflicts and to provide tools in order to reach a convenient and satisfactory solution for all the parties involved in the process (Thakore, 2013). Johnson and Johnson (1996) supported this idea and established that conflicts are

solved in a constructive way if they fulfil this three conditions: the result is satisfactory for all the participants, they improve the existing relationship between the disputants and they help to develop people's ability to solve future conflicts also with a constructive approach.

In the particular case of schools, conflicts can be potentially positive for group dynamics if they are effectively and correctly managed. Thus, schools should not be considered as unaffiliated to conflict resolution. For instance, Gómez, Matamala and Alcocel (2002) proposed a series of elements that lead to obtaining benefits from conflicts: teacher training in both academic and personal fields, creating a respectful climate with clear rules and conflict management strategies, fostering positive attitudes like accepting diversity, tolerance or responsibility, promoting team-work between educators and introducing social skills in the curriculum. The school atmosphere is modified when conflict resolution and management programs are incorporated, making it more comfortable and supportive (D'Oosterlinck & Broekaert, 2003).

Having established the benefits of conflict resolution, the disadvantages must be highlighted. Conflicts can generate a sense of distress when they are not solved. In the case of students, it can also lead to inappropriate behaviour or lower academic performance. Conflict resolution is essential to avoid an uncomfortable environment (Fernández, 2016).

The teachers' role is essential for ensuring that tensions are addressed and worked with in order to convert them into a meaningful experience and to reach their full potential. Educators are responsible for creating an adequate environment where conflicts are solved, in contrast with the current society where confrontations are constant, individualism and competence are promoted and interpersonal relationships are deteriorated (Narejo & Salazar, 2002).

Prevention and solving plans help with any potential crisis. However, along the years many experts have contributed to the research developing or compiling other authors' techniques and as a consequence there are many techniques and approaches that can be employed in the schools. For instance, Pérez Serrano and Pérez de Guzmán Puya (2016) divided these strategies in three groups depending on their finality: analysis and diagnosis, for identifying the conflicts; communication and negotiation, for solving them; and creating a comfortable environment by coexisting together, for building a healthy atmosphere for when conflicts arise.

These authors mentioned a series of criteria and variables that should be considered when choosing the techniques to use in the school (Pérez Serrano & Pérez de Guzmán Puya, 2016, p.73, 74): the objectives that are pursued, the group experience, the context (time and space), the group size, the characteristics of the individuals, the group environment and the level of expertise of the coordinator (in this case the teacher or the school administration).

Saiti (2015) examined the research on the topic and determined that conflict resolution enables schools to work properly and uneventfully. She compiled several authors' contributions on the topic and reformulated five approaches to conflict handling modes: avoidance, compromise, collaboration or integration, forcing or competing and smoothing or accommodating.

In this section the most popular management and resolution techniques and strategies are described. These practices could be used for managing conflicts and making them a constructive element in the social relationships involved in Primary Education English teaching.

### **3.3.1. Rules of coexistence**

Coexisting goes beyond sharing a common place. It implies respecting the other and looking for the common good. Therefore, it is necessary to share a normative system which ensures the optimal conditions for living together (Herrera Torres & Bravo Antonio, 2011).

In every school there is an official regulation that establishes the basic rules that should be followed by teachers, students, parents and the rest of the members in the community. These norms are based on certain values, which are indirectly taught, and reflected on specific actions in the classroom and the school. Besides, the coexistence principles aim to reflect the centre's educative character and its educational project. They are supported by moral principles based on human rights, they follow the current educational legislation and they should be expressed clearly (Fernández, 2016). Due to their role as prevention agents in conflicts, they are included in this section about management techniques.

Pérez de Guzmán, Amador and Vargas (2011) collected information from 41 Spanish schools and both teachers and students stated that norms contribute to building a comfortable atmosphere where all members coexist together. However, these authors mentioned some conditions that must be considered. Norms have to be understandable, clear and coherent. All the members in the community must be aware of the rules and the potential repercussions of any infraction. Children have to be comfortable but within the coexistence norms to create a space where the people feel safe. Thus, it is indispensable that norms are established respecting the children but also encouraging them to respect their classmates, teachers and the rest of the school personnel (Lago & Roso, 2017). In schools, rules regulate people's behaviours and contribute to their personal development. By incorporating these rules, students facilitate the school's and the classroom's smooth running (Pérez Pérez, 1999).

It is also particularly advantageous for the school to involve students in the rules formulation instead of just imposing them. As a consequence, the norms will be more concrete and better respected and obeyed. Lago and Roso (2017) agreed on the importance of exchanging a teacher-students vertical perspective for a horizontal one where dialogue is present. However,

as Pérez Pérez (1999) indicates, it is considered essential to differentiate between the development of the rules where students can be active participants and the enforcement of the regulations, which is exclusive responsibility of teachers. Besides, according to these authors there are some errors when teaching norms as attitudinal contents. For example, rules are not seen as preventive measures but as procedures to follow once the conflicts have arisen, so students do not learn as much from them as they could.

### **3.3.2. Consensual decision making**

Even though this technique is not the most popular strategy in conflict management, it is also considered in the literature on the topic. Although the following authors did not explicitly relate this tactic to the school context, it is easily extrapolated to the reality in the educational centres.

Firstly it is necessary to understand the meaning behind “consensual decision making”. Crawford and Bodine (1996) consider it as a process in group problem solving which involves the participation of all the concerned parties and may or may not involve a neutral intermediary. These groups (or their representatives) work together to design an agreed plan of action which aims to solve the conflict. Consequently, all the parties’ interests are recognised and taken into consideration when reaching for the optimal solution. Appelbaum, Abdallah and Shapiro (1999) affirmed that interests-related disagreements complicate the consensual decision making process. What is salient from this specific management technique is the emphasis on interest differences. For example, it should be highlighted that what a group considers as a necessary condition may be a detriment for the others. Dialogue thus is deemed as essential.

### **3.3.3. Conciliation**

Although it is not as popular or well-known as other techniques, this conciliation strategy also contributes to conflict management and resolution. This procedure requires consulting an impartial third party in order to reach an acceptable agreement. Hence, this person solves the dispute by considering each party’s concerns and difficulties (Robinson & Parkinson, 1985).

The people involved in the conflict are empowered to decide by themselves. Its voluntary, flexible and less formal character differentiates it from other procedures (Thakore, 2013). Besides, it involves a third party whose function is to help. These so-called conciliators have a very active role and therefore need a series of skills that were compiled by Deutsch in his research (1994). Firstly, these people have to build the necessary trust to establish a healthy relationship with the parties. Secondly a cooperative problem-solving attitude facilitates the conflict resolution. In the third place the skills related to cooperative and creatively making decisions about the conflicts are necessary. Lastly, conciliators should have certain knowledge about the issues surrounding the conflicts in order to work towards a constructive solution.



### 3.3.4. Negotiation

Negotiation is a more common strategy for conflict management. It is considered a problem-solving process involving two or more parties in conflict who try to reach an agreement. The groups or individuals voluntarily meet face to face without a neutral party with a mediating role in order to solve their disputes. It is necessary to identify each group's needs and interests and engage in a dialogue so they can find beneficial solutions for both parties (Crawford & Bodine, 1996). These groups or individuals can be present or on the contrary they can employ a representative. Moreover, interaction and communication have a central role in negotiating an accord, which may end up being complete or partial (Berger, 2014). Tensions are dealt with through compromises and concessions. There are three situations in which a negotiation process is more likely to be used: with relatively simple conflicts, low-intensity conflicts and with equally-powerful parties (Eunson, 2011).

Negotiation does not necessarily ensure a win-win situation between both parties. It may lead to getting more than what they had at the beginning but also to giving up something which is not deemed as important. In fact, there are two major approaches to negotiating agreements: integrative and distributive bargains. The first one focuses on a collaborative approach where both parties understand and respect each to achieve both groups' objectives. The second one involves a competitive approach where one party wins more than the other (Thakore, 2013).

In their research, Appelbaum, Abdallah and Shapiro (1999) considered four phases of the negotiation process (p.14): establishing the issues and constructing the agenda; the opening moves, with the first demands and revealing the interests; the intensification of the negotiation, where the bargaining and the options examination takes place; and working out an agreement. However, the negotiation phases depend on the author consulted.

Fisher and Ury contributed to the "negotiation" technique with the Harvard Negotiation model in 1983. Together with Patton they introduced new ideas in the revised version of their project (1997). For instance, they added the "principled" negotiation to the already proposed "hard" and "soft" negotiations. Whereas the "hard" implies taking extreme stances, rivalry and a unique winning party, the "soft" means concessions and a friendly atmosphere to reach a common agreement. The "principled" negotiation is hard on the merits and soft on the people. It consists of four basic ideas: people, separating the people from the problem; interests, focusing on them and not on positions; options, thinking of different options with mutual benefits; and criteria, which means that the agreement must be based on objective principles. These authors also introduced the concept of the BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement), which consists in the weaker or the least powerful party having a series of previously established ideas or a fixed plan that serves as a guide to conduct the negotiation.

Besides, these authors mentioned a potential action plan when one of the parties does not play fair: the negotiation jujitsu. This plan implies countering the attacks in a way that focuses on the reasons behind them. When dirty tricks are used, it is important to have previously negotiated a series of norms about how the negotiation process is going to occur.

### **3.3.5. Mediation**

Mediation is probably the most popular technique in conflict management, especially in schools. In the actual case of Spain, it is actually a reality that is expanding in education. Almost 71% of the autonomous regions in the country incorporate it in their regulations: However, 24% still leave behind important aims such as learning and developing personal and social skills, focusing only on reaching a satisfactory agreement (Viana-Orta, 2013).

It is a technique which tends to be used in cases where the parties coexist together or cannot break their relationship, like in schools. Its main objectives are to use communication as a tool for conflict resolution, to build a comfortable environment, to foster cooperative activities, to promote respectful attitudes and to encourage dialogue and active listening (Pérez Serrano & Pérez de Guzmán Puya, 2016). Ordóñez, Delgado, Fernández Martínez and Hervás (2020) mentioned some of its main characteristics, such as learners' freedom of expression, equality between the groups in conflict, the neutrality and impartiality of the members, confidentiality of all the parties involved, willingness to solve the disputes and personalisation of the sessions.

The main feature of mediation is the presence of a mediator, a neutral third party who controls the process but not the result. This person or institution has to be independent and help the groups or the individuals in conflict to reach an agreement mutually beneficial and resolve the differences (Thakore, 2013). It is important that the parties voluntarily resort to this figure, who facilitates the communication, fosters decision-making and avoids conflicts perpetuating indefinitely. This party does not hold the power, does not make decisions or determine a resolution. It is the groups involved who have to be creative and actively participate in reaching a common solution (Pérez Serrano & Pérez de Guzmán Puya, 2016). The mediator decides the structure for discussions and if it were necessary private meetings would be incorporated. The mediator does not need any specific training although it is recommended. However, the ideal person for this role should have knowledge about interpersonal, communicative, legal, conflict and emotional aspects. It is important that the mediator is objective, supportive and non-judgmental, uses astute questioning and has a win-win attitude (Eunson, 2011).

Teachers, parents and students can act as mediators in school disputes. This way, not only conflicts are solved but also certain values are worked with, creating a better atmosphere in the centres and establishing conflict resolution procedures. It is especially beneficial for older students to be the ones in this mediating role. Peer mediation programs are often used in

schools due to their advantages. For example, the process becomes age appropriate and more understanding and emphatic. Students do not feel neither scared nor ashamed as they may be when adults are present. Feeling empowered benefits their self-esteem and discipline, contributing to their commitment to their implemented ideas (Crawford & Bodine, 1996).

There are several mediation models depending on the chosen criteria. For instance, Pérez Serrano and Pérez de Guzmán Puya (2016) talked about distributive mediation, with a win-lose result, and the comprehensive mediation, where both parties work cooperatively so they both win. Ordóñez, Delgado, Fernández Martínez and Hervás (2020) defined the vertical and the horizontal models, depending on who acts as the mediator in student-student conflict, the teacher or a classmate. They also introduced a third model that takes place on the break time.

Finally, there are a series of steps that could be followed in the mediation process. Depending on the author there are variations between these stages. For instance, Pérez Serrano and Pérez de Guzmán Puya (2016) determined seven steps (p.36-37): dialoguing with each party, negotiating with both parties, informing about the situation, organising the information, concretise the different alternatives, consensus and reaching an agreement.

### **3.3.6. Problem solving workshops**

Another strategy for conflict management involves using “problem-solving workshops”. Collaboration is encouraged because the parties are asked to come together and empathise with the others’ ways of thinking and acting. The main objective is to prepare these groups so they are able to analyse the conflict causes and the necessary conditions for its resolution. Thus, an objective and reasonable solution is achieved through mutual communication (Thakore, 2013). The parties involved in the conflict may participate as a group or choose a representative with enough influence in the community. It is a particularly useful strategy when these groups have a shared-conflicts history (Jiménez Bautista & Beltrán Zambrano, 2019).

Crawford and Bodine (1996) exposed in their article that problem solving workshops can be fostered and taught in schools by presenting students with hypothetical conflictive situations where they think of solutions and reach a common decision. Therefore, children can creatively deal with tensions between and within class groups. Students act as active participants in this training which aims to be ideal for their school’s characteristics. The role of teachers is quite noteworthy as they are in charge of modelling those behaviours and values the students need. As Pérez de Guzmán, Amador and Vargas said (2011), for this technique to be effective it is necessary to build a comfortable atmosphere, to identify and discuss the problem and to explore all the existing resolutions. This strategy shows children the consequences of conflicts for them and, in general, for their class and the school. Besides, it encourages critical thinking and the students’ autonomy to become more independent in conflict management.

## **4. EDUCATIONAL PROPOSAL**

In this section an educational proposal is described in order to provide a practical perspective of the real and potential conflicts in the social relationships involved in Primary Education English teaching. The following project, called “Cross-curricular Macro and Micro Conflicts Project”, is supported by the ideas developed in the theoretical framework above explained.

### **4.1. Introduction**

The “Cross-curricular Macro and Micro Conflicts Project” has been designed in order to introduce the issue of conflict prevention and management in schools. Students are provided with tools and resources for dealing with disputes in their lives and at the same time, as Johnson, Johnson, Dudley and Acikgoz (1994) determined, actually training students in constructive conflict management could successfully lead to reducing disputes and improving the school atmosphere.

The project is characterised by introducing the conflict matter from both a micro and a macro perspective in several subjects from a cross-curricular perspective. From a large-scale angle, the students work on conflicts or conflict-related elements from a general point of view or they are presented with common conflicts in the current society while they are taught the subjects' contents. Conflicts need to be considered as common daily situations. This new perception leads to a positive approach, creating an opportunity for learning from disputes and tensions (Ordóñez, Delgado, Fernández Martínez & Hervás, 2020).

Later and from a short-scale angle, what has been learnt from these macro-conflicts is transferred to the school context, which is more familiar for learners. A comfortable climate in schools is related to better academic results and more importantly, to better affective results and a healthier social and personal development (Gómez, Matamala & Alcocel, 2002). Regarding these conflicts in the schools, the project focuses on the main sources and social relationships involved in Primary Education English teaching, which have been fully developed in the literature review. The main sources are educational beliefs, foreign language anxiety, culture, group work, homework, academic expectations and authority perception. The main groups from the educational community involved are teachers, students and parents. Besides, particular and specific conflict management and resolution strategies, which have also been described previously in this paper, will be implemented, such as mediation, negotiation, rules establishment or conciliation.

State Bilingual Primary Education Schools in the Autonomous Community of Madrid have to teach at least two subjects in English, except for Spanish Language and Literature and Mathematics, in addition to the English language subject (Orden 4605/2017). The subjects involved in the project are those usually taught in English: Social and Natural Science, English

and Arts. Besides, a Tutorial Action Plan related to conflict will be included in the project in order to work directly on the tensions that arise in the classroom or at home, thus involving parents. Parents need to know that they belong to the educational community, which aims to provide students with a holistic education. Consequently, they are encouraged to play an active role in the educational process. Their contribution is essential to develop a plan in which the learners' family and school life are unified. Furthermore, it depends on parents to ensure a healthy and close relationship with the teachers, which is reflected on their collaborative monitoring of children (Pérez de Guzmán, Muñoz and Vargas, 2011).

The project aims to be implemented in the fifth year of Primary Education. This school year has been chosen for two main reasons. Firstly, children in this year are ten or eleven years old and therefore their cognitive and social development ensures that they can delve deeper into the conflict issue than younger students (Piaget, 1964). Secondly, the subjects' contents established by the legislation for this school year allow the disputes matter to be introduced in a natural, non-forced way. For instance, according to the curriculum for the Community of Madrid, learners have to learn about historical conflicts or the internal organisation and hierarchy of a company (Decreto 89/2014).

The project will start on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, the "School Day of Non-violence and Peace". From that day on, the students will work for a whole month on the conflict issue in a cross-curricular way in the aforementioned English subjects. Each activity has two parts, macro and micro conflicts. It is recommended that they are worked on unhurriedly in several sessions throughout the month so that all content (theoretical, conflict-related and emotional) is acquired appropriately. The specific timing of each activity has not been included in this proposal, as they have only been discussed from a general point of view. Their actual implementation has to be adjusted to the specific needs and characteristics of the school and its students.

Throughout this educational proposal, the details of the "Cross-curricular Macro and Micro Conflicts Project" will be described in order to address the conflict issue from a practical perspective. Firstly, the initial assessment of the reality of the school and of the conflict perspectives of the members of the educational community is described. Secondly, the project's conceptual, procedural and attitudinal objectives are included. Afterwards, the contents which the students will be taught are examined and the methodologies adopted are considered. There is also a description of the activities that will be put into practice in the lessons from the different subjects: Social Science, Natural Science, English and Arts, including a section with the Tutorial Action Plan. Finally, the project's assessment is included to evaluate its results.

## **4.2. Initial assessment**

Two weeks before the start of the project, a series of assessments will be carried out to determine how serious the issue of conflict is in the school and the opinions and perspectives of those involved in English language teaching: parents, students and teachers.

For this purpose, a series of questionnaires have been developed for people in these three groups (appendices 1, 2 and 3). Although these questionnaires are self-developed, some ideas have been based on Ordóñez, Delgado, Fernández Martínez and Hervás' Evaluation Test (2020, pp.47), Fernández's questionnaires (2016, pp.209-211;215), Girard and Koch's contributions (1996, pp.47 and 104) and Jones and Kmitta (2002, pp. 163-165 and 186-187).

The questionnaires have been written in both Spanish and English, although they would be presented to teachers, parents and students in Spanish to ensure the best comprehension. Particular importance has been given to ensuring that children understand the questionnaire by introducing more instructions and fewer options to avoid confusion.

The aim is to get an overview from each group about the reality in schools and at home. There are questions related to the frequency of conflicts, to people's opinions and to proposals for improvement.

## **4.3. Objectives**

This project has been designed in order to fulfil a series of conceptual, procedural and attitudinal goals. The objectives have been established by the author of this undergraduate dissertation according to the conflict issue from the macro and the micro perspectives and involving students', parents' and teachers' roles. The specific subject contents have not been considered to focus on the conflict matter.

The conceptual objectives refer to those theoretical contents the people involved in English teaching will learn during the project and they are the following:

- a. To understand the intrinsic and constructive nature of conflict in the society and in the educational process.
- b. To understand the concept of conflict source and to be able to provide some examples.
- c. To understand the principles of conflict resolution and management, comprehending its importance and knowing some specific techniques.

The procedural objectives refer to the set of actions, skills and practices connected to the concepts that have been learnt along the project.

- a. To identify potential and real conflict situations that arise in the classroom.

- b. To be able to put into practice the main conflict resolution and management techniques.
- c. To develop strategies for promoting students' autonomy to solve their own conflicts.

Finally, the attitudinal objectives are related to the series of values and sensibilities that aim to be fostered and encouraged during the project.

- a. To create an appropriate environment where trust and comfort are present and therefore conflicts can be acknowledged.
- b. To assume responsibilities and to play an active role regarding what can be done to address and work on conflicts.
- c. To be able to express one's own feelings and emotions regarding the conflict.

#### 4.4. Contents

The "Cross-curricular Macro and Micro Conflicts Project" aims to teach students different types of contents: **subject contents**, **conflict-related knowledge** and **emotional and values education**.

Regarding the **contents of the subjects**, they are established by the **national and regional legislation**, specifically by the educational law that governs the current school year, the LOMCE (*Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa*), and the Decree of the Community of Madrid for the Primary Education Curriculum for the fifth year. However, it is necessary to emphasise that the current educational law is the LOMLOE, but its curriculum has not yet been developed. These contents are described in detail in each of the activities proposed below.

Students are introduced to different **conflict-related elements**. For instance, they learn the fundamental principles of numerous **conflict management and prevention techniques** that have been described in the theoretical part of this paper, such as mediation, negotiation, rules of coexistence and problem solving workshops. **Conflict awareness** is also developed through this project. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), people learn through direct experience, and its rewarding or punishing consequences, or by observing others, who are considered role models. This theory could be perfectly applied in the schools, as environments where several people coexist together.

Learners also internalise the **role of conflicts in our society (macro level)** and in their **school and classroom (micro level)**. As Pérez de Guzmán, Muñoz and Vargas (2011) point out, teachers are asked to fulfil a series of teaching objectives related to the curricular contents for the different subjects. For this reason, several aspects also important for the children's global education as people and social human beings are being left behind. Learners **coexist with**

**conflict** and therefore should be taught how the **necessary abilities and tools** to make the most of these tensions, dealing with them in a positive way that makes them grow individually and as a group. Teachers act as educators, they cannot assume these students' tasks and responsibilities, otherwise learners will face detrimental consequences in the long term (Pérez de Guzmán, Muñoz and Vargas, 2011). All the members in the educational community are involved in this **learning process about conflicts**. It is necessary that all the students, their environment and the relationship between these two elements are the basis of this pedagogic experience. This way a real social change can be achieved (Narejo & Salazar, 2002).

**Emotional and values education content** is also taught when working on conflict management and resolution. Emotions are directly related to conflict and thus why this dimension should be considered when managing these tensions. Emotional education involves **emotions regulation and awareness**. These two concepts refer to being conscious of one's feelings and to transform the negative ones into positive emotions which facilitate conflict management, ensuring a suitable response for the context. Moreover, managing the other party's emotions when disputes arise is also important to work on the problem (Bisquerra, Pérez-González & García Navarro, 2015). **Emotional intelligence** is an essential element in students' development. It contributes to both their cognitive performance and their personal well-being. Learners' actions are motivated by both their emotions and their context, so it is necessary for them to learn the ability to know, regulate and express their feelings and also to understand and empathise with the emotions of others. Teaching practice is indispensable to provide this emotional knowledge and skills, especially considering that the school is a place where emotions are constantly present (Valenzuela-Santoyo & Portillo-Peñuelas, 2018).

There are also certain **values** which come into play when conflicts arise and could therefore be internalised and worked on. For example, according to Saiti (2015), teamwork, cooperation, trust, effective communication, understanding the needs of others, respect and participatory decision making ensure a better climate in which conflicts can be managed constructively. Narejo and Salazar (2002) emphasise the vital role of **education for peace** in building a comfortable environment, in which dialogue between all members of the community should be fostered. **Communication** is thus essential both explicitly in the contents, methodologies and purposes and implicitly in the school atmosphere. Fernández (2016) focused on the **education for the socio-personal development, civic education and intercultural education**, but also highlighted the importance of **values** such as active listening, cooperative learning, self-control and self-reflection, empathy, assertiveness and conflict resolution techniques.

Crawford and Bodine (1996) designed a model for educating children in conflict resolution. According to them, there are a series of **attitudes and abilities for handling disputes**. Some of the attitudes described were respect, non-violence, responsibility, honesty, solidarity or



diversity; and the skills needed for solving conflicts were orientation, perception, communication, emotion, creative thinking and critical thinking abilities. However, as Pérez Pérez (1999) point out, in order to teach all these values and emotional abilities, the teacher has to model them and create a classroom and a school environment where these values can be put into practice and hence internalised.

#### **4.5. Methodology**

The methodologies that are employed in this project have been chosen to work the conflict issue from both a macro and a micro perspective. They will be used in the activities later proposed for the different subjects. It is important to ensure that methodologies related to conflicts are constructive, active, based on experimentation, on individual and work group, on globalisation and interaction. Attention to diversity, meaningful learning and critical thinking are also promoted (Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas, 2011).

In this section the main methodologies in the project will be covered: **cooperative learning**, **mindfulness**, **role playing**, **problem-based learning** and **dialogical learning**. The main reason for the high number of methodologies is the combination of theoretical, attitudinal and conflict-related curricular contents. In addition to the use of both macro and micro perspectives.

**Cooperative learning** consists in working together to reach common and beneficial goals. It involves the pedagogic use of small groups in the lessons so leaning is optimised. The groups would be organised in what Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1999) called “informal groups” (p.6), they are formed for completing specific tasks inside a lesson and they do not have a permanent character. These groups are always composed by the same students, whose levels are heterogeneous and therefore help and support each other in the learning experience.

**Mindfulness** has become really popular in education in recent years. It consists in being totally conscious and paying attention to the surrounding environment. Meditation is offered as a tool for this purpose, focusing on the students’ own actions, thoughts and feelings. Learners develop self-control and the ability to be relaxed to achieve the aforementioned consciousness. In schools this technique has become especially useful for facing stressful situations or problems that arise while coexisting together. This method has an important role in conflict management, as it facilitates emotional regulation, dialogue, empathy and active listening, among others (Calderón Uribe, Otálora Gallego, Guerra Báez & Medina Giraldo, 2018).

**Role play** is a method where students experience a situation assuming a different role. In this case one involving interpersonal or between-groups conflicts. The final result depends on the learners’ personalities and opinions and how they play their roles. Human relationships and conflict management are promoted, as children learn to put themselves in their parents’, teachers’ and classmates’ shoes. They develop their empathy skills and understand others’

behaviour (Maier, 1952). Besides, they put into practice Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), learning by seeing each other act and directly experiencing the conflict situations. Belmar (2003) developed four stages in role plays: training, in which a comfortable atmosphere is built; preparation, when the teacher introduces the characters, the conflict and the general circumstances; the dramatization, where the students play their roles; and the debate, when learners analyse the play and transfer what they have experienced to their real-life situations.

Contrary to traditional approaches, the **problem-based learning** gives the students an active and central role in the learning process. They are supposed to acquire knowledge and abilities through their practical application to a real or fictional problem in order to solve it (Servicio de Innovación Educativa de la UPM, 2008). Several competences related to conflict management are promoted through this methodology, such as problem solving, group work, decision-making, communication skills and attitudes and values development (De Miguel, 2005).

Communication between students is dealt with through the **dialogical learning methodology**. This means that dialogues and interaction are considered two of the most important tools for learning. All learners' contributions are considered useful and diversity ensures a greater knowledge (Álvarez, Cotado & Iturriaga, 2013). This is especially vital when conflict management techniques such as negotiation or mediation are used in the activities.

#### **4.6. Activities**

This section develops the activities that would be carried out in the different subjects for the project, which deals with conflicts in the social relationships involved in Primary Education English teaching from both a macro and a micro perspectives. Conflict is an intrinsic element in schools as an inherent part of coexisting and therefore training in conflict management is promoted in education. This instruction consists in developing the necessary skills to work on them and to consider them as an opportunity to learn and as a constructive component in the students' education (Moreno Marimon & Sastre Vilarrasa, 2003).

The activities have been described in a general way, without specifying their timing or going into great detail about their implementation in the classroom, as they must be adjusted to the learners and the specific conflicts of the class group.

As explained in the introduction, the subjects chosen are those normally taught in English: Social Science, Natural Science, English and Arts. Besides, a Tutorial Action plan is included. There are also some common activities that will be carried out as a unifying thread for all subjects to capture the students' learning and the class' progress. The first one has been developed as a variation of Batton's ideas for resolving conflicts together (Batton, 2000), while the rest have been self-developed.

In the first place, a “Peace-wall” will be set up in the school playground. Together, all the people involved in the educational process (teachers, parents, students...) build a common space where they can write positive and constructive messages for all to see. The people in the project are particularly encouraged (fifth graders and their families and teachers), although it is an activity open to all the members in the educational community. Secondly, in each classroom there will be a “conflict-solving corner” where students can sit down to solve the conflicts that arise after the month-long project. In this way, they put into practice what they have learnt during the month autonomously, only involving the teacher if strictly necessary. Thirdly, for the duration of the project, each class group will produce a newspaper compiling the main lessons learnt about conflict during the month. This publication will include the concepts and ideas developed, along with techniques and sources of conflict. In addition, there will be sections where the students themselves can write (publicly or anonymously) about their personal experiences during the project, what they think about the activities and their own ideas about conflict. The format will depend on the school’s resources.

#### **4.6.1. Social Science**

For the subject of Social Science, two different activities are included in the project, which relate to two of the blocks specified in the curriculum for the fifth year. The first comprises the contents of “history, the footprint of time” block and the second the contents of the “living in society” block (Decreto 89/2014, p.17).

For the History part, the fifth graders will work on the process of expansion of Christian territories, delving into the disputes between Muslims and Christians. In this way, the students gain a macro perspective on the subject of conflict. To do so, they are divided into two groups, each one representing one of the parties of the conflict. They are asked to use this role-play for two main purposes. Firstly, to empathise and deepen the emotional aspects of the dispute by experiencing it first-hand. Secondly, to learn in a meaningful way the contents of the subject specified by the curriculum (Decreto 89/2014, p.21), such as the historical characters, dates, battles, important events...

In each lesson they “travel” to the past by putting themselves in the place of these characters through Belmar’s (2003) four stages previously described in order to acquire theoretical knowledge. Moreover, once these contents are understood and reinforced, the students will carry out negotiation sessions between both groups in which they will try to reach an agreement to solve conflicts in the hypothetical situation of having to divide up the territory or organise treaties or simply when it comes to coexisting with each other. As explained before in this paper, an integrative negotiation where each party respects and understands the other to achieve both group’s objectives (Thakore, 2013) will be used.

From a micro perspective, students will use the principles learned for negotiation in the previous part to work on conflicts that arise in the classroom. Specifically, they will work with the disputes and hidden conflicts that arise with the issue of homework between teachers and students. Learners and educators state their interests and expectations through a dialogic methodology where all the members can intervene and orally contribute to the conversation. Thus, an agreement regarding the tasks can be reached taking each group's necessities so that both parties can accept it.

For the Economics part, the students will work with companies and their forms of business organisation, a fifth grade content (Decreto 89/2014, p.23). Also through a role-playing game, the students will learn about the different departments of companies and their internal hierarchies. Tensions are inevitable in these corporations, and students will be put into hypothetical situations of authority conflicts, working with the topic from a macro perspective. Each student is given a specific role in the business (director, manager...) from different departments, which they have to learn about according to the curriculum. Each section will have to collaboratively solve a number of authority disputes or difficulties that may arise in their departments. They talk about how they may feel in these cases from the role they have been given and how they experience the fact of having a certain authority in relation to others. Values like respect and empathy are learnt in an experiential way. In addition, the teacher introduces situations in which students can understand the difference between authority and power.

Therefore, the students have deepened their understanding of the concept of authority and the potential conflicts it may provoke. They are going to use this learning for the micro perspective, where they are going to delve into the teacher-student relationship focusing on the authority issue. Students will understand how authority is acquired, its implications, how to gain mutual respect, the reasons why teachers are in this position... As in the history part, a dialogical methodology is encouraged where both sides can open up and orally discuss their perspectives, feelings and ideas for better coexistence on this topic. This will be done first in the groups formed according to the distribution of roles, by the business departments. Afterwards, each group will orally share their reflections with the rest of the class and finally a dialogue will be established with the whole group (including the teacher) to discuss it.

#### **4.6.2. Natural Science**

In the Natural Science subject, work is done on content related to experimentation for the macro perspective of the conflict. In accordance with the legislation, (Decreto 89/2014, p.11) "the teaching and learning of science provides the student with the opportunity to learn and put into practice the values and behaviours that are at the basis of scientific work: observation,

analysis, criticism, contrast, reflection, perseverance... as well as questioning, hypothesising, interpreting data and experimenting”.

Specifically, the activity is related to light and its properties. As the primary school curriculum indicates, fifth grade children are supposed to learn to “carry out various experiments to study the properties of commonly used materials and their behaviour in the presence of light, sound, heat, humidity and electricity” and “observe some phenomena of an electrical nature and their effects (light and heat)” (Decreto 89/2014, p.15). Students will be divided into groups. Together they will have to conduct an experiment related to the refraction of light. They will have to put different objects in several glasses with different liquids (water, oil...) to understand this property. For the experiment they will have to follow the steps of the scientific method: definition of the problem, formulation of hypotheses, data collection and analysis, confirmation or rejection of hypotheses, results and conclusions (Castán, 2014). They will have to take notes of what they do or propose for each of these stages.

Once students have worked out how to follow a series of steps to reach a goal, the same procedure will be worked out for the micro perspective. Students will use problem-solving workshops for conflict management, which are closely related to problem-based learning. They will be introduced to a series of real conflict situations that have occurred in the classroom when working in groups. In this way they work cooperatively on their own student-student disputes and tensions using this technique.

#### **4.6.3. Arts**

For art, students will work with two of the contents specified in the curriculum for the subject of art education: “to distinguish the theme or genre of plastic works” and “to represent in a personal way ideas, actions and situations using the elements that make up visual language” (Decreto 89/2014 p.60). In addition, at the beginning of each lesson they will have a short time of mindfulness. As explained in the methodology section of this proposal, this technique can help students to become more aware of their surroundings, which is beneficial for working with art, and of their own feelings, in order to use the subject to reduce stress and anxiety, which are seen as potential sources of conflict.

From the macro perspective, students will work with a series of artworks that reflect the theme of conflict. They will have to analyse both their subject matter and the background and motives behind the work. They will also reflect on the characteristics of the paintings and their possible relationship to what they depict. The paintings selected are *The 3<sup>rd</sup> of May in Madrid* (Francisco de Goya), *The Surrender of Breda* (Diego de Velázquez), *The Battle of Trafalgar* (Joseph Mallord William Turner), *The Battle of Lepanto* (Juan de Luna), *Guernica* (Pablo Picasso), *Cat and Dog Fight* (Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo) and *Battle of Nashville* (Howard Pyle). These

works can be related more to wars and armed conflicts than to more subtle or peaceful tensions or disputes. This is because children of this age (10/11 years) are in the transition between the concrete operational and formal operational stages (Piaget, 1964). This means that they are in the process of developing abstract thinking. Therefore, this activity has been designed with this aspect of the cognitive development of children of this age in mind. It is considered that the use of concrete works from which to draw more abstract conclusions can be beneficial.

These reflections and acquired knowledge, both about mindfulness and conflict in art, will be used for the “micro” part of the activity, in which they will work on parent-student conflicts. In particular, meditation and mindfulness are incorporated into the lessons with a few minutes dedicated to this purpose. Moreover, the students will draw the tensions that exist in their homes with their families. To do this, they will use a four-part worksheet (included in appendix 4) to draw different types of conflict at home related to different sources of conflict involved in English language teaching: *What happens at home when I get a low grade? What relationship do my parents have with my homework? What do my parents expect from me at school? What happens at home if I have a conflict in school?*

The pictures should not be discussed aloud so that the children do not feel self-conscious. In order for them to trust the teacher enough to show them their family conflicts, it is necessary to have developed a climate of trust, as has been supported throughout this paper. A special emphasis needs to be placed on the art classes, where an attitude of respect will be further encouraged during the month of the project and in the following months.

Also from the micro perspective, students will be asked about the academic expectations their parents have towards their performance and results, as it is one of the most common sources of conflict between these two groups. It will lead to an interesting sharing of experiences and hidden feelings that will help the teacher to identify the most demanding families and those students with self-esteem problems or exaggerated family pressure. The teacher will take this knowledge into consideration in order to introduce it in parent-teacher meetings or to decide whether to carry out a general communication asking parents to pay special attention to the issue and even to organise courses for those parents who are interested in working on this subject matter.

#### **4.6.4. English**

In the English subject, conflict will also be dealt with from macro and micro perspectives. We will work on the skills considered in the curriculum: oral comprehension, written comprehension, oral expression and written expression (Decree 89/2014, p.50). The role of language becomes particularly important in this subject. English is seen as a linguistic tool for both expression and understanding. The subject serves as an introduction to the language and

links it to the theme of conflict, with more emphasis on this relationship than in the previous subjects. While the other subjects have used language to deal with other content, in this case English itself is the content.

From the macro perspective, we will work with the conflict in two different stories, which will be read by the students to work on written comprehension and by the teacher to work on oral comprehension. The fragments chosen will be *The Story of Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, Retold Through Negotiation* (Bodine, Crawford & Schrupf, 1994, as cited in Crawford & Bodine, 1996, pp.131-134) and *The Story of the Three Little Pigs with the Wolf's Mediation*, which has been self-elaborated based on Pérez Serrano and Pérez de Guzmán Puya 's (2016) phases of the mediation. Only the self-elaborated story is included in this dissertation (appendix 5), as the other reading can be found in Crawford and Bodine's (1996, pp.131-134) article that has been included in the references section of this document. This new way of approaching traditional stories introducing conflict-related elements will be commented on, as well as the everyday nature of disputes. Besides, based on these tales, the principles of negotiation and mediation will be discussed.

In order to also introduce conflicts that have culture as a source, we will work with cultural awareness by asking children with a different cultural background about disputes in the history of their country and about stories that their relatives have told them where there are conflicts. In addition, the teacher introduces some ideas related to English-speaking countries other than the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

From the micro perspective, the conflict will be dealt with using the English language as a tool in two different ways. The first consists of elaborating in groups (using a cooperative learning methodology) a list of classroom rules for conflict prevention and resolution. Special emphasis will be placed on the sources of conflict that are most common in the specific context of the school in the relationships of students-students and students-teachers during the month of the project. In order to write these norms, a number of linguistic structures will need to be used, such as modals or the present tense. Learners will have to write these rules together, thus working on their written expression skills. The norms proposed by all the groups will be stuck on the wall of the class during the month of the project and at the end a single list will be drawn up again by the whole class together.

Also within the micro perspective, students will be asked to talk about what they think about the use of English at school: what they like the most, what they think it is useful for, what they dislike the most, the efforts they make, their expectations... This will open the debate to work with the conflict related to educational beliefs, both theirs and their parents'. Besides, students practice on their speaking skills. In order to encourage listening among them, in addition to

commenting on their own opinions, they should refer to what others have said. For this purpose they would need to use present and past as well as structures like the reported speech.

#### **4.6.5. Tutorial Action Plan**

This project includes a tutorial action plan whose main objective is to facilitate the prevention and resolution of conflicts in the school context. Special attention will be paid to student-student, parent-teacher and student-teacher relationships.

Through assemblies in the classroom, students can acquire the values of autonomy and responsibility in order to solve possible conflicts that arise on a daily basis. Moreover, they participate democratically by showing how they feel and their ideas (Pérez Pérez, 1999). These assemblies will be used both to carry out simple procedures such as distributing tasks in class and to solve problems or difficulties among classmates. In this plan, assemblies will be held every week during the month of the project and it is recommended to set them up every fortnight after the end of the month of the project, in a time called "tutoring". Students will be encouraged to develop the necessary skills so that, as a long-term goal, they will be able to lead the assembly themselves. This procedure is especially necessary when group work is the conflict source.

In addition, it is proposed that the teacher pays attention during this month to the students, to determine if they could (depending on the progress of the project) be able to mediate conflicts between peers: peer mediation. This procedure and process, described by Adigüzel (2015) puts the students themselves in charge of resolving the conflict as mediators. Their role is to maintain a reconciliatory, active listening attitude and to handle the conflict in an appropriate and constructive way. It guides the process by following a series of steps leading to the resolution of the problem. However, it also encourages the active role of the parties involved. As a long-term goal, all students could be actually trained in this procedure in order to further foster their autonomy and conflict resolution skills.

As for the relationship between teachers and learners, a series of individual tutorials is proposed. Every day during the month of the project, the teacher will take some time out or ask one or two children (depending on the ratio) individually how they are doing at break time. If there is something that has drawn attention to the child's conflicts in any of the activities carried out during the month, an attempt will be made to work on the issue in a subtle way and to promote a climate and a relationship of trust without the child feeling forced to share anything. Moreover, the other teachers are asked to pay attention to each child. The aim is also to detect possible conflicts between students and educators in the school. Moreover, a mailbox will be placed in the classroom where children can deposit, publicly or anonymously, papers addressed to the teacher where they can register conflicts or simply feelings about



teachers' attitudes or actions. Due to the possible embarrassment of the learners, emphasis will be placed on creating a climate of trust and comfort in the classroom. Individual work will be done with each child if necessary.

Finally, this project proposes a series of considerations and measures to be implemented in order to work on teacher-parent conflicts. In this way, a relationship that promotes the best of each group and their relationship can be achieved. After all, the aim of both groups is to achieve the best education for the children.

First of all, an attempt will be made to call parents to a general meeting a couple of weeks before the start of the project where the details and objectives of the project will be clearly stated. Parents will be given the possibility to ask for extra tutorials in which only the issue of conflict will be discussed, either because parents and their children have a strained relationship, because of possible conflicts with the teacher, or because they are aware of conflicts in the classroom. Parent-teacher meetings are a relatively common feature of the educational process and they entail a critical occasion for interaction. It is normally thought that these conferences are sources of stress on both sides due to the fear for criticism of their professionalism and competence in the case of teachers and their parenting in the case of parents (Pillet-Shore, 2016). Negative attributions are frequent when there is not a healthy relationship. The aim will therefore be to have meetings where more than one teacher is present and a conciliatory attitude is maintained. Besides, the family conflicts that have been seen in the art subject can be raised in these parent-teacher meetings.

It is necessary to work on the different educational beliefs held by parents and teachers, since, as the literature review in this paper has shown, this is one of the most common sources of conflict. The teacher can be given the opportunity to communicate how they manage the educational process while families can share how they manage it at home. Any remarkable facts or comments made by the students during the English activity in which the educational beliefs of the children and their parents were discussed will also be commented on.

#### **4.7. Evaluation**

To evaluate the success of the project, a series of self-developed questionnaires will be given to the students, teachers and parents involved in the project (appendices 6, 7 and 8) The questions have been adapted to both the age and the role in the educational community of the target group. Their objective is to obtain information to understand the scope of the project according to these people's perspectives. Although these questionnaires are self-developed, some ideas have been based on Jones and Kmita's (2002, pp. 124 and 163-165) contribution to the topic of evaluating conflict resolution education programs.

Like the initial ones, these questionnaires have been written in both Spanish and English, although they will be presented in Spanish. Some questions coincide with the questionnaires from the beginning of the project while others have been adapted or are completely new. The aim is for the three groups to reflect on the conflict, the tensions present, the learning throughout the project and what the future will be like in class and at home. The aim is for everyone to feel prepared to deal with the subject of conflict as an intrinsic element in education with an incredibly constructive value.

In the case of the students, in addition to having a document with clearer instructions, they will answer the questions in class. Due to potential shyness or embarrassment, the anonymous character of the documents will be emphasised. The teacher will pay special attention to gestures and grimaces expressed by the students when answering them.

## **5. CRITICAL REFLECTION**

### **5.1. Level of fulfilment of the objectives and competences**

At the beginning of this document, some general and specific objectives were established, which are intended to be fulfilled throughout this Final Degree Dissertation. In addition, the aim is to acquire a series of competences (general and transversal) associated with the different subjects and contents worked on during the Degree in Primary Education Teaching.

As for the general objectives described in section 2.1. of this document, they have been met, although not equally. The one related to information and communication technologies, although worked on, has unconsciously had less presence. The most worked on are those linked to the competences (as it will be indicated below) and to the didactic strategies in the different areas, since the conflict issue is always considered as an intrinsic element in education whose constructive value can be internalised in the classroom. Moreover, oral and written communication and formality have been worked on in a transversal way while elaborating this paper. Lastly, reflective, critical and scientific thinking have been worked on both consciously and unconsciously during the whole process of creating this paper, both when searching for sources and writing it and when conveying the main ideas on the topic.

The specific objectives included in section 2.2. have been kept in mind throughout the whole process of elaboration and have consequently been fulfilled. Conflict has been considered as an intrinsic element in the educational process and specifically in the teaching of EFL in Primary Education. For this reason, references to this issue in the Spanish and Madrid's legislation have been included and the main sources of conflict in the social relationships involved in the teaching of EFL have been described. Moreover, the constructive value of conflict has been considered, so an overview has been given of the main techniques and strategies for conflict management with the possibility of adopting them in the educational

context. Finally, a project potentially applicable to a school has been developed in order to work on conflict. Starting from the macro perspective with conflicts present in the society, the students work on the disputes arising in the classroom between the different groups involved in EFL teaching in primary school.

As for the competences, they are written in more detail in section 5.4 later in this document. However, all the general ones have been taken into account, especially those related to social processes, to the design, planning and evaluation of the teaching and learning process, to tutorial action and to the didactic strategies planned according to the curriculum for the areas included in the educational proposal, i.e. Natural Science, Social Science, Art Education and, with a special emphasis, English. As far as cross-curricular competences are concerned, only multiculturalism and interculturalism have been worked on briefly, and independent work, organisation and autonomous learning in greater depth.

## **5.2. Limitations of the study and future directions**

Throughout the preparation of this Final Degree Dissertation, a series of limitations and difficulties have been encountered both in relation to the subject and to personal aspects.

Firstly, the subject of conflict has been widely studied throughout history, which is precisely why the literature on the subject is extensive and varied. This has led to a long and hard work of research, selection and summary of the most important points in order to contextualise and provide the necessary information on the subject. However, there is no precedent of work with the chosen approach. Conflict at the specific level of Primary Education has been studied, albeit in a very broad and general way. Less common are articles that cover the tensions of the three main groups involved in education (students, parents and teachers) together, so that an exhaustive work of compilation and structuring has had to be carried out. As for the combination of these three elements with EFL teaching, no similar work has been found in six months of searching, and I have had to establish relationships on my own. While this ambitious work could contribute much to the issue of conflict in today's society which, as has been mentioned numerous times throughout this paper, gives sovereign importance to the teaching and learning of English, it has been an arduous task that has encountered many limitations in locating articles that could contribute to the issue.

Organising and deciding on the structure of this paper has been a great difficulty, especially at the beginning. It has been particularly difficult to find the right balance between the topics I personally wanted to deal with and those most present in the literature on the subject, often incompatible aspects that have led to blockages and many hours of dedication and effort.

In relation to this idea, in order to give sufficient importance to EFL teaching in Primary Education, the theoretical framework has had to include numerous sections. Although at the

beginning more importance was given to the sources of conflict, it was when the work was well underway that I changed the focus of the educational proposal. This turning point meant undoing work already done in the practical part and retouching the theoretical part, which had been adjusted to the initial ideas. Although I could not foresee that this would happen, perhaps it would have been convenient to devote more attention to the practical part from the beginning. It is also true that time has been a determining factor throughout the drafting of the document. In general, I have had little room for manoeuvre to make changes. Besides, given the amount of work that December and January entailed in terms of exams and final projects and the excessive perfectionism on my part, I fell behind in the deadlines, which weighed me down from almost the very beginning. Furthermore, we had informative meetings prior to the assignment of the tutors in which some professors indicated that the fact of belonging to the mention did not oblige me to link the work with the object of the mention, it was only "advisable". Thus, I focused my initial search for references on the conflict from another perspective instead of the current one, so I did not advance at the beginning as I had planned.

While I have enjoyed this work most of the time, all these limitations have hindered the process. However, none of them have served to stop it or discouraged me in my future teaching. Often the Final Degree Dissertation is seen as a mere formality in the degree course. In order to avoid this feeling and not to lose my passion for my subject and my work, I have always tried to feel comfortable with it and to make decisions based on my tastes, taking it to the personal and emotional aspects of education, which are what strengthen my vocation.

### **5.3. Conclusions and personal reflection**

After reading some research on the topic and selecting common ideas from different authors (Thomas, 1992; Kolb & Putnam, 1992; Appelbaum, Abdallah & Shapiro, 1999), I have written a definition of conflict introducing my own ideas in relation to the focus of this paper (the inherent and constructive value of conflict in education): *conflict is a potentially constructive process inherent to socialisation and therefore to school life. It is linked to the individuals' emotions and it arises from disagreements and tensions caused by differences in ways of thinking or acting.*

This paper has dealt with the issue of conflict, understood as a reality inherent to interpersonal relationships and therefore to the educational context. It is present between and within the different groups of the educational community and consequently appears in the teaching and learning process, including in EFL teaching (Saiti, 2015). Due to the well-known relevance of this language in today's society (Mahu, 2012), conflict takes on a renewed importance, which is already great because of its social and personal role.

In addition to mentioning the importance of social factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), and of conflict in particular, for children, two fundamental ideas have been worked on as a basis. Firstly, the intrinsic value of conflict, which has been proven by its importance in the national and regional legislations. In a cross-curricular way, students are supposed to be provided with skills and resources that enable them to manage conflict in and out of school (Decreto 89/2014). Besides, seven sources of conflict between parents, teachers and students are shown as the main groups present in the EFL teaching in primary school. These sources show actual and potential situations that prove the inherent nature of conflict in education and they are the following: educational beliefs, foreign language anxiety, culture, group work, homework, academic expectations and authority perception.

Secondly, its constructive potential has been addressed. Through proper conflict management, a comfortable and supportive atmosphere of trust and respect is achieved. It also promotes the proper development of the students (García-Hierro & Cubo, 2009). Working to establish good relations and quality coexistence in the school is extremely beneficial for all people involved. In order to demonstrate this constructive value, a number of conflict management techniques have been included. These strategies have been described considering their possible application in the school context and they are the following: rules of coexistence, consensual decision making, conciliation, negotiation, mediation and problem solving workshops.

In the practical part of this document a project has been developed, the “Cross-curricular Macro and Micro Conflicts Project”, which provides a didactic approach to conflict resolution in the school reality. From a macro perspective, conflicts or elements of conflict at a societal level are worked on, and from a micro perspective, this knowledge is applied to work on actual conflicts, real or potential, in the educational reality, based on the sources and techniques mentioned above. These contents are taught in a predominantly practical way for one month in the fifth year and in the subjects with English as a medium of instruction: Natural Science, Social Science, Art Education and English, focusing on conflicts between students and between students and teachers. A tutorial action plan is also included to involve parents directly. The aim is to achieve an improvement in the school climate and coexistence.

Throughout this Final Degree Dissertation I have tried to show one of the most essential personal and emotional aspects in education, which in my opinion tend to be relegated in favour of academic content by many teachers and in general by society. Although it has not been an easy task, the result and the process have been enriching, both professionally and personally. As well as bringing me closer to the competences proposed for the Degree in Primary Education, this work has reinforced my vocation and my educational principles. To conclude, I include a quote that conveys the reflections I have come to in this process: "Conflict

is a natural, vital part of life. When conflict is understood, it can become an opportunity to learn and create. The challenge for people in conflict is to apply the principles of creative cooperation in their human relationships" (Bodine, Crawford & Schruppf, 1996, p.iv).

#### 5.4. Linking of the degree competencies within the dissertation

Figure 1. Visibility of the degree competencies within the dissertation.

General degree competencies:	Section in the TFG	References-information sources	
		Primary sources	Secondary sources
CG1. To understand the evolutionary process in the biological and psychological development of children between the ages of 6 and 12.	3 3.2.1 3.2.5 4.1 4.6.3	Bronfenbrenner (1977), 8, 11 Bronfenbrenner (1986), 8 Piaget (1964), 17, 29, 37 Gómez, Matamala & Alcocel (2002), 28	
CG2. To understand the processes of learning in children between 6 and 12 years old.	3.2.1 3.2.2 3.2.5 3.2.6 3.2.7 3.3 4.1 4.4 4.5	Pena (2000), 11 Thijs & Eilbracht (2012), 11 Lasater (2016), 11 Arnold (2011), 13 Krashen (1982), 13 Chan & Wu (2004), 13 Ávila Daza & Garavito (2009), 16 Hurtado Torres & Castañeda-Peña (2016), 17 Kidwell (2004), 17 Patall, Cooper & Robinson (2008), 18 Bisquerra Alzina, Pérez González & García Navarro (2015), 18, 32 Peralta Sánchez & Sánchez Roda (2003), 18 Davis (2001), 20 Chen (2017), 20 Gómez, Matamala & Alcocel (2002), 21, 28 Saiti (2015), 21 Bandura (1977), 31, 33 Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas (2011), 31 Narejo & Salazar (2002), 32 Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1999), 33	
CG3. To know the foundations, principles and characteristics of Primary Education	1 3 3.1 3.2.1 3.2.5 3.2.6 3.2.7 3.3 3.3.1 3.3.5 4.1 4.4 4.6.1 4.6.2	Jares (1997), 5 Saiti (2015), 5, 21 Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas (2011), 5, 31 Crystal (2003), 6 Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols (2008), 8 Ley Orgánica 8/2013 (2013), 9 Decreto 89/2014 (2014), 10, 35, 36, 37, 38 Decreto 58/2016 (2016), 10 Decreto 32/2019 (2019), 10 Ley Orgánica 3/2020 (2020), 10 Council of Europe (2014), 11 Kidwell (2004), 16 Rosário et al. (2015), 16	

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General degree competencies:	Section in the TFG	References-information sources	
		Primary sources	Secondary sources
	4.6.3 4.6.4	Bisquerra Alzina, Pérez González & García Navarro (2015), 18 Pace & Hemmings (2005), 20 Tahull Fort & Montero Plaza (2015), 21 Gómez, Matamala & Alcocel (2002), 21 Narejo & Salazar (2002), 22, 31, 32 Herrera Torres & Bravo Antonio (2011), 23 Fernández (2016), 23, 32 Pérez Pérez (1999), 23 Viana-Orta (2013), 26 Pérez Serrano & Pérez de Guzmán Puya (2016), 26 Ordóñez, Delgado, Fernández Martínez & Hervás (2020), 28 Orden 4605/2017 (2017), 28	
CG4. To design, plan and evaluate learning and teaching processes in the context of the school as an educational institution.	1 3 3.2.1 3.2.5 3.3 3.3.1 3.3.2 3.3.3 3.3.4 3.3.5 3.3.6 4.1 4.4 4.5 4.6 4.6.2 4.6.4 4.6.5	Ghaffar (2009), 6, 9 Lin (2008), 11 Ballantine (1999), 11 Rosário et al. (2015), 16 Saiti (2015), 21 Gómez, Matamala & Alcocel (2002), 22 D'Oosterlinck & Broekaert (2003), 22 Pérez Serrano & Pérez de Guzmán Puya (2016), 22, 26, 27, 38 Fernández (2016), 23, 32 Lago & Roso (2017), 23 Pérez Pérez (1999), 23 Crawford & Bodine (1996), 24, 25, 27, 32 Robinson & Parkinson (1985), 24 Eunson (2011), 25 Thakore (2013), 25 Appelbaum, Abdallah & Shapiro (1999), 25 Fisher, Ury & Patton (1997), 25 Ordóñez, Delgado, Fernández Martínez & Hervás (2020), 26, 27, 28 Johnson, Johnson, Dudley & Acikgoz (1994), 28 Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas (2011), 31, 33 Narejo & Salazar (2002), 31, 32 Valenzuela-Santoyo & Portillo-Peñuelas (2018), 32 Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1999), 33 Calderón Uribe, Otálora Gallego, Guerra Báez, & Medina Giraldo (2018), 33 Maier (1952), 33 Belmar (2003), 33 Servicio de Innovación Educativa de la UPM (2008), 34 De Miguel (2005), 34 Álvarez, Cotado & Iturriaga (2013), 34 Moreno Marimon & Sastre Vilarrasa (2003), 34 Batton (2000), 34 Castán (2014), 36	Crawford & Bodine (1996), 38

General degree competencies:	Section in the TFG	References-information sources	
		Primary sources	Secondary sources
		Adigüzel (2015), 40	
CG5. To analyze the importance of social factors and their influence on educational processes.	1 3 3.2.1 3.2.2 3.2.3 3.2.4 3.2.5 3.2.6 3.2.7 3.3 3.3.5 3.3.6 4.1 4.4 4.5 4.6	Jares (1997), 5 Saiti (2015), 5, 21, 32 Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas (2011), 5, 21, 27, 29 Mahu (2012), 5, 11 Nishanthi (2018), 6 Ghaffar (2009), 9 Pena (2000), 11, 15 Thijs & Eilbracht (2012), 11 Lasater (2016), 11 Amelio (2019), 11 Hiatt (1994), 12 Lake & Billingsley (2000), 12 Knopf & Swick (2007), 12, 20 Christenson (2004), 12 Nair et al. (2014), 12 Pérez Murillo (2013), 12 Huang (2012), 14 Chan & Wu (2004), 14, 16, 18 Mazari & Derraz (2015), 14 Molina (2011), 14 Palmer (2015), 15 Alfares (2017), 15 Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001), 16 Rosário et al. (2015), 16 Ávila Daza & Garavito (2009), 16 Cojocariu & Mares (2014), 17 Thelamour & Jacobs (2014), 17 Hurtado Torres & Castañeda-Peña (2016), 17 Davidovitch & Yavich (2017), 17 Valle et al. (2015), 17 Amiryousefi (2016), 17 Kohn (2007), 18 Peralta Sánchez & Sánchez Roda (2003), 18 Ballantine (1999), 18 Tahull Fort & Montero Plaza (2013), 19 Díaz, Fernández, Gómez & Halbach (2005), 19 Lago & Roso (2017), 20 Pereda, Prada & Actis (2010), 21 Tahull Fort & Montero Plaza (2015), 21 García-Hierro & Cubo (2009), 21 Johnson & Johnson (1996), 21 D'Oosterlinck & Broekaert (2003), 22 Fernández (2016), 22, 32 Crawford & Bodine (1996), 27, 32	Torío López, Peña Calvo & Rodríguez Menéndez (2008), 19



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General degree competencies:	Section in the TFG	References-information sources	
		Primary sources	Secondary sources
		Ordóñez, Delgado, Fernández Martínez & Hervás (2020), 28 Bandura (1977), 31, 33 Narejo & Salazar (2002), 31 Pérez Pérez (1999), 32 Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1999), 33 Maier (1952), 33 De Miguel (2005), 34 Álvarez, Cotado & Iturriaga (2013), 34 Moreno Marimon & Sastre Vilarrasa (2003), 34	
CG6. To know and apply techniques for the gathering of data through observation or other strategies in the processes of investigation, evaluation and innovation.	3.2.2 3.2.3 3.2.4 3.2.5 3.2.7 3.3 3.3.1 4.2 4.6.2 4.7	Du (2009), 13 Chan & Wu (2004), 13 Molina (2011), 14 Alfares (2017), 15 Amiryousefi (2016), 17, 18 El Defensor del Profesor (2020), 20 Pereda, Prada & Actis (2010), 20 Saiti (2015), 23 Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas (2011), 23 Ordóñez, Delgado, Fernández Martínez & Hervás (2020), 29 Fernández (2016) Girard & Koch (1996), 30 Jones & Kmita (2002), 30, 41 Castán (2014), 36	
CG7. To understand tutorial action and orientation in the frame of education, students and developmental contexts.	3.2.1 3.2.5 3.2.7 3.3 3.3.1 3.3.5 4.1 4.4 4.6 4.6.1 4.6.5	Larrosa Martínez & García-Fernández (2014), 11 Eipstein (2001), 18 Pace & Hemmings (2005), 20 Pereda, Prada & Actis (2010), 21 Saiti (2015), 21 Pérez Serrano & Pérez de Guzmán Puya (2016), 22, 26 Pérez de Guzmán, Amador & Vargas (2011), 23, 29 Lago & Roso (2017), 23 Pérez Pérez (1999), 24, 32, 39 Johnson, Johnson, Dudley & Acikgoz (1994), 28 Gómez, Matamala & Alcocel (2002), 28 Narejo & Salazar (2002), 32 Fernández (2016), 32 Moreno Marimon & Sastre Vilarrasa (2003), 34 Thakore (2013), 35 Adigüzel (2015), 40 Pillet-Shore (2016), 40	
CG8.1. To design didactical strategies appropriate to the nature of the specific field, starting from the Primary curriculum, for the area of natural sciences.	4.6.2	Decreto 89/2014 (2014), 36 Castán (2014), 36	

General degree competencies:	Section in the TFG	References-information sources	
		Primary sources	Secondary sources
CG8.2. To design didactical strategies appropriate to the nature of the specific field, starting from the Primary curriculum, for the area of social sciences.	4.6.1	Decreto 89/2014 (2014), 35 Belmar (2003), 35 Thakore (2013), 35	
CG8.3. To design didactical strategies appropriate to the nature of the specific field, starting from the Primary curriculum, for the area of mathematics.			
CG8.4. To design didactical strategies appropriate to the nature of the specific field, starting from the Primary curriculum, for the area of language and literature.	4.6.4	Decreto 89/2014 (2014), 38	Crawford & Bodine (1996), 38
CG8.5. To design didactical strategies appropriate to the nature of the specific field, starting from the Primary curriculum, for the area of music.			
CG8.6. To design didactical strategies appropriate to the nature of the specific field, starting from the Primary curriculum, for the area of arts and crafts.	4.6.3	Decreto 89/2014 (2014), 37	
CG8.7. To design didactical strategies appropriate to the nature of the specific field, starting from the Primary curriculum, for the area of physical education.			

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## 7. INDICES

**FIGURE 1.** Visibility of the degree competencies within the dissertation.



## 8. APPENDICES

### 8.1. Appendix 1: Questionnaire – Initial assessment (Students)

<i>Students</i>					
How often do these situations happen?					
	Never	Rarely	Often	Always	
I observe conflictive situations in the classroom					
Classmates respect each other					
I try to act when conflicts arise					
I communicate conflicts to teachers					
Students have problems with teachers					
Mark the answer you think best matches your reality					
How do you feel coming to school?	Great	Normal	I am not comfortable	I am treated badly	
What is it that you don't like about coming to school?	Nothing	Tasks	Teachers	Classmates	Others
How do you feel at home?	Great	Normal	I am not comfortable	I am treated badly	
Write down three things that make your relationships in class more difficult					
Write down the three things that you value most about your classmates.					
What can we do to solve these difficulties and promote positive relationships?					
My intention is to achieve the following conflict management objectives ...					
To achieve them, I promise to do the following in the coming month:					
<p><i>Mario and Ana have been friends for years. They are always together and like spending time with each other. One day, Mario met Cristina and they have been hanging out since then. Ana is feeling left out and she tries to spend time with other classmates in the school. However, one day she hears them say that Mario doesn't want to be her friend anymore because he has not tried to reach for her since Cristina appeared. Realising how this is true, she goes to find Mario and they both start to argue shouting and reproaching each other's behaviour. Mario thinks Ana is not respecting his new friend and feels forced to only have Ana as a friend.</i></p> <p>Write what you would do to help Ana and Mario resolve their conflict.</p>					

<i>Estudiantes</i>					
¿Con cuánta frecuencia ocurren estas situaciones?					
	Nunca	Raramente	A menudo	Siempre	
Observo situaciones de conflicto en el aula					
Los compañeros de clase se respetan					
Intento actuar cuando surgen los conflictos					
Aviso a los profesores de los conflictos que ocurren					
Los estudiantes tienen problemas con los profesores					
Marca la respuesta que más se ajusta a tu realidad					
¿Cómo te sientes viniendo al colegio?	Genial	Normal	No estoy cómodo/a	Me tratan mal	
¿Qué es lo que no te gusta de venir al colegio?	Nada	Tareas y deberes	Profesores/as	Compañeros/as	Otros
¿Cómo te sientes en casa?	Genial	Normal	No estoy cómodo/a	Me tratan mal	
Escribe tres cosas que dificultan tus relaciones en clase					
Escribe las tres cosas que más valoras de tus compañeros de clase.					
¿Qué podemos hacer para resolver estas dificultades y fomentar las relaciones positivas?					
Mi intención es alcanzar los siguientes objetivos de gestión de conflictos...					
Para conseguirlos, me comprometo a hacer lo siguiente durante el próximo mes:					
<p><i>Mario y Ana son amigos desde hace años. Siempre están juntos y les gusta pasar tiempo juntos. Un día, Mario conoció a Cristina y desde entonces quedan mucho juntos. Ana se siente excluida y trata de pasar tiempo con otros compañeros del colegio. Sin embargo, un día les oye decir que Mario ya no quiere ser su amigo porque no ha intentado acercarse a ella desde que apareció Cristina. Al darse cuenta de que esto es cierto, va a buscar a Mario y ambos comienzan a discutir gritándose y reprochándose su comportamiento. Mario piensa que Ana no respeta a su nueva amiga y se siente obligado a tenerla sólo a ella como amiga.</i></p> <p>Escribe lo que harías para ayudar a Ana y Mario a resolver su conflicto.</p>					

**8.2. Appendix 2: Questionnaire – Initial assessment (Teachers)**

<i>Teachers</i>					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I observe conflictive situations in the classroom					
I try to act when conflicts arise					
Students have problems with teachers					
I ask for help when I do not know how to act					
I look for information about conflict resolution					
I use a disciplinarian approach towards conflict					
Students are aware of their emotions					
Students try to solve conflicts					
Do you think you have enough training for solving conflicts in the classroom?	Yes			No	
Do you think you have enough training for solving parent-teacher conflicts?	Yes			No	
Do you think conflict resolution is one of the main important issues in education?	Yes			No	
Indicate the solution that you consider most suitable for solving the problems in the classroom and in the school					
Write down three things that make your relationships in class more difficult					
What could be done to solve difficulties and foster the positive relationships that already exist?					
My intention is to achieve the following conflict management objectives ...					
To achieve them, I commit myself to do the following in the coming month:					

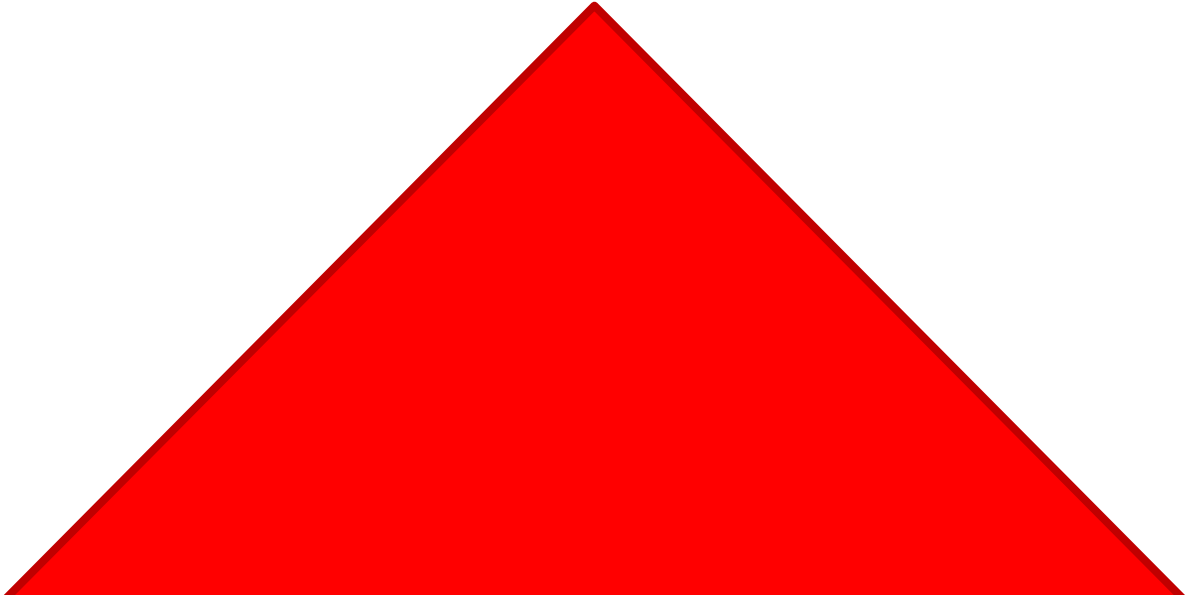
<i>Profesores</i>					
	Nunca	Raramente	A veces	A menudo	Siempre
Observo situaciones de conflicto en el aula					
Intento actuar cuando surgen los conflictos					
Los estudiantes tienen problemas con los profesores					
Pido ayuda cuando no sé cómo actuar					
Busco información sobre resolución de conflictos					
Uso un enfoque disciplinario hacia los conflictos					
Los estudiantes son conscientes de sus emociones					
Los estudiantes intentan resolver los conflictos					
¿Piensas que tienes suficiente formación para resolver conflictos en el aula?	Sí		No		
¿Piensas que tienes suficiente formación para resolver conflictos entre padres y profesores?	Sí		No		
¿Piensas que la resolución de conflictos es uno de los asuntos más importantes en educación?	Sí		No		
Indica la solución que consideres más adecuada para resolver los problemas en la clase y en el colegio.					
Escribe tres cosas que provocan que tus relaciones en clase sean más difíciles					
¿Qué se podría hacer para resolver las dificultades y fomentar las relaciones positivas que ya existen?					
Mi intención es cumplir los siguientes objetivos de gestión de conflictos...					
Para conseguirlos, me comprometo a hacer lo siguiente durante el próximo mes:					

**8.3. Appendix 3: Questionnaire – Initial assessment (Parents)**

<i>Parents</i>					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I have conflicts with my child's teacher					
I get information from the conflicts in the school					
There are conflicts between children in the school					
My child has emotional awareness					
I try to solve parent-teacher conflicts					
My child shares his/her problems in the school with me					
My child tells me his/her problems with me					
My child has conflicts in the class					
I am interested in the conflict issue in education					
Indicate the solution that you consider most suitable for solving the problems in the classroom and in the school.					
Write down three things that make your relationships with the teachers more difficult					
What could we do to solve difficulties and foster the positive relationships that already exist?					
My intention is to achieve the following conflict management objectives ...					
To achieve them, I commit myself to do the following in the coming month:					

<i>Padres</i>					
	Nunca	Raramente	A veces	A menudo	Siempre
Hay un conflictos en mi relación con el profesor/la profesora de mi hijo/a					
Me llega información de los conflictos que hay en el colegio					
Hay conflictos entre los niños en el colegio					
Mi hijo/a tiene conciencia emocional					
Intento resolver conflictos entre padres y profesores					
Mi hijo/a comparte conmigo sus problemas en el colegio					
Mi hijo/a me cuenta sus problemas conmigo					
Mi hijo/a tiene conflictos en clase					
Estoy interesado/a en el tema del conflicto en la educación					
Indique la solución que considere más adecuada para resolver los problemas en la clase y en el colegio.					
Escriba tres cosas que provocan que sus relaciones con los profesores sean más difíciles					
¿Qué se podría hacer para resolver las dificultades y fomentar las relaciones positivas que ya existen?					
Mi intención es cumplir los siguientes objetivos de gestión de conflictos...					
Para conseguirlos, me comprometo a hacer lo siguiente durante el próximo mes:					

**8.4. Appendix 4 : Art worksheet - Own elaboration**



<i>What happens at home when I get a low grade?</i>	<i>What relationship do my parents have with my homework?</i>
<i>What do my parents expect from me at school?</i>	<i>What happens at home if I have a conflict in school?</i>

### **8.5. Appendix 5: English reading - The Story of the Three Little Pigs with the Wolf's Mediation - Own elaboration**

Once upon a time there were three little pigs who lived very happily with their mother. One day the three of them decided to build their own house. However, they did not choose the same materials to build it. The smallest one made a straw house and the middle one a wooden one. When these two little pigs were finished, they slept, danced and sang, leaving the older one to continue building his stone house. The older pig worked hard for hours because he was making a brick house. His brothers laughed at him and asked him why he was working so hard.

The wolf arrived with the intention of eating the three little pigs. However, when he arrived and saw how badly the brothers treated each other, he changed his mind.

WOLF: Well well, what's going on here?

LITTLE PIG: Our brother is wasting his time! Isn't that funny?

OLDER PIG: No! I'm building a big, safe house, you guys sure made two messes.

WOLF: This can't be right! Let's all sit down together for a while and talk about what happened.

#### -Step 1: Dialoguing with each party

WOLF: I'm going to try to help you, don't you think we can come up with a solution that we all like? Don't worry, let's listen to each other, I'm neutral, I can facilitate the process, shall we?

OLDER PIG: Pf, okay.

MIDDLE PIG: Well, okay.

LITTLE PIG: Okay...

WOLF: OK, let's start with the smallest one. What happened?

LITTLE PIG: I picked the straw to make a house, and I finished early. I'm frustrated to see that my older brother is not finished and can't play with me because he chose a more complicated material.

WOLF: Thank you very much, Little Piggy. What happened, Middle Piggy?

MIDDLE PIG: I chose wood and I finished early too. I was hurt by our big brother's foolishness in choosing those materials.

WOLF: Thank you very much Middle Piggy. What happened, Big Piggy?

OLDER PIG: My brothers have been unwise and I'm worried about them getting into trouble, so I got angry with them.

WOLF: Thank you very much, Big Piggy.



-Step 2: Negotiating with both parties

WOLF: Thank you three very much for telling me what happened. You're brothers, don't you want to get along?

THE THREE PIGS: Yes...

WOLF: So let's work together to find a solution.

- Step 3: Informing about the situation

WOLF: Let's work on this conflict between you three. You have laughed at each other for choosing different materials and taking more or less time, but behind this laughter there are some very important feelings to consider. I will take it upon myself to help you, so let's be here for the next hour to continue talking about what has happened and see what we can do. Don't worry, everything we talk about is going to stay here.

- Step 4: organising the information

WOLF: let's remember what you have said about how you feel. You Little Piggy said that you didn't feel accompanied by Big Piggy, you thought he didn't want to play with you. Right?

LITTLE PIG: Yes...

WOLF: You, Little Piggy, felt insulted, didn't you?

MIDDLE PIG: Yes, so that hurt me.

WOLF: All right, thank you. Big Piggy, although you actually showed it in the form of anger, you're actually concerned about your brothers because you want the best for them, aren't you?

OLDER PIG: Yes, that's right.

WOLF: All right, are you calmer now?

THREE PIGS: Yes.

- Step 5: concretise the different alternatives

WOLF: What do you propose to solve the problem?

LITTLE PIG: I'd like to make a straw house so we can have time to play together.

MIDDLE PIG: I want to make mine out of wood so we can feel safe. It won't take long and we can play together afterwards. But whatever material we choose, let's not insult each other.

OLDER PIG: I want all of us to make our houses out of brick so that nothing happens to you.

WOLF: Alright guys, do you all understand each other's proposals?

PIGS: Yes!

- Step 6: consensus

WOLF: Of all the ones you've said, which alternative do you like the best, how can we do it, is there a way to achieve all three?

LITTLE PIG: What if we build just one house?

MEDIUM PIG: That's a good idea! And what material should we choose?

OLDER PIG: If the three of us build the house together, we'll finish sooner and we'll have time to play together.

LITTLE PIG: If we agree and build the house with each other in mind, we won't feel insulted.

MEDIUM PIG: If we make it out of bricks we will be safe.

- Step 7: reaching an agreement.

WOLF: Now that you know what you want to do, a single brick house between the three of you, valuing each other's opinions, how about writing down your agreement on a piece of paper? That way you can hang it up in your new house, you can include what the process was like and how you felt so that you don't forget it. Do you agree?

PIGS: Sure! Let's do it! Thank you Wolf-mediator!

**8.6. Appendix 6: Questionnaire – Project Evaluation (Students)**

<i>Students</i>											
How much do you agree with these statements?											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I know how use techniques to solve conflicts that arise in the classroom											
I know the conflicts that arise in the classroom related to the English language and teaching											
I consider conflict as an element that is always present in schools											
I think conflicts can lead to beneficial consequences											
I want to communicate conflicts to teachers											
I feel free to share my conflicts in the classroom											
I feel free to share my conflicts at home											
Mark the answer you think best matches your reality											
How do you feel now coming to school?	Great	Normal		I am not comfortable			I am treated badly				
What is it that you don't like about coming to school?	Nothing	Tasks		Teachers		Classmates			Others		
How do you feel now at home?	Great	Normal		I am not comfortable			I am treated badly				
Write down three things related to conflict that you have learnt this month:											
Have you solved the conflicts you had with your teachers? How?											
Have you solved the conflicts you had with your parents? How?											
Have you solved the conflicts you had with your partners? How?											
Have you achieved your conflict management objectives?											

*Mario and Ana have been friends for years. They are always together and like spending time with the other. One day, Mario met Cristina and they have been hanging out since then. Ana is feeling left out and she tries to spend time with other classmates in the school. However, one day she hears them say that Mario does not like to be her friend anymore because he has not tried to reach for her since Cristina appeared. Realising how this is true, she goes to find Mario and they both start to argue shouting and reproaching each other's behaviour. Mario thinks Ana is not respecting his new friend and feels forced to only have Ana as a friend.*

Write what you would do to help Ana and Mario resolve their conflict.

<i>Estudiantes</i>												
¿Cómo de acuerdo estás con estas afirmaciones? 0: Nada de acuerdo – 10: Muy de acuerdo												
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Sé cómo usar técnicas de resolución de conflictos para solucionar los que surjan en clase												
Conozco los conflictos que surgen en clase relacionados con el inglés y su enseñanza												
Considero el conflicto como un elemento que está siempre presente en los colegios												
Pienso que los conflictos pueden llevar a consecuencias beneficiosas												
Quiero contarles a los profesores los conflictos que surjan												
Me siento libre de compartir mis conflictos con la clase												
Me siento libre de compartir mis conflictos en casa												
Marca la respuesta que más se ajusta a tu realidad												
¿Cómo te sientes ahora viniendo al colegio?	Genial		Normal			No estoy cómodo/a			Me tratan mal			
¿Qué es lo que no te gusta de venir al colegio?	Nada		Tareas y deberes	Profesores/as		Compañeros/as			Otros			
¿Cómo te sientes ahora en casa?	Genial		Normal			No estoy cómodo/a			Me tratan mal			

Conflict as an Intrinsic and Constructive Element in the Social Relationships Involved in Primary Education English Teaching

Escribe tres cosas relacionadas con el conflicto que hayas aprendido este mes:

¿Has resuelto los conflictos que tenías con tus profesores? ¿Cómo?

¿Has resuelto los conflictos que tenías con tus padres? ¿Cómo?

¿Has resuelto los conflictos que tenías con tus compañeros? ¿Cómo?

¿Has conseguido cumplir tus objetivos para la gestión de conflictos?

*Mario y Ana son amigos desde hace años. Siempre están juntos y les gusta pasar tiempo juntos. Un día, Mario conoció a Cristina y desde entonces salen juntos. Ana se siente excluida y trata de pasar tiempo con otros compañeros del colegio. Sin embargo, un día les oye decir que Mario ya no quiere ser su amigo porque no ha intentado acercarse a ella desde que apareció Cristina. Al darse cuenta de que esto es cierto, va a buscar a Mario y ambos comienzan a discutir gritándose y reprochándose su comportamiento. Mario piensa que Ana no respeta a su nueva amiga y se siente obligado a tenerla sólo como amiga.*

Escribe lo que harías para ayudar a Ana y Mario a resolver su conflicto.

### 8.7. Appendix 7: Questionnaire – Project Evaluation (Teachers)

<i>Teachers</i>					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
The students have understood the dynamic of the project					
The students have felt free to express their emotions and share their feelings					
Students have solved their problems with teachers					
I have felt satisfied with the development of the project					
I have looked for information about conflict resolution					
Parents have got involved with the project					
Do you think you have enough training for solving conflicts in the classroom?	Yes		No		
Do you think you have enough training for solving parent-teacher conflicts?	Yes		No		
What things are going to change from now on?					
In what way, if any, do you see the project making a positive difference?					
In what way, if any, do you see the project making a negative difference?					
Write down three things related to conflict that you have learnt this month:					
Have you solved the conflicts you had with the students? How?					
Have you solved the conflicts you had with your parents? How?					
Have you achieved your conflict management objectives? How?					
Do you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on the project?					

Conflict as an Intrinsic and Constructive Element in the Social Relationships Involved in Primary Education English Teaching

<i>Profesores</i>					
	Nunca	Raramente	A veces	A menudo	Siempre
Los estudiantes han entendido la dinámica del proyecto					
Los estudiantes se han sentido libres de expresar sus emociones y compartir sus sentimientos					
Los estudiantes han resuelto sus problemas con los profesores					
Me he sentido satisfecho con el desarrollo del proyecto					
He buscado información sobre resolución de conflictos					
Los padres se han involucrado en el proyecto					
¿Piensas que tienes suficiente formación para resolver conflictos en el aula?	Sí			No	
¿Piensas que tienes suficiente formación para resolver conflictos entre padres y profesores?	Sí			No	
¿Qué cosas van a cambiar a partir de ahora?					
¿De qué manera, si es que hay alguna, consideras que el proyecto marca una diferencia positiva?					
¿De qué manera, si es que hay alguna, consideras que el proyecto marca una diferencia negativa?					
Escribe tres cosas relacionadas con el conflicto que hayas aprendido este mes:					
¿Has resuelto los conflictos que tenías con los estudiantes? ¿Cómo?					
¿Has resuelto los conflictos que tenías con los padres? ¿Cómo?					
¿Has conseguido cumplir tus objetivos para la gestión de conflictos?					
¿Tiene algún otro comentario, sugerencia o información sobre el proyecto?					

**8.8. Appendix 8: Questionnaire – Project Evaluation (Parents)**

<i>Parents</i>					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I have got involved in the project					
I have tried to solve my conflicts with my child's teacher					
I have tried to solve my conflicts with my child					
I have asked my child about his/her conflicts					
I have been attentive to conflicts in the school					
I have felt satisfied with the development of the project					
I have looked for information about conflict resolution					
What things are going to change from now on?					
In what way, if any, do you see the project making a positive difference?					
In what way, if any, do you see the project making a negative difference?					
Write down three things related to conflict that you have learnt this month:					
Have you solved the conflicts you had with your child? How?					
Have you solved the conflicts you had with your child's teacher? How?					
Have you achieved your conflict management objectives? How?					
Do you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on the project?					



Conflict as an Intrinsic and Constructive Element in the Social Relationships Involved in Primary Education English Teaching

<i>Padres</i>					
	Nunca	Raramente	A veces	A menudo	Siempre
Me he involucrado en el proyecto					
He intentado resolver mis conflictos con el/la profesor/a de mi hijo/a					
He intentado resolver mis conflictos con mi hijo/a					
He preguntado a mi hijo/a sobre sus conflictos					
He estado atento/a a conflictos en el colegio					
Me he sentido satisfecho con el desarrollo del proyecto					
He buscado información sobre resolución de conflictos					
¿Qué cosas van a cambiar a partir de ahora?					
¿De qué manera, si es que hay alguna, considera que el proyecto marca una diferencia positiva?					
¿De qué manera, si es que hay alguna, considera que el proyecto marca una diferencia negativa?					
Escriba tres cosas relacionadas con el conflicto que haya aprendido este mes:					
¿Ha resuelto los conflictos que tenía con su hijo/a? ¿Cómo?					
¿Ha resuelto los conflictos que tenía con el/la profesor/a de su hijo/a? ¿Cómo?					
¿Ha conseguido cumplir sus objetivos para la gestión de conflictos?					
¿Tiene algún otro comentario, sugerencia o información sobre el proyecto?					