

Bullying Language: Behind the Aggression

Giovanny Jesús Fandiño Urrego

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés

Faculty of Sciences and Education

Bogotá 2018

BULLYING LANGUAGE: BEHIND THE AGGRESSION

GIOVANNY JESÚS FANDINO URREGO

Director:

NANCY GOMEZ BONILLA

This document is partial requirement to obtain the degree of Licenciado en Educación  
Básica con Énfasis en Inglés.

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés

Faculty of sciences and Education

Bogotá 2018

Acuerdo 19 de 1998, Art. 167

La Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas no será responsable de las ideas expuestas por los graduandos en este trabajo.

**NOTE OF ACCEPTANCE**

---

**DIRECTOR**

---

**JUROR**

---

---

---

**BOGOTÁ DC 2018**

### Abstract

This study looked for a bullying language understanding in a Colombian context with seventh-grade students who put together and/or relate their social and linguistic backgrounds to create a unique language system around bullying, which effected their coexistence and the foreign language learning process. The problem came out when observing that the class time was reduced because it was necessary to give a solution to bullying situations, finding that they did not conceive certain situations as bullying, unlike adults such as teachers and parents. The following study is qualitative, descriptive, interpretative following the principles of ethnographic research and it is designed to understand, describe and discover the strategies that the students use in their speech acts immersed in the bullying language. It relates how students through their second language classes got aware of their linguistic creations and how some of them were used violent and aggressively to maintain a social hierarchy or to keep a power relationship between them. By categorizing their behaviors and reactions some possible students' roles are found when facing bullying situations. Finally, it is proposed how, through the 'Community language learning – CLL', motivating environments can be created for learning English through the work of everyday problems in the school.

*Keywords:* Bullying, language, symbolic violence.

## Resumen

Este estudio buscó una comprensión del lenguaje del bullying en un contexto colombiano con estudiantes de séptimo grado quienes unen y/o relacionan sus experiencias sociales y lingüísticas para crear un sistema de lenguaje único alrededor de bullying, el cual estaba afectando su convivencia y el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera. El problema surge al observar que el tiempo de las clases se reducía porque se debía dar solución a situaciones de bullying encontrando que ellos no concebían ciertas situaciones como bullying a diferencia de los adultos como pueden ser los docentes y padres de familia. El estudio presentado es de tipo cualitativo, descriptivo, interpretativo siguiendo los principios de una investigación etnográfica y está diseñado para entender, describir y descubrir las estrategias que los estudiantes usan en sus actos habla inmersos en el lenguaje del bullying. Relata como los estudiantes a través de sus clases del segundo idioma se concientizaron de sus creaciones lingüísticas y como algunas de ellas fueron usadas violenta y agresivamente para mantener una jerarquía social o para sostener relaciones de poder entre ellos. Al categorizar sus comportamientos y reacciones se encuentran posibles roles que los estudiantes tienen frente a una situación de bullying. Por último, se plantea como a través del 'Community Language Learning - CLL' se pueden crear ambientes motivantes para el aprendizaje del inglés a través del trabajo de problemas cotidianos en la escuela.

*Palabras Clave:* Bullying, Lenguaje, Violencia Simbólica.

## Contents

Abstract.....	5
Resumen .....	6
Introduction .....	9
Justification.....	12
Problem statement and Research Question .....	14
Objectives .....	18
General Objective.....	18
Specific Objectives.....	18
Theoretical Framework.....	19
Language Sense: Semiotics and meanings .....	24
Conflict as a Tool for a Social Construction.....	29
Bullying consequences .....	32
Pedagogical Intervention .....	37
Pedagogical approach.....	38
Innovation.....	42
Pedagogical Objectives.....	44
Pedagogical Implementation .....	45
Teachers and students' roles .....	47
Evaluation.....	49

Research design .....	51
Type of study .....	53
Setting.....	54
Participants .....	56
Data collection instruments and procedures .....	58
Role of the researcher .....	59
Reliability and validity .....	59
Data Analysis.....	61
Students roles in regards of bullying language.....	69
Gender Identity and Race .....	75
Power relations .....	79
Conclusions .....	82
Pedagogical implication .....	85
References .....	87
Annexes .....	92

## Introduction

Language represents who we are socially and how we socially create meanings. It has been seen that people from all ages are recreating meanings in their constant human dynamics; and, it seems that students' previous language and social experiences, lived at home in their first year of life, play an important role because it helps and allows them to gain or establish a social status in a structured society. Throughout two years of English language teaching, it was seen that language is a pivotal code to really understand some of the most recent social concerns in the students' environment. In this case, bullying was explored in order to have a better and clearer idea of what this really is. It was undoubtedly a relevant problem that interrupts the students' learning processes and even their social relationships. Additionally, it was also seen that some teacher, parents and school administrators might not understand bullying and can address it in the wrong way; therefore, the idea of revealing part of what bullying is become very important. There must be a way of addressing bullying correctly bearing in mind that students' social development is delicate and important for them.

There are plenty of times that educators intend to solve problems but leaving out the learning process that they need to keep up and the attentiveness that students' social relations deserve. We can't deliberately try to solve problems that we might not understand at all. That is why this study indicates that language must be seen as one of the bases that introduce new people to an established social life, letting them identify social roles and the representations of what people have constructed in their previous language experiences. In other words, language was used as a source to find and understand bullying conflicts and recognize students' social hierarchy. Accordingly, understanding how language allows us to enter into the students social shared meaning system and get from it specific contexts. In order to detail bullying language, which was seen several times in the students' interactions, there were several conversations

and discussions about this phenomenon that allowed different perspectives to come out from the students' opinions about bullying. In some way, students had a social hierarchy with different categories and understandings when defining what bullying meant for them.

After those perspectives and conceptions about bullying language, the purpose of truly understand it came out. According to Pierre Bourdieu language carries power and symbolic violence, and it was totally perceived in the students' language practices. On the first stages of the study, the impression was that students were always struggling to define a role and status in their community or in their social groups. That is why bullying language was presented as a dynamic organism that allowed an understanding of how humans' relationships are modified and there was the attempt to reveal it. Inevitably, it was important to analyze bullying and conflicts to make the distinction between them because Toohey (2009) says that the necessity of conflict is relevant due to the fact that it allows students to produce adult's patterns to permit the construction of a social structure and individual personalities.

Behind that aggression, in the research process, it was seen that there was more than just violence and conflict. Many authors have mentioned that language is more than what we normally perceive; it is more than just a sequence of words but a sequence of meanings that are in constant change. Language is changed socially but at the same time, it also modifies society through time and usage. This perception of bullying and language relates, somehow, to what many linguists have mentioned about violence in language such as Terdiman, Foucault, Piaget and Van Dijk. Therefore, the aggressive language presence in class was studied through the following question 'what characterizes the linguistic and social constructions in bullying discourse?' which was analyzed with the students' help and perspectives.

It was noticed that people, in general, identify bullying language when there was not bullying at all. Students revealed that their shared meaning system is misunderstood by adults

several times. It was found that grown-ups are concerned about teaching children their semantic structure but there are not attempts to analyze and understand students' constructions. Furthermore, it is seen that the new generations and their linguistic codes have modified the way language is used throughout time. Thereafter, it was important for this study to re-evaluate the importance of the students' language creation and finally allow teachers, parents, etc. to understand bullying language.

Bullying has been studied thoroughly in psychological matters but there are not too many studies about bullying language. Therefore, it was important to study and explain what is going on with students' language interactions and bullying. Definitely, language is used to bring beauty as well as violence but it is relevant to truly get students' semantic meanings when they interact. It is clear that bullying is understood contextually because the context modifies the way bullying is practiced by the students. That is why our data collections show how bullying as a dynamic concern that people need to explore in context.

In the following chapters, the reader will be able to see an exploratory research detailing important finding of bullying language in context. It will give insights of bullying language in the 'problem statement'; a detailed conversation of the phenomenon in the theoretical framework; pedagogical intervention; methodology and application in the research design section and finally the findings in the data collection.

### **Justification**

Bullying is a global concern that has affected everybody. People from old ages could say that they were somehow involved, and nowadays, children can say that it is getting worse. The point is that the school environment had to take bullying in its agenda because of recent repercussions that bullying is bringing in. One on hand, students' social atmosphere has been getting tense and, on the other hand, teaching time has been decreased due to teachers' interventions in bullying situations.

This study explores the misunderstandings that people might have when discussing and identifying bullying language due to the fact that language, somehow, is unique and different from one context to another especially in school environments or from one person to another. Therefore, this study has relevant importance because it will allow teachers, administrators, parents, governors, etc. to work bullying language from a local context and to make interventions way more appropriate and effective. Even, it is important to clarify that effective interventions would create a better teaching/learning environment avoiding the time reduction that some classes have because some educators spend on solving certain students' conflicts. It will create language learning environments to make students improve their problem-solving skills and work on their self-esteem. Definitely, the study looks for a full comprehension of every individual in the classrooms.

Furthermore, having a clear understanding of the students' language backgrounds, teachers will be able to appropriate contexts for learning. That is to say, language educators will have the chance not only to teach English as a Foreign language but also to use language as a mediator of social concerns within their cultural practices. It must be relevant to take into account that bullying as language should be detailed by background, development, behaviors, meaning, etc. that makes them unique and incomparable with other contexts. It will let us

know what to teach, how to teach, and how students can take from the language lessons.

Finally, it will be a goal to make bullying widely understood by students, scholars, parents and all the administrative members of the school institution through language itself.

Deeply, after understanding bullying and its contextual features the idea is, on one hand, to work together to help students understand the consequences of their actions; and on the other hand, to create critical thinking skills to make bullying victims aware that it is just a language practices and how to react to it. Inasmuch as it will be a priority to allow them to create spaces where discussions and problem-solving activities come to their normal day-to-day lives. Basically, this intervention will provide students tools to keep creating society as they are constantly doing and make language way more meaningful.

As a final thought, this study might be determined to all the educators in general because it helps them to dig deeply into the students' language system. Therefore, language educators can improve their teaching practices and avoid wasting time when bullying takes place. And finally, students will be able to work from their own experience to contextualize their native tongue with the second language and produce more meaningful language creations.

### **Problem statement and Research Question**

Interaction with new generations has shown that language evolved in a way that bullying has been intensified through language (Sherrow, 2011). These new ways of communication either aggressive or not must be understood to identify bullying language in the students' context. Therefore, it was seen that there was the need of comprehending the students' language constructions to modify and design appropriate lesson plans, which might be meaningful for amazing learning experiences. Having this clear, the need that teachers can help students to develop problem solving skills through discussions avoiding harmful uses of language was discussed due to the fact that there are not effective solutions to these situations in the language learning environment. The following inquiries came because of the way students use their linguistic creations to hurt their classmates and, unknowingly, those creations might be relevant in their language learning.

Violence has many forms, according to Gay violence could be direct, structural and cultural which can be seen as a tringle; and, violence can start at any corner and it can be transmitted to the others at any time (Gay, 1999). Definitely, it was seen that violence in the classroom was happening very often and it interrupts any learning process. Specifically, the consequences affected everything; first of all, all students are altered, then the students' environment which might be very tense, the learning/teaching process and finally, teachers who are obliged to address bullying concerns instead of the lesson as such. This last affected party must understand the whole social students' context because as many authors have said, there are barriers between generations. For instance, it was seen that some teachers tried to solve students bullying-problems from their perspective but not from the students' points of view.

Undoubtedly, the concern here is not just what students do but how adults perceive the students' behavior to solve these conflicts. Bullying had to be studied thoroughly in the students' contexts and understood to give effective solutions and truly help students to overcome these situations. Methods and approaches must be followed, the importance of this understanding was totally relevant due to the bullying frequency in the students' daily school life. Teachers took a lot of time to solve and understand what happened in the classroom before the class started. Therefore, students were not actually learning English and because of interference they lost their possible interest. Class after class, it was the same, students were exposed to bullying and this constant situation addressed the students' attention to their problems and bullying instead of the English class. When this happened, the idea of truly understanding their bullying language came out to create a better social environment.

On one side, the dynamism of language has to address different ideas, feelings, and thoughts from completely different individuals and this had made language evolve in a way that it carries violence towards difference. Within this matter, language learning could be affected, so learning should be addressed properly to maintain effectiveness when working with students' knowledge and language practices. In other words, taking into account the students' linguistic codes, teachers can take it as an advantage to create amazing learning experiences and reduce bullying language. During two years of language teaching practices, it was noticed how language allows constructions of social roles through student's exploration and understanding of the world. However, plenty of times the results gathered from their social creations were not positive at all; these results had negative connotations towards aggressiveness and violence. That was why the interest of understanding those variants and concerns. Initial activities were applied to find out their social dynamics.

Thus, between discussions and brief explorations of their bullying language, students themselves expressed a different concept of bullying than the one presented on media and that their language creations came from the outside world. For example, some of the aggressive words they normally used were employed by different sources in their daily surroundings such as family or TV programs. Generally, children give old experiences new meanings (Bergh & Bulck, 2000). That is to say, they only know the aggressiveness in the words and they work the meanings collectively. Thereafter, the semantic meaning that students put in the language is created during the time in which they have relationships with their equals and consequently the words that they took change totally to have new meanings.

Hence, teachers cannot intervene in students' disputes or improve teachings environments because they are far from understanding the students' reality. Basically, there was the need to analyze their linguistic constructions, language practices and the way they work the invention of new meanings collectively to improve teaching methods because it allows educators to place themselves in real contexts. Many teachers have worked from students' realities and have gotten amazing results (Gruwell, 1999). Undoubtedly, if teachers do not work in their environments, they won't be able to have meaningful lessons because students will be far more concerned about their social lives.

It is clear that children or adolescents are creating and sharing a new meaning system but what are educators doing to understand it? Sometimes, we are not focused on the students' linguistic practices but more into solving problems and conflicts among them. However, these interventions are obsolete because we are not actually working on the roots of the conflicts. We cannot leave aside the students' work creating all those new meanings in their social development. Definitely, each one of them has certain social categories that defined who they are, and what they know, value, want, etc. This process comes from simple interaction when

they are just children; then, they will create new semantic meanings collectively, and finally, they will reproduce and give part of their social creations to the society.

Generally, bullying is a subject constantly discussed as something that has the same level globally but speakers do not take into account specific and contextual variations. The general understanding comes from people's opinions and media, but those sources don't have a psychological formation to discuss it thoroughly. Bullying has different scopes and the one here studied is semantics. When bullying is semantically worked, adults, in general, can say that there are plenty of times when children are using abusive language; however, it can just be just a misunderstanding. This lie in how big the semantic field is, making people believe that there is bullying language when there isn't. That is why specific context must be analyzed to effectively work on the students' conflict. When working on bullying language, it was found that it is related to chauvinism, gender, sexuality among others.

Certainly, the study is focused on the need of truly see when students are having conflicts and when they are just interacting using their day-to-day language; thereafter, to see what is behind bullying in their natural environment. As Baeza & Sandoval (2012) suggest: "We must, therefore, make intelligible the horizon that meant violence, detect sense... assume that the violence episodes say it in a direct way and without double-dealing is to simplify the problem and close the possibility of make hermeneutics. Violence does not always speak in a straightforward manner, it is necessary to identify and translate the speeches that are at stake" (p. 1). Understanding bullying is not to look for violent meanings but going deeper into their language system and analyze its complex structures. In order to widely understand a shared meaning system, one needs to immerse oneself in their context, culture and to assimilate the way of thinking to comprehend what is really happening with their social relations. It is not an easy task because language itself expresses not only meanings but all our human emotions.

Due to the mystery that language carries by itself and the eagerness to explore those hidden meanings created by new generations, the inquiry to decipher the characterization of the new linguistic codes and social constructs in bullying language came out in order to look for a better understanding. Then, to implement those findings to help educators in general who will be able to guide students' relations through new teaching methodologies.

### **Research Question**

What characterizes the linguistic and social constructions of bullying language in seventh-grade student's context?

### **Objectives**

#### **General Objective**

- To characterize the linguistic and social constructions of bullying language in an EFL seventh-grade class.

#### **Specific Objectives**

1. To analyze students' social meanings in their daily language use in order to have a better understanding of their shared meaning system for a preferred language educational environment.
2. To identify new meaning in the students' speeches in regards to symbolic violence to categorize violent patterns in their language structures.
3. To interpret sociolinguistic aspects to classify when students are being aggressive or when they are just using their language.

## Theoretical Framework

It is understood that this study is trying to reveal bullying as a constructed matter from students' linguistic backgrounds. Throughout this chapter, it is going to be discussed plenty of factors that make what bullying is linguistically and how it is conceived and constructed. Additionally, it will be stated how our social development, during our school days, make our own language patterns full of violence and beauty at the same time depending on our personal purpose. This understanding would be vital at the moment of going to interact with a group of students and, somehow, realize as a newcomer the inevitable language structures established for that specific group. This collective creation and system of language practices are mentioned by Pierre Bourdieu (1991):

*“What circulates on the linguistic market is not 'language' as such, but rather discourses that are stylistically marked both in their production, in so far as each speaker fashions an idiolect from the common language, and in their reception, in so far as each recipient helps to produce the message which he perceives and appreciates by bringing to it everything that makes up his singular and collective experience”* (p. 39).

It is strongly believed that bullying can be conceived in different ways by different people. The way people understand bullying might be determined by factors such as their social and cultural backgrounds. Meaning that, bullying will differ from one another taking into account the difference among contexts. Certainly, there are always external and internal factors that build the individual conception of what bullying is for every person. Definitely, at first glance, a language concept is constructed individually from personal experiences and then constituted and agreed collaboratively within a group of people where language has been exercised with specific features that make their shared meaning system unique with its own

patterns. Bullying is certainly a global matter but it is incomparable from one specific context to another; that is why, the understanding of these matters has plenty of practices depending on the group of people that the researcher is trying to comprehend.

On the other hand, bullying itself is not just constructed by patterns of violence but from a sequence of individual growth and empowerment which let participants and students look for what they are in their society and what role they play in their social hierarchy. In other words, it is a representative sample of what we create and want of ourselves in our life. Humans are always struggling internal and externally to make their life meaningful and, in their way to fulfill their goals, they create certain relationships of power allowing new concepts to come into life. So, the understanding of this social matter is a construction made from the students' perspectives and world's point of view as Krauss & Chiu (1998) argue: "...culture as a shared meaning system developed by members of a collective to represent the world, create cultural artifacts, orient themselves and others to features of the environment, and evoke certain feelings" (p.18).

In a context where bullying takes place, it is necessary to bring into consideration different factors that provide meaning to the language used in the situation. It is definitely clear that people have certain intentions when producing sentences or discourses but there might be misunderstandings if we are not involved in their language use (Bowerman & Levinson, 2001). Therefore, the outside-listener needs to put much more effort to not just understand the literal meaning of what it has been said but the intentions that are into the message. It will show the individual' language conception and also how this process comes to a social language interaction. This matter consists of the individual backgrounds which represent their language acquisition and, thereafter, the role that they bring to their social

construction. It is important to mention that bullying is taken as a language interaction among students.

On the other hand, media has defined bullying globally leaving behind what specific contexts bring into the definition. Bullying needs to be studied particularly in order to really help the victims of the case. The interactions are not the same because different factors such as social backgrounds, cultural system, language, etc. will modify the symbolic violence. It doesn't mean that the general conception is wrong but that means that understanding bullying language in context is an arduous task to do because it involves a deep comprehension of the population. Consequently, the wide explanation needs to be characterized taking into account the people involved in each scenario. The depth into the phenomenon requires the participant's voices to get into the shared meaning system where language is uttered in order to collect the situation's details and avoid wrong assumptions that the audience might have.

Since bullying has been prevalent in everyone's school agenda, this statement departs from general conceptions as Huesmann (1994) argues that "Bullying among schoolchildren is certainly a very old phenomenon. The fact that some children are frequently and systematically harassed and attacked by other children has been described in literary works, and many adults have personal experience of it from their own school days" (p. 97). Therefore, it should not be conceived as a difficult matter that no one has experienced before but something that we can relate to.

Unquestionably, it is necessary to take theories of language acquisition and social development to make and provide sense to linguistic relations nowadays made by students. Language represents where we came from and who we are in a social context as (Krauss and Chiu, 1998) mentioned "Just as language use pervades social life, the elements of social life constitute an intrinsic part of the way language is used" (p. 2) Somehow, language lets us

understand a social phenomenon from the participants' perspective introducing certain features of the context. Krauss and Chiu continued arguing that "How these participants define the social situation, their perceptions of what others know, think and believe, and the claims they make about their own and others' identities will affect and content of their acts of speaking".

Deeply, it is completely relevant that our background modifies our language and makes us who we develop at a social level. The classrooms become the foundation of a social creation. Students produce new meanings interactively and collaboratively making some of them unique and understandable just by them as producers. This production undoubtedly needs to be deciphered by the participants themselves and provided to the audience to make their language modifications understood. This process will also include emotion and culture; basically Forman, Minick, & Stone (1994) take Vygotsky's points of view to sum this up: "... Vygotsky's writing dealt not only with cognition but also with emotions, motives, and personality. Moreover, his conception of the social extended well beyond social interaction and discourse to include both cultural and social-institutional levels of analysis" (p. 3).

Moreover, language exercise is a dynamic matter and it could be even mentioned as a living process due to the variation in language patterns and the plenty of factors and situations that modify specific productions. It is irrefutable that a language matter could be understood without the self-explanation of the producer, the receiver, and the environment. Having these patterns of language clear, we can come up to interact with the students and analyze symbolic violence in their natural context. To be a member of a society or to interact with a social group means to have plain their language use as Halliday (1978) states "In the development of a kid as a social being, language performs an important function. Language is the channel in which life models are transmitted, in which you learn how to act as a member of a "society" – within

and through of the social groups, family, neighborhood and so on- and to adapt its culture, ways of thinking and acting, beliefs and values” (p. 19).

An important implication on this area shows that students are recreating what adults left about social inventions to recreate it in their “new social environment”. It is a transmission of social perspectives and roles that play together in the classroom. This means, students and newcomers have an idea of society from their first years of life and they show and makes it valuable at the moment they start interacting with their equals. Bruner (1990) states: “The symbolic systems that individuals used in constructing meanings are systems that were already in place, already ‘there’, deeply entranced in culture and language...” (p. 11). Hence, all these theoretical concerns and the experiences with the students made clear that bullying is not a social interest explained only by media but the ones who interact with that language and have an accurate idea of what the shared meanings system is. As it was mentioned before, media gives a vague idea of what this phenomenon is because it is a general or worldwide view but media won’t be able to take into account specific contexts that students live day by day; that is to say, people cannot just work with the general conception but with the students’ experiences and linguistic creations.

Certainly, bullying here is also conceived as a specific phenomenon and it varies according to contexts and places as language changes from society to society or generation to generation. Therefore, that language change also modifies the perspective that people have towards bullying. This concept of bullying will differ from the outsiders to the ones interacting and placing everything they have into the dynamics of their social interactions. When listening to their aggressive encounters one will be a witness not only of the aggression but their linguistics codes made during their first stage of life. It is only a recreation process that makes

the natural context as Trudgill states: “Language varies not only according to the social characteristics of speakers – such as the factors of social class, ethnic group, and gender...- but also according to the social context in which speakers find themselves...” (2000; p. 93).

### **Language Sense: Semiotics and meanings**

Previous studies and researches had documented that language change is inevitable as (Aitchison, 1981) says “...words acquire new meanings and new pronunciation” thus it is understood that bullying language constructions are also in constant change. Meaning that, bullying and language are modified all the time but separately, and children put them together; therefore, this phenomenon needs to be analyzed in context to understand students’ aggressive interactions. It is clear that, bullying and its concepts are unique for the bully and the victim because they created their own language when interacting with their equals. If adults immerse in students’ world, there will be plenty of new words, meanings and creations that adults wouldn’t easily decipher. Several times, a child will take words that they don’t even know and place connotations to make it meaningful. What is more, several documents have stated the students’ innovation to create their own words (La patria, 2013):

*“If the word does not exist, they –students– make it up, use it, and get used to it. So are the adolescents and their oral expression. ...in their argot, they use words or phrases that serve to express their emotions, feelings, or to refer to something or someone.”<sup>1</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> This citation comes from a Spanish document. Original “*Si no existe la palabra, ellos la inventan, la usan y la familiarizan. Así son los adolescentes y su expresión oral. ...En su jerga emplean palabras o frases que les sirven para expresar sus emociones, sentimientos, sensaciones o para referirse a algo o alguien*”

It totally shows that language is not a static structured limited to a literal meaning but a field of numerous meanings and connotations playing altogether. As a matter of fact, these peculiar events let us understand somehow that language differs definitely from one person to another and the barrier will be bigger if a comparison is made between adults and adolescents. Namely, it is totally clear that every single individual creates and modifies some meanings making them understandable only by context. So, we can say that contextual meanings show how a semantic system is established, organized and produced as Eikmeyer & Rieser (1981) mentioned:

*“In thesis I will argue that in principle one can assign an unlimited number of meanings to each word. (...) Instead of these more abstract meanings, one gets confronted with the meanings actually constructed or realized by the participants of a conversation. The real meaning of a word in conversation very often differs from its standard meanings. In general hence, real meanings should be considered in the world-semantic component of an empirical semantics. (...) First, methods must be developed for determining real meanings in specific situations. Secondly, it must be investigated empirically which of the possible meanings of a word can be regarded as standard meaning at all, i.e. social stabilized meanings in specific and likewise socially stabilized contexts.” (p. 503)*

Eventually, these statements clarify entirely the importance of the language users’ participation to discover and understand how language works in their society or specific context. Immersion and constant interaction with the speakers would show the way they have organized semantics in a day-to-day basis. Therefore, language is seen a social construction as Reason (2008) asserted: “This would suggest that if language were a social construction created as a patterned system of communication, reflecting our social context, then, it follows that language is culturally ordained. The forms and the categories of language, therefore,

reflect the social mores and codes of the society in which we live. At this point, there exists a plethora of schools of thought, which present the role of language in different ways”.

For a deep understanding of their semantic system, it is required to reveal their conceptions and their language constructions; and not to simply go into the linguistic productions because it will produce misunderstandings and misconceptions due to the different language practices that the producer and the newcomer –researcher- have. It also means, that bullying must be perceived differently because it will have some variations depending on the participants’ point of view. Thus the concept of bullying is not just what parents, teachers and media state but what the students’ linguistic codes represent. As Leech (1983) expresses this point in regards of the semantic study: “...Obviously, connotations are apt to vary from age to age and from society to society.” (p. 12). For that reason, bullying is understood as a matter socially constructed that carries language practices from social inventions and symbolic understandings and this make the phenomenon unique and complex. So, it should be depicted from the specific to general and global concerns. To judge any utterance, it is necessary to form and turn to the conceptualization of language patterns already established.

The importance of interacting and understanding children is relevant because they are always active on the meaning-making process. In regards of bullying, they are filling empty words with a big load of aggressiveness and symbolic violence and put together their experiences as Jones and Brader say “...students bring with them a rich ray of prior experiences, knowledge, and beliefs that they use in constructing new understandings.” Thereafter, society works on re-constructing words to express new reasoning making new connotations and this understanding is also expressed by Innis and Hirst (1985 and 1987 respectively) when they say that just a word can suffer different modifications and at the time it

is uttered, the meaning goes from the conceptual meaning to the connotative one; it could completely different from another. For example, one word is globally accepted for most of the speakers of the language and this word's conceptualization goes into paper, a dictionary; and then small groups of people might use the word with new connotations. There is when misunderstandings come out because listeners need to figure word's meanings out. This process is semantics and pragmatics in practice; it is taking the linguistic social creation and work exhaustively with possible language modifications; it is to look at the root and changes made over time to understand what that new word or connotation means.

Naturally, after this deep comprehension of language use and its context, it is important to develop the analysis itself into what linguists called 'The Encoding/decoding paradigm' which means in simple words the communicative process between the producer and the receiver; deeply, this statement is used by Bourdieu in language and symbolic violence as enciphering and deciphering process of the linguistic exchange. Basically, this field is about the communication process and understanding of the code taking into account code as the language itself. This means that speakers produce signs of mental representations and receivers must construct those representations. However, this is quite a hard process because the same message can have different meanings; but it is definitely a necessary exercise to get what the studied social group is trying to convey. On the whole, Krauss et al. (2010) expresses this concern in the following statement: "...it is often the case that the same message will be understood to mean different things in different context."

Having these concepts explained, the semantic understanding is organized and focused on the language as a code; secondly, the producer's message and intentions; thirdly, the receiver's assumptions and understanding. Of course, in the process of understanding these

practices, it is relevant to take neutral participation because there might be plenty of wrong connections due to the fact that personal assumptions can divert real connotations. In this regard, Krauss et al. continued explaining: “On this basis, an utterance like “It’s nice to see someone who find this topic so stimulating,” said about a student who has fallen asleep during a lecture, will be understood to have been ironically indented.” For that reason, language must be contextualized and bullying should be scrutinized in context.

Moving forward, it is required to move to language intention worked by Austin (1962) who named this ‘Speech acts’. It involves a big part of the language essence itself and unquestionably a base of the discourse analysis. As its name says, this is a theory of intentions, understandings and connotations that express not just the structural organization of language but the context and the purpose of the producer and the receiver’s interpretation. Going beyond that Austin (1962) expresses these conceptions into three aspects: The locutionary act that evolves the specific conventional meaning, the illocutionary act that is in regards of intentions, and the perlocutionary act which is the particular effect on the addressee. For example, a ten years old boy produce a sentence which is undoubtedly the locutionary act; but that sentence was an order directed to one of his equals, so this is, the illocutionary act that expresses that that sentence instead of being a question was an order; finally, the intension is the perlocutionary act which is the intentions or the force of that sentence like “Persuasion” on the listener or receiver:

*“The act of ‘saying something’ in this full normal sense I call, i.e. dub, the performance of a locutionary act (...). To determine what an illocutionary act is so performed we must determine in what way we are using the locution: ‘asking or answering a question’, giving some information or an assurance or a warning, announcing verdict or an intention, (...) The trouble rather is the number of different*

*senses of so vague an expression as 'in what way are we using it' - this may refer even to a locutionary act, and further to perlocutionary acts... (...)Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience... and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them..." (p. 94)*

Definitely, this is a starting point to understand certain characteristics of language to, of course, go into the essence of social issues and the semantic structures socially created by specific groups of people. As a conclusion, society is viewed as constructions as well as a current evolving field that carries, at the same time, that constant language change; keeping in mind that all those processes are a collective work. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize in those evolving fields that makes meanings different from time to time and it will depend on the management of language as Yang and Wang (2016) say "These managers of language have different ways to interpret all sorts of factors in situational contexts, and this interpretation will eventually influence language management." (p. 78). Basically, what is said is a current representation of social constructions of specific groups and understating it will make outsiders to connect more than literal meanings but to explore their society.

### **Conflict as a Tool for a Social Construction**

Centuries later of the sociolinguist boom great researchers and linguists started to talk about verbal violence or symbolic violence. It is focused on the language use to express rejection, disapproval, hatred, etc. towards different ones creating social inequity. Definitely, humans are always in conflict trying to express new feelings and meanings as Toohey (2009) expressed "Conflict in language learning has commonly been viewed in terms of the conflicts that individual experience as they attempt to appropriate new means of expression" (p. 367).

Definitely, Bourdieu works symbolic violence in a complete sense; he is the author who represents almost the entire understanding of symbolic violence. He attempts to express

that a social relation is based on a market or background and a profit making a hierarchy depending on how much a person can give in that relation. Even more, there is a linguistic exchange between a producer and a receiver allowing a process of enciphering and deciphering a social code. In that process, there will be a relation of power that establishes categories between the ones involved on the communication process. In other words, it presupposes that each one on the participants have a background, some conceptions and understanding of the social world and these belongings place people in certain social positions. When the process of communication comes out, the speaker provides a message with his/her world's understanding and the receiver must decipher and analyze what the producer is trying to express. Bourdieu (1999) states: "utterances are not only sign to be understood and deciphered, they are also signs of wealth, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and signs of authority, intended to be believed and obeyed." (p. 502).

Similarly, there is the Foucault's point of view that expresses the individual against a society or a convention. In this way, the producer of the message is conceived as someone with a greater linguistic competence which made them speak with more authority and somehow imperatively. However, the point in these statements is not oppression and force but the recreation between them upon language. In this same area, we can state that, at the first years of school, children are creating a society in which they take roles and representations and let disputes to come out to gain a better understanding of their society; and, this is something necessary in the child development. So, disputers are not negative at all times but relevant for the social recreations that children have to carry out every single day of their lives. Additionally, Toohey argues the importance of disagreement in child interactions: "...they disregard disagreement as a means for participants to manage activities with one another" (p-59) as well as Corzaro and Rizzo (1990) explain this relevance:

*“They argue that disputes are important in children's attempts to reach shared understanding and to jointly organize and construct play events”(...) They explain their positive view of disputes as follows: Disputes and argumentation like other forms of communication and discourse enable children to reproduce the adult society of which they are developing members through their own creation of and participation in a shared peer culture.” (p. 260)*

For that reason, it is important to notice that children in their early ages use language to recreate their social background to generate and contribute to their own social development. In that process of recreating themselves as active social members, they have to show disapproval and acceptance of certain social matters. It will generate patterns that will let outsiders see student's social creations and points of view; even more, the power relations that they might work on and have established. Having clear the importance of disputes, it defines the difference between necessary disputes for social development and bullying that is focused on aggression and negative rejection. Furthermore, relations must be in power balance because it provides value and strength to what is said; all authors who are concerned about power relations state that somehow it is necessary and part of a social construction. We have also Terdirman (1989) who tries to understand and analyze that relation from particular to general in case as he stated of the ‘resistance of the nineteenth-century France’: “it could be nothing like the dynamic exchange of heterogeneous signs and intentions –still less their struggle for predominance –which we conceive as necessitating social communication to begin with. Language presupposes difference. It exists only within a “differential” world, a world of conflicts and oppositions” (p. 15).

This understanding let us conceive that conflicts are not negative at all times; so, people shouldn't see conflicts with prejudice and objection because conflicts are also way of expression to recreate statuses and points of view. Definitely, conflicts come as way of arguments, disagreement and difference of opinions. Consequently, bullying is not every act of disapproval and it must be understood correctly; several times people identify bullying when there is nothing but a debate between a group people. In order to differentiate 'positive disputes' and 'bullying' we need to go into students' social creations and understanding of the world, their language use and development. We can mistakenly judge actions that are not negative.

Nowadays, every act that people might see as negative towards others is perceived as bullying when it is not correct to make them part of bullying because some of them are ways of disagreement and some others are social constructions that students use in their daily interactions. Even more, it is necessary to remove all the conceptions that we would have in regards of violence because the students themselves see violence differently. Therefore, we can take students' perceptions of violence and work from there to really identify what bullying is and, somehow, work preventively for a healthy coexistence.

### **Bullying consequences**

It is well known that bullying is a phenomenon that has reached dangerous limits and has increasingly affecting schools' environments everywhere. Because of where it has gotten, it has been constantly mentioned on TV, newspapers, Internet, magazines, peoples' discourses; but its spread has taken people to wrong conceptions and understandings of this matter. Even more, it is considered as a public health issue which can affects psychologically and physically thousands of students (Herrera, Romera, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2018). They also stated that there are some cultural similarities and differences that characterizes bullying in different regions and, it

must be understood in order to address these situations properly. Furthermore, there are not many studies about bullying in a Latin-American context and that is why such researches should be done.

Then, the lack of information of bullying in a Latin-American context creates misunderstandings. Therefore, it is commonly heard that there were bullying, that one person is bullying another and so on; however, everything has become bullying when it shouldn't. That is why the importance of truly getting to what bullying is and causes in order to avoid any misconceptions and; even more, because bullying has let real people down, people who have gotten hurt and even ended their lives. Losey (2011) mentioned several cases where children have been chased to the point they contemplate suicide and thus the relevance to understand it: "it will be important to have a thorough understanding of the nature of bullying, its impact, and the risk factors of bullying, suicide, and school violence" (p. 8)

But before explaining the theoretical understanding of what bullying is I want to introduce the conception that was made during the research process and the theoretical construction which let me understand the process of the whole issue. Definitely, the base of this social concern starts in the first stage of our lives due to our constantly social development through the language use. Unquestionably, we have been creating signs and symbols for the rest of that social development and they will be our background in the way we interact with each other. As Aragonés (2001) expresses: "at present, such communication involves a complex process in which strictly linguistic verbal codes have ceased to play the exclusive role in discourse and share their value in the construction of meaning with other non-verbal codes, especially iconic and multimedia, which requires specific strategies for their use and semic interpretation" (p. 22). Obviously, because of the technological advancement bullying has been increased to other aspects; this is why the new concepts of bullying bring terms such

as cyberbullying and physical aggression. However, this research will take the base of the phenomenon which is only the linguistically side of the symbolic violence, and most likely, the opening to those new terms and behaviors.

The main statement involved in this section is the real conception of bullying on general people' thinking. That is to say, the real meaning changed or it is misunderstood by most of the people when bullying is introduced into a discussion. Even more, there are several discourses that state bullying is any kind of aggressive act even if it is by mistake. Ergo, this misconception is aggravating the phenomenon and creating confusion. For example, Anna Wierzbicka (2009) states: "While there is no shortage of various attempted definitions of bullying, there are usually lacking in clarity, precision and explanatory value"; and also, she continues "This is partly because to provide an adequate definition of bullying one needs to consider closely not only human behavior but also the meanings of words and ways in which these meanings can be accurately defined and intelligible explained" (p. 102). Afterwards, this same author as many others try to claim that –after the meaning of bullying itself – there is also confusion in what the words actually means: "What matters here is not how the word should be used, or what it should mean, but rather, what it actually means as it is normally used by "ordinary people"". That is to say, to comprehend bullying one needs firstly to see what the social constructions and then make a study. For example, a group of people is using a 'rude word' that of course for another group has a negative connotation; so, if someone listens to the first group is going understand the code differently from what actually is. For that reason, the study of bullying carries the social construction. Even more, it is not always negative.

However, the message is negative and it is directed to hurt people. One needs to identify it and understand it. Language expresses almost everything even, as it was said before,

the human essence and human has malevolent conceptions that can bring interruption in the society in which humans are co-existing. Abusive language is being used tremendously and Salem, Liberman, Eriksen, Saiyasombut, Bollinger, Pearce & Salarzai (2012) argue: “As often as language is used with great facility to promote beauty, express deeply felt emotions, and convey vital information, it is all too often used malevolently to pit nations or communities against one another. Rather than promoting peace and understanding, it can undermine these aspirations.” (p. 1). Undoubtedly, society has a dominant and a dominated and this is why Bourdieu says that it depends on the ‘market’ which is called here ‘background’ and profits in a relation of negotiation. This means, thereby the social constructions the groups come together with different perceptions and the relation of power becomes stronger depending on the market of each individual:

*“It is true that the definition of the symbolic relation of power which is constitutive of the market can be subject of negotiation and that the market can be manipulated, within certain limits, by a metadiscourse concerning the conditions of use of discourse. (...) But it goes without saying that the capacity to manipulate is greater the more capital one possesses, as is shown by the strategies of condescension. It is also true that the unification of the market is never so complete as to prevent dominated individuals from finding, in the space provided by private life, among friends, markers where the laws of price formation which apply to more formal markets are suspended.” (p.71)*

Thereby it also taken into account the importance of the psychological side after the completely understanding in the sociolinguistic one. However, in regards of these sections and documents society roles still are important. Santomauro (2011) explained taking as reference Tognetta that students from 10 to 12 years are creating their roles, social roles: “Luciene Tognetta, from the Education Faculty of ‘Universidad Estatal de Campinas (Unicamp),

explains that between the 10 to 12 years of age, the child goes to look for the social coexistence, different references from the one he/she received at home, giving continuity to the process of the personality construction.” And depending this process the child will get some feelings about him/herself which will give the way in which the child behaves: “...he/she can feel pleasure in scorning the other in order to confirm himself/herself”.

Probably, we are not looking the focus of this phenomenon because we are based on the consequences or results after a whole process of construction. In this phenomenon we are going find the discourse of certain ideologies that let students being aggressive such as Gender identities (Krauss et al., 2010), Racism (Fredrickson, 2002) and so on. As it was told before, this will be an attempt to understand language into those ideologies and social constructions. Are they characterized only by those constructions? What are they creating social meanings or are those social meanings already created? It will study deeply those meanings and productions.

### **Pedagogical Intervention**

Before the pedagogical intervention is addressed, it is important to introduce the context where the study took place because it was why the study was conducted and, therefore, the curriculum was modified. Basically, the use of bullying and aggressive language affected somehow the teaching and learning processes; in other words, the time destined for the class development was reduced because of bullying presence. There was undoubtedly a constant interruption that altered the way classes were designed and planned. Consequently, I had to design a new completely chronogram and curriculum in order to modify the language lesson and implement action plans to let students learn meaningfully. To simplify the vision of language, the teaching and learning, and the lesson planning were re-design to innovate the English language classes letting students work collaboratively to solve social conflicts while taking advantage of the English class to really learn the language.

For one side, the Educational Institution is placed in a location where it can serve to the whole community around the locality due to the three branches that the institution has. It provides primary and secondary education for almost 4.157 students of all ages. Additionally, it is a public school which offers formal education according to the Colombian Secretary of Education. Deeper, the school's education goal is based on values and it is stated on its Institutional Education project-PEI which stands for "Proyecto de Educativo Institucional": Values education for coexistence and productivity. This Institutional project has been the focus of this institution for several years so it was also taken into account for the development of this pedagogical intervention.

Specifically, the instructional design was applied to seventh graders who were 11 to 13 years old. They had already several meanings established in their native language and they were creating new ones on the L2. The population was about 40 male and female students.

Moreover, students had to move from one classroom to another one for each class; and between those changes the classes were reduced approximately 5 to 10 minutes less. For that reason, the total time for an English lesson was about 40 to 35 minutes each; this time was not the most appropriate one for a successful English language learning. All in all, the teacher's intervention had to be aligned by the time for each class directed to address the main factors which altered the class flow; in this case, bullying presence. I wanted to take the time that headroom teachers took from the class to solve students' conflicts and to make it an opportunity to work on the target language while solving problems; in other words, not to set aside students' conflicts with the second language learning but using second language teaching as a problem-solving source.

### **Pedagogical approach**

Community Language Learning (CLL) was the approach for each English lesson development; this approach helped students to learn L2 while constructing and working on their co-existence. One of its principles is to work cooperatively leaving behind competition. During lessons teachers become counselors who can help students with problems, making connections among feelings, expressions, and behaviors that students may have. But not only that, this approach states language as a mere social process and it was reflected due to the fact that students are creating 'society' and meanings; therefore, teachers have to take into account the students social constructs when teaching a L2. In other words, this approach does not only take language learning as an individual process but as a social process where students are having contact with. Its founders stated that "Language is people; language is persons in contact; language is person in response" (1983:9)"

This approach also relates with the entire bullying concerns this study was trying to reveal because the English class did allow the social language creation but guiding students to

a better understanding of what their meanings were and making sure they could keep working on language creation on the L2; so students got to know about the consequences of such language patterns when using aggressively and then worked to foster positive language use between them. At the end, they could recognize aggressive language and bullying language and so something about it.

With his approach, human's social development and its language production are taken into account at the same level because both have the same influences for a second language learning. Moreover, with the study's perspective, language teaching is taken as a tool that can be used as a social guide that addresses students' problems and assumptions in regards to their language understanding. These aspects are important because both problems as well as language learning were relevant at the moment of each English class. Instead of interrupting the class to address social and language problems, both were weaved together to make it meaningful. For that reason, Community Language Learning was appropriate for each English teaching lesson, and social problems solving. All in all, there was a big barrier between the English lesson and the student's problems because the time destined to the lesson was totally invested in the bullying actions that teachers wanted to address. In other words, those educators had to decide if they spend their time in the English class or in fixing the bullying situations. There was not any relation.

Basically, the approach maintained the language learning process active in the entire lesson but at the same time, the teachers could address bullying concerns and even more, helping students to understand the phenomenon and accepting difference. Community language learning let teachers guide different issues throughout language; in this specific case, it let me address the main concerns students have regarding others. For example, bullying was predominant when students perceive difference between each other; so, with this approach,

students could discuss the difference between them instead of marking those aspects aggressively. Due to the new focus on the English class, we could work on students' relations and second language competences.

Furthermore, Community Language Learning creates an environment where teachers are counselors who assist students in their social relations making sure about student's position in regards to others and to the world itself. It also makes students aware of bullying language use and also how language dynamics can affect them on their social development. As the same approach states: "one person giving advice, assistance, and support to another who has a problem or is in some way in need". Deeply, one of the objectives of CLL which matched perfectly with the study and its pedagogical intervention is the humanistic technique that is defined by Moskowitz (1978) which made students aware of the social relationships they are creating but also about acceptance and consciousness about who they are and what consequences their behaviors bring to social development:

*"Moskowitz defines humanistic techniques as those that blend what the student feels, thinks and knows with what he is learning in the target language. Rather than self-denial being the acceptable way of life, self-actualization and self-esteem are the ideals the exercises pursue. [The techniques] help build rapport, cohesiveness, and caring that far transcend what is already there... help students to be themselves, to accept themselves, and be proud of themselves... help foster a climate of caring and sharing in the foreign language class". (Richards & Rodgers, 1986)*

With this approach, bullying was introduced in the English class as a subject to be discussed as a matter looking for problem-solving tools. The aim was to get language as a mediator to get into these situations and change it for a better understanding and learning process. Even more, it helped to improve the teachers' involvement into the understanding of the student's cultural meanings which were created in their background development and;

thereafter, create guidelines and activities that let students understand their own creation and notice the importance of what they were linguistically producing. In that point of time, the results were modifying the class structure.

During the initial stage working on bullying in the English class, several aspects were identified such as the social roles, points of view and meanings farther from what a teacher in a normal class can perceive. These findings made the lesson plans dynamic; meaning that, planning was in constant construction keeping ahead of the purposes of the study but guiding students into acceptance and recognition of all the aspects in the bullying language study and English teaching. From the understanding of the students' dynamics, constructivism was a complement of the lesson planning.

On one hand, constructivism was the base of the lesson planning in regards to activities and the form itself to let students have a thorough knowledge of their social situation. Definitely, it created an environment where data could be collected but also it allowed students to understand their relationships, improve each of them and change their perspectives about difference. Constructivism let students become active participants who reflect on their own knowledge (in this case, bullying problems) and use active techniques to infer their behaviors. Basically, a good inference of this theory is stated on a governmental page focus on Educational theories: "we reconcile new information with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge".

In account of bullying understanding, constructivism through all of the activities revealed students' awareness of bullying language implication in their social lives. Bullying phenomena was introduced and it generated the need to discuss it in order to get the students' perspectives. Those perspectives were completely exposed in the class and we carried out

some debates that help students to reflect on, as constructivism theory implies. Meaning that, pedagogically speaking, students used language to comprehend and analyze bullying itself. This process produced the first findings that help to construct the study for further research and pedagogical implications. Thereafter, students were allowed to be active participants into the topic and the English class; activities such as roles plays and the creation of proposals let students toward to develop problem-solving skills. Additionally, they were introduced to certain topics to encourage their self-understanding about bullying. That was why during the pedagogical process students found out ways of reconciliation on their own. In addition, learning was meaningful because students were able to interact with the problem and they were able to find several ways to solve it. They were immersed in the second language when bullying contexts were recreated into the curricula and students could give their opinion based on their own experiences and backgrounds. Basically, the phenomena started as a topic and its development let us create specific concepts letting the study foster in a direct way.

The previous pedagogical statements place new ideas about learning and teaching where students are able not just to learn and handle a subject (second language) but also giving them the opportunity to work independently on their social relations. Moreover, this approach allowed students to be school leaders with great language potentials and linguistic tools to work on social values on their native and second language. On the other side, it created language awareness and it allowed a wider understanding of their ways of communication. This long process took out concepts of social creations and social roles such as the victim and the bullied construction.

### **Innovation**

In this pedagogical intervention, I was able to talk to the students and create a relation of respect where students provided information. On the early stages, I was able to take a

supportive role providing confidence and second language structures. Later on, students started to produce some tasks independently and I intervened when it was just requested.

This totally took English teaching as a social mediator where students learn a foreign language dynamically. It removes the idea of just language instruction because students acquired and use language in the development of their social relations to solve some concerns on their environment which improves also the teacher's lessons. It was not only an unusual class with an out-of-context topic but something that concerned all of us. This type of intervention took different factors that somehow change students' learning process and alter their social roles, perceptions and assumptions. It let me be an English teacher and also be a social mediator in the classroom due to the bullying events. In other words, it opens the barrier that some classes have lettings students to be themselves but accepting each other difference. It completely changed the form that the English classes are usually provided because it did not split the class into diverse frames as usual; for example, the time when teachers interrupted their class to get into the bullying situation, the time when the teacher had to document the situation in the academic folder and the students had to wait to sign up the notes; and finally, the grammar or "Language" teaching frame. This previous 'process' was really long and meaningless that did not allow a meaningful learning process neither time to let students participate actively in a real English class. This is why; my attempt to change the process resumes the language social perspective and embrace to the bullying concerns, students' participation in problem solving and real-world language learning.

With the help of the Community Language Learning and some principles of constructivism –certainly, for those specific classes– students were able to speak out loud by their own and let them to recreate in the class bullying events, what they usually do about them and, it let out their social and cultural meanings creation; during these sessions we could

implement problem-solving activities where they were able to understand their differences and solving any type of differences through language use. Language had been used negative for aggressive purposes but, at that time, it was used to address that aggression into positive actions; it was all the way around. This pedagogical intervention involves some principles: Understanding the content of the activity, students' participation in classroom planning; and practices that give them the chance to work independently over a longer period of time. (Vieluf, Kaplan, Klieme, & Bayer, 2012).

Importantly, for these new principles, students' context was very relevant. Their backgrounds let me discover firstly the school events and bullying situations; thereafter, the research and pedagogical foundation. This study mentions the context in different chapters but it is exactly what brings sense to the entire study and to the two years of teaching process that were carried out. In relation to this chapter, the context lets us understand the students' background. Students were not open to actively participate in the decision making for the curricula and I tried to do the opposite. Even more, we took what the school was looking for, values as the main education goal. It was a multicultural environment due to the location so the difference between each other was generally enormous.

### **Pedagogical Objectives**

1. To take the second language learning process as a tool that can allow students to reflect and solve their social relationships and discrepancies.
2. To introduce vocabulary related to daily life subjects so students can express opinions more motivated and easier.
3. To understand how students, work with their native language to promote similar language creations in English and increasing their interest in learning the second language.

## **Pedagogical Implementation**

Significantly, it was a process which took more than two semesters to be carried out. First of all, the classes were designed just with a grammatical approach where students could learn the basics and practice the introduced patterns of the English language. There were different stages for the English class such as the warm-up, which introduces a song or a game; the introduction of the topic; practice, which is guided with the teacher's help; the production, which students can produce what has been learnt; and finally, the closing. This was an ideal teaching methodology for EFL; however, the classroom did not work in that way. The classroom encloses human beings with different ideas, backgrounds, relations and, certainly, conflicts.

When it was seen that the class was reduced due to students' conflicts, it was necessary to re-design the whole class curriculum for a betterment and help students to solve their problems through language. Having the tools and the theories, Community Language Learning was the approach taken that allowed the English class to be successful and, definitely, effective. Because of the students' ages, the lesson plan was designed so they could speak out about the insights they had about bullying, how it worked in their social system and the understanding of their behaviors and language.

At the beginning, students were introduced to bullying. This allowed the teacher to say what people, in general, see from their context; therefore, they could say how slightly wrong or right the perception was. That was the point where students started to correct and add more to the perspective given. They showed what bullying was for them, when they were and were not aware of bullying actions. They were very interested in the topic and most of them wanted to participate. This construction let them see that several times they did not realize they were bullying others and, some other times, outsiders found bullying when there were not any

aggressive actions but simply interactions. During the debate, students received vocabulary related to bullying so they could explain their ideas using English vocabulary.

In the following sessions, they were asked to identify what bullying actions took place in their classroom. They were very engaged because they could express themselves and say how they could see bullying. These activities and debates allowed students to speak out about bullying without being attacked by others; because of the class environment that it took, they were just addressing a topic naturally and they did not feel any pressure. After a definition was established, students were asked to mention if they felt whether a bully or a victim and why; also, they had to write about someone they knew that might be a victim and describe how they felt about it. Some of their works were in Spanish and those were introduced anonymously to the class to work them using English language.

After recognizing bullying victims, students started to work in defining why those classmates were attacked; therefore, as a goal, students had to identify if they were bullies or not. This transition was handled properly so bullies did not feel afraid of recognizing themselves as bullies; they also expressed why someone would attack another person. Bullies were trying to reveal the causes that precede bullying in their specific environment. After having the definition of bullying and the roles students took part in, we started to work in their language use. Students worked what a word could mean and its semantic meanings giving to the class a valuable information that could help teachers and students to solve their problems such as bullying language.

The following stage was very remarkable because students had acquired enough vocabulary related to bullying and during the classes they were able to work English language in order to define their meanings and share their cultural meaning system to the language teacher. During this process, communication channels, discussions and debates were opened in

order to solve their differences and make them aware of their language power. This allows language as a social mediator where students could express their feelings and create channels to improve their social relationships. Even more, it increased the interest of the English language because they felt way more related to the topic addressed in the English class. On the other hand, the entire class was taking into account the students learning process and the concerns that teachers and students had about bullying.

### **Teachers and students' roles**

Thoroughly, a new and innovative teacher's role was introduced in order to implement this methodology. This role allowed students to express themselves and be heard, as the CLL approach presents. In addition, this approach states what the teacher –counselor– needs to introduce to understand the complexity of the social development. In Curran words: “The teacher is responsible for providing a safe environment in which clients can learn and grow. Learners, feeling secure, are free to direct their energies to the tasks of communication and learning rather than to building and maintaining their defensive positions.” In this approach, students are named as clients.

However, the teacher's role and its perspective were a construction of certain theories that innovated the teaching labor; additionally, teachers discuss, works and analyzes the total linguistic environment, focused on bullying concerns. On the other side, the English teacher takes for granted the students words as a feedback. Certainly, as Vieluf et al express: “Professional learning activities within schools, such as team supervision, are one setting where such reflection can take place. Finally, de-privatization of practice implies that teachers observe each other, give feedback, and act as mentor, advisor or specialist.” (p. 114). In progress, students develop in their second language a new way of expression and language utterances; it means that English was a tool used in problem-solving. As Brown says: “As

human beings learn to use the second language, they also develop a new mode of thinking, feeling, and acting-a second identity. The new “language ego,” intertwined with the second language can easily create within the learner a sense of fragility, a defensiveness and a raising of inhibitions.” (2001, p.61)

On the other hand, we have the learners’ role. This is the most important because students are learning and using the second language as a tool of self-recognition and understanding. There was an opportunity to know their social foundations and relations with others. In the English classes, students showed their perspective about difference and expressed their feeling about their social environment itself. It was a process where they were able to actively participate in the classes. They understood that their social roles are completely noticeable and applicable in the classroom. They count on each class thus their opinions, feelings and expressions affect the entire environment.

During the lessons, students obtained different assumptions about their social construction. It was introduced that every action, every word, every situation modify the meanings into their reality. It is assumed that the students were applying that L2 in a constructed world by their meanings and social artifacts. As the detailed study of CLL, it is said: “When faced with a new cognitive task, the learner must solve an effective crisis. With the solution of the five effective crises, one for each CLL stage, the student progresses from a lower to a higher stage of development.” (La Forge, 1983 ) In terms of language instruction this approach states 5 stages which this study tried to follow verbatim:

*“In stage 1 the learner is like an infant, completely dependent on the knower for linguistic content. A new self of the learner is generated or born in the target language”(La Forge 1983:45). The learner repeats utterances made by the teacher in*

*the target language and overhears the interchanges between other learners and knowers.*

*In stage 2 the child achieves a measure of independence from the parent" (Larson 1983:46), Learners begin to establish their own self-affirmation and independence by using simple expressions and phrases they have previously heard.*

*In stage 3, the separate-existence stage, learners begin to understand others directly in the target language. Learners will resent uninvited assistance provided by the knower/parent at this stage.*

*Stage 4 may be considered a kind of adolescence. The learner functions independently, although his or her knowledge of the foreign language is still rudimentary. The role of psychological understanding shifts from knower to learner. The learner must learn how to elicit from the knower the advanced level of linguistic knowledge the knower possesses.*

*Stage 5 is called the independent stage. Learners refine their understanding of register as well as grammatically correct language use. They may become counselors to less advanced students while profiting from contact with their original knower."* (Richards & Rodgers, 2001 p. 310).

## **Evaluation**

Due to the fact that the topic was not in the curriculum and the English class had to accomplish the school criteria, the class was split into two main parts. The first part had the mandatory grammatical subjects and the second part took bullying as the axle of the class. The first lesson, students were exposed to bullying as a topic where they could learn English vocabulary related to bullying so they could use it later for discussions. During the second stage, all the students had some assignments where they had to write about violent situations, about words meanings, and positions they had about bullying; basically, they had to express

their perspectives of their language and bullying. During those sessions, students could use the vocabulary they gained at the beginning. Therefore, they were graded taking into account their writing and their vocabulary use.

During the final stages, when students had enough knowledge about bullying, some discussions were carried in order to talk and understand their language perspectives. Some of them had a huge range of English vocabulary to express what bullying was for them and some others had some difficulties explaining their ideas in the second language; however, they participated actively and were helped by teachers and classmates to use the English language. Additionally, it was seen that students were more engaged when discussing their daily problems putting more effort to participate and be heard. These types of topics call their attention according to what it was seen.

Definitely, their language learning process could be way more meaningful because students feel more related and motivated to participate and give their opinions. These classes give them the opportunity to discuss freely their problems without the fear of being judged or punished. Unfortunately, it was also seen that students wanted to have more time to discuss and learn about this subject in the English language. The outcomes were amazing because we could share personal experiences and most of the time, we could talk about them in the English language, our goal.

### **Research design**

The primary purpose of this study was to figure out the bullying discourse affected by students meaning constructions, and the discursive strategies behind what people see on day-to-day actions and disputes among classmates at schools. Most importantly, the study wants to understand the process of language development and language change through the students' background starting from primary where they are interacting and knowing each other until secondary where students already have a defined social role and perception of the world regarding their cultural environment. In addition, the research is trying to reveal and characterize a real conception of what bullying is in every students' minds. Then, comprehending the points mentioned above; the study wants to seize how language works by itself in the creation of meaning and social relations; in this case, focused on bullying.

On one hand, scholars, institutional administrators, psychologists, teachers and even researchers have worked heavily on what bullying is as a social phenomenon in every school, but they barely touch what is the relationship between bullying and language. There is not too much information about how language affects bullying and its perception from the students' side. Definitely, we all know that language is a vital tool that recreates and complements social aspects such as social interactions between participants and relations of power. Even more, throughout language, we can also understand these social concerns it has been mentioned before. This language understanding can help us out studying those semantic constructions that new generations are making and contributing to a new bullying language. On the other hand, one of the research purposes of the study was to completely understand bullying but taking into account participants' context and life experiences which construct who they are socially; with this, there was an attempt to explain bullying according to the environment and not with the general trend. That is, currently bullying is conceived as any violent word or

violent action but it should be deeper than just an action, it has its own background.

Understanding this phenomenon, there will be a right beginning to start making decisions and warranty possible solutions; and, thereby work on the real problem from the root itself to find a coexistent environment in diversity.

The study that was carried out had the purpose of gathering all the information related to what really language is in the classroom in order to analyze what bullying is in an educational and even in a participants' contexts. The group of participants in this study was children from 12 to 13 years old who were seventh graders. This small group was chosen because they demonstrated a particular dynamism in their language interactions where bullying, aggressiveness, and violence were present. At first glance, violent acts were perceived in a general context but throughout a certain period of time, while teaching and interacting with them, some information was gathered in order to find out who the leaders in these types of actions were and who the constant victims were as well. Additionally, this defined a decisive axis to establish violent patterns in their continuous behavior towards others and the certain relation between bullies and victims.

The ongoing observation and analysis of these actions allowed the research to find out how the communication between peers was constructed. With all this, one of the purposes of this study was to decipher and decode their communication process, understanding the producer's intentions and the receiver's comprehension in a bullying context. It will include a brief relationship with sociolinguistics matters as the language use is completely related to social constructs. There are important elements in order to carry this project successfully out such as the type of study, the participants, the context or setting. On the following sections, the elements will be explained due to its relevance in how everything was addressed in order to collect the data and its findings.

## **Type of study**

At first glance, the phenomenon to be studied was absolutely related to the nature and essence of language and social behaviors, so in order to understand these concerns, the axis to develop the research was taken by ethnographic research principles which address an understanding of behavior and culture by observing and talking to people in their own natural context. Therefore, symbolic relations and the dynamic of language use were relevant in the data analysis. Consequently, this research is meant to understand, describe and discover discursive strategies that students use in their speech acts which are immersed in the bullying language discourse. As it looks also for understanding that new phenomenon that has not been addressed linguistically before, its approach has an exploratory purpose in order to get an accurate explanation of what is happening in the students' environment. Thereafter, there is a deep description of what has been found during the study. It is also meant to produce initial stages for further research to study this phenomenon thoroughly. All in all, the study is qualitative, descriptive and interpretative following the principles of ethnographic research; the details of how the study was conducted will be in the following pages.

Deeply, the analysis of the participants' voices comprehended five phases: Merely observations of the context and the general interaction between the participants; secondly, a follow-up of the current phenomenon through daily journals or field notes; thirdly, a production of writings about bullying conceptions and conceptualizations by the students from seventh grade. Fourthly, an introduction of the concept –constructed collaboratively –based on their own insights and then to make all the students aware of the phenomenon that the study is addressing by showing them what their individual conception was and how the whole group understands that symbolic violence; and finally, the spread of the general findings and an brief introduction of how bullying should be understood taking into account the students social

context. In other words, the idea is to leave the general conception of what the phenomenon has been expressed by media but understanding its variations and produce specific aspects of these actions by analyzing students' voices and then leave bases for further research. The interaction and exhaustive observations were not modified at all because this would affect the results. There was not purpose to alter their natural contexts as a qualitative research guides, expressed by California State University, Long Beach's website:

*“Qualitative research does not introduce treatment or manipulate variables, or impose the researcher's operational definitions of variables on the participant. Rather, it lets the meaning emerge from the participants. It is more flexible in that it can adjust to the setting. Concepts, data collections tools, and data collection methods can be adjusted as the research progress”<sup>2</sup>*

Somehow, the results are just simply based on gaining understanding from the participants' points of view. It is understood that those meanings come from the participants themselves and their own experiences. Furthermore, the research guides a process in which the data is filtered in different sources of data collection that validate the findings. On the other hand, the data collection allowed a characterization of participants' behavior where it is also generated certain descriptions of the different roles in a bullying situation.

### **Setting**

The study was carried out for about two years in a pedagogical practice. It was in two different branches of the same school (being one for primary and the second one for secondary). In both contexts, it was given a natural environment where students and participants could get on naturally. That means, the setting was not modified or induced in

---

<sup>2</sup> Taken from the URL: <http://www.csulb.edu/~msaintg/ppa696/696quali.htm>

order to get wrong results or make participants to change their natural development because it can produce inaccurate language usage. Having this clear, observations were merely an immersion in students' interactions and context because it is understood the importance of a natural contexts "...whereby the researcher attempts to immerse himself (herself) in the flow of happenings in the settings. An initial feeling experienced by the novice ethnographer is the desired always to be where the 'action' is." (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2002).

In regards of the location, the study takes place in a public school from Bogotá, Colombia. The socio-economical income is level three – middle-class– where those levels are listed from one to six being one the lowest and six the highest. This is a commercial area where people might find big stores, street markets and banks. The school has three branches in the zone; one for secondary which tackles sixth to eleventh grades, second branch for fourth and fifth grades and the last one for kindergarten to third grades. The initial observations were made in the second branch with fourth graders but the study itself was developed and carried out in secondary with seventh graders at that time. It was important to carry observations in different school settings because it allowed the research to look at school life in different situations and settings. Even more, this was important due to the language characterization in different school life's stages as language varies from place to place, school to school, rural to urban, etc.

The school hours are in the morning from 6:30 am to 12:15 pm. Classes are approximately of 45 minutes each, and students have to move to different classrooms every time they have a different subject which reduces the average class' time. In those classroom changes, students tend to meet with their fellow students from other grades and it lets to violent actions too. Basically, the school setting allowed students to interact all the time with their classmates but also with the entire school body.

## **Participants**

The participants had different backgrounds regarding social, cultural and economic matters. As public school in the capital city, there were students from different regions of the country and that was why differences between them were prominent somehow. Each grade, since sixth grade up until tenth grade, students are mixed so it makes them to share the same cultural language system between them. Even more, the school receives new students each year students that come from other public schools or private schools. All of these annual changes make a multicultural environment that carry some violent acts between students due to the differences mentioned before.

After several observations and research assessments of the environment and the students' behavior, some patterns were found and studied for further research. Immediately, one group of students were identified as bullies and victims because of their constant aggressive interactions. Plenty of times, they were the focus of the class because they rose their voices in order to intimidate their counterparts. Relations of power were imminent and the language usage had to be identified. Therefore, those students who let violent language be visible were the participants in the study. Somehow, the participants represented some features for their classmates, they were the leaders, the guides, and the victims.

These participants were from secondary and their ages were from 10 to 13 years old. It is important to mention their ages because they were in their preadolescence stage where language is also developed and recreated by them as Nippold mentioned in her document 'language development during the adolescent years: aspects of pragmatics, syntax, and semantics': "Pragmatics, the use of language in social contexts, undergoes the adolescent years, a time when peer communication become an increasingly common activity and important source of information, emotional support, and personal well-being..." (2000).

On the other hand, the participants produced relevant data to understand their language development and the relation of power that Pierre Bourdieu mentioned in his documents. Those students represented language as the dynamic matter that many authors have written about. Their shared meaning system changed and evolved from time to time. Lightly, it had been seen that language in their early stages were quite different from the preadolescent and adolescent stages regarding symbolic violence in their speech acts.

According to their perspectives and life's point of view, there were some categories that defined the study and its essence taking into account their ages, gender, background, roles in their social environment and development as such. They detailed their experiences and language understanding to clarify what bullying really is in their school. It allows us to comprehend bullying in a Colombia context (local context). The participants were 70 per cent males and 30 per cent females.

From the research ethics, participants' parents gave consent about their participation to make sure they were aware of the research and what their sons and daughter were doing. Consents are important to have a clarification about the study, their responsibility, etc. as Standord Univerisity's page clarifies:

*“Obtaining written informed consent from a potential participant is more than just a signature on a form:*

- *The consent document is to be used as a guide for the verbal explanation of the study.*
- *The consent document should be the basis for a meaningful exchange between the researcher and the participant.*
- *The participant's signature provides documentation of agreement to participate in a study, but is only one part of the consent process.*
- *The consent document must not serve as a substitute for discussion.”*

Otherwise, the researcher was absolutely neutral but full of rapport in order to make clearer results as Midgley, Danaher & Baguley (2013) stated "...may need time for many participants in many contexts to build rapport and identify suitable democratic participatory process..."<sup>3</sup>.

### **Data collection instruments and procedures**

Undoubtedly, the data collection is the fundamental part to understand, confirm and answer the research question which was worked during two years that the research was carried out. To comprehend part of what the instruments are, it was firstly explore the subject, level and possible backgrounds to gather the data. As Jordan (1997) states that to get a need analysis the research needs to assess the language levels and skills of produce it; moreover, it got a classification of methods to gather data in a chronological order and start the corresponding procedures to understand the phenomenon. On a general perspective, the data tools were observation (Fox, 1998) (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2006); journals; interviews being the most relevant one (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008):

*"If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk with them? Conversation is a basic mode of human interaction. Human beings talk with each other; they interact, pose questions, and answer questions. Through conversations we get to know other people, learn about their experiences, feelings, attitudes and the world they live in. In an interview conversation, that researcher asks about, and listens to, what people themselves tell about their lived world. The interviewer listens to their dreams, fears, and hopes; he hears their views and opinions in their own words; and learns about their school and work situations, their family and social life."*

---

<sup>3</sup> Midgley, Danaher and Baguley. The role of participants in Education research.

### **Role of the researcher**

This point is really exalted due to the implications that a research can make during his or her study. For that reason, I took into account the difference between the teacher in a pedagogical sense and the researcher merely in the investigation context. In regards with the last one, it was stated the behavior of the research during the researching sessions. Hernández et al (2006) argue the most essential meaning of the role of the researcher in which the he or she most of all should respect the participants while there is a development as a supervisor who takes into account the actions taken in the classes; as a leader and finally as a friend. However, whatever the role developed is the researcher should be impartial in the form the data has being collected to avoid interference in the finding or process.

### **Reliability and validity**

The research, as it was mentioned before, was exploratory because it makes the researcher to observe a small social group to notice and document new patterns of behavior in an environment. Even more, the data instruments used were not altered to get specific findings and there was a constant interaction with the participants to avoid any variables in the results. Everything that was documented was confirmed with the population itself; for example, observations were supported by the survey where participants let the research know if the observations as such were understood correctly and didn't have any misconceptions.

On the other hand, it is important to mention that the students were not afraid to talk about the phenomenon because there was an environment of confidence and they knew that there were not repercussions if they talked about bullying. They could open their minds and say everything they were experiencing; so, bullies as well as victims talked about their daily activities and how bullying was present in their lives. Actually, there was the opportunity to interact with the students at all times, in class, in the recess, etc. so it makes a pure interaction

with the population. It means that the results come from the ones who live and experience bullying every day making the results valid and reliable.

Furthermore, when the instruments were used, the researcher took into consideration that there were not any factors that may change the participants' answers. So, it was imperative to make sure that every single participant would feel relaxed and calmed when answering the survey's questions, and they didn't notice when the observations were made in order to avoid any behavior change. Answers and observation were made different times to make sure that the results were always the same. The research was always attentive to natural environments to avoid misunderstandings. For that reason, the study was always trying to achieve clear goals and get the most accurate results. Finally, to guarantee the objectivity of the information, it was important to give concise results and analyze the findings thoroughly.

### **Data Analysis**

Within two year of teaching practices the study revealed the language conceptualization in different settings and participants' perceptions. It states that the use of language varies according to the place, to the people and the background of every member related to that act of speech. Even more, it is notorious that bullying discourse evolves at the time participants are growing up; it shows that bullying develops features throughout time. Language is in a constant creation as social values are, it could show that while people grow they put into language their background and they can develop high levels of aggressiveness and violence or low levels of confidence. Furthermore, it was seen that language has specific creations and patterns from grade to grade.

English language was placed as an unknown matter that students had to explain and introduce during the first language sessions. The essence of their language, their creation of meanings, everything that comes from the language itself and what students have done with it were depicted and detailed by the students themselves to get a better understanding of how society works and how they modify language. Therefore, those conceptions of language, gotten from the students, let the researcher see violent patterns and detailed them on the study. After all, categorizing some of them to develop different teaching approaches to introduce linguistic topics as usual and create contexts of problem solving to help students in their language experience, understand their own situations and make them aware of what to do in bullying situations.

On the previous chapters, it was mentioned that bullying is there since people start their school experiences. It was inevitable to notice that primary students are defining their relations among peers and secondary students are representing and production what they have already defined throughout their first school years. Frankly, violent language patterns are

present in all the students' stages but those are more remarkable and relevant when they are adolescents; that is why, the study was focused on secondary students from seventh grade. It is important to make clear that there won't be the same social environment because of the constant language evolution and the active member's participation, background and setting. Even more, Geoffrey Leech stated in his book semantics: "...connotations are apt to vary from age to age and from society to society."<sup>4</sup> For that reason, the data is collected from primary and secondary graders but focused on the last one in which participants raised their voice and expressed what bullying is and how it is represented.

When conducting the study, it was seen that students in primary are not into a bullying context as such. In other words, there are not bullying actions and regarding to the language itself they are unaware of discursive strategies produced; it means that students use several discursive strategies but they are not conscious about them. It is also notice that students are reproducing and playing with all what they have gathered and learned from their background and personal experiences. Similarly, primary students are not totally conscious of the language they are using and its concepts and meanings. In the initial stages, three primary students, two from fourth and one from third grade, gave us some aspects of language use in their natural context.

At the very beginning, many primary educators described them as "hyperactive" and some others classified them as "trouble makers" or "students who did not how to behave correctly"; even knowing, that those are psychological statements and it corresponds only psychologists or experts in the matter. Particularly, there were some behavior and language

---

<sup>4</sup> Leech, Geoffrey (1983) Semantics: The study of Meaning, 12.

patterns that were not clearly identified and superficially, nobody knew what was happening with the students and the reason of those patterns; what is more, nobody was concerned about the students' language strategies. On the contrary, the three students had commitments with the school because the administrative wanted to move them out. Accordingly, in that period of time students were interviewed about their behavior and use of language.

In the interviews the students expressed where they got some rude words from and why they were being aggressive. For example, **student-a**, expressed: "My cousins say those words to me and also I have heard some of them on TV programs... Even more, I don't know what those words means I just use them." Hence, this participant is aggressive because of his personal background but this student doesn't know the words literally accepting that his family was somehow aggressive and the TV programs that he watches represented physical and mental violence. As shown above, primary students were questioned about meanings which, at the end, they did not really know but they had experienced the aggressiveness of those rude words. Consequently, they knew the negative conception of the vocabulary which was used. That is to say, students use many words because the relation to the context in which they heard the word but not because they know exactly the Conceptual meaning. It shows that students are the ones who give the meanings to the words.

Meanwhile, the **student-b** agreed with the previous statements acknowledging that they do not want to attack their classmates but play with them; they mentioned that it seems that nobody understands what they are trying to do. "I don't understand why I am being punished if I was just playing... the teachers think that we are responsible for every bad thing which happens in the classroom". Regarding to what the interviewee said, people such as their classmates and their teachers are not aware of what they are doing, and they feel observed and punished all the time for something that they didn't mean to do, at the beginning. The three of

them felt that they have been punished for something that they didn't do or they were not aware of. There were examples of discursive strategies that students learnt from an adult environment and they used those to express what they just feel and think without knowing that those expressions are somehow cruel for others. Accordingly, children are just trying to be honest and they expect others to be open-minded in that communication process, but their honesty to the world is misunderstood and seen negative by adulthood. That is why adults need to keep in mind that children's language use is merely related to sincerity and different from the adults' language production.

It is clear that in primary, students start to create their language conceptualization and conception. Particularly, some of the students that were recognized as bullies expressed that they don't understand their actions until they were punished; it means that the context itself make them understand the concept and meaning of the utterances they said. Additionally, primary is a stage where students unconsciously are immersed in a language process that helps them to create their social roles for their later life. In those initial interactions, children are naïve when it comes to use the language as adults conceive it, as George Herbert Mead argues that children are not aware about their behavior at all but they experience and understand actions during their interactions; even more, Mead mentions that the child is play a game where he or she experiences several roles while building his or her own personality:

*“These are personalities which they take, roles they play, and in so far control the development of their own personality. This outcome is just what the kindergarten works toward. It takes the characters of these various vague beings and gets them into such an organized social relationship to each other that they build up the character of*

*the little child. The very introduction of organization from outside supposes a lack of organization at this period in the child's experience*"<sup>5</sup>

**Students c** provided to the study an understanding of the children's dynamics when observing and studying bullying. At the very beginning, student c was described as the "troublemaker of the classroom" by his peers and the teachers. He was extremely aggressive and rude, and several times he was found hitting and attacking his classmates. The school principal had on file the request to expel the student immediately for his behavior. Therefore, the student was interviewed and observed to find out his discourse strategies and language conceptualization; however, he was initially predisposed to answer the questions made because he did not want to be punished for what he might say. He expressed that every time someone wanted to talk with him, it was because of a problem.

[He was found abusing verbally one of his classmates.]

Interviewer: "Can we talk?"

Student c: "...What did I do now?"

Interviewer: "I just want to talk about what is going on!"

Student c: "No, I know, everything that I say is wrong... [Stop] I don't want to... I was playing with them but... I know it is my fault... Why I am wrong?"

**Student c** expressed that he uses some words without knowing the meanings but understanding the negative connotation that these words have. It was clear that these negative words were heard and used by the student's parents. Even more, student c remarked that he had difficulties to express some ideas towards others because he did not know the exact meaning of the words or the aggressiveness in the words he had in mind. That is to say, in

---

<sup>5</sup> Mead, George H. Play, the game, and the Generalized Other (1934)

some situation the student wanted to express a negative feeling but he was not conscious of how aggressive or negative the words was. He classified negative words incorrectly thinking that those words were okay in his daily speech.

Definitely, it was found that primary students develop some behaviors according to the context, the relations they have with their classmates and conceptions that adults bring when correcting them. On the other side, it is important to say that several times, children don't know how aggravating their negative statements towards other are until adults come to punish and reject what children have said. Therefore, children know that there are being aggressive and violent but they don't know that they are bullying their classmates. Then, the problem is that children are confusing honesty with abuse.

From an initial view and before conducting the study with secondary students, it is seen that primary students are not aware of their language repercussions and they don't have enough knowledge of the content in the locutionary act (what is said). They are merely honest to each other without preventions of the intentions even if it is a negative intention because, for them, it is positive to be honest and always say the truth no matter how violent this one can be. For that reason, it's relevant to take into account that many cases students are not literal with the words they are saying as Austin argued: "In the case of nonliteral utterances, we do not mean what our words mean but something else instead" (Bach, 1998). So, comprehending their attempts to express themselves and their shared meaning system is a must as well as their language practices; keeping in mind the producer's and listener's language production is completely different.

After the initial findings with primary students, the study focused its attention to secondary students which is conceived as the period of time that students have already a social role in their environment. Besides, it is the representation of what they created during primary

level; they are going to behave according to what they did and learnt in their first school years. For that reason, every member involved in their social group established a relation of power towards other. In addition, there was a variation of language patterns between the primary students and the secondary students mentioned in this study due to the fact that they had different backgrounds and their language development was different. For example, the utterances used fifty years ago by a teenager are not the same to the utterances from a teenager nowadays. According to Clark (2007) language development is affected by the context and/or social environment; of course, her point of view is explained in general terms but it simplifies what this study wanted to state because school is a reflection of what the society itself is:

*“The reasons why one language or one variety of a language becomes associated with a particular nation are many and varied, resulting from a combination of historical and social changes. Throughout history, one of the first things an invading force of another country imposes upon the conquered people is its language, particularly in terms of political, economic and educational institutions and suchlike”* (Clark, 2007).

The first finding states a new language system and constructs of meanings related to the setting which was observed and the participants related to it. Next, most of the journals already reviewed described a new way of communication which students established in their daily life; in other words, a new language production process. Even, the interviews could show and confirmed what was observed: Students gave samples of new vocabulary and new language constructions. In addition, there were new words which are neither understandable in grammar nor linguistic; phrases or words such as “aborto the chulo (Raven abortion)” [Chulo: colloquial term of raven in Spanish]; “raven trunk [Term related to mouth]” and “diente de camello [camel back tooth]”.

However, not all the new words are aggressive because those new terminologies are currently incorporated in the way they are communicating among them. Hence, it was important to identify negative and positive words because their bullying discourse was quite unique because of the new language constructions observed. For example, on the research journals made in the initial observations, it was detailed by the researcher that children and adolescents were using aggressive language and words that might hurt others. Although, these conceptions were inaccurate, students themselves explained that some of those words were just new ways to refer to their friends and there weren't any negative connotations as it was understood initially. That is to say, several times the researcher described bullying language when there was not because the vision of language was different from the one that students had.

During that period of time, the participants expressed several new words and some of them apparently were violent words; however, those were not violent words because the contextual meaning took other sense for many of the participants. According to what was collected, there are some especial examples: The first one is "Winnie-puta" [Winnie-whore] which comes from the cartoon character; it was referred to an overweight student who thought that the expression did not have anything bad at all, he laughed about it and started to joke about his weight. Meanwhile, the same students said: "Well, there is not a problem... I call that girl 'Tetiana'" [The girl's name is Tatiana but they modified her name to stand out the breast]; that girl laughed as well and interrupted the participant to continue with the interview. All in all, these examples show that they constructed a new share meaning system. On the other hand, there is also the negative use of language within their language development such as last-name transformation taking into account physical imperfection as well as offensive words. Finally, this second category confirms that language develops differently through the

time; it depends of the group of members that is interacting and their social roles: for a group of students some rude words are not rude at all but for another group those words have still that negative meaning. It is definitely clear that the meanings given are totally related to the type of relation that students have.

After the initial findings and insights of how bullying works in a general view, the information collected allowed the following categories:

### **Students roles in regards of bullying language**

This category takes into consideration the knowledge that students have regarding bullying language and bullying actions. That means that the focus of this category was to find out what the participants know about bullying or if they are aware of their aggressive actions - consequences-. Besides, this category is also centered in what bullying really means having clear the student's shared meaning system and not just what people in general see it. This means, that bullying is not what media says but what students had lived and have constructed in their school environment. Deeply, adults expressed and identified bullying language in the students' interactions because they found the use of aggressive meanings; however, students acquired and adapted new words in their regular speech which seems to be violent but were not aggressive at all from their own view.

First of all, there is an attempt to see certain profiles or roles in the students' context. The following profiles will provide how their dynamics work and how they can be classified when bullying takes place:

- a. The first profile is the most frequent one, it is the student who supports bullying or does bullying without knowing what he/she is doing. It is an indirect bullying in other words. These students think that they are not doing anything wrong to their classmates and they place themselves as witnesses. In this profile, there was a

participant who completely show how this works; even more, he was narrating the situation as a witness using the language that bullies do all the time. He started saying “There is bullying all the time to imperfect people such as smaller guys or the one who has mental problems...”, “another victim is the students x, not bullied as much as the other one... But sometimes he is such a little faggot. I don’t know but he needs his mother or something because he asks stupid things that make me believe that... “El bojita [Character from ‘el chavo’, Mexican program] brushes him [insinuating that the student was a fool]”. Undoubtedly, these utterances demonstrate that this participant expresses his thoughts about bullying as a witness; although, he implicitly showed that he supports bullies when describing the victims calling one slowly or retard and the other one as homosexual. Additionally, he was observed making comments and supporting bullies in middle of the aggression. All in all, he is one of the many students who are intimidators without knowing who they are.

- b. The next profile describes the students who bully others, they are aware of what they are doing and they believe to have the right or reason of their acts. However, it seems that they don’t see the consequences of bullying and hurting others. They consider that bullying is necessary for them in order to have recognition in their social group as well as to be respected by all their equals. Even more, the aggression made is seen as a source which establishes and defines their social roles, and maintains a relation of power. The representative sample taken was when three students started to discuss what bullying is and the three of them referred as a mediator of power: **Student a** said: “You make people respect you”; immediately **student b** said: “Yes, everybody will see how they advocate themselves”; then, the

first student answered to this question ¿How would you define bullying, then? “Everybody looks for it because many people could make others respect them right know”. Basically, unconsciously some of them just take bullying as a way of respect or a game of power but they are not aware of what has been done to the victims and the internal conflicts that this might cause. For instance, some of the bullies see bullying as a form of strength leaving clear that they are stronger than others. This assumption makes them think that they have control and they can domain the social group. Additionally, they stated that bullying is the way some people look for respect and recognition.

- c. Another profile found immersed in this environment is the witness that partially knows everything but doesn't do or say anything. He/she does not do bullying or attack his/her partners but they detect the moment of aggression. It seems that they don't care anything about the victims, the bullies or the aggression itself. It was observed that these students are moved by bullying actions, they try to go where bullying comes out to see what the whole scenario is. For example, a bully started to attack verbally to one of the victims identified in the classroom and, at that specific time, the witnesses surrounded the bully and the victim and some of them just stood by on silence looking how the bully bullied the victim. For that reason, these witnesses are passive because they don't do anything against bullying and because they are not affected at all by bullies.

On one hand, many of them were interviewed about how they perceived bullying and the following samples are part of their answers:

- [sample one]

**Student a:** “Those are heavy games between them”

- [Sample two]

**Interviewer:** “Would you like to tell me if there is bullying in the classroom”

**Student a:** “Yes! For example, there was a case in which a guy was bullied and he left the classroom because of it [...] they treated him badly on Facebook and on social networks”

**Interviewer:** “How was he virtually mistreated?”

**Student a:** “He was called negro [nigger], brownie as well. Also, he was kind of gay because he was recorded with makeup; then, his father told bullies to stop that. [...] Later on, a group on Facebook was created which was called ‘Against that black guy’ and ‘the black one’”

**Interviewer:** “Did you join to that group?”

**Student a:** “No, well the creators made me join it”

**Student b:** (Laughing) “Me too”.

**Student a:** “He [the student they described as black] was looking for acceptance but nobody loved him”

- [Sample three]

**Student:** (Talking about the student who left the classroom) “He is happy there, not here. He has friends now.”

The previous interviews and its statements provides a brief understanding of how these type witnesses conceive bullying. Some of the participants are showing that they are aware of bullying as such but most of them consider it as a normal thing in the school environment ignoring the effects that it may cause to the victims. Even

more, these witnesses don't see bullying language or actions as something that should be punished. Furthermore, it is seen that students don't focus their attention on bullies and how aggravating it is but their focus is the victims; the interviewees highlighted the victims and the collective's perception of the students who are bullied.

On the other hand, it was important to interview these students because they provided how bullying is seen in their environment. It was seen that the adult's perceptions are completely different from the students; adults can perceive the consequences of symbolic violence but it seems that student don't see it that easily. In other words, students don't see the consequences or they don't give enough importance to what is happening to their counterparts.

- d. The fourth profile which the study wants to reveal is the one who have no idea about bullying bullies all the time. They accepted themselves as “innocent aggressors” and they admitted it in groups; it means that they do not talk individually but collectively as one group of friends. When they discussed why aggression came out of their language, they placed their self in a game. They see bullying language as part of their self-concept, self-image and self-evaluation in relation to others. The following sentences and words are a description of bullying for them and also the reason why of those behaviors:

- “That people annoying me”
- “It is a vicious game”
- “It makes us believe that we are bigger/stronger”
- “It is a game about respect”
- “It helps to ease my anger”

- “Role of social relationships”

Furthermore, according to these sentences some participants discussed in group to find out that they were being violent to focus on their social roles. As it was mentioned before, it was that students see bullying just an easy and innocent game that helps them feel better. On the other hand, it was seen that behind their abusive language, there were students who wanted to feel comfortable and vent their emotions; even more, there were students who were looking for acceptance and recognition. So, it was seen that not only victims are looking for acceptance as many witnesses mentioned but the bullies bully others because they wanted to be accepted by their friends. That is to say, these bullies want to have a recognition by their peers bullying a few of their classmates.

- e. The last profile is the one that is considered the most important and the most affected one by this phenomenon, the victims. They are the students that are not perceived as much as their classmates; even more, they can be unnoticed by others in regular activities. In other words, they didn't talk that much, their participation was minimum, they are seen as shy people who do not raise their voices at all. Despite their shyness, the researcher tried hard to make them talk and express how they felt because of bullying. **Victim a** said: “I have been bullied because of many reasons which are...” and just with that statement he thought people had reasons to bully and attack him, he was giving up to the aggression. What is more, he stated that he already knew how to handle this kind of aggression: “I let them talk because they are nothing and I should not be affected just for what they say or do”. That is to say, he got a way to live with what bullies do and he is going through a bad time but he realizes that he needs to calm down and continue with his life. Finally,

immersed in the student interview, it was seen that their language construction was different than the bullies' one; that means that people even of the same age have different backgrounds that establishes their meaning system producing some discrepancies among them.

In summary, aggressive behaviors and symbolic violence are inevitably part of everybody's daily life and each one of us have been bullies or victims but bullying will be modified and different throughout time. For that reason, it is important to know what bullying is for specific contexts and what the participants think about it in order to avoid any misconceptions and judgements of some the students' actions. It is imperative that teachers, students, parents and academic members should contextualize the setting, considering that bullying is not the same depending on the place; and having in mind factors such as the meaning constructions, language use, students' background, etc. Besides, when bullying is figured out in the environment, academic members should work from every student's knowledge and having clear the students' shared meaning systems; it's obvious that there will be some variations in the meaning systems that students have with the one that adults have. For instance, bullies and victims also have language variations too.

### **Gender Identity and Race**

After an understanding of how language worked and a clear view of the students' language constructions, it was imperative to see how they integrate violence in their language. Therefore, this category introduces the way students conceive the meaning of male and female in their society, and how they use gender identities to bullying others. It is seen that students have constructed different concepts regarding gender and those meanings play an important role when understanding bullying. First of all, it was found that the use of gender had a

different connotation and it showed a chauvinistic background. For example, the following words were used with an aggressive or offensive connotation: “girl”, “woman”, “female”, etc.; that is to say, students have the idea that the words related to female represent weakness and fragility when they say it to their male classmates. This view does not come only from the school itself but it represents certain beliefs of chauvinistic societies; it shows also how students’ backgrounds came to play an important part when they are creating meanings.

In addition, students established patterns of behavior when it comes to gender identities; they have classified how a boy and a girl should look like. That is, boys should show strength in his identity, looking as a “macho” is a must, and male students cannot show fragility at any time; to the contrary, female students are the only ones who can be delicate and “feminine” as such in the whole word sense. For that reason, if one of the students breaks the established standards, they will be punished verbally because that might be unacceptable for the rest. For example, boys are named girls if those do not respect the rule of the men behavior and vice versa with girls. Several times, bullies refer to their male partners as girls or that they are alike. For instance, one student who explained the reason why he was being aggressive with one of his partners to what he said: “...He has a big ass being a man, he behaves such as little girl...” Even worse, one witness of bullying said talking of another student: “People bother him calling woman”. With these examples, everybody can notice that there is a rule in their environment and nobody can go under or over their social conceptions. On one hand, this type of symbolic violence is very common in different scenarios; it was seen in different grades with different students. One of the most common sentences between them was “He looks like a girl” which represents the view that male and even female students have towards gender.

Admittedly there were more aggravating situations where students use bullying language towards the students that might have broken the general assumptions of how men

and women behave. One example, the word ‘gay’ was constantly repeated by some of bullies to insult their classmates:

*“The English class was about comparatives and superlatives. The teacher gave examples and explained the topic; there were questions and answers giving completely understanding of the class. Next, every student had to write 10 sentences using what was explained in the class. Then, some minutes later, student after student went to the teacher’s desk to check if they had completely their classwork correctly. Everything was normal until a girl showed their ten sentences and one of those said: “Student x is gayer than student y” to what the teacher said: “That is correct but are you saying that Student x is happier than students y”. She answered: “No, I am trying to refer to gay as homosexual”.*

Surprisingly, the students showed that even in their second language they are still creating new meanings and ways of expression. Clearly, gay is a word that has two recognizable meanings for English learners and those are one “Of, relating to, or having a sexual orientation to persons of the same sex” and second “Showing or characterized by cheerfulness and lighthearted excitement; merry”. Furthermore, that specific word is not used just to refer to the sexual orientation it also has to humiliate and undervalue the people who they are referring to. For example, one guy was irritated with one of his partners that started to call him “gay” and words derived such as “fag”, “fagot” and etc. All in all, the sexual behavior has an important role and relation in the social environment.

On this category, physical difference had an important role. Being male or female had a status on their daily relationships and this made being different relevant. Deeper, bullying is a consequence of the ignorance regarding to the gender difference; it is seen that sometimes people are afraid of those differences and they start to attack that different person or object to minimize that difference or to make it irrelevant. Some people don’t want to accept that

difference because they are not open minded. In other words, participants and students attacked what they considered different, in this aspect, people.

On the other hand, the language they used was already aggressive when they were answering the questions in the interviews. For instance, many times when participants were talking about specific students they said “the black guy” and immediately they corrected themselves saying “the tiny little black guy” or similar expressions to sound nice and not offensive. Something important, in Spanish ‘black’ and ‘nigger’ has the same word which is ‘Negro’ and it could be offensive or not depending on the context and the meaning. Even though, people prefer to say ‘Negrito’ which does not have a literal translation into English but its equivalent in English can be ‘Little black guy’. For that reason, the participants who talked about the bullying samples they refer to the victim as a little black guy to make language soft.

However, the bullies refer literally to those students as ‘negros’. They were offensive and the bullies did not understand the multicultural context; although, the school’s policies decreed that there is a multicultural environment full of values and ethics. According to what they said, the difference affects their environment almost all the time; students saw it as a reason to bully others. In one interview, one student said that “he is bothered because he is from another race”. It is reasonable to think that families are not encouraging to understand different cultures, ideas, conceptions, behaviors, races, etc. Definitely, it was obvious that students are bullying others because of skin color, or race. Even though, this school does not have foreigners or people from other cultures but students from different Colombian regions.

In most of the interviews and participants’ writings they stated that one victim was totally verbally bullied because of his color. It is a pattern regarding to words and ways participants expressed about him calling him nigger, not for his name, just by his skin. Some expressions were extremely rude; for that reason, it is important to mention the most used

ones: “People call him nigger or Brownie”, “Yes, Chocolate”, “That student was bothered on Internet and at the school for having brown skin”, “Two groups were created which say the black student and other the nigger”. Furthermore, there was a case in which a student state that bullies bother two students of the same skin color saying that should be a couple.

Finally, talking about other differences, students expound that there are many things that bullies take to attack other people even behaviors. However, this study is focus on the language itself. So, it is important to notice how those expressions express new meaning constructions; that is, students through language exposed their ideology based on difference and recognition; even more, through language they express acceptance and rejection influenced by their background. It could not be just aggression or bullying at all, it is also a way to demonstrate our thought. Nonetheless, in this case is important to make them able to understand the difference as multicultural relationship and also show other ways to show disapproval but not negatively.

### **Power relations**

Finally, we can be witnesses of how power plays an important role at all times making social hierarchies more prominent. Language is a social practice that allows people to create new ways of communication and within that process, power is developed and practiced. On one side, power and racism show how dominance can be carried out by stronger social groups as we could see on the previous findings; for instance, some students were treated differently because of their skin colors and it could make people notice how race is perceived in the students’ environment. Besides race, this category reveals power relations in general clarifying how students, in this case, maintain certain power relations to have a social status.

It is known that there are groups in each classroom and those groups have given names which define and characterize, somehow, students’ roles. Some of them are the ‘mean’ ones,

some others ‘the nerds’, or even the popular, etc. This role categorization is not only used by children but it has been used part of our speech as kids or adolescents; even more, media also shows how it can be described. Of course, this categorization can be more evident depending on the group of students and their general social background. When discussing with the participants, some of them showed a personal struggle to belong to those groups and some others expressed a sense of belonging; this demonstrates how their social hierarchy is established. In this ‘game of roles’, each one of the participants shows a level of authority making clear that depending on the group, they can empower their social status.

Once this is established, bullying can show a clear view of the perception that students make of themselves and the way they treat others accordingly. They used language to reject or accept others; language, in this case, might be used ruthlessly. In detail, some students presuppose that they might pertain to a dominant group and it is shown throughout language, and all of this is just a game of power and respect. In their own words, the social status is based on how strong someone can be or how much respect he or she can gain. In the following excerpts, one can see how the participants kept the idea of a bully-victim distance and their interest in maintaining that limiting relationship.

[Excerpt one]

**Student:** “Victims are in charge of their own respect”

**Student b:** “You make people feel respect for you”

[Excerpt two]

A group of girls stated:

**Girl:** “He looked for acceptance but nobody loves him”

**Girl two:** “As that other guy who nobody cares about”

Undoubtedly, forms of power are used to maintain privileged and powerful positions. It was definitely seen when some students expressed their ideas about social groups and sense of belonging. There were some cases where people could see that those groups established some rules of who goes in or out; in order to belong to this social representation, students who wanted to join must go through a 'special inspection'. Therefore, these power relations created barriers to participation. There was a special case where one a girl wanted to join the called 'diligent group' which was described as a small group of people who got the best grades in the classroom due to their teamwork and their constant improvement. This girl was reject because she wat 'enough'.

[Excerpt three]

**Student:** "I wanted to be diligent as they are and also pass this grade but those girls did not let join it because they thought that I wanted to be with them just to cheat making copy of what it's done".

**Interviewer:** Do you feel bad?

**Student:** of course, I tried to join but I was not thinking to copy them and I am not an ignorant. They feel that I cannot improve. However, I fail this grade.

All in all, relations of power are definite when understanding bullying in the student's social environment. They have established certain roles and those roles allow them to behave and treat others. Unfortunately, these roles limit and frame some students to develop socially and equally; it only creates differentiation and segregation. Therefore, it is important to work on those social conceptions in order to improve relationships and make students aware that people are not framed and limited to ideas.

## Conclusions

Certainly, humans modify their behaviors, conceptions, and language throughout time making them unique and, somehow, indecipherable or difficult to understand. More specifically, each new generation produces new meanings and social representations making an incomparable and unrepeatably shared meaning system that cannot be deduced just by listening to or observing them superficially. In the case of adults and children, it was seen that there are vast differences between their shared meaning systems causing discrepancies when adults were trying to understand students' interactions, speeches and regular conversations. For instance, adults won't fully understand students' expression because their backgrounds are quite different. For that reason, teachers and adults can't assume that students will learn a second language if they don't take into account the students' cultural practices and social meanings. Definitely, in order to create meaningful interactions between students and adults it is necessary that both parties internalize and comprehend each other's shared meanings systems.

Each meaning system is created by cultural artifacts, period of time and most importantly people's background, life experiences, exposure to media, social practices, etc. Additionally, all these factors come to play when children are interacting for the very first time; they have in mind certain language constructions but they constitute new meanings collectively every day at school making some of their expression only understood by them. When one wants to identify when one of the students is nice, aggressive, indifferent, attentive, etc. it is necessary to leave out one's conceptions and social understanding to embrace to the students', in this case, shared meaning system.

On one hand, each person has experienced violence in different contexts such as at school, at university, at work, etc. and it makes that people have a definition of violence and a clear comprehension of how its dynamics work. On the other hand, because of different contexts and backgrounds (normally, generational changes) the definition of violence varies from person to person; so, its understanding is individual and non-transferable. For that reason, when analyzing bullying language, one may have misjudgments of students' language practices; thus, students themselves must explain their language practices to help adults identifying new expressions of rejections and disapproval. Inevitably, bullying for the students is different from adults' point of view and several times they are not bullying others as adults might think.

Definitely, students have established a social hierarchy and their language use may be seen aggressive when it is not. So, it is important to have in mind that they have different social groups within their social environment and they can interact with some of their close friends using apparently violent words when the words' connotations don't represent any violent meanings. However, those same words can have violent loads when they use them towards different ones; for instance, students that are not close at all but share the same classroom. Furthermore, some other students are unaware of these language practices; so, they think that honesty can be rough and hurtful thus students think that they are not bullying others whatsoever. It is imperative to let them know that bullying has different forms and they might be bullying others.

Finally, these understandings can help teachers to make students aware of their own language practices, and improve language learning and teaching. Even more, students will feel more comfortable if educators take into account their context and their cultural artifacts; in other words, they will feel more identified in the learning practices. Additionally, it is

important to say that this study is considered as an initial exploratory stage for other possible studies that can go in depth because this matter can totally be expanded to other disciplines and subjects. People from other areas can take advantage of this study to improve their interactions with the new changing generations.

### **Pedagogical implication**

During the teaching practices, I could be a witness that teaching languages is not just share knowledge to a group of students and end it up after 45 minutes. It was more than that, teaching involves humanity and being connected to a group of human beings with different characteristics, features, backgrounds, beliefs, etc. Therefore, having a successful teaching is to bring into our practices a better understanding of the students' dynamics and act according to their context. It is to say, we need to leave out our judgmental reasoning in relation to what the student do or do not do, we must be guides in their learning process and help students to create an environment which they are constantly creating and building up as a society.

On the first place, bullying was an issue which affected the students' learning process because it changed the class flow making the conflicts a priority. Also, the English class was not actually successful because students lost their focus in order to solve their problems and L2 was not even related to their nature. For that reason, having bullying as a topic in the English class made them feel way more related to class and it made the English learning process interesting because they could learn about themselves while learning a foreign language.

As second language educators, we must be aware that the classroom is a sociocultural system, and when interacting with more than one language, we need to take into account their meaning system to make the English class, in this case, way more appropriate and effective. It was seen that students could not make a transition from a daily problem, bullying specifically, to a class that does not embrace to their specific needs. Therefore, there were two failures, breaking the class into two different parts which did not have any relation and give a meaningless class which did not have any relation to their lives. It is important to provide them with tool that can help them to create their sociocultural system.

All in all, it is necessary to take into account the students' backgrounds to create a better environment for their language learning and help them to solve their problems through language. Teachers will be able to create activities that can allow students to foster critical thinking skills, problem solving skills while practicing different linguistics areas such as speaking, grammar, listening, etc.

## References

- Aitchison, J. (1981). *Language Change: Progress Or Decay?* New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Austin, J. O. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Massachusetts.
- Bach, K. (1998, October 6). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Speech Acts*. Retrieved from <http://online.sfsu.edu/kbach/spchacts.html>
- Baeza, J., & Sandoval, M. (2013). *Guanajuato, Secretaria de Educación*. Retrieved from <http://www.seg.guanajuato.gob.mx/Ceducativa/CDocumental/Doctos/2012/Junio/12062012/LosSentidosdeLaViolenciaEscolar.pdf>
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bowerman, M., & Levinson, S. (2001). *Language Acquisition and Conceptual Development (Language Culture and Cognition)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Longman.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- California State University, Long Beach. (n.d.). Retrieved from California State University Web site: <https://web.csulb.edu/~msaintg/ppa696/696quali.htm>
- Clark, U. (2007). *Studying Language: English in Action*. Palgrave.
- Corsaro, W. A., & Rizzo, T. (1990). *Disputes in the peer culture of American and Italian nursery school children*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dijk, T.  
(<https://www.google.com.co/search?q=%E2%80%9CDiscourse%2C+Power+and+Access&oq=%E2%80%9CDiscourse%2C+Power+and+Access&aqs=chrome..69i57j0.1222j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>). Discourse, power and access.

- Eikmeyer, H.-J., & Rieser, H. (1981). *Words, Worlds, and Contexts: New Approaches in Word Semantics*.
- Forman, E., Minick, N., & Stone, A. (1997). *Contexts for Learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. New York: Pantheon Book.
- Fredrickson, G. (2002). *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton University Press.
- Gay, W. (1999). <http://www.philosophy.uncc.edu>. Retrieved from <http://www.philosophy.uncc.edu/wcgay/publingvio.htm>.
- Gruwell, E. (1999). *The Freedom Writers Diary*. Perfection Learning Corporation.
- Halliday, D. (1978). *Language as social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*.
- Hernández, R., Fernández, C., & Baptista, P. (2006). *Metodología de La Investigación*. McGraw-Hill Interamericana.
- Herrera, M., Romera, E. M., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2018). Bullying y Ciberbullying en LatinoAmerica. Un Estudio bibliométrico . *Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa*, 125-155.
- Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (2002). *Research and the Teacher: A Qualitative Introduction to School-based Research*. Routledge.
- Huesmann, R. (1994). *Aggressive Behavior: Current Perspectives*. Plenum Press.
- Jones, G., & Brader-Araje , L. (2002). The Impact of Constructivism on Education: Language, Discourse, and Meaning. *American Communication Journal*, 1-10.
- Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes: A Guide and Resource Book for Teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Krauss, R., & Chiu, C.-Y. (1998). *Language and Social Behavior*.

- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2008). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- La Forge, P. (1983 ). *Counseling and Culture in Second Language Acquisition*. Pergamon.
- La patria*. (2013, August 2). Retrieved from La patria.com: <http://www.lapatria.com/teen/los-jovenes-tienen-su-propia-jerga-40914>
- Leech, G. (1983). *Semantics: The Study of Meaning*.
- Losey, B. (2011). *Bullying, Suicide, and Homicide: Understanding, Assessing, and Preventing Threats to Self and Others for Victims of Bullying*. New York: Routledge.
- Midgley, W., Danaher, P. A., & Baguley, M. (2013). *The Role of Participants in Education Research: Ethics, Epistemologies, and Methods (Routledge Research in Education)*. Routledge.
- Moskowitz, G. (1978). *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class: A Sourcebook on Humanistic Techniques*. Newbury House Publishers.
- Nippold, M. (2000). Language Development during the Adolescent Years: Aspects of Pragmatics, Syntax, and Semantics. *Topics in Language Disorders, Vol. 20, No. 2. (2000), pp. 15-29 Key: citeulike:778250.*
- Prado Aragonés, J. (2001). La competencia comunicativa en el entorno tecnológico: desafío para la enseñanza. *Comunicar*, 21-30.
- Reason, L. (2008, June). *Language as a Social Construction*. Retrieved from International School: <http://www.internationalschool.info/language-as-a-social-construction/>
- Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (1986). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press. .

- Salem, M., Liberman, A., Eriksen, T. H., Saiyasombut, S., Bollinger, L., Maja-Pearce, A., & Salarzai, N. (2012). The Big Question: Abusing Language: When Should Language be Restricted? *WORLD POLICY Journal*.
- Santomauro, B. (2011). Violencia Virtual. *Revista Internacional Magisterio N 53*, 24-29.
- Sourgo, Y. (2013). *Morocco World News*. Retrieved from [www.moroccoworldnews.com](http://www.moroccoworldnews.com):  
<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2013/07/99544/power-language-and-social-relations-doing-things-with-words/>
- Standford Univerisy, Research Compliance Office*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Standford University  
 Web site: <https://humansubjects.stanford.edu/new/resources/consent/index.html>
- Terdiman, R. (1989). *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France*. Cornell University Press.
- Toohy, K. (2009). Disputes in Child L2 Learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 257-278.
- Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. New York: University of Oxford.
- Unknown. (2012). *James Standfield*. Retrieved from James Standfield:  
<https://www.stanfield.com/blog/2012/11/sticks-and-stones-how-humans-intensify-bullying-through-language/>
- Unknown. (n.d.). <http://www.powercube.net>. Retrieved from Powercube:  
<http://www.powercube.net/analyse-power/forms-of-power/>
- Van Dijk, T. (2001). *Estructuras y funciones del discurso*.
- Vieluf, S., Kaplan, D., Klieme, E., & Bayer, S. (2012). *Teaching Practices and Pedagogical Innovation*. OECD Publishing.
- Wierzbicka, A. (2009). The Language of 'Bullying' and 'Harassment'. *Quadrant*.
- Yang, B., & Wang, R. (2016). *Language Policy: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach*.



### Annexes

The following letter is the consent form:

Octubre 24 de 2013

Padres de familia/acudiente:

Cordial saludo

La presente es para informarles que estoy llevando a cabo un estudio de “bullying” o matoneo en el colegio, en donde busco definir los pensamientos de los estudiantes respecto a la que esto puede llegar a ser en el aula de clase y en su ambiente escolar. Por tanto, se necesitan muestras de validación tales como grabaciones, entrevistas y escritos para dirigir la investigación y a su vez cumplir los objetivos del estudio. Además, es de vital importancia el conocimiento de los padres y su consentimiento para que los estudiantes participen en la recolección de datos y puedan dar información sobre lo que conocemos como matoneo.

Los datos recolectados serán de total confidencialidad, no se revelarán nombres ni nada que atente contra los mismos estudiantes sino servirán de apoyo para la validez que todo trabajo de investigación requiere. El estudio es llevado por el profesor-practicante de inglés de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas del presente año lectivo.

Si desea más información sobre el estudio que se está llevando a cabo, mi correo electrónico es \_\_\_\_\_ y mi número de celular es \_\_\_\_\_. Finalmente, agradezco su atención prestada y pido de manera cordial por favor regrese este permiso para poder recolectar los datos anteriormente mencionados.

Atentamente,

Giovanny Fandiño

Yo \_\_\_\_\_ identificado con la cédula de ciudadanía N° \_\_\_\_\_ doy permiso que mi hijo \_\_\_\_\_ del grado \_\_\_\_\_ participe en el desarrollo de la investigación: Bullying language: ways of aggression. The discourse behind bullying and its consequences”.

Firma \_\_\_\_\_

### Chronogram

Taking into account, we have 15 weeks starting in the first week of August and finish in the second week of November.

Week	Activity	Description	Goal
One (August 5 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> )	What is Bullying for us?	Students will show what they think about bullying.	Construct bullying's meaning in the language learning environment.
Two (August 12 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> )	Why is bullying in the classroom?	Students take their perspectives about bullying and its causes.	To find out what is the perception of that situation on students' mind.
Three (August 19 <sup>th</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> )	I am victim or I am bully? Why?	Students have to identify what role they are in the bullying presence.	To identify the special cases of bullying in the classroom.
Four (August 26 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> )	Why am I bully? Why are they bullies?	Students by themselves are going to show what is typical in bullying situations.	To depict with the students help what typical characteristics bullying has.
Five (September 2 <sup>nd</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> )	Why do I treat people in that way?	Students as bullies will say what they try other people in that way.	Discourse analysis. To find what causes makes bullies act in that way.
Six (September 9 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup> )	What could a word mean?	We will focus on to explain the words' meaning and what a word could carry out.	Pedagogical intervention. To explain semantic meanings.
Seven (September 16 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> )	What could a word cause?	To explain the speech acts in general way to make students understand a little about speech acts.	Pedagogical intervention. To develop activities to explain speech acts. (Aggressive speech)
Eight (September 26 <sup>th</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup> )	Do I use a bad word?	Students will reveal what kind of words they use in bullying acts.	To find out the words that bullying language has when it is present in the classroom.
Nine (Sep 30 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 4 <sup>th</sup> )	Role play.	Students will do groups and represent a bullying language situation (aggressive word in silent mode). Students have to show resolutions.	To identify how students conceive bullying acts representing what they see in a bullying situation.
Ten	Role play II	To continue with the activity.	

(October 7 <sup>th</sup> - 11 <sup>th</sup> )			
Eleven (October 14 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> )	What do I perceive?	Students will talk about what they represented and how they connect the bullying language with their presentations.	Discourse analysis of what they conceive.
Twelve (October 21 <sup>st</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup> )	What do I want to say?	Students will talk about what they have been saying behind those bullying words.	To identify semantic and pragmatic meaning in each bullying word.
Thirteen (Oct 28 <sup>th</sup> - Nov 1 <sup>st</sup> )	What violence means?	Students will talk about what violence means for them. How do they identify in their classroom? What are the probably factors of it?	To look for what violence is for them and to find out how symbolic violence is present in the language learning environment.
Fourteen (November 4 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> )	My personal perception.	Student, one by one, will say what problems they found, what the symbolic violence means for them and when they use it. How they identify it. Finally, to say how they will finish the life issue which we discussed.	To reach the symbolic violence using students' voices and how to solve them. To ask them written about it.
Fifteen (November 11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	Language usage	They will tell us in that week what is the role of language according to what they see in their classes. What was the role of language?	Final conclusions. To identify what is the use of language in the symbolic violence. To related to speech acts.

