University "St. Kliment Ohridski" – Bitola
Faculty of Education – Bitola

ISSN: 1857- 8888
DOI: 10.20544/teacher.29.10

INTERPERSONAL NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES RELATED TO HYPOTHETICAL CONFLICT DILEMMAS AMONG STUDENTS IN SECOND GRADE

Anica B. Zlatevska
MPS-Kole Kaninski Bitola
anicazlatevska@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the interpersonal negotiation strategies employed by second-grade students when faced with hypothetical conflict dilemmas. Using a qualitative approach, the research examines how children at this developmental stage interpret social conflicts and the types of reasoning they apply to resolve them. Participants were presented with age-appropriate scenarios involving peer disagreements, and their responses were analyzed to identify common patterns in negotiation behavior. Findings reveal a range of strategies, from simple assertive demands to more complex forms of perspective-taking and compromise. The study highlights the developmental trajectory of social-cognitive skills in early childhood and underscores the importance of early educational interventions to foster effective conflict resolution abilities.

"If your heart is filled
with kindness and love,
you will never look at the world
with hate in your eyes"
A. B. Zlatevska

Introduction

All children face a large number of conflicting dilemmas in their development. Therefore, it is very important how children react in such conflict situations, that is, what strategies they apply. First, the child encounters conflict situations in the family and preschool institutions, and then in elementary school and the social environment.

The family, at the beginning of every child's life, is the only school of life, where the first experiences are acquired, where the child's development as an intellectual, emotional, and social being begins. For the harmonious development of each child's personality, a family environment of happiness, love, respect, and understanding is necessary. First, in the family, children are introduced to their rights and responsibilities, to self-respect and respect for other family members, as well as to ways of solving problems in the family. And all of this means taking the first step along the path called "culture of peace." But despite that, we should know that: "sufficient data indicates that the culture in which a child lives has a decisive influence on the development of his thoughts, feelings and activities, but that at the same time it limits him from understanding that there are other ways of living, thinking, feeling and acting. " (Murdzeva – Shkaric, 2002).

Research methodology

The research was conducted in three cities: Primary School "Kole Kaninski" in Bitola, Primary School "Goce Delchev" in Gostivar and Primary School "Dedo Iljo Maleshevski" in Berovo. The research was conducted with one hundred second graders, 50 of whom are girls and 50 are boys. According to ethnicity, 62 are Macedonians, 25 Albanians and 13 are of other ethnicities: Vlach, Serbian and Roma. The average calendar age of the children is 7 years and 6 months.

The translation of the questionnaire "Concepts about Peace, War and Strategies to Attain Peace" from English to Macedonian and to Albanian was done by Dzhanish Kokalari (former English teacher at the Primary School "Kole Kaninski" in Bitola, Philologist: English language, Albanian language and Macedonian language). Second-graders from Bitola, Berovo and Gostivar who attend classes in the Macedonian language of instruction were surveyed by the psychologist for this research. Second-grade students from Gostivar, who attend classes in the Albanian language of instruction, were surveyed by

the school psychologist at the "Goce Delchev" Primary School in Gostivar. The responses from Albanian to Macedonian were translated by Dzhanish Kokalari.

The second graders from Bitola were tested by the school psychologist with the Bender Developmental Assessment System (LB-R) Art Test. The test is used by psychologists who work with preschool and early school-age children, i.e. it is intended for children who are 5 to 10 years old.

Analysis and interpretation of research results

The following analysis will present interpersonal negotiation strategies in four hypothetical conflict dilemmas: Taking, Quarrel, Boy, and Soldier. Conflict dilemmas are from Ilse Hakvoort, a psychologist from the Netherlands (Hakvoort, I. 1996). The data processing is according to the code list from the same author.

The comparative analysis was conducted according to the children's gender, place of residence, ethnicity, mother's employment, and father's employment. While, only among children from Bitola the level of mental maturity was also taken into consideration and was assessed with the LB-R test.

(4a) Taking (Hakvoort, I. 1996) What would you do if you found out that your best friend was taking something that belongs to you?

What would kids this age do when they find out their best friend is taking something of theirs, we will learn from the analysis of the responses received to the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4a) Taking. The percentages are calculated from the total number of students, which is 100 students. Out of a total of 100 students, 20 students (20%) will claim what belongs to them, that is, what is theirs and was taken from them.

If they find themselves in this situation, 15% of students will tell their teachers, and 8% will tell their parents. Children at this age seek help from an authority figure to deal with a problem they have encountered. A girl from Gostivar replied: “I will tell the teacher.”

A student from Berovo would solve the dilemma in the following way: “I'll take it from him, because it's mine.” 12 students out of a total of 100 students (12%) would react similarly.

Eight students out of a total of one hundred (8%) will ask their friend why he did it, and four students (4%) will wait a few days, because maybe what was taken from him will be returned.

Thirteen students out of a total of 100 (13%) say that they will do nothing. Twenty students out of a total of one hundred did not answer this question, i.e. they do not know what they would do (20%) (Table 1; Chart 1).

Table 1: Interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4a) Taking among second grade students

Code	Categories	Total	Percentages
0	**No answer**	20	20.00
1	**No reaction**	13	13.00
2	**Help from authority**	23	23.00
3	**Concrete activities**	40	40.00
4	**Psychological approach**	4	4.00
	Total	100	100.00

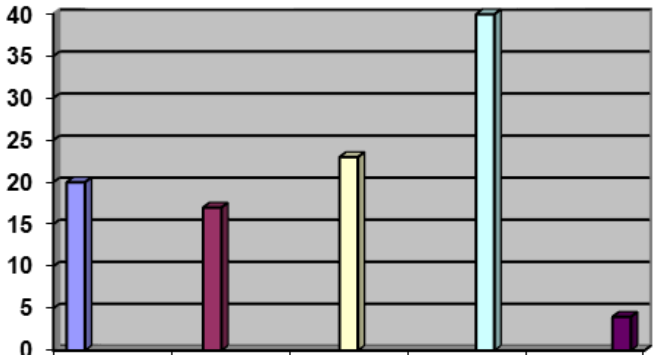


Chart 1: Interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4a) Taking among second grade students

For statistical processing of the data, the $\chi 2$ test and the contingency coefficient (C) were used. The significance level of the $\chi 2$ test was assessed according to the $\chi 2$ test threshold tables, with a probability (confidence level) of p=0.05 (95%) and p=0.01 (99%) (Nikoloski, 2001) The statistical processing of the data was carried out according to the categories presented in the code list "Concepts of Peace, of War and Strategies for Peacemaking" by Ilse Hakvoort (1996).

The analysis of the children's responses according to their gender shows that there are no significant differences between the responses of girls and boys (DF=4; $\chi 2$=0.84; S=0.091).

There are significant differences between students of different ethnic backgrounds in their interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma-4a.

The differences are that children from the Albanian ethnic community mostly appeal to authority, Macedonian children undertake specific activities, while children from other ethnic communities almost equally use all strategies (DF=8; $\chi 2$=25.44; S=0.450; p<0.01).

The analysis of the students' responses regarding their place of residence shows that there are significant differences in the children's strategies depending on their place of residence (DF=8; $\chi 2$=17.41; S=0.385; p<0.05). Students from Gostivar mostly seek help from an authority figure (teacher, parent), students from Berovo most often undertake specific activities, while students from Bitola apply several different strategies.

Second grade students in the Bitola class were tested with the LB-R test, which determined the level of mental maturity. Then, an analysis was made of the influence of mental maturity and responses to the conflict dilemma-4a. The data obtained indicate that there is no significant difference in the students' responses depending on the level of mental maturity (DF=8; $\chi 2$=6.00; S=0.439).

The employment and unemployment of the father and mother do not affect the behavior of students in this conflict dilemma (father: DF=2; $\chi 2$=2.95; S=0.169; mother: DF=2; $\chi 2$=4.92; S=0.216).

(4b) Quarrel (Hakvoort, I. 1996) Your best friend is fighting with another boy/girl. What would you do?

When children see their best friend fighting and arguing with another boy/girl, 63% of them (63 students out of 100 students) will separate the children who are fighting and arguing. A student from Gostivar replied: "I will separate them." The strategy of separating children in a fight is most prevalent among students from the Albanian language of instruction class in Gostivar (twenty students out of a total of twenty-five students).

Eight students out of a total of 100 students (8%) state that they will do nothing, i.e. they will not interfere in such a situation. A girl from Bitola replied: "There's nothing I can do, I'll run away so they don't hit me, that's what my grandfather taught me". Six children will ask for help from a teacher or parent (6%). And, the same number of children (6%) will approach to separate the children in the fight, but also to ask them why they are fighting and fighting. Fifteen students out of a total of one hundred students (15%) did not know what they would do and did not answer this question (Table 2; Chart 2).

Table 2: Interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4b) Quarrel among second grade students

Code	Categories	Total	Percentages
0	**No answer**	15	15.00
1	**No reaction**	8	8.00
2	**Help from authority**	6	6.00
3	**Concrete activities**	63	63.00
4	**Role of a mediator**	6	6.00
	Вкупно	100	100.00

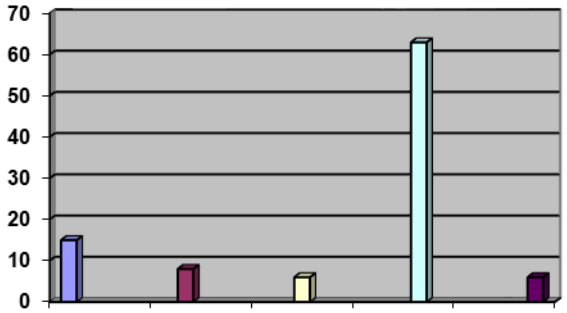


Chart 2: Interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4b) Quarrel among second grade students

From the analysis of the students' responses to the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4b) Quarrel, in terms of the influence of several factors, the following data were obtained:

-students' gender does not affect interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma 4b (DF=4; $\chi 2$=3.40; S=0.181);

- depending on the ethnic background of the students, there are no statistically significant differences (DF=8; $\chi 2$=10.55; S=0.308);

- place of residence significantly influences the interpersonal negotiation strategies of students in the hypothetical conflict dilemma 4b (DF=8; $\chi 2$=16.39; S=0.375; $p<0.05$). The differences consist in the fact that students from Bitola, despite specific activities, mostly remain without reaction, while students from Gostivar in most cases will seek help from an authority figure (parent, teacher);

- the mental maturity of the students (Bitola class) does not significantly affect their strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma 4b (DF=6; $\chi 2$=8.50; S=0.503);

- the employment and unemployment of the father does not affect the way of behaving in this conflict dilemma (DF=2; $\chi 2$=2.37; S=0.152);

- The employment and unemployment of the mother significantly affects the way children react in this conflict dilemma (DF=2; $\chi 2$=6.69; S=0.250; $p<0.05$), more children whose mothers are employed seek help from an authority figure (parent, teacher), compared to children whose mothers are unemployed.

(4c) Boy (Hakvoort, I. 1996) The boy Martin/Agim lives in a country that is at war. He is 15 years old and has to go to the army. He does not want to go because he does not want to participate in the war. But if he is forced to go, what should Martin/Agim do?

The conflict dilemma with the boy Martin/Agim among the second grade students caused different reactions. The most common reaction among 39 students out of a total of 100 students (39%) is that he has to go as soon as he is told. For example: a female student from Gostivar answered: “He will go, we should always listen to our elders.”

Eight children out of a total of one hundred children (8%) think that he should go defend the homeland. Following are some of the students' answers. A girl from Bitola: "If someone fights, Martin will defend him." A student from Gostivar thinks this way: "I would tell him, please, Martin, go to war, because that's how it should be."

Thirty students out of a total of 100 (30%) expressed negative emotions and disapproval of the boy Martin/Agim going to war. The following are the answers of two students. A student from Berovo said: “Martin should not go to war to be killed.” A student from Gostivar stated: “Children should not go to war, including the boy Martin.”

Eighteen students out of a total of 100 students (18%) did not answer this question (Table 3; Chart 3).

Table 3: Interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4c) Boy among second grade students

Code	Categories	Total	Percentages
0	**No answer**	18	18.00
1	**Yes, for defence of the country**	8	8.00
2	**Responsibility without a gun**	5	5.00
3	**Duty (must go)**	39	39.00
4	**No, negative emotions**	30	30.00
5	**Help from authority**	0	0.00
	Вкупно	100	100.00

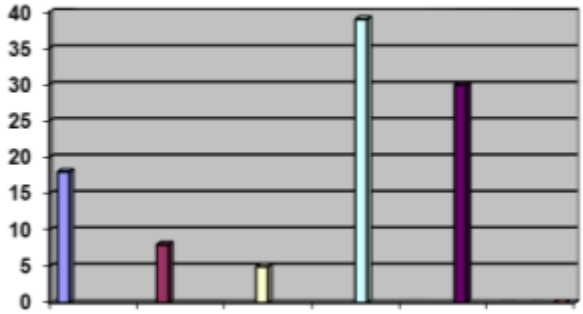


Chart 3: Interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4c) Boy among second grade students

The analysis of students' responses in terms of their gender shows that there are no significant differences (DF=2; $\chi 2$=4.00; S=0.196).

Statistically significant differences exist in terms of the ethnic affiliation of the students and their opinion on whether the boy Martin/Agim should or should not go to war (DF=4; $\chi 2$=34.14; S=0.504; $p<0.01$). The majority of students belonging to the Albanian ethnic community (56%) were left without an answer to this hypothetical conflict dilemma, while the remaining students agree that Agim should go to war. Most Macedonian students (63%) think that Martin should go to war for various reasons, and only two students did not respond. Students from other ethnic communities have different opinions on this issue.

The analysis of the data obtained according to the students' opinions about the hypothetical conflict dilemma 4c and the environment in which they live, shows that there are statistically significant differences at the 0.01 significance level (DF=4; $\chi 2$=17.44; S=0.385; $p<0.01$). Out of a total of 25 students from Bitola, 20 students think that the boy Martin should go to war for various reasons (defense, respect for authority, obedience, etc.). Out of a total of 25 students from Berovo, 13 students think that Martin should not go to war, citing several reasons for this (they will beat him up, he is small, etc.). Out of a total of 50 second graders from Gostivar, 22 second graders think that a 15-year-old boy should go to war (to fight, defend, listen to his elders, etc.). While 14 second-graders out of a total of

50 (28%) think that he should not go to war, 14 second-graders were left without an answer to this conflicting dilemma.

The level of mental maturity of the students (from the Bitola class) does not affect the students' strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma Boy (DF=4; $\chi 2$=1.85; S=0.262).

There are no significant differences in relation to the father's employment and unemployment and the students' opinion on this conflict dilemma (DF=2; $\chi 2$=4.62; S=0.210). There are significant differences in relation to the mothers' employment and unemployment (DF=2; $\chi 2$=14.25; S=0.353; $p<0.01$). Most students whose mothers are employed think that a boy should not join the army, unlike students whose mothers are unemployed who are more likely to think that a boy should join the army.

(4d) Soldier (Hakvoort, I. 1996) When you grow up, do you want to be a soldier? Why?

Fifty six out of 100 second grade students (56%) do not want to be soldiers when they grow up, and the most common reason for this is a feeling of fear. Below are some of the answers. A girl from Bitola answered: “No. Because I don’t want to be injured.” A student from Berovo said: “I don’t want to be a soldier. Because they will kill me there.” A girl from Gostivar answered: “No. I’m afraid of being injured.”

Out of a total of 100 students, 37 students (37%) want to be soldiers when they grow up, and they cite various reasons for this (to defend the homeland, all males should be soldiers, I have to go, etc.). For example, a student from Berovo said: “When I grow up, I will be a soldier, because I have to.”

Seven students out of a total of one hundred students (7%) had no answer to this conflicting dilemma (Table 4; Chart 4).

Table 4: Interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4d) Soldier among second grade students

Code	Categories	Total	Percentages
0	**No answer**	7	7.00
1	**Yes, for defence of the country**	14	14.00
2	**Yes, aggression**	2	2.00
3	**Yes, duty (must go)**	5	5.00
4	**No, negative emotions**	56	56.00
5	**Responsibility without a gun**	16	16.00
	Вкупно	100	100.00

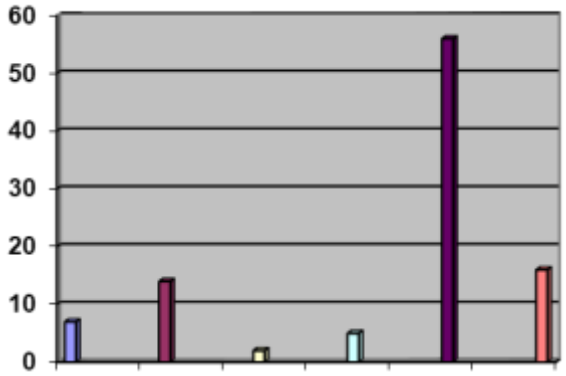


Chart 4: Interpersonal negotiation strategies in the hypothetical conflict dilemma (4d) Soldier among second grade students

The analysis of the students' responses, in terms of their gender, regarding whether they want to be soldiers when they grow up, shows that there are significant differences (DF=2; $\chi 2$=36.08; S=0.514; $p<0.01$). The differences are that 66% of male students want to be soldiers when they grow up, unlike girls who only 8% want to be soldiers. The resulting differences are influenced by the different ways of

raising children of different genders. By simply being designated as male or female at birth, a child is given guidelines for the behaviors and personality traits they should adopt (sex typing) (Murdzeva – Shkaric, 2002).

There are no significant differences between students of different ethnic backgrounds and their views on whether they want to be soldiers when they grow up (DF=4; $\chi 2$=6.86; S=0.253).

There are no significant differences between the opinions of students depending on their place of residence (DF=6; $\chi 2$=12.04; S=0.327).

The mental maturity of students from Bitola was tested with the LB-R test. The results obtained show that there are no significant differences (DF=4; $\chi 2$=7.13; S=0.471) between the strategies of students with different mental maturity.

There are no significant differences in terms of parents' employment and unemployment and students' opinions on whether they want to be soldiers when they grow up (father: DF=2; $\chi 2$=5.93; S=0.237; mother: DF=2; $\chi 2$=4.98; S=0.218).

Conclusion

According to the data obtained from this research and the analysis performed, we can conclude that there are different interpersonal negotiation strategies among second grade students, depending on the type of conflict dilemma. However, in the same conflict dilemmas, there are significant differences in interpersonal negotiation strategies regarding the gender of the children, place of residence, ethnicity, and employment of the mother. The significant differences obtained indicate that the manner of raising children has an impact depending on gender, the children's belonging to the ethnic community associated with the place of residence, as well as the role of the mother in the raising process depending on her employment or unemployment status.

The findings from this research are an incentive for further research with preschool and early school-age children, in order to examine the influence of family type, parental upbringing styles, educational styles in preschools, educational styles in primary schools, the time children spend in front of screens (the content they watch and, more importantly, what messages children receive by watching that content).

Literature

Bender, L. (1970). Use of the Visual Motor Gestalt Test in the diagnostic of learning disabilities. J. Special Educ. 4, 29-39.

Мурџева- Шкариќ, О. (2002). Психологија на родот. Скопје: Сојуз на организација на жени на Република Македонија (СОЖМ), Женски центар на РМ, Центар за женски студии, 103-104.

Мурџева-Шкариќ, О. (2004). Развојна психологија. Скопје: Филозофски факултет.

Николоски, Т. (2001). Статистика во психологијата. Скопје: Универзитет “Св. Кирил и Методиј”, Филозофски факултет.

Запирање на насилството во училиштата-прирачник за наставници. (2009). Скопје: УНИЦЕФ; БРО; Алгоритам центар.

Златевска, А. (2008). Употреба на ЛБ-Р протокол. Просветно дело 1/2008. Скопје: АД Просветно дело, 45-52.

Hakvoort, I. (1996). Conceptualization of Peace and War from Childhood through Adolescence/A Social-Cognitive Developmental Approach. Amsterdam: Univerziteit van Amsterdam, Fakulteit der Psychologie.