

ESL and Conflict Resolution: An investigation of the relationship between English language
experience and conflict resolution style among high school students

Erin M. Brittain

Department of Psychology and Child Development
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

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Abstract

With the prevalence of violence in high schools today, interpersonal conflict resolution is a relevant topic for both school administrators and psychologists. Many conflict resolution training programs emphasize the development of students' emotional vocabulary to encourage mutual self-expression and the promotion of compromising and collaborating solution; however, a large number of students in California schools are classified as "English as a Second Language" (ESL), and less experience with the majority language, English, may have an effect on the specific conflict resolution styles adopted by the individual. This study tested the hypothesis that greater experience with the English language would be related to greater use of the compromising and collaborating conflict resolution strategies. The survey was administered to high school students in San Jose, California, and the results yielded significant results such that less English experience was associated with greater use of the avoiding and accommodating styles, and more English experience was associated with greater use of the collaborating style. These results can be explained by the role of emotional vocabulary in resolving interpersonal conflict, and in some cases, culture and ethnicity also play an important role on conflict behavior. The findings have practical implications for school administrators and policy makers as this study has shown that greater experience and emotional vocabulary in English is related to use of non-violent problem solving behavior in high school students.

Introduction

Violence in schools

In 2008, public schools reported 1,332,400 violent incidents during the school year - 2.4 incidents per 100 students (NCES). While many factors are involved in the occurrence of violence, one aspect surrounding each case is interpersonal conflict, an inconsistency between one's personal needs and the needs of another. Interpersonal conflict is inevitable in every stage of life, and the manner in which adolescent students approach conflict resolution has profound influence on their relationships with peers and their psychological well-being. Both of these social and psychological factors influence the learning environment and feelings of security for students in schools.

English as a second language

Public schools in California enrolled 1.5 million "English as a Second Language" (ESL) students in 2005, (UC LMRI), and 39% of households in California report speaking a language other than English at home (U.S Census Bureau, 2008). These individuals face greater challenges than others because they must learn another language, balance two different cultures, and deal with all the other typical trials of being an adolescent. Communication is a fundamental factor of resolving conflict. Without the necessary tools, a student influent in English may approach resolution in an alternate manner by competing, accommodating for another, or avoiding the conflict altogether. In many cases, the conflict remains unresolved, and over time, the unresolved interpersonal issues can have a negative impact on both the individual and the learning environment. This study investigates the relationship between experience with the English language and the use of various conflict resolution styles among high school students.

A Review of the Literature

Conflict resolution styles

Interpersonal conflict can manifest itself in a variety of contexts due to discrepancies in beliefs, attitudes, and values. When addressing conflict, research has shown most people adopt a certain style of conflict resolution that influences their behavior, and, “it appears that individuals do have more and less preferred styles of conflict resolution, and these styles reveal cross-situational consistencies both within and across interpersonal, interorganizational, and international domains of conflict” (Sternberg & Soriano, 1984, p. 125). A common model of conflict resolution styles identifies 5 separate styles (Appendix A): competitors show high concern for the self with low concern for others; accommodators show high concern for the other with relatively no concern for the self; avoiders are both unassertive and uncooperative in they have low concern for the needs of both the self and other; collaborators demonstrate assertiveness and cooperativeness, and they work with the other to find a solution mutually satisfying to both parties; and compromisers are intermediate in assertiveness and cooperativeness, and they pursue solutions to partially satisfy both parties (Thomas & Kilman, 1974). While most individuals demonstrate consistency towards a preference for one of the styles, the choice of style is influenced by the situation as well as personal disposition.

Conflict resolution programs in schools

Particularly in today’s schools, conflict resolution has become a hot topic due to its relevance to violence prevention among students. With violence on the rise, many schools have implemented conflict resolution training programs to help students gain the skills necessary to resolve interpersonal conflicts. According to an analysis conducted by Sherman (1997) in a community in Chicago with conflict resolution training in public schools, conflict resolution

training was associated with increases in peaceful problem solving and reductions of more than 50 percent of the violence in even the most notorious gangs compared to very little change in a comparable community without conflict resolution training. Aspy et al. (2004) found a significant relationship between youth social skills and high-risk behaviors. Students possessing a feeling of safety at school and having the skills to resolve conflict and control negative emotions was also associated with an avoidance of fighting and violence overall.

Conflict resolution programs not only affect the amount of violence in schools, but they also have implications for learning. Positive social interaction is so central to a student's well being that many argue social interaction is an inherent need. For example, children's failure to successfully interact can lead to distress and an inability to actively engage with the environment (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). In other words, the absence of positive social interaction caused by interpersonal conflict can interfere with a student's ability to learn.

In realizing the importance of teaching conflict resolution skills in schools, many programs have been developed and implemented in public schools across the nation. With such a multitude of programs, it is critical to evaluate the effectiveness of each, and understand the commonalities among those that are successful. In an analysis of conflict resolution programs, researchers found that the ability to correctly interpret one's own emotions and the emotions of others has very important implications for successful social interaction (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Emotional competency is critical for conflict resolution, and research has shown that the success of a given program is directly related to the presence of skill development.

“Without skills students and teachers can envision what a caring community can look like, but are unable to get there. As important as it is to build the vision and align people

around the need to achieve this vision, it is also important to give them tools to create that envisioned reality” (Jones & Compton, 2003, p. 295).

One particular program utilized a “check-in” method where students were encouraged to express their feelings and listen to the feelings of others. Teachers emphasized “I feel” messages and provided the students with a range of affective vocabulary that discouraged the use of physical feelings (tired, sleepy, etc) (Heydenberk et al, 2006). In doing this, students were armed with both tools and confidence to positively handle issues. When comparing pre-test and post-test results with a matched comparison group of students of the same age at a different school in the community, use of the conflict resolution program was associated with a school-wide reduction in verbal and physical fighting. All teachers in the groups also reported decreased time spent on student conflicts, which provided more time for curriculum.

Challenges of ESL individuals

Individuals who speak English as a second language encounter a number of unique challenges during social interaction with English-speaking peers. According to Ortiz and Dynda (2008), ESL students are,

“often at a loss regarding what to do, what to pay attention to, and what is being asked of them, what the rules of the moment are, and in so doing, may engage in a host of behaviors that are considered inappropriate” (331).

In fact, ethnic minority students as a whole tended to feel less satisfied with conflict mediation at school than white students. The feelings of dissatisfaction could result from inherent difficulties for ESL students with the types of communication and social cooperation requirements of the existing conflict mediation programs and trainings. According to Carter (1998), students who have limited experience with the majority language (standard English in

this case) encounter “mis- or noncommunication in situations at school [and] face a greater challenge than fluent speakers during participation in conflict resolution” (2). English fluency also had an indirect relationship with the individual’s conflict resolution style and a direct influence on accessing third party conflict mediations, implying that level of English fluency had an impact on the student’s willingness to address the conflict by using a collaborating style or taking advantage of school resources (Carter, 1998).

Second language development and emotional processing

Research on second language development provides some insight regarding the difficulties surrounding emotional expression in a new language. An individual’s first language is developed in a natural environment where experience and emotion intertwine with language development into the brain’s perceptual and affective channels. When developed at an earlier age, language is integrated into the limbic system, which is responsible for emotions, drives, and desires (Paradis, 1994). Since language and emotional competence develop simultaneously, individuals tend to possess greater emotional vocabulary and competence in the native language. According to Myers-Scotton (1993), bilingual and multilingual individuals prefer for emotional interaction to be in language 1 (L1), and studies of code-switching behavior reveal that bilinguals tend to use L1 for instances of intimacy, solidarity, and emotional expressions while the L2 (second language) was used more often to indicate distance and emotional detachment. In social relations and group dynamics, bilinguals often used L1 to express “we-ness” while L2 was an indication of an out-group attitude (Pavlenko, 2004).

Issues with the second language

Furthermore, additional interviews revealed that negative words are actually processed more deeply in L2, and many bilinguals are aware that they tend to use L2 more frequently when

feeling angry. The association between negative emotions and L2 is likely a product of acculturative stress, which is stress directly resulting from leaving a home culture and adopting the culture of another (Berry, 1991). In a study of students of Mexican heritage by Meijia (2010), feelings of anxiety and depression were more prevalent when the students lacked control over preferred language use. In other words, being in situations where the more fluent language could not be used was related to greater negative feelings. Other research shows that profanity in L2 was often utilized as coping mechanisms during conflict with majority language-speaking peers (Myers-Scotton, 1993). The researchers observed that as L2 becomes more associated with negativity, interpersonal conflict in the majority language may be perceived as more hostile and be handled by an ESL student in a less than optimal manner.

Another issue surrounding ESL students is L1 attrition. Pavlenko (2004) argues that learning L2 in an L2-dominated environment can result in conceptual reconstruction of the student's mental vocabulary. This reconstruction may lead to feelings of inadequacy when reverting back to L1 for emotional expression. In other words, acquiring a second language can alter the framework by which an individual understood the world using L1. The relevance of L1 decays, but mastery of L2 is a slower process leaving the individual with fewer tools for personal expression. With evidence of bilingual individuals' difficulties with emotional expression and intimacy in L2 and the added tendency for negative emotion processing in L2, it is implied that ESL individuals would face challenges with the resolution of interpersonal conflict due to the emotional competence and vocabulary required for such interactions in the majority language.

The role of culture

It is also important to adopt a multicultural perspective in addition to investigating the role of language in conflict resolution among high school students. Different cultures possess

different values, and we must not assume the same conflict resolution strategy is the best for all students. According to Euro-American majority culture, the optimal approach is the negotiation of a resolution to resolve the conflict in way that is mutually satisfying to all parties. As Americans, we live in a culture that values self-expression, and both parties asserting their needs can help to develop optimal, mutually beneficial solutions. An imbalance often occurs when a student's culture promotes accommodating the other or avoiding conflict, thereby "saving face" to preserve relationships (Carter, 1998). "Saving face" involves protecting one's personal persona by hiding emotion from the public to prevent deviance from the group (Kitayama & Markus, 1999). In fact, the value of preserving relationships taking precedence over "winning" a dispute is common in several cultures (Diaz-Guerrero and Szalay, 1991).

Other research has shown that Asian Americans and Mexican Americans tend to be less assertive in conflict situations than members of the majority culture (Lee, 1991), consistent with the "saving face" notion of collectivistic cultures. As assertiveness is a central facet of the compromising and collaborating conflict resolution styles, avoidance and accommodation were the most common strategies reported by Mexican-Americans, and length of residence in the United States correlated with use of these strategies (Khorram, 1994). It is important to acknowledge the role of culture in influencing interpersonal conflict resolution, and we must make efforts to understand how values and norms interplay with language fluency to influence conflict resolution styles.

In summary, language and emotional vocabulary play a role in the adoption of conflict resolution styles, and individuals tend to be consistent in their preferred style. Many high schools have established conflict resolution programs that emphasize the building of an emotional vocabulary, but ESL students face unique social challenges that may leave them dissatisfied with

the current programs. Research on bilingualism shows that many individuals are more comfortable processing and expressing emotions in their first language, and the individual's second language tends to be more associated with negative emotions. This study will investigate the relationship between experience with the majority language, English, and reported use of the 5 conflict resolution styles. The background research has led to the development of the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis A: Speaking English as a first language will be related to greater use of the collaborating and compromising conflict resolution styles, and speaking English as a second language will be associated with greater use of the accommodating, avoiding or competing styles.

Hypothesis B: There will be a positive relationship between the number of years the participant has been speaking English and use of compromising and collaborating, and negative relationships will exist between number of years speaking English and use of avoiding, accommodating, and competing.

Hypothesis C: There will be a difference between participants who primarily speak English at home and those who do not whereby those participants whose primary language at home is English would have higher use of collaborating and compromising than those whose primary language was not English.

Hypothesis D: A positive relationship will exist between percentage of time speaking English with family and use of collaborating and compromising, and a negative relationship will exist between percentage of time speaking English with family and use of avoiding, accommodating, and competing.

Hypothesis E: A positive relationship will exist between percentage of time speaking English with peers and use of collaborating and compromising, and a negative relationship will exist

between percentage of time speaking English with peers and use of avoiding, accommodating, and competing.

Method

Participants

The study included 72 students at Oak Grove High School in San Jose, CA. The sample included 21 males and 51 females: 2 sophomores, 37 juniors, and 33 seniors from an AP US History class, a Spanish 4 class, and a Physics class. Two of the students were African American, 35 were Asian American, 6 were Euro-American, 23 were Latino, 4 reported being bi-racial, and 2 participants did not report their ethnicity. Teachers from these classes agreed to participate by allowing the researcher to pass out the surveys to all students during a period. Parental consent forms were distributed one week prior to testing, and students who returned signed parental consent forms were allowed to complete the survey.

Materials

Participants completed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). The inventory consists of 30 questions where the responder chooses one of two options as being more characteristic of personal behavior during interpersonal conflict. Each option corresponds to a specific conflict resolution style (competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating). Participants also answered an additional set of demographic questions inquiring about gender, ethnicity, and experience with speaking English (Appendix B).

Procedure

At the start of the class period, the researcher gave a brief personal introduction followed by explaining factors such as privacy, freedom to cease participation, and freedom to skip questions. Once all inquiries from the participants were answered, the researcher administered the questionnaires. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the student raised his/her hand, and the

researcher collected the survey. After all surveys were collected, the researcher addressed the class to express thanks and answer any additional questions about the project or Cal Poly.

Results

Experience with English

The majority of the sample (55.65%) reported that English was not their first language (44.6% reported English as their first language), and a majority of the sample (63.9%) reported that a language other than English was the primary language spoken in the home (36.1% reported English as the primary language spoken at home). Thirteen participants (18.3%) reported speaking English 0%-25% of the time with family. Sixteen participants (22.5%) reported speaking English 26%-50% of the time with family. Nineteen participants (26.8%) reported speaking English 51%-75% of the time with family, and 23 participants (32.4%) reported using English 76%-100% of the time with family members. When asked the same question with regard to peers, most of the participants (84.7%) reported speaking English 76%-100% of the time with peers.

Conflict resolution styles and ethnicity

A mean for each conflict resolution style (Thomas & Kilman, 1974) was generated for each participant. The overall means for each style are presented in Table 1, and the mean scores for ethnicities are presented in Table 2. Only two of the ethnic groups, Asian American (35) and Latinos (23), had large enough samples to make a meaningful comparison. An independent samples t-test yielded a significant difference between Latinos ($m = .49$) and Asian American ($m = .60$) on reported use of the avoiding style such that Asian American were more likely to report use of an avoiding conflict resolution style ($t = 2.61, p < .05$). There was also a marginal difference between Latinos ($m = .45$) and Asian Americans ($m = .35$) on use of the competing style such that Latinos were more likely to report use of the competing conflict resolution style ($t = -1.58, p < .10$). No other significant or marginal differences were found between the two

proportionally large ethnic groups. The Latino and Asian American groups (coded 0: Asian American, 1: Latino) were also used in linear regressions to compare the predictability strength of all the significant results of language use variables on conflict resolution styles.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis A proposed that speaking English as a first language would be related to greater use of the collaborating and compromising conflict resolution styles, and speaking English as a second language would be associated with greater use of the accommodating, avoiding or competing styles. The means and standard deviations of the scores of native English speakers and non-native English speakers are displayed in Table 3. The results of independent samples t-tests testing differences of native and non-native English speakers on use of each conflict resolution style yielded the following: There was a significant difference between participants whose first language was English ($m = .53$) and participants whose first language was not English ($m = .60$) on the use of an accommodating style ($t = -1.75, p < .05$) where participants who did not report English being their first language were more likely to report use of an accommodating style. There was a marginal difference between participants whose first language was English ($m = .56$) and participants whose first language was not English ($m = .50$) on the use of a compromising style ($t = -1.74, p < .10$). No other results were significant (Table 3).

Hypothesis B proposed there would be a positive relationship between the number of years the participant had been speaking English and mean scores of compromising and collaborating, and negative relationships would exist between number of years speaking English and mean scores of avoiding, accommodating, and competing. A test using Pearson's correlation coefficient yielded a marginal, negative relationship between number of years speaking English

and use of the avoiding ($r = -.178, p < .10$). Another test using Pearson's correlation yielded a marginal, negative relationship between number of years speaking English and use of the competing strategy ($r = -.156, p > .10$). There were no other marginal or significant relationships between number of years speaking English and use of conflict resolution styles (Table 4).

Hypothesis C proposed there would be a difference between participants who primarily spoke English at home and those who did not whereby those participants whose primary language at home was English would have higher mean scores of collaborating and compromising than those whose primary language was not English. The means and standard deviations of the conflict resolution style scores of the two groups are displayed in Table 5. Independent samples t-tests indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups on mean avoiding score ($t = -2.86, p < .05$) such that participants who do not speak primarily English at home ($m = .47$) were significantly more likely to report using an avoiding style than were those who primarily speak English at home ($m = .58$). In an additional test of predictability using linear regression, not speaking primarily English at home was found to significantly predict the use of an avoiding strategy ($\beta = -.28, p < .05$), and ethnicity, Asian American ($m = .60$) or Latino ($m = .49$), was also a significant predictor ($\beta = .39, p < .05$). These results indicate that there are independent effects of language use and ethnicity on use of an avoiding strategy whereby those who do not primarily speak English in the home are more likely to use that strategy and members of the Asian American ethnic group are more likely to use the avoiding strategy. There was also a significant difference between the two groups on mean score of collaborating, ($t = 3.36, p < .05$) such that participants who speak primarily English at home ($m = .52$) were more likely to report using a collaborating style than participants who do not speak primarily English at home ($m = .40$). In an additional test of predictability,

ethnicity was not a significant predictor of reported use of the collaborating strategy ($\beta = .00, p > .05$), but a linear regression supported the conclusion that speaking primarily English at home was a significant predictor of use of the collaborating strategy ($\beta = .31, p < .05$) There were no other significant or marginal results (Table 5).

Hypothesis D stated that a positive relationship would exist between percentage of time speaking English with family and mean scores of collaborating and compromising, and a negative relationship would exist between percentage of time speaking English with family and mean scores of avoiding, accommodating, and competing. A test using Pearson's correlation coefficient yielded a significant, negative relationship between mean score of the avoiding style ($m = .54$) and percentage of time speaking English with family ($r = -.31, p < .05$). In an additional test of predictability, ethnicity, Asian American ($m = .60$) or Latino ($m = .49$), was a significant predictor of use of the avoiding strategy ($\beta = -.37, p < .05$). Although a significant relationship existed, percentage of time using English with family was not a significant predictor of use of the avoiding strategy ($\beta = -.24, p > .05$). These results indicate that being Asian American was a greater predictor of reported use of the avoiding style than percentage of time using English at home. There was a marginal, positive relationship between mean score of the collaborating style ($m = .44$) and percent of time speaking English with family ($r = .16, p < .10$). There were no other significant or marginal relationships between percentage of time speaking English with family and mean scores of conflict resolution styles (Table 6).

Hypothesis E proposed that a positive relationship would exist between percentage of time speaking English with peers and mean scores of collaborating and compromising, and a negative relationship would exist between percentage of time speaking English with peers and mean scores of avoiding, accommodating, and competing. Tests using Pearson's correlation

coefficient for the relationships between each conflict resolution style and percentage of time speaking English with family yielded no significant relationships (Table 7); however a marginal, negative relationship existed between mean score of competing ($m = .42$) and percentage of time speaking English with peers ($r = -.19, p < .10$).

Discussion

General patterns

Based on the results summarized in Table 8, there was a tendency for participants with less English experience to report greater use of an avoiding or accommodating style. In regards to language, it is plausible to conclude that less experience with English, especially in the home, could be associated with feelings of uncertainty in addressing interpersonal conflict. Without a strong emotional vocabulary in the majority language, it may be difficult for ESL individuals to not only express their own feelings, but also understand the feelings of others. As a result, these individuals may choose to avoid the conflict altogether or sacrifice their own needs in favor of the other party.

In addition, more experience with English was associated with greater use of the collaborating style. These findings are consistent with the theory that greater emotional vocabulary can lead to increased problem solving skills and ability for empathy (Crick & Dodge, 1994). With a larger, more diverse armory of affective words, individuals can better understand their own experience and be more effective in speculating about the experiences of others. Specifically, the significant and marginal correlations regarding the greater use of collaborating style were found with more English experience in the home. Along with the role of language, encouragement by parents for self-expression and modeling may have an effect on an individual's tendencies to voice personal concerns while also accounting for the concerns of others. Another explanation involves the role of parental fluency in English. If the parent has more experience with the majority language, he or she will also be more able to express personal emotions and understand the emotions and experiences of the adolescent.

The role of culture cannot be ignored in these findings. Less experience with English may have been associated with greater use of the avoiding and accommodating strategies, but differences in culture may also be an important variable. Asian and Latino backgrounds were prevalent in the sample, and these cultures tend to be much more collectivistic than American culture. For instance, actions that are considered “avoiding conflict” in an individualistic culture like America would be described as “saving face” in collectivist culture, an action that is highly valued. To assert personal feelings and concerns could be seen as selfish and disrespectful in cultures that value interdependence. Tests of predictability also found that being Asian American was related to greater use of the avoiding strategy, and it would be interesting to examine cross-cultural differences among collectivistic cultures.

In the case of this study, more experience with English also translates to more experiences in American culture. In addition to using more English, those who that have spent more time in the United States may also adopt more of the individualistic values and ideals that encourage self-expression and assertiveness. The culture difference may account for the pattern of greater use of the competing strategy among participants with more English experience – a finding inconsistent with the original hypothesis. In our capitalist society that values independence over interdependence, a competing approach is often viewed as more successful.

Limitations of the research study

One limitation of the present study is its structure as a correlational study. Without random assignment to comparative groups and manipulation of an independent variable in a controlled setting, causation cannot be determined. This study simply investigated and revealed a relationship between conflict resolution style and experience with English. The study also did not address the context of the interpersonal conflict being reported by the participants. Considering

the diversity in cultural backgrounds, it is very possible that the students handle conflict situations differently with family members than they do with peers. It is important to recognize that the context of the conflict matters and may have affected the results. A last limitation was the demographic make up of the sample. Only two of the cultural groups were large enough to make meaningful comparisons over culture, and as in many quantitative studies, it was difficult to assign the biracial participants to a cultural group. Simply labeling the participants as biracial is inconclusive and prevents the examination of the individual's specific cultural backgrounds.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research could investigate the role of culture more extensively by comparing specific groups and surveying the varying levels of acculturation of the ESL individuals. It is possible that more experience with American culture may be associated with collaborating and compromising, while individuals who are immigrants or the children of immigrants may have a greater tendency to maintain the more collectivistic ideals valued by the home culture. For those participants who are biracial, it would be helpful to learn more about the backgrounds of the two parents and cultural practices in the home.

It would also be interesting to examine the differences in conflict styles used with peers and with family. For those students who do not speak English at home but use English extensively with peers, the conflict resolution behavior may look very different in the two environments as they balance the two cultures and develop a bicultural identity. Another contextual variable is investigation of the environment where the ESL individual learned English. Use of the language could be very different if the individual learned English in a strictly academic setting compared to learning English on a playground. The varying levels of social context and English could be related to different behavior during interpersonal conflict.

Implications

Given the inevitability of interpersonal conflict among adolescents, these results may have practical implications for the way ESL students are taught to speak English. By putting a greater emphasis on the development of emotional vocabulary in both English and the individual's native language, these students will be better prepared for interpersonal problem solving and empathy. Conversely, the foreign language requirement in high school curriculum could put more emphasis on the emotional vocabulary of foreign languages. Students could practice self-expression in a foreign language to foster cross-cultural, social problem solving skills. This will boost their ability to relate to ESL students and give them a better sense of cultural differences.

Examining the big picture, "saving face" may be valued in the cultures and home lives of many ESL students, but over time, the cultural inconsistency with individualistic society is likely to foster feelings of anger and anxiety when conflict arises. The compounding of these negative emotions can drive students to emotionally withdraw, join gangs, or become violent. If all students, ESL and native English speakers, have a stronger ability to verbally express themselves and understand each other, it could lead to an increase in positive social problem solving and reduce the violence that plagues schools today. Policy makers and school administrators could take this information to improve the language and communication skills of all students to make California schools better learning environments.

Final Conclusions

This study tested the hypothesis that greater experience with the English language would be related to greater use of the compromising and collaborating conflict resolution strategies. Students in a San Jose, California high school were surveyed, and the results showed significant

relationships between English experience and the avoiding and accommodating strategies as well as the collaborating strategies such that less English experience was associated with greater use of avoiding and accommodating, and more English experience was associated with greater use of the collaborating strategy. These results can be explained by the role of emotional vocabulary in interpersonal conflict, and differences in culture may have also played a role. It is important to remember that the study was correlational, and the conclusions are not cause and effect. The results do have practical implications for school administrators and policy makers as this study has shown that greater experience and emotional vocabulary in English is related to use of non-violent problem solving behavior in high school students.

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Table 1

Mean of Conflict Resolution Styles

Style	Mean (<i>SD</i>)
Avoiding	.54 (.18)
Accommodating	.58 (.19)
Competing	.42 (.22)
Compromising	.52 (.20)
Collaborating	.44 (.17)

Table 2

Mean scores and standard deviations on conflict resolution styles by ethnicity

	Avoid	Accommodate	Compete	Compromise	Collaborate
African American	.41 (.12)	.58 (.35)	.50 (.47)	.38 (.17)	.63 (.18)
Asian Amer.	.60 (.18)	.57 (.19)	.35 (.22)	.54 (.20)	.44 (.13)
Caucasian	.46 (.21)	.49 (.08)	.61 (.07)	.36 (.20)	.58 (.20)
Latino	.49 (.16)	.61 (.19)	.45 (.28)	.54 (.20)	.42 (.13)
Bi-Racial	.50 (.10)	.54 (.19)	.42 (.22)	.52 (.20)	.44 (.17)

Table 3

Means and t-scores of native and non-native English speaking participants on conflict resolution styles

	English first language?	Mean(<i>SD</i>)	<i>t-score</i>
Avoiding	Yes	.54 (.17)	.03
	No	.53 (.19)	
Accommodating	Yes	.53 (.18)	-1.75*
	No	.61 (.18)	
Competing	Yes	.42 (.23)	.00
	No	.42 (.22)	
Compromising	Yes	.56 (.19)	1.40*
	No	.50 (.20)	
Collaborating	Yes	.44 (.19)	.109
	No	.45 (.15)	

Note. One-tailed significance tests + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Table 4

Relationships between number of years speaking English and mean scores of conflict resolution styles

	Pearson Correlation
Avoiding	-.18+
Accommodating	.12
Competing	-.16+
Compromising	.10
Collaborating	.14

Note. One-tailed significance tests + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Table 5

Means and t-scores of English as primary language at home on conflict resolution

English primary home language?		Mean (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i> -score
Avoiding	Yes	.46 (.15)	-2.86*
	No	.58 (.18)	
Accommodating	Yes	.59 (.18)	.49
	No	.56 (.19)	
Competing	Yes	.40 (.23)	-.44
	No	.43 (.23)	
Compromising	Yes	.52 (.19)	-.11
	No	.53 (.21)	
Collaborating	Yes	.52 (.15)	3.36*
	No	.40 (.16)	

Note. One-tailed significance tests + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Table 6

Relationships between percentages of time English is used with family and mean scores of conflict resolution styles

	Pearson Correlation
Avoiding	-.31*
Accommodating	-.01
Competing	.01
Compromising	.04
Collaborating	.16+

Note. One-tailed significance tests + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Table 7

Relationships between percentages of time English is used with peers and mean scores of conflict resolution styles

Pearson Correlation	
Avoiding	-.04*
Accommodating	.11
Competing	-.17+
Compromising	.09
Collaborating	.16+

Note. One-tailed significance tests + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Table 8

Results of significance tests on mean score of conflict resolution styles

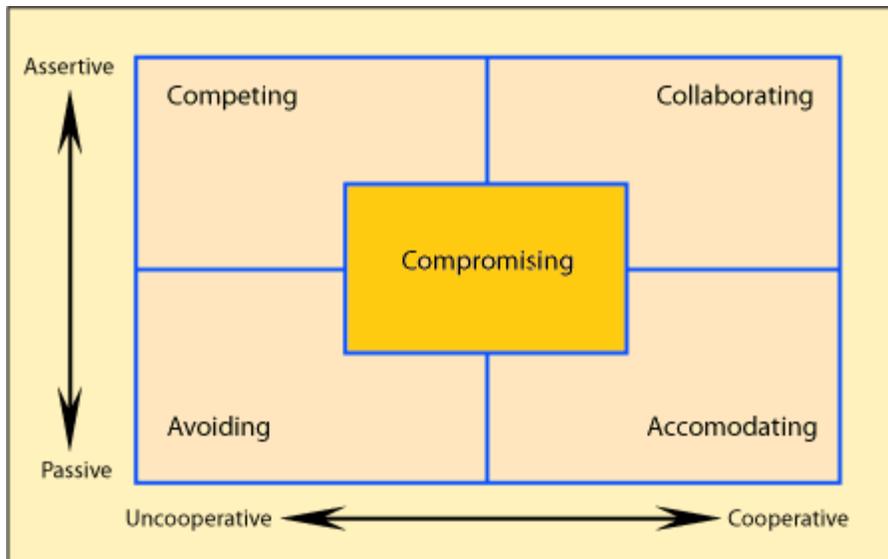
	Avoid	Accommodate	Compete	Compromise	Collaborate
Engl 1 st lang		*		+	
Years of Engl.	+		+		
Engl at home	*				*
% with family	*				+
% with peers			+		

*Indicates significance ($p < .05$)

+Indicates marginality ($p < .10$)

Appendix A

Conflict Resolution Styles



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Appendix B

1. What is your grade level?
 - a. 9th
 - b. 10th
 - c. 11th
 - d. 12th
2. What is your gender? _____
3. Is English your first language? ____ Yes ____ No
4. How many years have you been speaking English? _____
5. Is English the primary language spoken at home? ____ Yes ____ No
6. What percentage of the time do you speak English with your family?
 - a. 0-25%
 - b. 26-50%
 - c. 50-75%
 - d. 75-100%
7. What percentage of the time do you speak English with your peers?
 - a. 0-25%
 - b. 26-50%
 - c. 50-75%
 - d. 75-100%
8. What is your ethnicity?

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