



UNIVERSIDAD METROPOLITANA DE CIENCIAS DE LA  
EDUCACIÓN FACULTAD DE HISTORIA GEOGRAFÍA Y  
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DEPARTAMENTO DE INGLÉS

**INVISIBLE BATTLES: ENGLISH TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES  
AGAINST VIOLENCE WITHIN THE CLASSROOM.  
A CASE STUDY**

*SEMINARIO PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE LICENCIATURA EN EDUCACIÓN CON  
MENCIÓN EN INGLÉS Y PEDAGOGÍA EN INGLÉS*

**AUTORAS:**

Vanessa Cavieres Inostroza

Pía Ferrera Vidal

Constanza Grandón López

Francisca Muñoz Arce

Nayareth Navarrete Ávila

Daniela Obando Peña

Fabianna Rebolledo Bustos

Carolain Rojas Carrasco

**PROFESORA GUÍA:**

Lery Veronica Mejías García

Autorizado para

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Vanessa Cavieres Inostroza

Pía Ferrera Vidal

Constanza Grandón López

Francisca Muñoz Arce

Nayareth Navarrete Ávila

Daniela Obando Peña

Fabianna Rebolledo Bustos

Carolain Rojas Carrasco

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**Dedicatorias**

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## **Resumen**

Ante las alarmantes y crecientes cifras en los niveles de violencia escolar, este estudio buscó examinar las estrategias que cuatro profesores de inglés utilizan para abordar situaciones de violencia dentro de la sala de clases. Para ello, se empleó un estudio de caso con una metodología de análisis de contenido de una entrevista semiestructurada con siete preguntas abiertas, destinadas a comprender las percepciones y experiencias de los docentes. En cuanto a los resultados, se reflejó que los profesores enfrentan tres tipos de violencia por parte de los estudiantes: agresiones verbales, gestos y actos de intimidación. Estas situaciones generaron diversas emociones como estrés, frustración, vergüenza, miedo, soledad, ansiedad y evitación emocional. Asimismo, el análisis evidenció que los docentes combinan estrategias de supervivencia, estrategias de afrontamiento y conductas de búsqueda de apoyo para manejar los episodios de violencia.

## **Palabras Clave**

violencia escolar, docentes de inglés, emociones, estrategias de afrontamiento, estrategias de supervivencia.

## **Abstract**

Given the alarming and growing rates of school violence, this study sought to examine the strategies used by four English teachers to address situations of violence in the classroom. To achieve this, a case study was conducted using content analysis methodology based on a semi-structured interview with seven open-questions designed to understand the teachers' perceptions and experiences. Regarding the results, the analysis showed that teachers face three types of violence from students: verbal aggression, gestural aggression, and acts of intimidation. These situations generated various emotions such as stress, frustration, shame, fear, loneliness, anxiety, and emotional avoidance. The analysis also showed that teachers combine survival strategies, coping strategies, and support-seeking behaviors to manage episodes of violence.

## **Key Words**

school violence, English teachers, emotions, coping strategies, survival strategies.

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## **Introduction**

School violence has become a persistent concern in Chilean educational settings, affecting not only students but also teachers, who are increasingly exposed to verbal, psychological, and physical aggression. Recent national data illustrate the magnitude of the phenomenon: nearly 79% of teachers have experienced insults, while 62.8% have been threatened, lastly 10.9% express suffering physical aggression inside the classrooms, establishing student-perpetrated violence against educators (Colegio de Profesores, 2023). These numbers reveal not only the frequency of violent incidents but also the extent to which teachers have become direct victims within educational establishments.

For the purposes of this research, school violence is defined as intentional and repeated behaviors involving harassment, intimidation, or aggression that undermine the well-being of the educational community. Constant exposure to violent incidents has led teachers to develop a range of personal and professional strategies to manage the repercussions of such incidents on their emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and sense of safety within the classroom.

Although existing literature has deeply examined the impact of school violence on students, considerably less attention has been given to how teachers experience and cope with these situations. Recent findings indicate that violence against teachers in Chile has become a permanent phenomenon, which over the past two decades has not received sufficient political regulatory, or research attention to facilitate its recognition, understanding, and intervention (Galdames-Paredes & Rioseco-Sánchez, 2023). This gap is specifically relevant for this study, as the research team specialization is in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), focusing on English teachers allows for a more accurate understanding of the professional reality, pedagogical challenges, and emotional demands that English teachers face when dealing with violence in the school settings, since according to Xie, X., & Jiang, G. (2021), emotions in EFL teachers must often manage language anxiety, identity-related stress, not mentioning the high levels of interaction, communication, and student participation, that sometimes is not there. These factors can intensify the emotional labor required compared to subjects with more individual or structured activities.

In response to the limited data, the present study examines the strategies that English teachers employ to manage episodes of violence in the classroom, considering both their professional actions and the emotional processes associated with the experiences. Understanding how teachers navigate these situations is crucial for developing effective support systems, strengthening institutional protocols, and promoting long-term well-being among educators.

Aligned with this purpose, the general objective of the study is to examine the strategies that English teachers use to deal with situations of violence in the classroom. To achieve this goal, the specific objectives are the following:

- A) To identify the types of violence teachers experience in the classroom.
- B) To identify the strategies used by English teachers to deal with situations of violence in the classroom.
- C) To categorize the strategies used by English teachers to deal with situations of violence in the classroom.
- D) To analyze the strategies used by English teachers to deal with situations of violence in the classroom.

To explore both individual strategies and the emotional dimension involved in violent situations, this research adopts a qualitative case study design. According to Moser and Korstjens, qualitative research “aims to provide in-depth insights and understanding of real-world problems and, in contrast to quantitative research, it does not introduce treatments, manipulate or quantify predefined variables” (2017, p. 1). Additionally, a case study allows for a detailed and context-sensitive exploration of teachers’ realities, capturing the complexity of violent incidents and the meaning of the strategies used (Creswell, 2018). For this reason, semi-structured interviews were conducted, using open-ended questions that explored teachers’ personal definitions of violence, their experiences, and their reflections on institutional responses. In order to understand teachers' experiences from their perspective, educators’ responses were analyzed into five main categories: types of violence, interrelationships between types of violence, perceptions and experiences of school violence, teachers' emotional responses to school violence, and educators’ survival strategies to deal with school violence.

Regarding the delimitations of the study, this research is restricted to a reduced group of four English teachers working in Chilean schools, which means the findings reflect the experiences of this specific professional group rather than a larger sample. The focus is intentionally placed on English teachers due to the research team's academic specialization and the practicality of accessing participants in this area. The study examines only the strategies used inside the classroom, excluding violence occurring in other school spaces. Additionally, as the research relies on self-reported experiences obtained through interviews, the results capture teachers' personal perceptions rather than direct observations.

This qualitative study is structured into four chapters, including the present introduction. The following chapter presents the theoretical framework and literature review of the main concepts explored in this study: definitions of school violence, Chilean socio-politic experiences within the broader context of school violence. The third chapter describes the methodology used in this study, along with the results obtained based on participants' answers. Finally, the last chapter, Conclusions, includes implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

The research seeks to reveal not only the complexity of these behaviors but also the emotional consequences they generate. Ultimately, this perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the need for effective pedagogical strategies and institutional support systems that protect and empower educators.

## **Theoretical Framework**

To address the issue of violence in the classroom, it is imperative to understand the problem from every possible angle. First, it is necessary to establish what this investigation will consider as violence:

From an international point of view, the World Health Organization (n.d.) defines violence as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, developmental issues, or deprivation.

For this study, physical violence will be defined as any form of bodily control, intimidation, or aggression against another person's body, such as hitting, pushing, or pulling hair (Ajenjo & Bas, 2005). This definition also acknowledges that violence can extend beyond visible physical acts to include threats, intimidation, and other non-physical behaviors. It encompasses different types of violence, interpersonal, self-directed, and collective or armed conflict. It recognizes a wide range of consequences, including psychological harm and developmental impairments that can affect individuals, families, and communities. One specific manifestation of this phenomenon is bullying or peer harassment (Neut, 2017).

### **1. Defining School Violence**

After reviewing several definitions of school violence from both national and international perspectives (e.g., Olweus, 1993; UNESCO, 2017; Fundación Paz Educa, n.d.), the present research adopts the definition provided by the Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (n.d.), as it offers a comprehensive and contextually relevant view for

the Chilean educational system. This definition acknowledges the multiple forms of violence, their intentional and repeated nature, and their impact on all members of the school community, including both students and teachers.

School violence is therefore understood as intentional and repeated behaviors involving harassment, intimidation, or aggression that undermine the well-being of the educational community. These actions are often committed by individuals who may not fully comprehend their consequences. For this research, school violence will be examined in its physical, psychological, verbal, social, and aggressive forms involving teachers within the classroom. (Fundación Paz Educa, n.d.; Araos & Correa, 2004).

### **1.1 Forms of Violence in Schools**

When it is referred to school violence, it is important to highlight the existence of different forms in which violence is manifested in the school setting. This study will focus on and explain these four forms of violence in schools, which affect students and teachers alike:

A) **Physical violence:** Involves bodily harm inflicted among members of the school community, often leading to emotional and psychological consequences (Ajenjo & Bas, unpublished manuscript, 2005; Fundación Paz Ciudadana, n.d.).

B) **Psychological violence:** Encompasses actions or attitudes aimed at damaging an individual's self-esteem, emotional state, or sense of security, with potential long-term effects such as depression (Fundación Paz Ciudadana, n.d.; Ajenjo & Bas, 2005).

C) **Verbal violence:** Consists of the use of language to insult, humiliate, or belittle others. While lacking physical contact, it can result in equally severe emotional and psychological harm. (Fundación Paz Ciudadana, n.d.; Ajenjo & Bas, 2005).

D) **Social violence:** Refers to exclusion or social marginalization, which undermines individuals' sense of belonging. This type of violence reflects broader societal inequalities and affects learning, coexistence, and the overall well-being of the school community. It can occur between teachers and students, among students, or between parents and teachers (Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, n.d.).

Understanding these diverse manifestations of school violence provides the foundation for analyzing how they impact teachers' experiences and their emotional well-being within the educational context. This study builds upon these theoretical distinctions by examining how verbal, gestural, and indirect forms of violence are perceived and managed by English teachers. By situating these experiences within the broader context of school violence, the research seeks to reveal not only the complexity of these behaviors but also the emotional consequences they generate.

## 1.2 Complexity and Causes of School Violence

School violence is a multifaceted phenomenon whose definition varies depending on the context and the observer's perspective. Its origins are also multifactorial, spanning individual, school-related, and sociocultural dimensions.

- **Individual factors:** Exposure to domestic violence, high impulsivity, and a lack of socio-emotional skills increase the likelihood of a student becoming either a perpetrator or victim (Olweus, 1993).
- **School environment:** Weak enforcement of rules, tolerance for degrading behavior, and inadequate conflict resolution mechanisms among peers can create an environment conducive to violent incidents (Trianes et al., 2003).
- **Sociocultural influences:** The normalization of aggressive behaviors within the educational setting, combined with structural inequalities, fosters violence rooted in perceptions of injustice (Dubet & Martuccelli, 2007).

The causes of school violence emerge from the interplay between personal histories, institutional practices, and societal dynamics. Understanding these factors is fundamental for developing prevention and intervention strategies that are not only effective but also context-sensitive, an approach that underpins the rationale of this research.

### **1.3 Consequences of School Violence**

The repercussions of school violence are severe and extend beyond the immediate incident. Victims often experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, academic underachievement, and, in some cases, school dropout (Ortega, 2008). Perpetrators may develop persistent antisocial behaviors that continue into adulthood (González & Santana, 2001). On a collective level, persistent violence undermines the school climate, breeds mistrust among community members, and fosters fear and disengagement (UNESCO, 2017).

Given these profound and long-lasting consequences, tackling school violence is not only an ethical imperative but also a prerequisite for fostering a safe, inclusive, and motivating learning environment. In the specific case of English teachers, recognizing these outcomes highlights the urgency of adopting evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies within the classroom.

## **2. The Chilean Socio-Political Context**

For a deeper understanding of the background and purpose of the investigation, it is essential to contextualize the social and political context in Chile in the previous years in relation to violence. In the words of historian Gabriel Salazar (2020), the so-called “social outburst” was the largest and most fearsome social upheaval in the history of Chile (p.13). Primarily initiated and led by high school students, it represented the venting and expression of the accumulation of anger and discomfort associated with social injustice and inequality resulting from the neoliberal system implemented in the country. Salazar (2019) defines the social outburst as the spark that awakened the marginalized citizens, since a popular movement emerged, composed and articulated by young people who bore years of injustice and rage in their memory. This caused millions of people to protest on the streets throughout the country for several weeks, expressing their dissatisfaction with the difficulties faced by the most vulnerable sectors of society, including but not limited to the rise of the cost of public transport, the high cost of living versus the income disparity among social classes.

Regarding the emotional aspect “The experience of protesting unfolds within strong interpersonal networks, and participation generates pleasurable emotions, which are associated with the successful interpretation of the demonstration” (Asún et al., 2020, “Abstract” section, para. 1). Due to the high level of violence that was reported during this period, marked by protests, arrests and violations of the physical and moral integrity of hundreds of people; these events caused the emergence of post-traumatic symptoms in children from areas exposed to high levels of violence. This resulted in emotional and behavioral changes (sleeping difficulties, fears, anxieties about death, among others). Children expressed emotions of fear and anger in the face of police action, as well as sadness due to the alteration of their daily and school routine (DDN, 2020).

Understanding this context in a realistic manner contributes to comprehend how these events have impacted educational outcomes. This social inequality may be replicated similarly in schools and classrooms, being school violence a reflection of the structural inequalities of society (social, economic, gender, racial...) pre-existing to the pedagogical action, but which directly affect the school experience of young people. Particularly affecting those who develop in contexts of more accentuated exclusion, a complexity that must be considered when analyzing school violence (Neut, 2017).

## **2.1 The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic affected Chile in the social and economic dimensions severely. This was also reflected in education and its establishments, since:

Chilean schools were completely closed for more than 250 instructional days between 2020 and the first four-month period of 2022, which corresponds to almost 52 school weeks. Or 1.4 school years. This figure positions Chile as the OECD country with the highest number of days without classes (Ugarte, 2023).

During the period of confinement, the lack of socialization among younger students significantly affected their emotional regulation and social skills (Rodríguez-Monge et al., Bioinformation, 2023). The sudden interruption of face-to-face education forced

many of them to remain in unstable and often unsafe home environments, where they were exposed to neglect, abuse, and other forms of violence (Ministerio de Educación, 2021). These adverse experiences, combined with isolation and limited emotional support, contributed to the development of frustration, impulsivity, and aggressive behaviours once students returned to school. In consequence, domestic and social violence began to manifest within educational spaces, linking home experiences with broader social and educational challenges (Morillo, Guerrón, & Narváez, 2021).

As a result, this increase of violent behavior directly affected not only the school climate but also teachers' emotional well-being. The rise in verbal aggression, disrespect, and even threats towards teachers reflects how post-pandemic behavioural changes disrupted classroom dynamics and increased emotional pressure in educators. In fact, "the increase in complaints reflects a negative impact on the health and well-being of education professionals, exacerbating burnout and dissatisfaction within the school community" (Simões & Alves, 2020, as cited in Aqueveque, Cárceles, & Maureira, 2025). Teachers faced burnout and emotional exhaustion due to the constant exposure to violent or disruptive behaviours, which, along with the uncertainty of the pandemic context, resulted in higher stress levels compared to other professions (MINEDUC 2021).

Therefore, the pandemic not only troubled the educational system completely, but also affected the personal reality of each member of the many educational centers across the country. Post-pandemic consequences like emotional exhaustion, student misbehaviour, and technological inadequacies demonstrated how fragile and vulnerable the system is, especially when talking about education.

Due to the effects previously mentioned in the behaviour of students, the emotional distress among teachers, and the fragility of the educational system in the post-pandemic society, it became necessary to strengthen and apply clear regulations that could guide schools in the prevention, management, and sanctioning of violent acts within the scholar community.

## 2.2 Gender Perspective

It is essential to differentiate how violence is experienced and interpreted through a gendered perspective. Women are frequently positioned as the primary subject of violence, as gender norms and socially constructed roles shape various forms of aggression within society. This highlights that, even within structured institutional efforts, violence continues to manifest differently across gender lines, reinforcing the need for policies that address the issue from an intersectional and gender-sensitive perspective. Regarding educational contexts, as Galdames and Pezoa (2023) note, “In Chile [...] a high incidence of teacher-victimisation remains despite the implementation of regulatory frameworks oriented to improve and promote school coexistence”, it is therefore critical to consider how violence emerges in its perception depending on whether the teacher is a woman or a man, since interpretation and institutional response often vary according to gender, as explained in a study made by López et al. (2025): “male teachers were less likely to report feeling unsafe compared to female teachers.” This highlights that, even within structured institutional efforts, violence continues to manifest differently across gender lines, reinforcing the need for policies that address the issue from an intersectional and gender-sensitive perspective.

According to Small et al. (2024), patriarchal norms and cultural expectations contribute significantly to the normalization and trivialization of multiple forms of violence, including sexual harassment and discrimination against female teachers. Such dynamics frequently suppress formal complaints and constrain institutional support mechanisms. Although many female educators can identify gender stereotypes in classroom interactions and demonstrate a willingness to challenge them, their strategies often inadvertently reinforce these same stereotypes, even aggravating inequality dynamics and possible vulnerabilities against violence (Small et al., 2024).

Small’s study (2024) also highlights that female teachers may consciously or unconsciously tend to reproduce gendered behaviors and expectations that marginalize students’ participation and voice. This underscores that gender not only shapes who becomes a victim of violence but also influences pedagogical practices and classroom

dynamics. The same author additionally emphasizes that the impact of violence differs according to the teacher's gender, particularly concerning health, professional stability, and emotional well-being. Educators often report experiencing harassment, intimidation, or symbolic violence manifested through stress and the desire to abandon the profession. These findings align with McMahon et al. (2024), whose study addresses the emotional impact of violence on teaching professionals. Although their research refers to educators in general, it is worth noting that the majority of participants identified as women, which means that the reported trends largely reflect the experiences within the school system.

As Aqueveque et al. (2025) explain, “female teachers experience higher rates of discrimination and psychological violence, reflecting the persistence of gender inequalities within educational institutions”. This highlights the importance of integrating a gender perspective in school policies and teacher education programs to address not only the manifestations of violence but also the structural conditions that allow them to persist.

### **3. Legal Framework in Chile**

In Chile, various regulations focus on preventing, eradicating, and sanctioning certain conducts that disrupt a good environment within educational establishments.

They serve as a guide as to what is expected regarding the ways in which school violence must be handled, and propose a foundation for the implementation and creation of preventive tools. Furthermore, the legal framework establishes the parameters of what will be considered as school violence and its respective sanctions or repercussions.

**A) Law N° 20.536 (2011) School Violence Law:** This Law established modifications to the “General law of education” N° 20.370, therefore instauring obligations for the educational establishments, such as: promoting a harmonic environment, establishing a definition of what is considered as school violence and the creation of committees that are in charge of preventing situations of violence and the promotion of companionship, respect and good relationships inside the schools.

Moreover, it involves certain sanctions if the educational authorities do not apply these obligations within the internal norms of the educational establishments.

Article 16 A of law N° 20.536 regarding school violence establishes the promotion of a good school coexistence defined by the harmonious relationships among the members of the school's community, implying positive interrelation allowing the fulfillment of the educational objectives in a climate that will improve the development of students (Ley N° 20.536, 2011). Furthermore, Article 16 B delves into defining the acts of violence such as: any action or omission constituting aggression carried out inside or outside the educational environment, that are committed individually or collectively.

**B) Law No. 21.128 (2018) “Safe classroom” Law:** This law introduces procedures for the nullity of tuition or even the expulsion of students in cases of extreme violence, that way ensuring protection of the school communities. This law aims to sanction actions that violate the permanence of a safe environment and coexistence inside the educational establishments.

The law establishes that the actions that highly affect the school's coexistence inflicted by any of the members of the school's community, will be under the scrutiny of a sanctionary process, and that the principal in under the obligations of notifying these decisions with the corresponding arguments (Biblioteca del Congreso de Chile, 2018).

**C) Proposed Law (2024) National Action Plan:** Recently introduced to the Chilean Senate, this new bill proposes a National Action Plan requiring all schools to establish coexistence teams and implement standardized procedures for protecting victims and preventing re-victimization.

Furthermore, the proposal “sets a new standard for the internal management of coexistence, updating the internal regulations and the Educational Coexistence Management Plan” (Ministerio de educación, 2024). It also incorporates training by the

Superintendence of Education, and creates the figure of the Coordinator of Educational Coexistence, who will have a suitable professional profile, exclusive dedication, and full-time. The project also reinforces the duties of prevention and action for the adequate protection of the members of the community, for which the adults of the educational communities must report immediately the occurrence of any events of harassment, violence, or discrimination against any member of the community that they become aware of.

Together, all these laws and regulations are a reflection of the commitment of the Chilean state for a better education, more secure, inclusive, and utterly free of violence inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, they serve as a guide to the present research in terms of what will be considered school violence and how it will impact the schools' coexistence, putting at odds the permanence of a safe environment for the community.

#### **4. Framework for Good Teaching (Marco para la buena enseñanza)**

The Framework for Good Teaching establishes standards that promote ethical, reflective, and learning-centered experiences, guiding teachers' formation, evaluation, and ongoing professional refinement. Within this framework, teachers are expected not only to deliver curricular content but also to foster students' comprehensive development through inclusive and value-based education. In Chile, this framework functions as part of the national teacher evaluation system, serving as a guideline for assessing and improving professional practice (MINEDUC, 2021).

The teaching standards consist of pedagogical practices required to foster learning in students. These standards are divided into four dimensions:

A) **Teaching preparation and learning:** This domain focuses on the preparation of teaching that each educator offers to the students. It includes the necessary knowledge, abilities and attitudes related to the discipline.

B) **Creation of an Environment for Learning:** This domain focuses on the creation of an optimal environment for learning that teachers must foster, showing engagement in promoting strong bonds with their students.

C) **Teaching of Learning for all students:** This domain emphasizes the implementation of plans to fulfill the goals for the class, using different pedagogical approaches that promote higher expectations and challenges. The teacher supports the students in the new acquired knowledge, adjusting their teaching practice accordingly.

D) **Professional responsibilities:** This domain focuses on the professional responsibilities of each teacher, the principal being that all students learn, while remaining committed to continuing their professional development and collaborating with the school community.

The Framework for Good Teaching has multiple purposes that aim to solve the challenges that society is facing. It is a regulatory instrument for the prevention of violent behaviors due to its focus on promoting a healthy coexistence. Although it does not offer explicit guidelines for managing violent crises in real time, it outlines professional practices that help teachers meet national standards related to the prevention and management of such situations. By setting clear expectations for classroom management, the framework recognizes the teacher's responsibility in fostering respect, safety, and emotional well-being among students. Moreover, it promotes conflict resolution through peaceful and constructive strategies, encouraging the development of socio-emotional skills supported by consistent and fair rules.

## **5. Teacher Role**

During the past decades, teachers have been reduced to mere transmitters of specific knowledge, and that was their sole purpose, but this idea has evolved over the years. Teachers are also citizens and human beings who help build other citizens and humans.

As Chilean society has undergone significant social, cultural, and technological shifts, the role of teachers in society needs to be modernized. Being a teacher “implies not only the responsibility of transmitting the knowledge of the discipline it teaches, but

also the commitment to form and develop attitudes, values and skills aimed at the integral development of their students” (MINEDUC, n.d.). This evolution can be traced through four phases of the Chilean society:

- 1. Dictatorship era (1973-1990):** During the military regime, teachers in Chile were restricted and expected to replicate the political discourse of the moment. Authority and control were emphasised over creativity and critical thinking (F. Donoso, 2013).
- 2. Post-Dictatorship (1990- 2000s):** The return to democracy brought new challenges like the implementation of new curricula, integration of technology, and embracing inclusive practices, while gaining more responsibilities regarding their education (Donoso, S., 2005).
- 3. 21st century:** With globalization hitting the country, teachers adapted once again; they now had to promote technological literacy, socioemotional skills, intercultural awareness, and democratic participation on top of their teaching responsibilities (Paredes-Aguila, J. A., & Rivera-Vargas, P., 2023).
- 4. Pandemic and post-pandemic era (2020-present):** During the isolation, teachers were challenged to emotionally support their students while innovating in their new digital classroom. During the post-pandemic era, teachers guide students to reintegration into this new world. They need to support students to socialize with their peers while being in tune with their students' mental health and re-establishing school routines on top of all the above (Red Educativa Mundial, 2024).

This historical journey not only redefined what it means to teach but also highlighted teachers’ broader social responsibilities, particularly in addressing challenges such as inclusion, diversity, and spotting school violence.

The trajectory of the teacher's role has shifted from an authority figure with so much knowledge to a multidimensional being that combines pedagogy, emotional support, community building, and social leadership. Regarding community building, teachers are in a variety of cases, the bridge that connects people, not only fostering students'

relationships with each other, but also modeling them, because “the attitudes and behaviors of teachers directly influence the cognitive, affective, and social development of students” (Journal of Pedagogical Research & Kahveci, H. 2023).

And as cohesive agents, teachers are now able to bridge the gaps among the students, which is extremely needed, mostly in the most challenging environments, (Novelli & Sayed, 2016). Nowadays, this feature makes teachers extra valuable, considering mixed backgrounds in just one classroom. Immigrant students, LGBT+ students, students with different socioeconomic upbringings, among others, have been connected to each other through their teachers.

Teachers are active contributors to building a more inclusive, safe, and respectful school environment, which is why teachers are also important when preventing violence and addressing conflict. By acting as a model, teachers can show students the healthy way to manage conflict (García Pastene, P., & Revista Educación Las Américas, 2021). Their responses to a challenging situation also influence their students. By reacting calmly, fairly, and assertively, students might see their way to resolve a disagreement without turning to violence.

When acting as a mediator, teachers can apply strategies such as restorative actions, cooperative learning, and socioemotional education that allow them to transform a potentially violent situation into an opportunity for growth for students. (Lodi, et al., 2021). This also leads the teacher to take action in their position of power, becoming a bridge between entities such as “convivencia escolar”, allowing them to activate institutional tools like protocols and adjustments to contribute to the detection and prevention of violence.

In addition, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers can use the immense potential of collaborative and communicative skills, which can foster dialogue and problem-solving naturally. This creates safe spaces in which respect, diversity, and meaningful learning collide in meaningful ways.

While all the characteristics mentioned above can build an excellent teacher, it is relevant to mention that socially, the profession is underappreciated. The constant work overload in a system with cracks leads to burnout, which “is defined as the final phase in the adaptation stress process. This syndrome is composed of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment” (Revista Salud Publica, 2012).

The phenomenon of teacher burnout has become increasingly relevant, not only in Chile but worldwide. Burnout is not limited to emotional exhaustion; it also involves depersonalization, where teachers begin to distance themselves from their students, and feel a sense of reduced personal accomplishment, where their professional efforts feel undervalued and underappreciated. This syndrome is strongly linked to excessive overworking, a lack of support from the institutions, and the constant pressure to meet educational standards under challenging conditions (Agyapong, et al., 2022). When teachers are overworked, their capacity to fulfill the roles of mediator, role models, and community builders is undermined, as their emotional resources decrease. In the Chilean context, where teachers are expected to address diverse students' needs, promote inclusion, and manage conflict, burnout represents not only a health issue but also jeopardizes the creation of a safe and positive learning environment. Addressing work overload and emotional strain is therefore essential if teachers are required to fulfill their complex and key role of preventing school violence and promoting a healthy school coexistence.

In conclusion, the evolution of the teacher's role in Chilean society reflects a transformation from an authority figure to a multidimensional and professional educator. Encompassing pedagogy, emotional support, and leadership. However, despite their central role in society, teachers continue to face underevaluation, excessive workload, and high emotional demands. These conditions become particularly detrimental when addressing school violence, as teachers are expected to act as mediators, role models, and community builders. For EFL teachers, the challenge is even greater, since they must integrate language teaching while promoting multicultural understanding and respectful coexistence.

Recognizing both the potential and the difficulties of this role is key to analyzing the strategies Chilean teachers employ to confront violence in the classroom.

## **6. Institutional strategies**

Due to the increase in school violence (Agouborde, M. V., & El País, 2024), the fabrication of protocols to deal with these situations was necessary to prevent these episodes from escalating into more serious incidents. It is very important to recognize that although these protocols are established by educational institutions, families, guardians, teachers, and all school employees must be committed to implementing them so that violence can be addressed on time.

In addition, it should be noted that these measures and protocols are enforced and regulated by Chile's legal framework and its corresponding laws that lend a hand in preventing violence within establishments and take prompt action when situations escalate, ensuring safe spaces for the entire educational community. Additionally, these measures provide schools with strategies and protocols to address violence within the school context, as well as the necessary tools to develop their own plans. Some examples of such strategies include:

### **6.1 School coexistence team**

One of the primary strategies used by Chilean schools is the implementation of a School Coexistence Team. According to Law 20.536, schools are required to have a school coexistence coordinator (MINEDUC, 2011), and the Ministry of Education specifies that this team must be composed of a counselor, a general inspector, and professionals who provide psychosocial support (psychologist, social worker, among others) to address student violence issues (MINEDUC, 2015).

According to the MINEDUC (2015), this team is responsible for:

- Monitoring student behaviour in the classroom, hallways, and playgrounds.
- Organizing regular meetings with students to promote respectful interactions.

- Coordinate workshops and other activities that foster cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution skills.
- Supporting teachers in managing classroom dynamics and reinforcing school rules.

As Molina (2025) highlights: “the commitment of students to change their attitudes toward school life is essential. This process is achieved through regular, lifelong learning and monitoring to improve their behavior”. However, the effectiveness of these teams relies heavily on the active collaboration with teachers, students, and families, ensuring strategies extend beyond the school environment. As explained in the framework for good teaching (MBE), “ in the area of civic education [...] it involves parents and guardians in reflecting on the complementary role of the home and the school in promoting good coexistence...” (MINEDUC & CPEIP, 2021). Therefore, in order to effectively deal with violence in the classrooms, all participants inside the school community need to collaborate and rely on each other to foster a safe environment.

## **6.2 Organization of the school environment**

The physical organization of the space in which students interact is another critical institutional strategy, as this plays a fundamental role in the development of violence. As Eisenbraun (2017) says,

Adjusting traffic flow in hallways can decrease the potential for adverse student encounters. Dividing the entrance and exit of the cafeteria, staggering the beginning and ending of the lunch period, keeping time spent in line limited, and increasing staff supervision during high traffic flow times can all help to reduce negative actions between students.

A well-organized school helps prevent and address acts of violence among students, as these tend to occur during break times when children are unsupervised on the playground. Additionally, involving students in the process of organizing recreational areas, such as team games, puzzles, friendly competitions, and board games, contributes positively to the creation of bonds between classmates and schoolmates, as it allows

students to be more relaxed, have fun, and, at the same time, learn to function comfortably and empathetically within the community. This reduces arguments, fights, and therefore violence among students, as it creates a harmonious and healthy environment within the school.

Effective participation allows children to participate in projects of personal interest; provides opportunities for children to develop competencies in setting goals and making decisions; provides opportunities for dialogue and contribution to tangible outcomes; and provides opportunities for children, adults, and professionals to learn together and from each other. (Chawla 2009; Chawla and Heft 2002; Francis and Lorenzo 2006; Freeman 2006 as quoted in Der and Rigolon, 201, p. 7).

Increasing adult supervision in the most isolated areas or high-risk areas and installing security cameras can significantly reduce incidents of violence, since violent acts tend to occur in isolated areas, such as the end of a hallway or a hidden corner on the playground (Eisenbraun, K., 2017).

### **6.3 Zero-tolerance policies**

In the context of school disciplinary policies, these traditional disciplinary approaches rely on exclusionary measures, such as suspensions and expulsions, to manage misbehaving students, maintain order, and separate disruptive pupils from the school community (Lodi et al. 2022).

In consequence, this strategy consists of schools punishing students who commit violent acts by suspending them from attending school for a few days, following conversations and meetings with their parents or guardians. When the situation is more serious or it escalates over time, the student may be expelled from school as a preventive measure against the spread of violence. However, the educational community needs to understand that its actions have consequences and that violence between peers or within

communities cannot and should not be justified under any circumstances. In Chile, this strategy is established by Law No. 21.128 (2018), known as *Ley de Aula Segura*.

The law mentioned before focuses on solving conflicts in school life in order to prevent situations of violence. Students who exhibit disruptive behavior in the school context may be suspended, expelled, or have their registration canceled (Perez, 2023). Although this law seeks to reduce the levels of violence, there are limitations to its application, as the student could be removed and excluded from the learning process, causing academic problems. A study carried out by Brow, T. (2007) found that suspensions and expulsions can lead to academic failure and social isolation, which may, in consequence, cause emotional difficulties for students. Similarly, Emond et al. (2020) note that “exclusion from school, particularly if permanent, disrupts peer relationships and self-image and may increase social isolation, all of which may predispose to the development of anxiety or depression”. Therefore, disciplinary actions should be based on clear evidence of serious misconduct and must always consider the child’s rights when consequences are applied.

According to Article 46 (f) of the Ley General de Educación and Article 6 (d) of *Ley de Subvenciones Escolares*, this type of violence prevention is usually the last resort to punish students who commit violent acts (Angulo, C., 2023). For this reason, schools should prioritise mediation and other preventive protocols before resorting to punishment.

Combined, these institutional strategies reveal both the potential and the contradictions within school systems’ responses to violence. While coexistence teams and the organization of the school environment aim to foster prevention and dialogue, zero-tolerance policies often rely on punitive logics that may exclude rather than rehabilitate. Overall, the impact of these strategies depends on how well they balance discipline with care, highlighting the need for reflective and inclusive practices that address the roots of violence rather than merely its symptoms.

## Methodological Framework

### 1. Overview

Within the Chilean educational context, English teachers face particular challenges when addressing violent situations, a concern that has become increasingly urgent as reports of school violence continue to rise nationwide. Teachers in training are also experiencing this reality during their practicum, especially in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, when incidents of aggression against educators showed a notable increase. According to recent data from the Superintendency of Education, complaints in relation to school violence submitted by educators and school communities have steadily grown across the country (Aqueveque et al., 2025), reflecting a broader pattern that directly impacts teachers' emotional well-being, sense of safety, and classroom dynamics. Despite this escalation, many English teachers, like other educators, report feeling unprepared to manage violent incidents, partly because university programs provide limited training in socio-emotional strategies or conflict resolution. According to a study published by the Universidad de Chile, "regarding the level of preparation received by teachers during their undergraduate studies, 62% of respondents disagree with the statement that they received training at university to deal with the problems of school violence" (Castillo Retamal et al., 2025, p. 56).

On the other hand, the same study established that 57% of the interviewed teachers later received some type of training related to issues of school violence in their respective workplaces (Castillo Retamal et al., 2025).

This suggests that teachers often lack strategies to address school violence, and that there is a persistent gap in acknowledging their needs within the current Chilean context, especially when considering curricular programs. Thus, this continues to highlight the need to identify which strategies support teachers in navigating violence in English classrooms.

Based on this information, the following research question emerged: What strategies do English teachers use to address school violence in the classroom? Guided by this question, the general objective of this study was to examine the strategies that English teachers use to

deal with situations of violence in the classroom. To achieve this purpose, the following specific objectives were established:

1. To identify the types of violence teachers experience in the classroom.
2. To identify the strategies used by English teachers to deal with situations of violence in the classroom.
3. To categorize the strategies used by English teachers to deal with situations of violence in the classroom.
4. To analyze the strategies used by English teachers to deal with situations of violence in the classroom.

A qualitative case study approach was selected as the most suitable for investigating this phenomenon, since the main objective was to explore the experiences of the teachers regarding the phenomenon of violence inside the classrooms. Accordingly, open-ended questions were used as a part of a semi-structured interview to elicit detailed responses. This methodological choice allows for in-depth exploration of perceptions, meanings, and emotional experiences. As Groom and Littlemore (2011) argue, “the whole purpose of qualitative research is to engage in precisely this kind of questioning: to reflect consciously on the things that we normally never reflect consciously on” (p. 83).

Consequently, the study focused mainly on exploring the emotional and behavioral dimensions associated with teachers’ experiences with school violence. The results were categorized into five central aspects: the types of violence identified, interrelationships between violence, perceptions and experiences of school violence, teachers’ emotional responses to school violence, and strategies they used when facing school violence.

## **2. Participants**

This section outlines the participant selection process and the criteria used to ensure that the teachers involved in the study possessed direct and relevant experience with school violence. Given the qualitative nature of the research, careful attention was paid to recruiting individuals whose professional backgrounds and teaching trajectories would provide meaningful insights into the phenomenon.

The study involved four English teachers, selected through purposive sampling. Participants were selected based on an existing professional relationship with the interviewers, since at the moment of the interview, the participants were also supervising the practicum of four members of the research team. This familiarity created a safe and trusting environment for open discussion. Establishing rapport is extremely valuable in qualitative research, as it helps interviewees feel comfortable and increases the likelihood of obtaining richer, more detailed information (Horsfall et al. 2021).

The interview explored each participant's personal and professional experiences with school violence. To protect their identities, pseudonyms were assigned: Miss A, Miss B, Mister C, and Mister D.

Before the formal interviews, the researchers conducted informal conversations with each potential participant to verify they had experienced school violence at some point in their teaching careers. Additional inclusion criteria were established:

- Having taught for at least one year in municipal, private, or subsidized schools, or other educational settings involving children.
- Having witnessed or experienced physical, verbal, and/or psychological violence, either directly or indirectly.
- Ensuring gender balance, resulting in the selection of two female and two male teachers.

### **3. Instrument**

Given the nature of the research, a qualitative instrument was used to collect detailed, experience-based information. The insights offered by participants made it possible to understand how they perceived, interpreted, and managed situations of violence, as well as how they felt during and after such events.

The instrument was an in-depth interview, chosen because it allows for rich, contextualized narratives that reveal not only what teachers do but also how and why they make certain pedagogical decisions and apply specific strategies. In-depth interviews are particularly valuable for exploring complex, context-dependent phenomena, making them appropriate for understanding teaching practices and classroom dynamics (Creswell, 2018).

The interview was organized into seven areas, progressing from general aspects of school violence to participants' personal experiences, professional practices, and emotional responses. The topics were as follows:

1. Teacher's professional context.
2. Perception and experience of violence.
3. Approach strategies and direct experiences.
4. Professional preparation and tools.
5. Institutional support and school context.
6. Relationship between the emotional world and the teaching role.
7. Projections and proposals.

Each topic included between one and four open-ended questions, with optional follow-up prompts, to keep the conversation flowing while ensuring alignment with the research objectives. *See Appendix A.*

To refine the instrument, a pilot interview was conducted with a teacher from a different subject area. This pilot helped assess timing, clarity, and the relevance of questions. Following the pilot, the entire instrument was validated by an expert. *See Appendix B.*

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, ethical considerations were addressed carefully. Participants were provided an informed consent form specifying confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and their right to pause or withdraw from the interview at any time.

After the interviews were completed, content analysis was applied. This method is empirically grounded, exploratory in nature, and inferential in intent (Krippendorff, 2018).

This method was selected because the study aimed to explore teachers' personal experiences of violence, and identify the strategies they used to address it in schools. Content analysis enabled an in-depth examination of the meaning teachers attributed to violence and their experiences within their professional roles.

#### **4. Data analysis and Findings**

This section explores and analyzes the types of violence reported by teachers in the classroom, the emotional impact on them, and the strategies identified through the interviews.

##### **4.1 What types of violence do teachers experience in the classroom?**

Throughout this research, three main categories of violence were identified and reported by teachers. Their accounts show how these manifestations occur daily.

**4.1.1 Verbal violence:** The interviews show that verbal violence manifested in the form of insults, profanity, and disparaging remarks directed at teachers during classroom conflicts. Mister C noted that “they speak to me in a mocking tone, using a lot of profanity and showing disrespect.” Similarly, Miss B described situations in which students “assess you in a certain way, they see you passing by and call out to you very aggressively.”

Likewise, Mister D described “they talk behind teachers' backs, there is no good attitude, there is a lot of disrespect [...], the verbal treatment of teachers, not necessarily with swear words, but with words that show their dissatisfaction with teachers, and there is no opportunity for dialogue.”

Overall, three of the four interviewed teachers reported being victims of verbal violence in the classroom, which aligns with Arbuckle, C. & Little, E., 2004, as cited in Sun, R., & Shek, D., 2011, referring to these situations as an activity that causes distress for teachers, and interrupts the learning process, since it not only impacts on the teacher but also creates a disruptive classroom dynamic.

It was also observed that teachers often fail to identify this form of violence because it has been normalized. For instance, Mister C initially denied having experienced verbal violence, explaining "I have seen that students have also threatened other teachers. That's what

I have seen, not towards me but towards my colleagues." However, he later recounted an episode where "the student stands up and threatens me, insults me, and makes a gesture with his fist as if he is going to hit me", revealing that he indeed had experienced a verbal aggression in the classroom.

Additionally, verbal violence often accumulates or escalates into other types of violence. As Miss A explained, "I've obviously had to stop certain situations where I feel it's going to escalate" This suggests that physical violence often emerges when verbal aggression is not addressed in its initial stages.

**4.1.2 Gestural Violence:** According to Cedeño-Pupo et al. (2023), this type of violence "is structured based on the use of non-verbal language with the deliberate intention of harming or damaging the interlocutor and includes the use of silence for harmful purposes". Johnson, R. L., and Aaron, B. (2013), also describe several non-verbal cues associated with violence, such as clenched fists, angry expressions, invaded personal space, or rigid posture. In the case of the interviewees, this non-verbal language manifests through provocative body language intended to challenge their authority. Mister C explained, "I approach the student and the student stands up and threatens me, scribbles at me, and makes a gesture with his fist as if he is going to hit me". Due to some of the exemplified physical indicators that can lead to violence, his experience reflects how quickly teachers must interpret these indicators and decide how to respond.

Teachers also described how students often express their disagreement with classroom norms through obscene or disrespectful gestures. Miss A emphasized that "students respond through body language, we as teachers can also notice when students are angry, obfuscated, frustrated, and sometimes we feel that it can escalate a bit, to something a little more serious". She added that "I believe that the greatest violence we teachers experience is through words, gestures, and body language from students, which often leave us feeling a little confused, not knowing how to respond." Her account highlighted the ambiguity teachers face when gestures serve as precursors to potential escalation. She also acknowledged "I have had situations where I have had [...] to stop certain situations where I feel like it's going to escalate [...] to something physical", underlining the importance of recognizing early indicators to respond quickly and maintain classroom safety.

Gestural violence plays a significant role in the classroom environment. As Mister D shared his definition of violence include “[...] insults, attitude towards teachers and fellow students, whether it be grimaces, gestures”, highlighting gestural and verbal forms become intertwined in daily interactions. Overall, gestural violence emerges as an indirect form of aggression that often tends to escalate from verbal disrespect. Teachers’ testimonies show that obscene gestures, and hostile body language are used to challenge the teacher’s authority. Even when teachers, such as Miss B, do not feel intimidated, they still recognize that these gestures destabilize classroom order.

**4.1.3 Intimidation:** Within schools, this type of violence refers to direct behaviors intended to threaten, manipulate, coerce, or psychologically pressure another person, and it may involve physical proximity, gestures or actions intended to humiliate, isolate, or control the victim (Erazo Santander, Óscar A. 2018). The teachers’ testimonies reveal how this form of violence manifests inside the classroom and how it affects their sense of safety

Mister C described one of the most explicit examples of intimidation, recalling that a student “stood in front of me and acted like he was going to hit me, raising his arms in front of my face.” He added that the incident left him feeling “extremely threatened” and even led him to question his career. His accounts illustrate clearly how intimidation directly destabilizes teachers’ emotional security and professional identity.

Similarly, Miss B reported threatening gestures used by students to pressure teachers: “They called you and made signs for you to go, gesturing to cut your stomach (if you didn’t go).” These nonverbal acts convey the potential for harm and are designed to induce fear or compliance in the teachers. Miss B also experienced a situation in which intimidation escalated into a more dangerous incident “Once, I was teaching a class, and they threw a smoke bomb into the room. I opened the door and kicked it out [...] and then they knew that I wasn't going to play their game”. Her response illustrates how intimidation can intensify into high-risk behaviors intended to provoke fear, while also highlighting how teachers’ assertive reactions sometimes defuse further attempts.

As these accounts show, intimidation represents a form of violence that threatens teachers more explicitly than verbal or gestural aggression. Teachers describe it as having a

profound impact on their sense of safety in the classroom and acknowledge that failure to address these incidents promptly may lead to escalation. Furthermore, intimidation often co-occurs with gestural violence, forming part of a broader pattern in which different types of aggression overlap and intensify.

#### **4.2 Interrelationships between types of violence**

The three previously discussed types of violence tend to manifest in an interconnected and mutually reinforcing way, as demonstrated by the teachers' testimonies. For instance, Mister C stated, "They (students) usually swear and you usually correct them, but this year in particular, I received direct and very strong swearing; high-caliber swearing for many minutes, from two students on different occasions, and that had never happened to me before. One of these students stands in front of me and acts like he's going to hit me. And he raises his arms in front of my face. So, yes, I felt violated in that regard".

When analyzing this interaction, a clear pattern of escalation emerges. The teacher first experienced verbal aggression, which then progressed into intimidating physical gestures. In other words, verbal violence culminated in non-verbal threats, illustrating how different forms of aggression often converge within the same event.

Similarly, Miss A recalled "I believe that the first instances I recall were clearly situations among students, who treated each other poorly. Mostly through verbal situations, swearing, I don't know, bad words they said to each other, they also teased each other a lot, with jokes or pranks, which obviously had no place in a classroom and on many occasions both students ended up upset by the situation. So obviously that led to [...] physical situations of violence." Even among peers, the same progression is evident. The conflict began with verbal violence and it intensified through teasing (likely accompanied by obscene gestures) and ultimately escalated into physical altercation. This progression aligns with the literature, indicating that conflicts tend to "escalate with the use of threats and coercive strategies, and end in the dissatisfaction of both parties" (Longaretti & Wilson, 2006, p. 5).

Moreover, according to the Mistaken Goal Chart from Positive Discipline, students may react violently due to underlying and unresolved emotional or relational issues, as "a

misbehaving student is a discouraged student” (Nelsen, et al, 2020). Such behaviors often reflect one or both of the following mistaken goals; an attempt to obtain revenge from either a peer or teacher, or a misguided need to assert dominance or control.

Both scenarios represent cyclical patterns in which frustration, unmet emotional needs, and perceived injustices fuel increasingly aggressive behaviors, reinforcing the interconnected nature of verbal, non-verbal, and physical violence inside the classroom.

Overall, the testimonies indicate that school violence rarely appears in isolated forms. Instead, it unfolds through sequences of interconnected actions that escalate when students’ emotional needs remain unrecognized or unmet. Understanding this dynamic is essential, as it shows that violence is not merely an episodic disruption but a pattern rooted in the relational and emotional fabric of the classroom. This interwoven nature of aggression highlights the need for early identification of warning signs, such as verbal or gestural hostility, before they develop into more severe incidents. Furthermore, acknowledging the cumulative effect of these behaviors provides a foundation for analyzing the emotional impact on teachers, illustrating why even “minor” or normalized forms of aggression can have profound psychological consequences.

### **4.3 Perceptions and Experiences of School Violence**

There is a shared perception of violence among the interviewees, who understand it as a multifaceted phenomenon beyond physical aggression. Their accounts indicate that their experiences of violence are deeply influenced by the specific school environments. This perspective challenges the dominant focus in the literature, which frequently emphasizes that “violence does not only refer to the worst practices, which are mostly directed to the bodies of children” (Biffi, E., & Monta, C. C., 2020), while often overlooking the fact that teachers also experience multiple forms of harm. The testimonies collected in this study demonstrate that educators are recurrent recipients of verbal aggression, intimidation, and relational disrespect, even when these behaviors are minimized or normalized.

The teachers expressed diverse and sometimes inconsistent perceptions of school violence, which shaped how they interpreted their own experiences. Miss A defined violence

as “physical and verbal aggressions, body language or gestures”, emphasizing some behaviors while overlooking relational or emotional dimensions. Mister D, associated violence with disrespectful actions such as making faces, teasing, and mocking, or speaking negatively about teachers, illustrating how relational disrespect becomes normalized in everyday school interactions.

Mister C conceptualized violence as “anything that threatens the peace and tranquility of the educational environment”. Although he initially minimized verbal aggression, suggesting his experiences with violence were “50 and 50”. He then recounted a particular incident where a student repeatedly insulted him and used threatening body language. Mister C reported that he “felt abused”, due to the intimidation but only afterward acknowledged that prolonged verbal insults accompanied by threatening gestures constitute a form of violence.

Miss B also demonstrated a tendency to downplay verbal aggression. When asked about violence in the classroom, she initially stated that she had not experienced it in her current school. However, she later described a situation in which a student directed insults at her, without labeling it as verbal violence. She linked her earliest experiences of violence to the beginning of her teaching career, framing them as part of the challenges new teachers face.

The different forms of violence mentioned previously occur in an interrelated manner, with verbal violence emerging as the most prominent expression. Furthermore, data reveal that verbal and threatening aggression occurs at a higher rate than physical violence (Longobardi et al., 2019); while gestures, although less visible, have a symbolic hostility through actions, which reinforces the emotional exhaustion of teachers.

Likewise, the findings show that violence is not limited to physical or direct expressions but also includes subtle interactions that, over time, contribute to the erosion of the emotional well-being of educators. “Educators experience different types of verbal and physical aggression, including intimidation, threats, sexual harassment, hitting, kicking, and pushing” (McMahon et al., 2024), where the coexistence of these forms of violence and experiences affects teachers’ perception of safety and sense of professional identity. Moreover, the persistence of these types of violence emphasizes the normalization of violence within the classroom.

In this context, understanding how these types of violence overlap becomes crucial, as verbal hostility, threatening behaviors, and gestural intimidation interact in ways that directly impact teachers' emotional well-being. These experiences leave a lasting mark not only on teachers' psychological health but also on the ways they approach their daily work. Taken together, the accounts reveal that violence is perceived through a broad spectrum of behaviors, many of which become normalized within school environments, making emotional strain an increasingly accepted part of teachers' professional lives. Whether minimized, overlooked, or internalized, these forms of aggression accumulate over time and reinforce a sense of vulnerability among educators.

Recognizing the complexity and interconnected nature of these experiences is essential, as it provides the foundation for analyzing their emotional impact. This recognition paves the way for the next section, which examines in depth how teachers emotionally respond to and cope with the types of school violence.

**4.3.1 Gender Patterns:** Regarding the experiences of violence, the data do not establish a direct relationship between gender and how teachers experience violent incidents. However, subtle differences emerged in the way some participants expressed their emotions. Female teachers tended to articulate fear, emotional strain, or difficulty managing certain situations more openly. This is reflected in Miss A's testimony, in which she expressed her emotions directly when recalling a violent episode "(I remember) feeling scared in a place that should be a safe place, my workplace."

Male teachers, by contrast, displayed more restrained emotional expression. For instance, Mister D stated "I think that they (emotions) are internal, because I can't show them", indicating a tendency to suppress emotional responses. A similar pattern appeared in Mister C 's account, he initially affirmed that "he wouldn't be afraid" when facing violent situations, yet later acknowledged that "I would feel anxious if an adult threatened me outside the school." These contrasting testimonies suggest that gender may influence how fear or anxiety are communicated and experienced.

This interpretation aligns with existing research showing that women generally express their emotions more openly and are granted greater social tolerance for doing so, while men

are often socialised to repress emotional expression (Urbón et al., 2025). Recent studies also report that women tend to score slightly higher in emotional regulation and self-awareness, which may contribute to more explicit verbalization of their emotional states (Jan et al., 2025). Therefore, while the testimonies do not provide sufficient evidence to establish direct correlation between gender and violence, they do highlight nuanced differences in emotional disclosure that resonate with existing literature.

While gender-related patterns help explain differences in how teachers express or restrain their overall emotional experience, beyond issues of disclosure, the testimonies reveal a broader set of emotional reactions that cut across gender and are shaped by the nature of violent situations teachers navigate. These reactions offer insight into how teachers interpret, manage, and cope with the challenges present in their daily work. The following section examines these emotional responses in greater depth.

#### **4.4 English Teachers' Emotional Responses to School Violence**

After analyzing the interviewees' responses, several emotional patterns emerged. During and after violent situations, teachers experience a complex combination of emotions such as stress, frustration, shame, fear, loneliness, anxiety, and emotional avoidance. According to the testimonies, these emotional responses are the result of the persistent exposure to violence and the perceived absence of institutional support.

**4.4.1 Stress:** Continuous exposure to aggressive behaviors not only generates psychological tension but also gradually deteriorates teachers' capacity to respond effectively. In fact, "there is increasing evidence that burnout as a negative stress response represents a risk factor not only for depression but also for cardiovascular and other somatic diseases" (Nil et al., as cited in Agyapong et al., 2022), leaving teachers not only emotionally exhausted but professionally disoriented. When stress and fatigue accumulate, teachers struggle to maintain empathy, which weakens their sense of purpose and belonging within the profession. Over time, this persistent strain can lead to emotional disengagement, self-doubt, and, in severe cases, the contemplation of abandoning teaching altogether. Varela et al. (2020) found that teachers who reported being victims of school violence present job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions, affecting their commitment to the profession.

Testimonies illustrate this emotional wear. Miss A described feeling "overwhelmed [...] because in one way or another, these are things that no one prepares you for" reflecting the emotional overload caused by the constant coexistence of cases she had to manage. Similarly Miss B explained that "I go to bed at 2 a.m. every day [...] and the next day I realize my class was very poor because I slept terribly and handled my emotions badly", showing the physical and emotional exhaustion associated with stress. For Mister C, stress takes the form of constant vigilance, he stated "I go home, plan my lessons, but I also need a plan B in case someone gets violent [...] it's heavy emotional wear". This statement illustrates the psychological toll of anticipating aggression. Finally, Mister D related that "internally [...] it has been frustrating, it has been stressful too [...] I used to take those emotions home and felt physically down", which illustrates the long-term emotional and physical effects of stress on teachers' well-being.

Together, these experiences show how persistent exposure to violence and insufficient institutional support contribute to a cycle of chronic stress among teachers, gradually destroying their sense of safety, motivation, and professional fulfillment.

**4.4.2 Frustration:** While stress represents an immediate emotional reaction, frustration appears as its long-term consequence. Interviewees implicitly expressed frustration associated with emotional exhaustion, professional helplessness, and the absence of institutional support.

Miss B illustrated this ambiguity when describing how emotional exhaustion sometimes leads her to question “should I address it (the violence) or should I let it pass?” She also emphasized the importance of recognizing one’s limits, noting that overworking and sleep deprivation negatively affect classroom management and emotional regulation. As Varela et al. (2020) highlight, exposure to violence affects teachers not only emotionally, through distress or discomfort, but also professionally, influencing class climate and student learning.

Teachers repeatedly mention inefficient protocols and insufficient support mechanisms from schools. Miss B explained, “the lack of specific training and mechanisms leaves teachers unprotected and without real tools to take action”, while Mister D added that “the inefficiency in the school’s system is due to the protocols that don’t work where there is a situation of violence.” As Muñoz et al. (2025) state training in conflict management and early intervention in cases of problematic behavior is essential for improving school climate. The testimonies show that when such structures fail, teachers’ frustration intensifies.

**4.4.3 Shame:** Teachers reported feelings of insecurity, fear of judgment, and difficulty seeking assistance. Miss A and Mister D explained that although psychologists occasionally support teachers, this assistance is informal, making educators hesitant and ashamed to seek help for fear of appearing weak or unprofessional in front of their colleagues.

According to Gušauskienė et al. (2025), violence often affects the victim’s emotional and mental health, hindering their ability to seek support due to guilt, shame, or fear. This was evident in the testimonies. Miss B admitted “not feeling confident enough to react appropriately or apply effective strategies when facing situations of violence”, even explaining, “if a student threw a chair at me, I wouldn’t know how to react”. Her words reveal a deep sense of helplessness rooted in the absence of prior experiences or practical training. Conversely Mister C shared his uncertainty and lack of confidence, but linked to the absence

of formal preparation, explaining “During my initial training, I never received preparation or support, I learned on the way, while I worked.”

Although the origins differ, Miss B’s derived from emotional insecurity, while in contrast Mister C’s originated from the shortcomings of teacher education. Both show how shame emerges when teachers feel unprepared or unsupported.

**4.4.4 Fear:** Among the interviewees, only Miss A openly acknowledged experiencing fear during a violent episode. She recalled an after-school incident, during a soccer match, in which “a student threatened to hit another student’s tutor” and became aggressive while searching for an object to use as a weapon to assault the tutor. Miss A witnessed the erratic behavior of the student before the situation was de-escalated by school staff.

In contrast, Mister C, denied feeling fear, stating, “It’s not like I feel scared or anything like that, because I am a grown man and I can defend myself.” Nevertheless, he later admitted that “there were days when I didn’t even want to come to school [...] my stomach turned just thinking I had to face (sixth grade) on Monday.” This contradiction reveals a latent emotional impact, suggesting that although he verbally rejected fear, his physical and emotional reactions indicated significant stress, fear and apprehension.

His responses suggest a form of professional emotional regulation, in which teachers, especially male teachers may deny, downplay or reframe fear, reflecting how teachers often suppress or rationalize this emotion to maintain authority and composure. As Kimura, Y. (2010) states, “teachers not only shape and suppress their own emotions in the service of teaching but also disclose their emotions for the purpose of constructing authentic caring relationships with students.”

Vulnerability theories of fear of victimization in school suggest that individual factors influence teachers’ fear of victimization. One such factor is the teacher’s sex, since females tend to fear crime more (Swartz et al., 2011; Öztürk et al., 2016, as cited in López et al., 2025). This could explain the difference between the teachers; on one hand, Miss A, a young teacher, declared explicitly her fear, meanwhile Mister C made clear his stoicism.

**4.4.5 Anxiety:** Teachers described anxiety associated with the unpredictability of violent events. Mister C admitted that “It makes me anxious the idea of going out of the school and that an adult or other person comes and threatens me because I correct a student’s behavior.” Similarly, Miss B said, “You didn’t know what could happen”, while Miss A recalled thinking, “I hope nothing happens tomorrow.”

Such reflections illustrate anticipatory anxiety, which strongly influences teachers’ emotional well-being. As Helsing (2007) states, “teaching is inherently uncertain due to its lack of a knowledge base or technical culture,” which amplifies teachers’ vulnerability to stress and anxiety.

**4.4.6 Loneliness:** Feelings of loneliness and emotional isolation were revealed through the teacher’s reflections on the absence of institutional support. All participants agreed that available psychological resources are directed exclusively towards students. Mister D stated, “(The psychologists) are exclusively for the students”, while Miss B noted that “There are a lot of personnel in the establishment, but they are focused solely on the students”. Similarly, Mister C remarked, “There is no protocol that helps teachers”. Finally, Miss A added that “There are psychologists per level, and if a teacher needed support, they needed to inform before they could access this resource.” These statements align with national educational reports, which indicate that the lack of institutional resources, administrative overload, and poor coordination with leadership seriously affect teachers’ motivation and emotional well-being (MINEDUC & SENDA, 2017). Such working conditions, when sustained over time, can foster emotional detachment and a piercing sense of loneliness among educators.

This pattern of responses also suggests that teachers often face emotional isolation within their professional environment. The absence of formal mechanisms for emotional assistance reinforces a sense of disconnection and neglect, leaving teachers to navigate the psychological consequences of violence alone.

**4.4.7 Emotional avoidance:** The interviews revealed moments in which participants minimized or refused answering questions in depth, especially regarding their feelings. For instance, Miss B, who had previously worked in detention centers, frequently minimized emotional questions. When asked about her emotional responses, she refused to answer, “Well, there are more intense days, and there are days in which I can face the situations better. Today was a complex day, and I have a slight headache”. When pressed further, Miss B explained that she tends to ignore the violent situations that happen around her. “Sometimes they (the students) said sex-related comments to me, but I preferred to ignore them”. Similarly, Mister D admitted that he often suppresses his emotions to maintain authority, “I think that emotions are internal, because I can’t show my feelings [...] in front of students and inside the classroom I have to be firm.”

This aligns with Winograd’s (2003) findings that “teachers avoid showing extreme emotions, especially anger”. While emotional suppression functions as a self-regulatory strategy to maintain classroom authority, it can also lead to emotional detachment over time.

In summary, the emotional avoidance observed among teachers reflects a personal barrier within educational settings. As the minimization and deliberately suppressing of feelings lead teachers to often distance themselves emotionally to preserve authority and control in conflictive environments. Without safe spaces for teachers to express their emotions, teachers risk internalizing the effects of school violence as part of their professional role.

Ultimately, the combination of structural deficiencies, ineffective protocols, and lack of institutional support directly impacts the emotional well-being of teachers. These conditions foster discouragement, emotional exhaustion and professional disengagement, increasing the likelihood of burnout and attrition among educators exposed to persistent violence. The emotional manifestations identified (stress, frustration, shame, fear, anxiety, loneliness, and emotional avoidance) are not isolated experiences, but intertwined symptoms of a system that fails to protect and support its teachers.

This situation reflects the urgent need for institutional frameworks that incorporate not only disciplinary and preventive measures but also the emotional dimension of teaching,

promoting care, empathy, and psychological safety as integral components of school coexistence.

#### **4.5 Strategies used by English teachers**

Recalling these four interviews, the strategies used by teachers to cope with violence in the classroom reveal a combination of defense mechanisms and intentional coping actions. These strategies reflect both the lack of institutional support and the need to protect their emotional well-being. When their emotional world is considered, it becomes clear how these strategies emerged from unconscious survival mechanisms to formal institutional protocols.

##### **4.5.1 Survival Strategies**

Survival strategies such as depersonalization and “autopilot” appeared as recurrent mechanisms teachers use to endure violent situations in the classroom. These strategies arise when educators face persistent aggression without adequate institutional tools, pushing them to reduce their emotional involvement as a way to cope.

Maslach and Jackson (1981) define depersonalization as:

An unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one’s care or service. It represents a form of emotional distancing, a way of coping with the strain of dealing with other people by treating them as objects rather than as human beings (p. 101).

This definition captures precisely what several teachers described in the interviews. When exposed repeatedly to disrespect or aggression, educators unconsciously lower their emotional engagement to protect themselves from continual emotional strain.

Mister C illustrated this process clearly when he shared:

Right now, I don’t feel like the creative person I really am. I think my creativity has been cut off in the way I teach, the way I plan my classes, and I feel like I’m focusing more on correcting behavior than on teaching content. That affects me because I can’t fully develop as a professional.

His testimony reveals how depersonalization limits creativity, reduces professional satisfaction, and shifts teaching from a meaningful activity to a survival task. Miss B's experience reflects the same emotional withdrawal. The cumulative exhaustion she felt often led her to let situations pass or minimize acts of violence instead of addressing them directly.

These emotional distancing mechanisms allow teachers to continue fulfilling their professional duties; however, it comes at a psychological cost. By suppressing emotional responses and reducing relational involvement, teachers protect themselves in the moment but risk long-term consequences such as reduced empathy, diminished job satisfaction, and weakened connections with students.

The recurrence of these survival mechanisms reveals a worrying process: the normalization of school violence. Teachers reported repeatedly encountering aggression without meaningful institutional support or intervention. As Miss B stated, "I didn't fall into their game [...] to reply to their disqualifications." And as Mister C reinforced, "But it ends up being normalized (curse words), so you feel like [...] it starts to become part of the norm, and later you get used to it".

Benbenishty and Astor (2005) warn that this normalization leads to a "culture of silence", where teachers downplay violent incidents to preserve stability in the classroom, even when it compromises their emotional well-being.

Such adaptation may desensitize teachers, obscuring the urgency of reforming school safety policies and shifting coping from empowerment to resignation. This not only erodes teachers' emotional well-being but also undermines the moral foundation of the educational environment.

#### **4.5.2 Coping Strategies**

In contrast, coping strategies involve healthier and intentional practices, such as journaling, meditation, and mindfulness, which help teachers process and channel their emotions derived from stressful situations. Miss A stated, "I really like writing, reading, and journaling; it especially helped me to put out all the emotions that sometimes one doesn't

know how to verbalize.” Her use of journaling illustrates a conscious effort to regulate emotions and prevent emotional overload. This aligns with Jennings and Greenberg’s (2009), who argue that mindfulness-based strategies strengthen teachers’ socioemotional competence and contribute to more positive classroom environments.

In contexts marked by classroom violence, where teachers have limited control over external factors, emotion-focused coping strategies become essential. Practices such as journaling, mindfulness, and meditation serve as tools for emotional regulation, allowing teachers to process feelings of frustration, fear, or helplessness.

Nevertheless, these strategies are often self-developed and implemented by the teachers themselves, since they are not secure enough with the skills and support that the school is providing. Miss A noted “I tried to look for strategies on a personal level. I remember the strategies given by the orientation team. I tried to look for the ones I could adapt to because I felt they were a little idealized.” Her reflection revealed a critical gap: institutional strategies often feel disconnected from reality. While emotion-focused strategies like journaling and mindfulness demonstrate teachers’ agency and resilience, their self-directed nature, it also exposes a systemic lack of structured emotional support within schools. As Miss A’s testimony highlighted, when institutional strategies are perceived as “idealized” or disconnected from real classroom dynamics, teachers are left to navigate emotional challenges on their own.

This underscores the urgent need for schools to integrate evidence-based emotional regulation practices into professional development programs, not as optional self-care, but as essential components of teacher well-being and violence prevention. Ultimately, recognizing and institutionalizing these coping strategies could transform them from individual survival mechanisms into collective frameworks for sustaining teachers’ emotional health and professional effectiveness.

#### **4.5.3 The need to look out for help**

Teachers also seek support networks, relying primarily on colleagues and family as their first source of support and guidance. This highlights their search for companionship amid

insufficient institutional structures. Miss B clearly stated, when referring to the institutional support, “No, it doesn’t exist. We receive a lot of training on how to work with children with ASD, on deregulation, but not on how to deal with violence. No, that’s the biggest weakness, it simply doesn’t exist.” Similarly Mister C said, “ As a teacher, I do have strategies, but not as an establishment. As a teacher, I have created my own protocols and strategies to cope with these situations.” These statements reflect what Gu and Day (2007) argue: teacher resilience is not solely individual but also relational, shaped within supportive professional communities. Colleagues become emotional and professional anchors.

Building on this perspective, Kelchtermans (2005) emphasizes that collegial support sustains teachers’ professional identity and emotional engagement, especially during moments of institutional change or reform. Thus, social support networks serve as both emotional refuge and a professional resource, fostering resilience and reinforcing teachers’ sense of belonging within the school community.

#### **4.5.4 Protocol activation**

Activating formal protocols represents a last-resort measure for teachers. However, during the interviews, they were perceived as inefficient or delayed, leading teachers to retreat to it only as a last resort, not to mention the lack of psychological support for teachers.

As mentioned before, Miss B explained, “There are psychologists here, and there’s a lot of staff, but I feel that the staff is focused entirely on the children [...] We have to look for support outside.” Likewise, Mister C described the inefficiency of institutional procedures:

There is too much bureaucracy. And it happens that it opens a protocol to a student, and then, a week later, it closes, but in the meantime, the student already slugged you off, kept the behavior. So it’s a long period, it’s not instantaneous.

These reflections reveal protocols that are reactive rather than preventive, punitive rather than restorative. When disciplinary measures focus primarily on punishment, they fail to address the underlying causes of the behavior and instead reinforce fear or resentment among students. According to Nelsen (2000) and the principles of positive discipline, punishment fosters an external locus of control, where students behave appropriately only to avoid

negative consequences, rather than from a genuine understanding of social responsibility or self-regulation.

This approach neglects opportunities for students to reflect on their actions, learn conflict-resolution skills, and internalize positive values. As a result, such protocols may temporarily suppress undesirable behaviors but do not foster long-term behavioral change or personal growth. In contrast, restorative or educative approaches promote dialogue, accountability, and community rebuilding, making them more effective for sustained coexistence.

The analysis of the interviews reveals that teachers face violence in the classroom through a combination of self-constructed and reactive strategies, developed largely due to insufficient institutional support. Survival strategies allow them to function temporarily but often compromise emotional well-being and professional fulfillment. In contrast, coping strategies reflect a conscious effort to remain grounded and motivated, supported by personal practices and collegial networks.

Overall, the interviews show that teachers rely on a wide range of strategies to navigate violence in the classroom, some rooted in emotional self-protection, others in intentional coping and informal support networks. These practices reflect both the adaptability and the vulnerability of teachers who operate without sufficient institutional guidance. While survival strategies help them endure immediate challenges, coping strategies and collegial support reveal attempts to regain emotional balance and maintain their professional identity.

These findings highlight the urgent need for schools to strengthen their institutional protocols, prioritize psychological support, and create emotionally safe environments for teachers, not only for students. Providing structured, evidence-based tools would empower teachers to move from reactive survival to sustainable professional resilience

Taking all of these into consideration, it is evident that the complexity of teachers' day-to-day responses to violence emphasize the importance of understanding these strategies within their broader emotional and institutional context. This perspective sets the foundation

for examining how such experiences shape teachers' emotional well-being and their sense of professional security.

## Conclusions

This study set out to examine how English teachers experience and deal with violence within the classroom, along with the strategies they use to respond to it. Through in-depth interviews with four English teachers working in diverse educational establishments, the research uncovered a complex and often invisible landscape where teachers navigate verbal aggression, gestures, intimidation, and constant emotional strain with limited institutional support.

The findings showed that the English teachers rely on a combination of defense mechanisms and coping actions that reflect both the lack of institutional support and the need to protect their emotional stability. They reported three main types of violence from students: verbal, gestural, and intimidation, which triggered emotions such as stress, frustration, shame, fear, loneliness, anxiety, and emotional avoidance.

Although the literature acknowledges the existence of protocols for addressing school violence, the data reveal significant limitations in their implementation. Teachers frequently rely on their own survival strategies rather than on institutional tools provided by schools or the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). Existing protocols focus almost entirely on students and fail to consider teachers' physical and emotional well-being. This contributes to feelings of loneliness, fear, and abandonment, reinforcing the reliance on defensive strategies.

School protocols also rely on punitive approaches that emphasize sanctions instead of addressing the underlying emotional or behavioral reasons behind violent actions. This model prioritizes control and discipline instead of seeking to understand and heal students, which leads to repeated incidents. According to Positive Discipline (Nelsen et al., 2000), punitive measures fail to foster meaningful behavioral change, since they generate fear or disengagement instead of responsibility and empathy. To create a supportive learning environment, schools need to incorporate emotional regulation strategies, mutual respect practices, and collaborative problem-solving methods to replace punitive systems.

As punitive protocols do not alleviate violent situations in the classroom, teachers have developed their own strategies for handling violence. These include survival strategies, coping strategies, support networks, and protocol activation while necessary. Survival strategies allow teachers to keep functioning, but they tend to address only surface-level issues and it may increase stress, frustration, and demotivation. Coping strategies, on the other hand, involve an intentional effort to protect personal well-being through self-centered practices and collegial support. Support networks, although not formally required, help strengthen bonds and create shared awareness within the workplace.

Among the mentioned strategies, support networks emerged as the most effective in managing both immediate and long-term emotional effects of violence. Teachers highlighted that informal conversations with colleagues provided validation and a sense of shared understanding. However, the usefulness of these peer networks also underscored a persistent issue: institutional support remained limited, leaving teachers to navigate violent situations with minimal organization guidance.

Teachers also unveiled their concerns regarding their professional preparation about socioemotional strategies. This study revealed that these tools are typically used in classrooms and are not taught during teacher education. Consequently, teachers do not feel prepared for what it is really like to experience violence in the classroom. Some of these strategies are learned during teaching practice or when an episode of violence occurs, such as activating school protocols. However, most are not easily applicable to the different realities of schools in Chile, so teachers must know how to adapt them to their context. Other strategies, such as journaling and relaxation techniques, are developed and used by teachers themselves as they become involved in violent acts. This reflects a gap in initial teacher education, especially in the areas of emotional and crisis management.

Some interviewees acknowledged the difficulty of working in environments where violence is present. Structural deficiencies, ineffective protocols, and limited institutional support directly affects teachers' emotional well-being and contribute to discouragement, professional disengagement, burnout, and exhaustion. It is therefore essential to address

teachers' emotional well-being as a central component. The findings show that teachers are constantly exposed to rude behavior, offensive gestures, lack of respect, disinterest in class, intimidation, and threats of physical violence. Although teachers can clearly define violence, they often minimize and normalize their own experiences, describing them as “minor incidents” unless physical contact occurs. This tendency is linked to the belief that adults in the classroom “should not” be victims of their students.

Overall, the research indicates that teachers' emotional responses are not an isolated event but part of a broader pattern shaped by systemic neglect. The normalization of violence and the emotional exhaustion within the profession perpetuates a cycle of vulnerability that threatens educational quality. This evidence demonstrates the need for institutions and national authorities to develop effective protocols that protect and assist teachers. Ultimately, this perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the need for effective pedagogical strategies and institutional support systems that protect and empower educators. This includes ensuring physical safety, providing socio-emotional support, and strengthening teacher preparation through ongoing training. This especially considering that teachers showed a strong commitment to professional growth, evidenced by their willingness to participate in courses on conflict management, violence recognition, and emotional regulation. Their engagement reflects genuine concern about addressing school violence in a system that often prioritizes productivity over well-being.

## **Implications**

The findings of this research point to fundamental implications for teacher training programs and educational policy in Chile. First, a significant gap in initial teacher education was identified, as all participants emphasized the lack of courses addressing violence in the classroom. This demonstrates the urgent need for teacher education institutions to recognize and address the reality of violence against teachers.

Although the teachers value continuing education, they also emphasize that preparation must begin at the university level. In the case of Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación (UMCE), only two courses within the “Licenciatura en educación con mención en Inglés” degree program partially address violence in school contexts. However, it is not sufficient as it only addresses the issue in some measure and does not deal with the “real” root of the problem. The courses focus on classroom management and teachers’ emotional management, such as underlying problems like hatred, disrespect, and understanding others. However, there is no single root cause to the problem, but rather a combination of factors, including the effects of the pandemic, punitives measures within schools, a lack of institutional support for teachers, among others. Therefore, updating the curriculum to include content related to emotional management, crisis response, and violence prevention is essential for preparing teachers to face the current realities of Chilean schools.

Teacher training programs should incorporate systematic instruction on socioemotional strategies, restorative approaches, conflict resolution, de-escalation techniques, and recognition of different types of violence. This would bridge the existing gap between theoretical training and the lived experiences of teachers in contemporary school environments.

Finally, curriculum adaptation should also include a more explicit focus on supporting male students in the development of soft skills and emotional competencies. The findings of this study indicates a slight difference in how male and female teachers experience and communicate their emotions when addressing violent situations, with male participants tending to minimize or suppress emotional disclosure. Strengthening these skills during initial

teacher education would not only promote more balanced emotional communication but also better prepare future teachers to manage their interpersonal and affective demands associated with school violence.

## **Limitations**

This research faced several limitations. To begin with, was the scarcity of literature focusing on the impact of school violence on teachers' well-being. Most existing studies examine students as victims, ignoring teachers' experiences and needs which are insufficiently addressed.

Next, the study included only four participants, limiting the scope of findings and restricting comparison across diverse experiences of violence. Although the interviews were rich and insightful, a larger sample could have captured a broader range of experiences of school violence.

Furthermore, the socioeconomic and institutional context of each school where the interviewees worked at the time of the interview might influence teachers' experiences. Since the study did not include participants from a more diverse range of school contexts, it was not possible to compare how levels of violence vary in settings with different degrees of social vulnerability.

## **Suggestions for Further Research**

Based on the findings, further research on teachers as victims of school violence is urgently needed. Currently literature largely focuses on student victimization, leaving teachers' experiences overlooked. Future studies should also explore how school violence affects teacher burnout, and long-term emotional well-being.

Workshops and training programs should also be developed to support teachers in recognizing and addressing the different manifestations of school violence. Research conducted to determine whether teacher attrition could be a direct consequence of violence experienced in the school context could contribute valuable insights for educational policy.

During the interviews, new questions arose regarding verbal violence, specifically the normalization of curse words and offensive expressions in Chilean culture. As profanity is often used casually, it is essential to examine how normalization influences classroom dynamics and teachers' perceptions of verbal aggression.

Finally, considering the results, it is suggested that gender-oriented research be conducted with larger samples. Due to this case study having only four participants, the differences identified between gender and emotional expression were subtle. It is necessary to investigate further whether emotional expression, fear of victimization, or exposure to violence vary according to gender, as the testimonies of Mister D and Mister C indicate that male teachers tend to show more restrained emotional expression than their female colleagues. Future research could explore how male students of pedagogy can develop and strengthen their communication and emotional skills, considering their relevance for the expression and management of experiences of violence in school contexts.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Instrument

#### Entrevista a profesores de Inglés

Profesora Guía: Lery Mejías

Nombre del/la entrevistado/a: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del establecimiento: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha de la entrevista: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrevistador/a: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Objetivo general:

El propósito de esta entrevista es explorar qué estrategias utilizan los y las docentes de Inglés para abordar situaciones de violencia dentro del aula. Además, existen preguntas dentro de este instrumento que también buscan explorar la relación entre el mundo emocional y el actuar de los docentes.

#### Recordatorio:

Dada la naturaleza de esta investigación y de las temáticas a tratar, el entrevistado o la entrevistada tiene derecho a dar término a la entrevista en el momento que ya no se sienta en condiciones de seguir.

#### 1. Contexto profesional del docente

Preguntas centrales:

¿Cuánto tiempo llevas ejerciendo como profesor/a?

¿En qué establecimiento estás ejerciendo la docencia actualmente? ¿Cuántos años llevas ejerciendo ahí?

¿En qué niveles enseñas? ¿Tienes alguna jefatura a cargo? ¿Qué curso?

¿Cómo describirías tu experiencia docente?

Notas del entrevistador/a:

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Follow-up sugerido:

- Tiempo total de experiencia
- Tiempo en el colegio actual
- Niveles/cursos
- Cambios observados

## 2. Percepción y vivencia de la violencia

Preguntas centrales:

¿Qué entiendes por violencia en el contexto escolar?

¿Has tenido experiencias con violencia en el aula? ¿Cuáles fueron las primeras?

¿Cuáles son los tipos de violencia que has logrado percibir dentro de los establecimientos en los que has trabajado?

Notas del entrevistador/a:

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Follow-up sugerido:

- Emociones predominantes
- Impacto personal
- Umbral de tolerancia

### 3. Estrategias de abordaje y experiencia directa

Preguntas centrales:

¿Podrías contarme sobre una situación de violencia significativa que hayas vivido como docente? ¿Cómo lo viviste en el ámbito emocional y cómo la abordaste? ¿Crees que fueron eficaces?

Cuando piensas en esta situación con la perspectiva del tiempo, ¿harías algo distinto?

Notas del entrevistador/a:

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Follow-up sugerido:

- Contexto y actores involucrados
- Emociones sentidas
- Apoyo recibido:

### 4. Preparación y herramientas profesionales

Preguntas centrales:

¿Te sientes preparado/a para enfrentar situaciones de violencia en el aula? ¿Con qué herramientas cuentas y qué crees que te hace falta? ¿Cuáles son tus necesidades formativas en esta área?

Notas del entrevistador/a:

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Follow-up sugerido:

- Formación inicial y continua

5. Apoyo institucional y contexto escolar

Preguntas centrales:

En tu trabajo actual, ¿existen mecanismos de apoyo institucional en tu colegio para abordar la violencia escolar? ¿Qué tan efectivo es/son?

Notas del entrevistador/a:

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Follow-up sugerido:

- Protocolos existentes
- Funcionamiento del equipo de convivencia
- Apoyo de directivos/colegas
- Clima organizacional
- Limitaciones estructurales

6. Relación entre el mundo emocional y el rol docente

Preguntas centrales:

¿Cómo es tu vivencia emocional de enfrentarte a este tipo de situaciones?

¿Crees que tu estado emocional influye en cómo enfrentas situaciones de violencia en el aula?

Notas del entrevistador/a:

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Follow-up sugerido:

- Estrés y autocuidado
- Apoyo emocional

### 7. Proyecciones y propuestas

Pregunta central:

¿Qué cambios o propuestas concretas propondrías en tu establecimiento para mejorar el abordaje de la violencia escolar?

Notas del entrevistador/a:

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Follow-up sugerido:

- Rol del profesor de Inglés
- Disponibilidad para colaborar en mejoras

Comentarios u observaciones finales

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## Appendix 2: Validation of the instrument

### Validation Statement

I have reviewed the interview instrument titled “*Interview with English Teachers on School Violence and Emotional Impact*”, and I validate its content in terms of clarity, coherence, and alignment with the stated research objectives. The instrument appropriately addresses key dimensions such as the professional background of teachers, their perceptions and experiences of violence, the emotional and institutional responses involved, and their personal and pedagogical reflections. Each section and question is adequately constructed to invite open, reflective, and meaningful responses, making it well-suited for a qualitative research approach. The interview structure provides a coherent path from personal experience to collective insight and proposed improvements.

I wish the research team every success in the implementation of this instrument and in the development of their study.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leandro Silva". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Leandro Silva Bravo

Prof. Asociado

Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación

### Appendix 3: Autorización SIBUMCE



UNIVERSIDAD METROPOLITANA DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN  
SISTEMA DE BIBLIOTECAS - DIRECCION DE INVESTIGACION

#### **IDENTIFICACIÓN DE TESIS/INVESTIGACIÓN**

Título de la tesis,  
memoria o seminario: “Invisible Battles: English teachers' emotional strategies against violence within the classroom. A case study.

Fecha: 17 de diciembre de 2025

Facultad: Facultad de Historia Geografía y Letras

Departamento; Departamento de Inglés

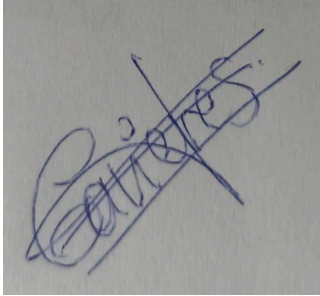
Carrera: Pedagogía en Inglés

Título y/o grado: Licenciatura en Educación con Mención en Inglés y Pedagogía en Inglés.  
Pregrado.

Profesora guía: Lery Verónica Mejías García

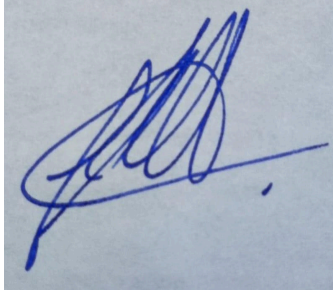
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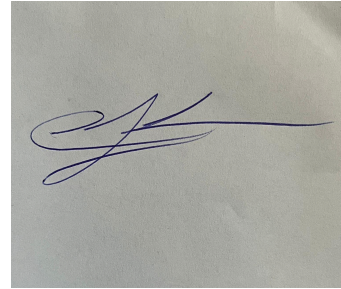
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Vanessa Cavieres Inostroza



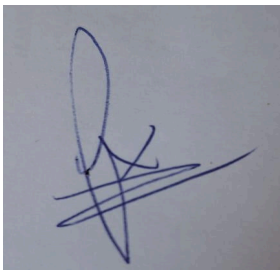
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Pía Ferrera Vidal



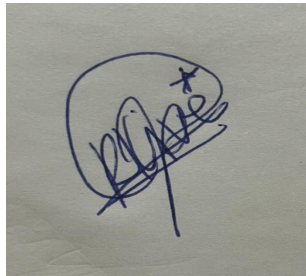
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Constanza Grandón López



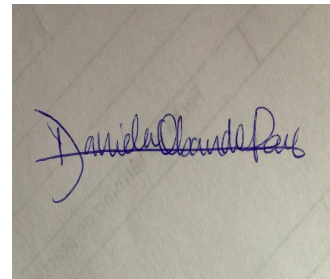
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Francisca Muñoz Arce



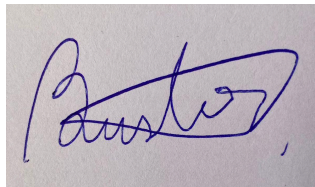
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Nayareth Navarrete Ávila



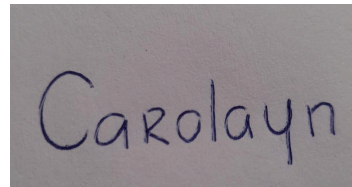
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Daniela Obando Peña



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Fabianna Rebolledo Bustos



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Carolain Rojas Carrasco

Santiago de Chile, 17 de Diciembre 2025