Hate Speech In Primary Education:
Its Implications For Cognitive And Emotional Learning

Julia Ángela Ramon Ortiz[^1], Jesús Vilchez Guizado[^2],
Fermín Pozo Ortega[^3]

[ julia.ramon@udh.edu.pe]
[ ORCID 0000-0003-4532-1476]
[^2] National University Hermilio Valdizán, Huánuco, Perú
[ jvilchez@unheval.edu.pe]
[ ORCID 0000-0002-5962-8703]
[^3] National University Hermilio Valdizán, Huánuco, Perú
[ fpozo@unheval.edu.pe]
[ ORCID 0000-0003-4336-3939]

**ABSTRACT**

The Peruvian education system in general and primary education in particular, in the post-pandemic stage, has been going through one of the most critical moments due to the increase in the social gap and access to technology by students, which is expressed in the heterogeneity in learning reinforced with discriminatory positions that lead to manifestations of hatred. This study aims to determine the influence of hate speech on cognitive learning and emotional learning of students in the fifth and sixth grades of Primary Education. The methodology used responds to a field study with a sample of 128 students from the two grades of study, a dichotomous questionnaire is administered and another adapted to the Likert scale referring to the dimensions of hate speech, cognitive and emotional learning. Among the results stand out: more than 50% achieved medium or low emotional learning, the average cognitive learning is regular (11.664), there is a negative relationship between hate speech and emotional learning of students. It is concluded that the practice of discourse among students in the fifth and sixth grade of primary education significantly influences their level of cognitive and emotional learning, a fact that has implications for their personal, social and intellectual training.

Keywords: hate speech, cognitive learning, emotional learning, primary education.
INTRODUCTION

In recent years some iniquitous acts in human relationships such as intolerance, racism and violence have proliferated in the context of education, during the COVID-19 pandemic there was an impressive increase in misinformation based on fear and hatred, including hate speech. Perverse attitudes such as incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence are proliferating, often undermining respect for diversity, inclusion, tolerance and social cohesion. Feeding distrust through discourses that disrupt interpersonal and group relationships. The forms of communication between people have undergone significant changes, at the same time the practice of critical and divergent thinking among the actors of society was strengthened, which manifests itself in all social strata and at all ages. In this dynamic action, people take different positions in the face of the phenomena of reality advocating their development and well-being, both individual and group through face-to-face actions or virtual media such as social networks. Social networks and other tools on the web often function as amplifiers of more fundamental points of view than face-to-face interaction, and discourses of animosity have spread to different spaces of activities (Colleoni et al., 2014). Along these lines, the practice of divergent and discriminating discourses are very prevalent among the members of educational institutions, regardless of the position they occupy; significantly affecting the learning process and emotional stability.

This study attempts to approach the problem from an educational perspective as one of the critical areas in the formation of adolescents; From the analysis of hate speech and its implication in the cognitive and emotional learning of primary school students, using strategies to monitor the development in learning activities and behavior development, fundamental in their integral formation.

Hate speech

Hate speech is "any form of word communication, in writing or through behavior, that is an attack on or uses discriminatory pejorative language in relation to a person or group on the basis of who they are or, in other words, because of their religion, ethnic origin, nationality, race, color, ancestry, gender or other factor of identity" (UN, 2019). Hate speech is also conceived, such as the communicative form of expression that deliberately promotes, justifies or disseminates the exclusion, contempt or devaluation of specific social groups, for example, because of ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, etc. (Lehman, 2020; Wachs et al., 2022). Being one
of the places of propagation of this form of discrimination and that often have participation adolescents who are attending the last two grades of primary education, putting afloat perverse actions against their peers, including teachers.

The perception of hate speech by people is not homogeneous, but all forms of manifestation that transgress people's rights are considered as part of this discourse. The possible hate speech that can be perceived varies depending on the context, the use of the term and its meaning vary, according to the person affected, there being a confusion in the relevance it may have in the violation of the rights of a person. Hate speech is a response to specific and pernicious discriminatory social phenomena, which can take many forms: written, non-verbal, visual, artistic, etc., and can be disseminated by any means, including the Internet, printed materials, radio, or television (ICCPR, 2015). These ways of acting in the context of education, from the first years of the school stage has gained more notoriety with the use of digital technology.

The practice of this discourse over the years has become vertiginously rooted in society and has found in social networks an ideal platform for propagation. Potentially offensive and dangerous messages against stigmatized audiences have increased with the health and economic crisis of COVID-19, claiming not only human lives, but also reinforcing existing problems and hitting the most vulnerable people hard (Bayer & Bárd, 2020). Terms such as homophobia, xenophobia, racism, discrimination, among others, delimit the different types of existing hate speech, which can be classified into three large groups: racial and ethnic hatred, hatred by nationality or religion and hatred by gender or sexual orientation (Esquivel, 2016).

Cognitive learning

Cognitive learning is one of the most important forms of learning in the development of people, since it houses a series of mental operations that are based on the experience and processing of information that allows to efficiently assimilate knowledge as a fundamental weapon to face problematic situations that arise in a context. This type of learning is focused on the enhancement of the capacity of the brain, which takes place when the student who learns comes into contact with new content and relates it to the knowledge and learning he already has, that is, when he establishes a link between the new learning and the previous knowledge. Cognitive learning enables the construction and generation of knowledge implies the participation of the student in their training, through teaching strategies of the teacher that turns students into
active, critical and creative subjects capable of developing autonomously, under the guidance of the teacher, where their action promotes research, reflection and search or inquiry (Ávila, et al., 2010). Through the activation of brain functions, such as thinking, attention, learning, problem solving, perception, among others. Among the components of cognitive learning can be highlighted: understanding, which is essential for cognitive learning to be efficient and beneficial, for this it is essential to understand the reason why you are learning a certain subject; Memory, enables the accumulation and systematization of the subject studied, it enables an improvement in the ability to relate new knowledge with previous experiences or information; and the application, which help to apply the information generated to situations of reality, developing problem-solving skills.

**Emotional learning**

The level of emotional and attitudinal maturity in schoolchildren is manifested in an adequate understanding and management of their emotional states that leads them to emotional balance in the medium and long term; the same that enables the prevention or reduction of problematic or risk behaviors that is typical of their age; to understand, properly express and regulate their emotional states that are varied and unstable.

Emotional learning is a process evoked to the personal development of the learner that serves as a complement to their cognitive activity, and aims to provide an education aimed at increasing personal and social well-being (Bisquerra, 2005). For this, emotional learning must be conceived as a process, continuous and permanent, aimed at enhancing the emotional skills of students for a comprehensive training and train them for their development in society.

In primary education, emotional learning plays a key role in the retention of information, as it establishes an intense connection between the physical and mental component that contributes to well-being; But this connection can cause problems related to various aspects of adaptation in the environment. In this line, the teacher must be aware of the influence of emotions on school learning, and the scenarios that students have to understand their inner world and the environment that surrounds them. Because through it, the knowledge and skills necessary to know and manage emotions are acquired, increase concern and interest in others.

Emotional learning encompasses emotional awareness; emotional regulation; emotional autonomy; social competence and competencies for life and well-being, enables the practice of active, participatory, critical, responsible and committed citizenship, oriented
towards emotional well-being (Oliveros, 2018). Thus, emotional learning favors the development of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-esteem, motivation and empathy to manage moods, impulses and resources necessary for learning; because emotions are the core where human relationships are built, for making better decisions. In emotional learning it is expressed in the confluence of physical and emotional conflicts, it helps the student in his personal training preventing emotional disorders such as anxiety and depression, enabling the empowerment of the ability to adapt, coexistence among peers and a better quality of life at the emotional level.

In summary, from the theoretical analysis developed referring to the three study variables, it can be abstracted that the difficulties in the learning process of the students are in correspondence with behavior, conflicts and prejudices (Crawford & Brandt, 2020). The same ones that cause biases in the cognitive and emotional learning of students with different levels of incidence. However, it is important to bear in mind that the cognitive and emotional learning provoked by hate messages does not depend exclusively on the content of the speech as on the ascription of the receiver in relation to that of the sender (Abuín-Vences, 2022).

**General and specific problems**

a. General problem
What is the level of influence of hate speech practice on the cognitive learning and emotional learning of students in the fifth and sixth grades of primary education?

b. Specific problems
- What are the most frequent forms of hate speech manifested by students in the fifth and sixth grades of primary education?
- What is the level of influence of the practice of hate speech on the emotional learning of students in the fifth and sixth grades of primary education?
- What is the level of influence of the practice of hate speech on the cognitive learning of students in the fifth and sixth grades of primary education?

**Objective and hypothesis**

Objective
To determine the level of influence of hate speech practice on the cognitive learning and emotional learning of students in the fifth and sixth grades of primary education.
Hypothesis
The practice of hate speech significantly influences the cognitive learning and emotional learning of students in the fifth and sixth grade of primary education.

METHODODOLOGY
The present study has been carried out based on a systematic review of literature related to the treatment of hate speech in the context of primary education. Research is conducted using the mixed approach, in which quantitative and qualitative methodologies are combined (Rocco et al., 2003). The research design, used in the study, is in correspondence with the characteristics of a sequential explanatory non-experimental design, by monitoring the attitudes and learning achievements of students in the context of primary education where the practice of hate speech is very frequent.

Participants
The study population is made up of students in the fifth and sixth grades of primary education of both sexes, whose ages range from 11 to 13 years of age in the Huánuco region in northeastern Peru. The study sample was made up of 128 primary school students, the authors accessed the study scenario making use of the existing affinity with teachers and administrators, so the choice of the sample was non-probabilistic (accessibility sampling). Fieldwork was carried out during the first semester of the 2022 academic year.

Instruments
For data collection, we advocated the development of a dichotomous assessment questionnaire related to another frequency questionnaire (every day (5), almost every day (4), occasionally (3), almost never (2) and never (1)) for the variable hate speech; For the emotional learning variable, an assessment questionnaire is administered with scales: very high (5), high (4), medium (3), low (2) and very low (1); while for the cognitive learning variable, a test is administered with a vigesimal score (00 to 20), qualified on an ordinal scale: excellent (20-18), good (17-15), fair (14-11), deficient (10-06) and very deficient (05-00). The three data collection instruments are administered for two months and in sync.
Data collection and analysis procedure

The fieldwork process is carried out in three phases, which are as follows:

Phase 1: we proceed with the elaboration and sequencing of the items of the questionnaire for the collection of quantitative data related to cognitive learning, through a test to evaluate the learning achieved; questionnaire with dichotomous items the dimensions of hate speech, and a multiple alternative questionnaire for the measurement of emotional learning of students.

Phase 2: Prior to the data collection, the directors and teachers were contacted in order to explain the study to be carried out and request authorization for data collection, guaranteeing its absolute confidentiality; then the instruments are administered.

Phase 3: Data processing and analysis was performed using Minitab 20 statistical software. First, the data referring to the variables under study are presented using statistical tables and graphs; The percentage descriptive analysis of the results obtained is carried out and some measures of central tendency, position and data dispersion are found. Spearman's regression analysis is performed with ordinal data and logistic regression analysis with dichotomized data and continuous quantitative data of the cognitive learning variable to determine the level of influence of hate speech on cognitive and emotional learning.

RESULTS

Manifestation of hate speech

Since the results of the survey applied to primary school students regarding the 10 most recurrent forms of expression of this hate speech considered in the survey, on average 25.47% of students consider that they were occasionally victims of hate speech at some point, while 25.16% state that they are victims of hate speech almost every day, while 25.08% express that they were almost never a victim of this speech, followed by 12.27% who consider that they are immersed in manifestations of hatred every day at school. These results show that the majority, more than 62% of students have experienced some positions considered as an element of hate speech on the part of their peers or the teacher; Likewise, the average of means and standard deviations are 3.52 and 1.29, respectively, results that indicate that students receive hate speech almost every day or occasionally (Table 1). It is also noteworthy, in some cases, the practice of hate speech has led students to significant improvements in their individual and group attitudes.
Table 1. Percentage, mean and standard deviation of the practice of hate speech in primary school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Every day</th>
<th>Almost every day</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Media (Desv.Est)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>10.94%</td>
<td>22.66%</td>
<td>25.78%</td>
<td>21.88%</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>3.35 (1.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>7.81%</td>
<td>17.19%</td>
<td>28.13%</td>
<td>34.38%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>3.42 (1.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>11.72%</td>
<td>26.56%</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>17.97%</td>
<td>3.48 (1.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>32.81%</td>
<td>21.88%</td>
<td>23.44%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>3.25 (1.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td>7.03%</td>
<td>28.13%</td>
<td>29.69%</td>
<td>26.56%</td>
<td>8.59%</td>
<td>3.20 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>14.84%</td>
<td>25.78%</td>
<td>28.13%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>3.86 (1.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>16.41%</td>
<td>26.56%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>24.22%</td>
<td>7.81%</td>
<td>3.75 (1.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>14.06%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>26.56%</td>
<td>23.44%</td>
<td>10.94%</td>
<td>3.15 (1.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>17.19%</td>
<td>21.88%</td>
<td>23.44%</td>
<td>23.44%</td>
<td>14.06%</td>
<td>4.08 (1.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>13.28%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>27.34%</td>
<td>23.44%</td>
<td>10.94%</td>
<td>3.50 (1.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>12.27%</td>
<td>25.16%</td>
<td>25.47%</td>
<td>25.08%</td>
<td>12.03%</td>
<td>3.52 (1.29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fountain. Own elaboration.

Level of emotional learning

With regard to emotional learning, the results show that 50.0% of the participants have a medium or low level of self-awareness, 50.0% have the capacity for low or very low self-regulation, 53.1% have a medium or low level of motivation, regarding the level of empathy between students, 53.1% have it at a medium or low level; while with regard to self-esteem, 56.3% only reach a medium or low level of development (Table 2). Regarding the five dimensions of emotional learning considered in the study, 28.9% of students have low emotional learning, 23.4% a medium learning level, 18.4% a very low level, followed by 15.5% who have a high level, and only 11.7% have very high emotional learning. From what is shown in the table it can be determined that the level of emotional learning achieved by the students reached a medium level; It is a pending task to carry out measures that strengthen the development of the dimensions of emotional learning of students.

Table 2. Percentage and average summary of emotional learning of primary school students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DÍMENSIÓN</th>
<th>Very high</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Very low</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcome on cognitive learning

To assess the achievement of cognitive learning, a knowledge test of 15 items corresponding to the dimensions: comprehension, memory and application was administered. Being the average of the grades obtained 11.664, median 12.0, which according to the established ordinal categorization corresponds to a regular learning level; Regarding the dispersion measures, a variance of 9.012 and a standard deviation of 3.002 and an interquartile range of 3 can be highlighted; Pearson’s asymmetry coefficient is -0.151, which indicates a left-cut distribution of data as shown by the histogram; Also, the confidence intervals for the mean and median are similar (Figure 1). In short, it can be said that the level of cognitive learning expressed in the descriptive statistical measures is not optimal, this adverse result probably has as one of the causes the hate speech practiced in the context of the school that affects the level of concentration and assimilation of the curricular contents.

Figure 1. Descriptive statistics of the results of cognitive assessment.

Level of relationship between hate speech and emotional learning

Spearman’s correlation coefficient ($r_s = -0.626$) indicates that there is a moderate negative relationship between the practice of hate speech practiced in school and emotional learning, also the level of influence of hate speech significantly influences the emotional learning of
primary school students, with a confidence level of 95%, Figure 2. This result establishes that there is a slight decrease in emotional learning in the face of the proliferation of hate speech.

**Figure 2.** Level of relationship between hate speech and students' emotional learning.

**Level of relationship between hate speech and cognitive learning**

Figure 3 shows the relationship between the dichotomous variable hate speech and the quantitative variable continuous cognitive learning, the same that identifies whether or not the student has been a victim of hate speech, the same that is related and can be predicted from the grades obtained in the evaluation that indicate their level of cognitive learning achievement.
Logistic regression also yields a $p = 0.001$, a result that indicates that the coefficients of the regression equation are significant in predicting that the student who receives hate speech has effects on their cognitive learning (Table 3). Likewise, the $R^2$ of the deviation = 38.73% indicates that the model has an adjustment of 38.73% as shown by the equation and what is observed in reality, which evidences a considerable fluency of hate speech in the cognitive learning achieved by the student.

**Table 3. Results of logistic regression between the variables hate speech and cognitive learning.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Desv. adjustment.</th>
<th>Media ajust.</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>64.75</td>
<td>64.7470</td>
<td>64.75</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive learning</td>
<td>64.75</td>
<td>64.7470</td>
<td>64.75</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>102.44</td>
<td>0.8130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>167.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

In the field of education, terms such as: "pedagogies of indignation and hope" (FOESSA, 2019), or "against pedagogies of cruelty" (Segato, 2018) are used. According to UNESCO (2021) "human rights education is the most effective way to prevent hatred, discrimination and violence in all its forms, including incitement to hatred, as all people are equally deserving of dignity, respect and justice, and in which diversity is accepted and valued". Hate speech is a complex problem of a social and educational nature that is on the rise, to reduce its spread requires a coordinated and committed work with and from dialogue (Izquierdo-Montero & Aguado-Odina, 2020). There is also a need to encourage actions to mitigate the practice of these discourses by strengthening the bonds of society and building a better world for all (ONU, 2019). According to the findings, the manifestations of hate speech in primary school students are growing with the help of the internet and social networks; And to counteract this harmful practice
it is essential to promote interest, responsibility, commitment, teamwork, cooperation and solidarity among students, enhancing the strengthening of their cognitive learning.

In the context of education, the difference between social groups causes the phenomenon of desensitization, increasing prejudices that encourage hatred, which can trigger violent acts (Abuín-Vences et al., 2022). In this line, the present study corroborates that the practice of hate speech in the school environment has an adverse impact on the development of attitudes, expressed in inappropriate reactions to stimuli, which show the destabilization of the emotional state that affects the process of its development. To reduce this problem, it is vital to promote the person-half-person relationship to generate spaces that allow a good emotional development, which leads the student to develop their emotional skills that will allow them to face changing situations in a competitive and globalizing world of which they are part (Mulsow, 2008).

Students' perception or assimilation of hate speech causes some cognitive biases of selective perception, as well as theories about intergroup biases, conflict, and prejudice (Crawford & Brandt, 2020); very frequent in media education from the practice of critical literacy (Santisteban, 2018). As a correlate to the aforementioned, the results of the present study show a significant incidence of the different expressions of hate in the assimilation of the instructional contents, since the students victims of hate speech have deficiencies in the achievement of learning and are reluctant to develop and explore their logical, critical and creative thinking, in the process of solving problems as part of their cognitive learning, acquiring a level that does not meet established standards.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Among the main daily manifestations of hate speech identified in primary education institutions, the following stand out: intimidation, violence, hostility, discrimination, homophobia, racism, harassment, threats, aggressions, exclusion, blackmail, ridicule, among others. These practices have negative effects, such as revenge, belief and conformity, attitudes that lead to weak formation in values and personality. The practice of this discourse has as allies the internet and social networks, which make up the virtual scenario to disseminate and feed thoughts and hate speeches, which find adolescents as captive victims, who assimilate these perverse practices that directly affect behavior and learning, colliding with the rules of coexistence and companionship.
The students victims of hate speech show deficiencies in personal development, having as a characteristic a low level of self-esteem, spirit of inferiority, pessimism, selfishness, distrust and other behaviors outside the normal; This condition evidences that the praxis of this type of discourse has a high incidence in the emotional learning of primary school students. Consequently, it is imperative that the educational process is aimed at reducing the consequences of hate speech and is a long-term preventive mechanism.

The results show that being immersed in an environment where there is permanent discourse classified as hatred, causes states of desensitization in thinking and information processing by students, generating cognitive biases of selective perception, both individual and group. This implies that the practice of hate speech significantly and adversely influences the cognitive learning of primary school students. Education alone will not eliminate hate speech, an effective antidote to that speech could be to give talks to students about the causes and consequences that this speech entails in their formation as a person.

This study highlights some limitations that can be addressed in future studies. First, it is performed at the descriptive-correlational level without manipulation of variables; Future research could consist of experimental work with predictive validity. Second, it was carried out in a single sample with relative representativeness of the population of primary school students in the province of Huánuco; Future studies could be conducted on more representative samples, taking into account gender, age and social status. Third, the non-experimental and cross-sectional design does not show total evidence of the real impact of hate speech on student learning; longitudinal and experimental studies are required to overcome this methodological limitation. Fourth, the conclusions are only obtained from the responses to the questionnaire on the three variables under study; Future research could include the follow-up and monitoring of hate speech in its different manifestations and its impact on the integral formation of the student.

DECLARATIONS

Funding: No funding was received from individuals or institutions for this study.

Conflicts of interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare in this research.

Ethical standards and informed consent: All the procedures followed were adjusted to respect people, through voluntary consent, the
protection of privacy, confidentiality, and the right to end one's participation in an investigation without suffering reprisals. Informed consent was obtained from the directors and teachers of the educational institutions included in the study.

REFERENCES


