THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHING EXPERIENCE LEVEL AND THE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT ORIENTATIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Sınıf Yönetimi Yaklaşımları İle Mesleki Deneyim Seviyeleri Arasındaki İlişki

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ABSTRACT: Managing the classroom is one of the necessary skills for effective teaching. Teachers adopt individual classroom management styles while implementing their classroom activities. The current study aims to investigate the attitudes of novice and experienced EFL teachers towards different classroom management styles (interventionist, non-interventionist and interactionist), and how those attitudes evolve in relation to their teaching experiences. The sample consisted of 36 EFL teachers working at state schools in Mersin, Turkey. Data was gathered from the voluntary participants by employing an Attitudes and Belief on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory and the responses were analyzed statistically by using Mann-Whitney U, Wilcoxon W, and Z tests. Nonparametric test results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the attitudes of the novice and the experienced EFL teachers in terms of using interventionist styles. Teachers reported exerting control in classrooms irrespective of their experience level. Additionally, with respect to non-interventionist and interactionist classroom management styles, more experienced EFL teachers were found to be more flexible in their approach to classroom management and were more likely to provide space for student modification of the classroom setting. The more experienced EFL teachers were observed to allow students to become more involved and active in classroom interactions and dialogues empowering the students to create a common voice for the classroom procedures and routines. Novice EFL teachers in contrast with their more seasoned counterparts were more concerned with concretely following and implementing the lesson plan according to set procedures. These findings suggest that novice teachers might benefit from additional in-service training to deepen their communication skills in classroom, contextual flexibility, and practice of the different classroom management styles.

Keywords: Classroom Management Styles, Teaching Experience, EFL Teachers.

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ÖZ: Sınıf yönetimi etkili öğretim için gerekli becerilerden biridir. Öğretmenler, ders etkinliklerini gerçekleştirirken bireysel sınıf yönetimi biçimleri edinirler. Bu çalışma, mesleğe yeni başlayan İngilizce öğretmenleriyle mesleki deneyimi olan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin sınıf yönetimi biçimlerine (müdahaleci, müdahaleci olmayan ve etkileşimsel) karşı tutumlarını deneyim yılı açısından incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Örneklem, Mersin ilindeki devlet okullarında görev yapan 36 İngilizce öğretmeninden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmanın verisi gönüllü katılımcılara uygulanan ile Sınıf Yönetimine Yönelik İnanç ve Tutum Ölçeği ile toplanmıştır ve cevaplar istatistiksel olarak Mann-Whitney U, Wilcoxon W ve Z testi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Parametrik olmayan test sonucu, müdahaleci sınıf yönetimi yaklaşımı açısından mesleğe yeni başlayan İngilizce öğretmenleri ile deneyimli İngilizce öğretmenleri arasında tutum olarak anlamlı bir fark olmadığını göstermektedir. Öğretmenlerin deneyim seviyeleri, müdahaleci sınıf yönetimi yaklaşımı üzerinde etkili bir rol oynamamıştır. Öğretmenlerin deneyim seviyelerine müdahaleci olmayan ve etkileşimsel sınıf yönetimi yaklaşımları açısından bakıldığında ise, deneyimli İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleğe yeni başlayan İngilizce öğretmenlerine göre daha esnek oldukları ve sınıf ortamında öğrenciler tarafından yapılan değişikliklere olanak tanıdıkları sonucuna varılmıştır. Ayrıca deneyimli İngilizce öğretmenleri, öğrencilerin sınıf içi iletişimlerinde ve sınıf prosedürleri ve standardları için ortak bir görüş oluşturmalarını kolaylaştıran diyaloglarda daha ilgili ve aktif olmalarına olanak sağlamışlardır. Bu bulgular ışığında yeni mesleğe başlayan öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi biçimlerini uygularken bağlamsal esnekliklerini ve sınıf içi iletişim becerilerini arttırmak için hizmet içi eğitimden yararlanmaları önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sınıf Yönetimi Biçimleri, Mesleki Deneyim, İngilizce Öğretmenleri.

INTRODUCTION

Classroom management has been referred to as "a teacher's efforts to establish and maintain an effective classroom environment for teaching and learning" (Brophy, 1986: 396). In a broader sense, it refers to "actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction (arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students' attention to lessons and engagement in activities) (Brophy, 2011: 17). Effective classroom management has been considered to be an area of common concern for both the novice and experienced teachers' classroom practice (Adams and Mastray, 1981, Martin and Baldwin, 1993), and is one of the major issues (Martin and Sass, 2010) and classroom challenges (Manning and Bucher, 2003; Ritter and Hancock, 2007) for teachers. The foundational nature of this challenge has led to a volume of research on teacher attitudes toward classroom management styles in relation to teachers' personal teaching experiences. For example, Martin (2004) found that beginning teachers generally struggle with classroom management and that their initial conceptions of proper classroom management do affect how teachers develop their teaching practice. In another comparative study, Melnick and Meister (2008) found that



experienced teachers feel more affirmative toward their classroom abilities than their novice counterparts do. Westerman (1991) argues that experienced teachers have set routines in the class and that they are more flexible in how they handle emergently developing situations. Hagger and McIntyre (2000) point out that experienced teachers generally know the sequences of the tasks, and how to best manage principal classroom management issues. Compared to experienced teachers, beginning teachers have more difficulty with focusing on the students' interruptions or questions while following the lesson plans (Livingstone and Borko, 1989). Novice teachers are observed to generally be less flexible, and adaptable to emergent situations in the classroom (Kerrins and Cushing, 2000).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The classification of teacher approaches toward classroom management is threefold: interventionist, non-interventionist and interactionist (Glickman and Tamashiro, 1980; Wolfgang, 1995; Martin and Sass, 2010). This model represents a continuum of teacher behaviors in exerting formal control from high level (interventionist) to low level (non-interventionist). The Interventionist approach, also called a rules-consequences style, demonstrates high levels of teacher control. Students learn to display desirable behaviors in a structured environment with teacher-generated rewards and punishment. The teacher heavily exercises executive control over his or her students and the classroom environment. This kind of management orientation tends to represent the behaviorist approach, which proposes all behaviors are acquired based on contiguity (simultaneity of stimulus and response events) and clear effects of behavior (reinforcement and punishment). Teachers implementing this approach reward positive behavior and restrict or punish any rule-breaking behaviors. The teachers set the rules to be observed during class time, issue directives and ideally, model expected behaviors in class. Martin and Baldwin (1993) claimed that experienced teachers are prone to be interventionist. However, Laut (1999) stated that novice teachers also practice the interventionist style to take teaching procedures under direct control. This may reflect insecurity on the part of the novice teacher exerting control in order to preserve the teacher's self-image and emphasize their status as teachers in the eyes of students. A study from Singapore by Quek (2013) found that beginning teachers opted for an interventionist orientation in dimensions such as people management, instruction management and behavior management. In the same vein, Akbaba and Altun (1998) stated that teachers with more experience level are less interventionist in their classroom management approach when compared to their counterparts with less experience.



However, Ünal and Ünal (2012) found that even though most beginning teachers endorse non-interventionism as a preferred classroom management approach, they seem to be actually implementing the interventionist style as they gain experience. Similarly, Aliakbaril and Heidarzadil (2015) found that through time and experience, the gap between teachers' actual beliefs and their classroom practice narrows and teachers generally become more interventionist.

At the other extreme, the non-interventionist style takes a relationship-listening orientation. Adherents of this teaching style believe that students have personal voices and that one can resolve his or her misbehavior with nascent resources. The teachers' role is to provide students considerable support in regards to time and helpful guidance while encouraging the student to find their own solutions to problems. Non-interventionist teachers are less active in directly controlling students' behaviors. This perspective presents a low level of overt teacher control in the classroom and promotes a high level of student responsibility. The teacher demonstrates active listening, and uses nonjudgmental language and nondirective guidance in interactions with students in this teaching style.

In the middle of the teaching style continuum are interactionists, who adopt a confronting-contracting approach. Interactionists suggest that students learn exemplary behaviors through their interactions with people and objects around them. This perspective connects the students' world with their environment giving the two parties (teacher and students) an equal and shared responsibility and reciprocal recognition that classroom rules are to be respected. While teachers may exert classroom rules while they confront students about their misbehaviors, they also engage in active questioning to find the reasons underlying the students' behaviors and intentions. Together teacher and student reach a mutual understanding and adopt a rational and reciprocal solution. Ünal and Ünal (2012) found that teachers with less experience are more likely to be counted as interactionist, while their more experienced colleagues are generally more interventionist. Similarly, in another study, Martin and Baldwin (1993) remarked that while less experienced teachers interact with students effectively, they exert a low level of teacher control in classrooms, come across as more understanding and shoulder less responsibility in class. In light of the findings of the abovementioned studies that teachers generally fall within the three categories of classroom teaching style, it may be the case that teachers utilize each of these styles in various situations while still favoring one particular style more than the others (Wolfgang, 1995). Researchers have mentioned some relevant variables affecting the teacher's



tendency to adopt interventionist, non-interventionist or interactionist styles (Ritter and Hancock, 2007). The variables examined were certification program (Martin and Shoho, 2000), gender differences (Martin and Yin, 1997; Aliakbari and Heidarzadi, 2015), rural vs. metropolitan settings (Martin and Yin, 1997), sources of the teachers' certification (Sokal, Smith and Mowat, 2003; Ritter and Hancock, 2007) and experience levels (Martin and Baldwin, 1994; Martin and Shoho, 2000). Of these demographic variables, experience level may be the most relevant variable in establishing preferred classroom practice. Hicks (2012: 87) noted that skills for classroom management can be developed "on the job", or could be gained through formal training (Bosch, 2006). On the contrary, a study by Green (2006) warned that experience level alone may not account for how a teacher approaches classroom management.

This study has taken experience level as a variable to investigate to see how it correlates to a teachers' approach classroom management. Relating the teachers experience level to classroom management styles can be useful to educational authorities. If any differences occur in classroom management styles between the novice and the experienced teachers, then in-service training to improve classroom management for novice teachers could be planned and implemented accordingly.

METHOD

The current study is based on the quantitative research method and aims to explore whether there are any statistically significant differences in teacher classroom management style (interventionist, non-interventionist or interactionist) correlated with teaching experience level (experienced or novice in this context). This should contribute to the findings of the studies above mentioned. The research question in this study focused on whether there were any statistically significant differences between experienced teachers and novice teachers in terms of classroom management style. The hypothesis of the study is that the teachers' level of experiences will have impact on the preferred classroom style implementation of language teachers (Martin and Baldwin, 1994; Martin and Shoho, 2000). Experienced teachers are expected follow a different order in managing the classroom (Daloğlu, 2002) and in their approach to addressing the students' challenges in learning (Levin and Nolan, 2000) while the novice teachers are expected to be more prone to classroom management problems and less effective in classroom management than their experienced counterparts (Martin and Baldwin, 1994; Martin and Shoho, 2000; Daloğlu, 2002; Freiberg, 2002).



Participants

Participants in current study included 36 primary and high school EFL teachers (18 experienced and 18 novice teachers) from public schools in Mersin, Turkey. They were randomly chosen after a period of official call to the schools to partake in local academic research. The participants were volunteers and consent forms were provided to participating teachers and turned in before the data collection process. The experienced teachers were defined as those who had completed six years of teaching. The novice teachers were those who had finished less than two years of teaching.

Data Collection Instrument

The data was collected through Attitudes and Belief on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory. Martin, Yin and Baldwin (1998) developed the inventory to classify teachers' stance toward classroom management. The classification is threefold: instructional management, people management, and behavior management. These categories relate to teachers' behavioral tendencies towards classroom routines and activities, mirroring the teachers' senses of control, and the way the teacher communicates and instructs. The first aspect, instructional management, includes activities such as arranging seating, sorting out daily instructional routines, and distributing materials. This section assesses the classroom organization tasks for smooth and orderly teaching procedures. The second aspect, people management, is related to teachers' beliefs about their students and teacher-student rapport in the classroom. The third aspect, behavior management, is about pre-planning classroom activities so as to prevent misbehavior rather than the immediate reaction(s) to misbehavior by the teacher. The ABCC Inventory consists of 26 items divided among three subscales: classroom management, people management, and behavior management. The numbers of item in each subscale are 14, 8 and 4, respectively. Respondents indicate on 4-point, Likert-type scale stating their beliefs classroom management in a range from "describes me very well" (a score of 4), to "describes me not at all" (a score of 1). High scores represent a high level of exerted control in classroom management suggesting an interventionist approach; whereas, low scores represent a low level of control, indicating a non-interventionist approach. The reliability coefficients for the original subscales were .82 for instructional management, .69 for people management, and .69 for behavior management (Martin, Yin and Baldwin, 1998).

Procedure and Data Analysis

36 EFL teachers' classroom management styles were investigated by the researcher's direct visit to their workplace at their availability. The inventory



was not scheduled for specific time; but the respondents completed and returned it in approximately 20 minutes. Descriptive statistics were employed so as to explore the relationship between teachers' experience levels and implementation of the described threefold classroom management styles. After having done the test of normality and test of homogeneity of variance, the Mann-Whitney U Test, a non-parametric test for independent measure design, was utilized.

RESULTS

The ABCC Inventory scores' means of rank and test statistics (significance) are displayed in the tables below.

Table 1: Mean Rank For The Classroom Management Orientation

Background	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Interventionist			
Novice	18	15,50	279,00
Experienced	18		387,00
Total	36	21,50	
Non-interventionist			
Novice	18	14,83 22,17	267.00
Experienced	18		267,00
Total	36		387,00
Interactionist			
Novice	18	14,19 22,81	255 50
Experienced	18		255,50
Total	36		410,50

Table 2: Test Statistics

	Interventionist	Non-interventionist	Interactionist
Mann-Whitney U	108,000	96,000	84,500
Wilcoxon W	279,000	267,000	255,500
Z	-1,714	-2,107	-2,513
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,086	,035	,012
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,091	,037	,013

In Table 1, the experienced EFL teachers have a higher mean rank than their novice counterparts, which means that they had the greatest number of high scores within the rank. In Table 2, the significance of tests was highlighted. To start with, there was not a statistically significant difference between the novice and experienced EFL teachers in terms of interventionist classroom management style, (U=108 Z=-1.71 p>0.05). However, there was a statistically significant difference between the novice and experienced English teachers



in terms of non-interventionist classroom management style (U= 96 Z=-2.10 p<0.05). Additionally, there was a statistically significant difference between the novice and experienced EFL teachers in terms of interactionist classroom management orientation (U= 84.5 Z=-2.51 p<0.05).

DISCUSSION

The researcher found that except for the interventionist approach, the teachers' level of experiences does have an impact on the effectiveness of classroom style implementation of language teachers. The two groups of teachers showed no significant difference in terms of teacher control of student's behavior in the class. This finding suggests that experienced EFL teachers do not have a more or less controlling stance in the classroom management style than novice teachers. It is an interesting finding since both groups of EFL teacher have a rules-consequences approach to classroom management. Therefore, the level of experience cannot be counted as an influencing factor on the teachers' approach to student behavior control and the classroom organization. This could be due to cultural factors as Turkey being a collectivist society, where teachers are seen to be source of power and knowledge in Turkish school culture. Teachers generally expect respect and exert authority in class settings and students are expected to obey and respect teachers (Cerit and Yüksel, 2015). This finding conflicts with the mixed finding of the studies by Martin and Baldwin (1994), which found that novice teachers are more interventionist than experienced teachers due to lack of knowledge in classroom management and the study by Okut and Öntaş (2015), which stated that years of involved in teaching was directly correlated to a preference for being interventionist. Yet, it supports Ritter and Hancock's (2007), Rahimi and Asadollahi's (2012), and Usul and Yerli's (2017) studies, whose findings indicated that experience level does not determine preferred classroom management style in this regard.

As for the non-interventionist and interactionist styles, the level of experience does indeed matter. The experienced EFL teachers acquired significantly higher scores in non-interventionist and interactionist teaching environments than the novice EFL teachers. This suggests that the experienced EFL teachers are more adept and realistic when allowing students to self-regulate their own conduct than their novice counterparts. They are more likely to let students express themselves regarding appropriate activities and to be more effectively involved in a reciprocal partnership between students and the teacher in the class when compared with the novice EFL teachers.



CONCLUSION

Classroom teaching style is crucial in student learning and development. It encompasses the strategies and actions teachers perform to provide a smooth flow of classroom procedures to foster a good learning environment. Several studies mentioned in the introduction examine possible potential influences over classroom style such as experience level, gender, and certification. In the present paper, the experience level of EFL teachers was investigated in relation to teachers' classroom management styles. EFL teachers' attitudes toward the classroom management styles were measured through the inventory with the subscales of instructional, people, and behavioral management. The data were then analyzed statistically. The finding of the study confirms that there is no statistically significant difference between the novice and the experienced EFL teacher in terms of using interventionist styles. This can be attributed to the traditional role of teachers in the classroom and to the eastern culture in which Turkish schools function (Shaw, 1998). It can be argued that teachers in Turkey are well practiced in teacher-centered classes (Kırkgöz, 2007; Çelebi and Sünbül, 2015; Yılmaz, 2015; Kaymakamoğlu, 2018). This cultural approach predates when learner autonomy and communicative activities came into educational practice with the 1997 curricula, and it might have set a precedent for the teacher's well-respected position in class. In non-interventionist and interactionist classrooms, when compared with the novice, experienced English teachers are more likely to provide appropriate space for student modification of the classroom setting. They are also more involved in classroom interactions and dialogues for effectively fostering a common voice for the classroom procedures. This finding confirms the studies stating that experienced teachers are prone to act in a more flexible and positive way (Martin, 2004; Melnick and Meister, 2008), while the novice teachers are concerned with concretely following the lesson plan and procedures (Livingstone and Borko, 1989; Kerrins and Cushing, 2000). This difference may reflect a more nuanced application of classroom skills acquired over time by the more experienced teachers. The current study suggests that novice teachers might benefit from in-service training to deepen their knowledge on classroom teaching styles, to better understand contextual flexibility, and the practice of the three classroom management styles in various contexts. In addition to this training, teacher initiatives for students, such as developing life skills, especially the skills of confronting social norms and rules appropriately, can facilitate students' autonomous learning. Workshops and in-service trainings on these topics can serve as a tool for providing for better classroom discipline (Sert, 2007; Yılmaz, 2009) and help elevate teacher standards for effective classroom management, foster more effective teaching and create a more positive learning environment for students (Egeberg, McConney and Price, 2016).



For further study, along with the experience level, teacher certifications for EFL teachers can be examined to investigate whether other variables such as diploma or certification from language and literature or linguistics versus certification from foreign language education has an impact on teachers' philosophies towards classroom management. There is a limitation in this study. As the number of participants was low, its generalizability can be questioned. Further study should include more EFL teachers to generalize the findings. The findings of the study could have been better supported by integration of qualitative research methods such as document analysis, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers. The mixed method research design should be used in further studies.



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