The Factors Affecting Classroom Management in Language Courses in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

An effective classroom management covers a wide range of knowledge and skills, such as the determination and development of rules, teacher leadership, learning styles and characteristics of the students, communication in class, motivation management, effective use of time in the classroom, organizing the classroom and setting up the learning environment. The most important function of the language teacher in the classroom is to provide a suitable learning environment and classroom organization. As an effective classroom manager, language teacher is expected to prepare for education, to determine the classroom rules with the students and make them adopt these rules as well as enabling the students to develop appropriate behaviours to learning foreign language. The aim of this study is to determine and evaluate the views of language instructors in Higher Education on the factors affecting classroom management in language courses. We asked three open ended question to the participant instructors to obtain the data: What are the most important factors to impact your effectiveness in the classroom?", "What are the rules of effective communication that you apply in the class?" and "What should you do to be successful in classroom management?" The universe of the study is made up of nine language instructors teaching English, French and German languages in Erzincan University and Namık Kemal University. The views of the language instructors obtained through face-to-face interviews show that they have some difficulties in teaching language, which result from the attitudes of the students, and their lack of interest in learning languages such as German and French. We concluded from the study that proficiency of the instructors, the interest of the students in language, the physical facilities of the classrooms, behaviours of the instructors to the students, the interest of the instructors in teaching language are of great importance to achieve effective classroom management in language classes in higher education.

Key Words: Classroom Management, Language Instructor, Proficiency of Teacher, Effective Communication, Higher Education.

1. Introduction

The individual is born in a social environment and interacts with various environments. Everything that determines the moment in which the individual lives is a social effect. With social influences, the individual begins to perceive his environment. In this process of understanding and perception, the

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individual learns to become a part of the society through socialization with others, and also becomes aware of the differences in the aspects of individuality and separation from other people. The school is the most important social environment in the process of being a member of the society and being an individual,. The school is important because it is a regular, disciplined and specialized organization, and it can keep its monopoly long after childhood.

Education is influenced by changes in society, and according to these changes, it needs reorganizing itself and also leads the reform of education society (Özdemir, 2000). However, it can be said that changing the role of education has also changed the role of the teacher. In that the principal role of the teacher is management, guidance, instruction, mediation and leadership (Can, 2009; Sural Çoban and Güler Arı, 2017), it is necessary to know the extent and the amount of change in these roles and to restructure the qualities of the teachers accordingly.

One of the key stones in the establishment of an efficient educational environment is the teacher's classroom management skill. It is undoubtedly one of the hardest sides of the teaching profession. A classroom environment, as long as classroom management is effectively used, will be governed in tune like an orchestra. In this process, as well as determining the rules to be put in the classroom, the teacher and student interaction comes to the forefront in order to ensure the continuity of its implementation, as positive teacher-student relationship includes proximity, warmth, attention and support (Yılmaz and Altunbaş, 2012; Bayar and Kerns, 2015; Kayalar and Güler Arı, 2017).

1.1. Classroom management

Classroom management is a very important element for a variety of activities, such as providing motivation for students, effective education, and increasing permanence in learning. The effective management of classrooms, the focal point of educational activities, is directly linked to the management ability of the teacher. In order to provide effective classroom management, it is important to plan lessons, courses and teaching activities, motivate students to learn, cope with unwanted student behaviours and establish classroom discipline. The main purpose of planning the teaching activities is to make them more efficient and effective within the limited time allocated for the course in the classroom environment. The most important condition of using time effectively is planning. An effective teacher is the one who plans all learning-teaching activities in advance. For this reason, the time for the activities in the school, particularly in the classroom should be spent for academic learning activities (Demirel, 2005; Şanlı, 2015).

Every organization has its own internal dynamics and interaction with its surroundings. These interactions influence the management of organizations. As in other organizations, the quality of classroom management manifests itself in each unit of education. The disruptions in the fulfilment of education goals result in deficiencies in classroom management. The aim of the instructor in classroom management in higher education is to carry out the behavioural changes expected for each student, and to create the most appropriate classroom environment and psychological atmosphere to ensure effective learning in the classroom. The instructor knows that such a classroom environment can be prepared in an approach that is appropriate to the principle of individual differences, giving priority to planned and programmed, disciplined and democratic structuring.

The social interaction in the classroom is the result of the interactions of motivated individuals, each one responsible for each other in a social setting in higher education. These interactions help students

develop social and academic learning behaviours as well as improve classroom climate. This interaction results in the workgroup's own natural status and structure, culture and social pattern.

In higher education, it is important that the teaching methods and techniques to be selected in order to establish an effective learning and teaching process and effective classroom management as well as the related instructional tasks and tactics should be done in the way in which the students can become active in the educational environment. Besides, the teaching methods chosen by the instructor in providing effective classroom management are active learning methods, which will enable students to think at the highest level, control their own learning in the learning process, make decisions and self-regulation, as well as control their own behaviour within the classroom.

1.2. The factors affecting classroom management in higher education

Factors affecting learning and teaching can also be expressed as factors influencing classroom management. However, classroom management is a broader concept that includes learning and teaching within the classroom. The traits, characteristics, competencies, and mood of a teacher are of great importance to effective classroom manager. A teacher who does not have respect, trust and desire for his profession cannot show the desired achievement in managing the class. When practicing his profession, he has to get rid of his personal feelings, opinions and beliefs. However, many teachers overstate and increase students' mistakes instead of correcting and reducing them, causing future difficulties, apathy, neglect and indifference in learning activities. If the teacher is insufficient in terms of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, the class with physical properties or a good program has no meaning.

The school management structure also has an important role in creating a positive learning environment in the school. The fact that the school management is only aiming to comply with the rules may cause the school's main purpose, effectiveness of teaching, to be taken into the second position (Celep, 2008). The attitude and functioning of school management can be regarded as one of the most important factors to impact the effectiveness of classroom management. As a social system, the school educates the student by taking it from the society and giving him back again. For this reason, classroom management and school management are highly interrelated.

In the classroom, the instructor is expected to establish a trust environment before anything else, because in a safe environment the students who engage in activities that they enjoy, believe in achieving and act responsibly do not tend to unwanted behaviours. Students who make an effort at their own pace and according to their own learning skill become more successful in their studies. The instructor, whose primary task is to socialize the students and to transfer the social culture to the students, must be able to recognize the society he lives in, along with the cultural characteristics. The instructor should know the characteristics of the organization he works in, the lifestyle, values and norms of the students in higher education.

As the communication skills are very important for classroom management, instructors should pay more attention to the language they speak while talking to the students, and should be more diligent in using a plain and fluent language that is appropriate for the level in language classes, and away from boring repetitions. They should avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations, and should be more diligent in using gestures and mimics effectively. They should establish more intimate and warmer relationships with the learners and be in close contact with the students to achieve positive communication. Teaching should not be viewed as creating academic style with incomprehensible

statements, and the instructors should be careful to write in a more plain and understandable style and should not regard academic style as an inexplicable cue. On the other hand, students should try to improve themselves and get to the level of understanding the academic language.

2. Literature Review

Bilir (2014) states in her study that the basic effect and the main factor of success in classroom management are undoubtedly to teach and the teacher himself/herself. The teacher should be competent and qualified in the field of professional development, especially in the field of student recognition. It is difficult for a teacher who does not know his / her students closely and profoundly in all directions to succeed in his / her professional life and in managing his / her class.

According to the study by Çelik (2007), in order to achieve the desired success of the in-class learning and teaching activities without interruption and at the same time the students' ability of self-management, the norms of classroom setting should be established with the students by the teachers.

In the studies by Atıcı (2007) with pre-service teachers, by Weishew and Peng (1993) and Çağlar (2008), it is argued that the reasons of unwanted behaviour in the classroom are gathered under two main headlights such as family-based one and student-based one. It is emphasized that the most important reasons of the unwanted behaviours encountered in the classroom have family origin. They divide the factors affecting classroom management into two groups as in-classroom factors and out-classroom factors.

According to Marzano (2003), it seems unlikely that effective teaching and learning can take place in a poorly managed classroom. One of the most important roles that teachers play in a typical classroom is that of classroom manager. Disorderly and disrespectful students, and no apparent rules and procedures cause chaos to become the norm.

Wright (2005) argues that managing language classrooms is a multi-dimensional activity and the learners use social, intellectual and emotional resources in classroom environment in which language is a resource. In classroom, material resources such as texts are processed, and personal resources such as resilience are brought into play during activity.

Williams and Burden (1997) state that classroom climate could cover quality of relationships, goal orientation with competitiveness, system maintenance and change including order, rule clarity, satisfaction, friction, competitiveness, difficulty and cohesiveness. Disruptive, disrespectful, and disorderly students have begun to disturb and prevent many faculty members and administrators in community colleges, private colleges, and universities from teaching and working effectively and efficiently. It is often expected that by the time students reach college they will know how to behave in a classroom.

Turanlı and Yıldırım (2000) argue that the teachers should be considerate about time management. The students expect their teacher to come to and start the lesson on time and never leave before the session is finished. Similarly, they want their teacher not to spend too much time for call roll or preparing students for group work.

Seaman (2010) explained the problematic students in Colleges and higher education, who frequently cause discipline matters in classroom and prevent instructors from managing the course. According to him the problematic students are those who do not respect other students' opinions, who monopolize

the discussion, who talk while another student is talking, who constantly ask questions, who eat in class, who make constant noise, who come to class late or leave early, who use pagers, cell phones, iPod in class, who use profanity or pejorative language, who are verbally abusive, who harass others, who cheat on tests, who threaten to harm themselves or others, who are physically violent or carry any kind of weapons, who commit sexual assault and raped.

Küçükali (2010) argues in his study that success of any education system is basically bound to the qualifications of the teachers who operate the system.

3. Materials and Method

3.1. Problem Statement and Purpose

In the study on the factors affecting classroom management in language courses we aimed to determine the views of the instructors teaching English, German and French languages in various departments in Erzincan University and Namık Kemal University, and to suggest language instructors to practice right strategies to achieve an effective classroom management in language courses. To fulfil the purpose of the study we asked the instructors "What are the most important factors to impact your effectiveness in the classroom?", "What are the rules of effective communication that you apply in the class?" and "What should you do to be successful in classroom management?".

3.2. Methods and Research Design

We used a qualitative research method to determine and evaluate university instructors'' views on the factors affecting classroom management in language courses. We preferred this kind of methodological approach as qualitative research is particularly influential in constructing the theory which is derived inductive through the field work, that is to say, the results of observations and interviews in the real world of the researcher rather than the laboratory or academy. The primary target of the research is the other researchers and academicians. Persons who benefit from the research will influence how well their research, methodological preferences and scientific values on research are found to be valid and reliable in their empirical and theoretical products of qualitative research (Patton, 2015). We conducted this research with the views of language instructors in Erzincan University and Namık Kemal University. For this reason we relied on case study design for the purpose of our enquiry. The case study design in research is chosen as it reduces the use of positivist or post positivist perspectives, accepts postmodern sensibilities, captures the individual's point of view, examines the constraints of everyday life, and secures rich descriptions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

3.3. Participants

The participants in our study were nine language instructors teaching English, French and german languages at various departments in Erzincan University (EU) and Namık Kemal University (NKU). As shown in Table 1, the youngest participant is male, with 4 years of teaching experience, teaching English in NKU, while the eldest is male, with twenty years of teaching experience, teaching English in EU. We preferred and used easily accessible sample technique in the research, as it increases the speed of collecting data and enables researchers to access the sample easily (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). We obtained the data from nine language instructors who admitted to be involved in the

interview for the research. The participants were asked whether they were contented to answer to the questions, and then we applied the tool. The names of the teachers are coded with letters and numbers.

Table 1: *Statistical data as to Gender, Age, Branch and Years of Experience*

GENDER		%	AGE		%	BRANCH		%	EXPERINCE		%
Male	4	45%	25-30 years	2	22%	English	4	45%	1-5 year 2		22%
Female	5	55%	31-35 years	4	45%	French	2	22%	6-10 years 4		45%
			36-40 years	2	22%	German	3	33%	11-15 years 2		22%
			Over 40 years	1	11%				over 16 years 1		11%

3.4. Research Instrument

In the study, we used the tool with semi structured interview form to gather data from language instructors. We asked three open ended questions to the participants. The questions were designed in accordance with the main strategies of classroom management. The questions of the interview were formed by the final judgement of three experts in the field, who are teaching staff in the Department of Educational Sciences in Erzincan University.

3.5. Data analysis

We obtained the data through one by one and face to face interview with the participants who were willing to reply to our research questions; the replies to the interview questions were matched and abstracted, the similarities being united in single statement and made into pure data. The data were then transferred and digitalized into computer in order to form digital data. We used content analysis with the percentage and frequency values.

4. Findings

We asked three open ended question to the participant instructors to obtain the data: "What are the most important factors to impact your effectiveness in the classroom?", "What are the rules of effective communication that you apply in the class?" and "What should you do to be successful in classroom management?" The instructors replied the first question as follows;

(Instructor 1, Lecturer of English with 10 years of experience) *"… First of all, I do not know my students well. I am not aware of what kind of problems they have and whether they can solve their problems or not. Some are introvert, while others are extrovert, some have sociotropic personality, while others autonomic personality. So it is difficult to keep the balance among all students…."*

From the statements of the lecturer, we can reach the conclusion that individual recognition for the students includes many features, such as their interests and abilities, their achievements and failures, levels of their personal and social cohesion, their problems, their weaknesses and strengths, their interests, attitudes and values, their developmental and inhibitory effects of the environment in which they are trained. The information about the students, which have been obtained or collected by

teaching staff or school management is not only necessary for training and instruction at school, guidance and psychological counselling for the planning of individuals' future and management services in the school environment but also for adults, who work in all parts of the industry, from public sector services to private sector services. It keeps the validity of collecting and using information related to individuals in health services, staff selection and placement services closely related to each other.

(Instructor 2, Lecturer of German with 12 years of experience) *"… The cultural backgrounds of the students in my department are different from each other and this makes it difficult for me to treat them with the same attitudes and behaviours. I become forced to be very careful even with my jokes…."*

Differences in the cultural sense and life-style of the students in any school environment can lead to differences in the outlook of an individual's appearance. Particularly skin colour and clothing discrimination can create a significant cause of conflict.

There can be an ethnic group difference, which is the main source of our cultural difference. This is caused by the prejudiced approach towards an ethnic group that is located in the neighbourhood of the school.

The religious difference or the sectarian difference within the same religion can cause some problems for the students and the instructors to consider each other. The formal approach is manifested in actions symbolizing religion. For this reason, the negative attitude of the society to approach these symbols brings with it intolerance.

A student who feels the existence of a conflict environment or who is involved in a conflict environment, cannot focus on the courses because his interest is channelled to other areas, cannot exhibit its talents and therefore cannot achieve the desired level of achievement in terms of education.

(Instructor 3, Lecturer of French with 8 years of experience) *"… In higher education every instructor has his own understanding of classroom management. Every instructor treats and behaves to the students in different way; some very tolerantly, indulgently, permissively, and patiently, while others primly, seriously, and formally. The students aren't sure how to behave in the course. The classroom rules must be the same in every course to achieve classroom management…."*

In higher education, teacher-student relationship can be considered in terms of mutual role play. This relationship is structured both by the teacher and the students with respect to their own assignments and roles. Likewise, the teacher's own role interpretation as a basis for his own perceptions and decisions determines the social relationship of the learners and thus the mode of communication. On the other hand, the teacher-student relationship is reciprocal, because the prevailing social relationship structure affects attitudes and decisions against others.

As can be understood from this statement, a proper classroom environment, efficient teacher-student communication, and an order and class rules established mutually are required for an effective education, and classroom management.

(Instructor 4, Lecturer of English with 10 years of experience) *"… Each student has his or her own learning style and the different learning styles cause me to change during the course. Some can learn better in visual-based way, some in audio-based way, while the others in kinaesthetic way. So, I sometimes have to use digital teaching tools in the course…. There are a few immigrant students and a few from other countries as Erasmus students. Their cultural understandings are not the same as those of native students, which makes my*

teaching method more complex… I always try to deal with my students as to their learning styles and cultural understandings so as to make them feel psychologically relaxed and comfortable...."

From the statements of the instructor who has taught English for ten years, an experienced instructor, we can say that the effectiveness of foreign language courses does not only depend on the learning styles of the students, but also their cultural comprehension. The text choice in relevant to the students' culture is of great importance in teaching foreign language. This proves to be very important in classroom management in terms of creating integrity of comprehension among students.

Teachers must meet the needs of the students, reinforce their successful behaviours, prepare an educational environment to help them achieve their goals, and explain their success and failures in an effort to motivate their students (Erden and Akman, 1995). The psychological atmosphere of the classroom should be in a state that comfortes the student and can express himself freely. Every student in the classroom must see enough attention from his teacher, does not have the fear of doing wrong, and if he feels himself to belong to that class, the development and motivation of the values increases (Dilekmen & Ada, 2005). The warm attitude of the teacher towards the students and the empathy with them encourage the motivation of the student. Empathy with students means being sensitive to what students may feel in that situation (Bacanlı, 2001). Motivation is considered as a power to achieve certain goals, thus students who are not motivated enough in the classroom are not expected to attend classes regularly, to focus on a subject, listen carefully to what is being told, show interest in withdrawal behaviour rather than struggle with difficulties encountered.

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

It is important for teachers to create a positive classroom climate in terms of classroom management, and students in a positive classroom climate can communicate happier, healthier and more easily adapt to the course. If there is no positive climate in the classroom, it is a reality that there will be an increase in undesired behaviours and it can go as far as to hate the school with the academic failure increasing (Üstün et al, 2017).

For an effective classroom management in language courses, common classroom rules should be prepared by the instructors at the same department in higher education. This is inevitable for the students and the instructors to keep an order in teaching and learning process. Otherwise disruptive student behaviours appear such as lateness or leaving the class early, inappropriate cell phone and laptop usage in class, side conversations, disregard for deadlines, grade grubbing, sniping remarks.

The instructors should create a positive communication with the students to prevent them from cheating others, distracting other students and instructor in class. Also the instructors should deal with the students to avoid reducing student participation, lowering other students' and instructor's motivation in or out of class. The instructors should pay attention to fairness in grading. They should make the students avoid disruptive talking, chronic avoidance of work, clowning, interfering with teaching activities, harassing classmates, verbal insults, rudeness to teacher, defiance, and hostility to staff. They should avoid not respecting the rights of other students' viewpoints, and monopolizing the discussion. Talking when the teacher or another student is speaking, constant questions that interfere with teaching, withdrawn, inattentive or sleeping in class, or reading or doing another subject in class can impede the effectiveness of classroom management.

Disruptive behaviours such as eating in class, making noise with papers, or by tapping a pen or pencil, inappropriate demands or too many demands for the teacher's attention, poor personal hygiene, offensive body odour, text messaging each other during the teaching, use of profanity or pejorative language in class, verbal abuse such as taunting, badgering, intimidation, harassment such as use of fighting words, cheating on tests, plagiarism, threats to harm others, physical violence, assault, and carrying weapons are common actions that undermine the classroom management. Therefore, all these disruptive behaviours should be prevented by a common and strict rules determined by the instructors at the same department in higher education.

As the cultural differences among students might effect the effectiveness of classroom management, particularly in the classrooms where foreign students as well as immigrant students are trained, the teachers should adjust their behaviours to avoid causing any insulting action.

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