

**THE EFFECT OF NON-VERBAL BEHAVIORS OF
TEACHERS ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

Öğretmenlerin Sözel Olmayan Davranışlarının Sınıf Yönetimi

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Abstract

Communication is a key element in instruction. Teachers and students convey messages by both verbal and non-verbal cues. Since teacher has a dominant role in the classroom; non-verbal cues of teachers have a great influence on the effectiveness of instruction. Therefore, this paper mainly discusses about the effects of non-verbal communication on college English classroom management in Turkey. The research focused on the perceptions of teachers about classroom management and students' reactions against teachers' non-verbal communication strategies. Case study was used as a research design. The study group consisted of 6 teachers. The data gathered through interviews and observations. The results showed that teachers consider the classroom management as a peaceful atmosphere, respect, and non-verbal communication. Teachers use non-verbal communication to prevent or to encourage some behaviors. Students accept or refuse the non-verbal communication. The research was conducted within a Turkish context. So, some pedagogical implications of the results were also discussed

Key words: verbal communication, non-verbal communication, classroom management, teaching English

Öz

İletişim eğitimde önemli bir yere sahiptir. Hem öğretmenler hem de öğrenciler ders içerisinde sözel ve sözel olmayan iletişimi kullanırlar. Öğretmenin sınıf içerisinde baskın bir rolü olması nedeniyle, öğretmenlerin sözel olmayan davranışlarının öğretimin etkinliği üzerinde önemli bir rolü vardır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma Türkiye'de üniversite düzeyinde İngilizce derslerinde öğretmenlerin sözel olmayan davranışlarının sınıf yönetimi üzerindeki etkilerini ele almaktadır. Araştırma öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi algısı ve öğrencilerin öğretmenlerin sözel olmayan iletişim stratejilerine karşı tutumlarını incelemektedir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden durum çalışması kullanılmıştır. Çalışma grubu 6 öğretmenden oluşmaktadır. Veriler görüşme ve gözlem yoluyla toplanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, öğretmenler sınıf yönetimini huzurlu bir ortam, saygı ve sözel olmayan iletişim olarak tanımlamaktadır. Öğretmenler, sözel olmayan davranışları bazı davranışların engellenmesi, bazı davranışların da teşvik edilmesinde kullandıklarını belirtmiştir. Öğrenciler ise sözel olmayan davranışları kabul veya reddetmiştir. Araştırma Türkiye'de yabancı dil öğretimi bağlamında gerçekleştirilmiş ve araştırma sonuçlarına göre pedagojik tartışmalar yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sözel iletişim, sözel olmayan iletişim, sınıf yönetimi, İngilizce öğretimi

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Introduction

Learner-centered teaching approaches have recently gained importance, so teachers are expected to reach all students in the classroom and incorporate them into the learning process. However, the challenges which the teachers encounter about the classroom management and discipline are not discussed adequately. Wlodkowski (1982, p.2) emphasizes the importance of discipline by saying “teachers would want to have disciplined students first if they were asked”.

Classroom management is described as shaping all of the classroom activities in accordance with the objectives of the lesson. It is accepted as one of the significant issues of an effective instructional process (Akar, 2007; Charles, 1996; Langdon, 1996; Lewis, 1999; Tantekin, 2002; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993). The first condition of classroom management is to create a learning environment encouraging students to participate into the lesson (Weinstein, 1996). Marzano, Marzano and Pickering (2003) revealed in a quantitative research that the behaviors of teachers in the classroom affect the academic achievement of students twice as much as curriculum, assessment procedures, and school policies. Some misbehaviors may occur and disrupt the learning environment despite teachers’ detailed lesson plans. Common student misbehaviors found out in many researches are making noise, speaking without taking permission, griping about his classmates, disruption, and not doing his homework (Akkök, Askar & Sucuoğlu, 1995; Atıcı & Merry, 2001).

Classroom management is mostly confused with discipline since it includes coping with misbehaviors. Actually, classroom management has four dimensions (Wong & Wong, 1998). Discipline is described as one of these dimensions (Jeanpierre, 2004; Martin & Baldwin, 1993; Stanford, Emmer & Clements, 1983). Other dimensions are arranging the physical environment, class time, and instructional materials (Wong & Wong, 1998). So, classroom management can be described as preparing and using the instructional materials, determining the class time and rules, incorporating students into the lesson, preparing the classroom activities (Brophy, 1996).

Webster’s 1913 Dictionary (2016) focuses on teaching students how to obey physical, mental, and moral rules while describing the discipline. According to Turkish Language Society (TDK) (2016), discipline is the state of obeying written or unwritten rules thoroughly. Charles (1996) describes the discipline as teaching students how to behave in an proper way and providing autonomy.

Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) categorize the teacher behaviors to set the discipline in the classroom as noninterventionist, internationalist and interventionist based on mental development approach. According to noninterventionist theory; everything is unique and has an equivalent in outer world. The teacher in this approach leaves the responsibility of achieving the classroom discipline to the students. Interventionist approach believes that we are shaped and brought up with outer world. So, teacher is responsible for setting the classroom discipline. According to interactionist approach, individual development takes place during an interaction of inner capacity of individuals and outside effects. Teacher shares the responsibility of classroom management with students in this approach (Wolfgang & Glickman 1980).

Communication between teacher and students gains importance as for classroom management and discipline. Communication is described as a process of sending and receiving some messages which convey our knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Effective instruction depends on our communication skills with students. The interaction between teacher and students lead to effective communication (Miller, 1988). So, it can be said that interactive classroom approach facilitates communication in the classroom.

Communication can be categorized as verbal and non-verbal communication (Knapp, 1972). Non-verbal communication suggests communication without utterances. This type of communication includes our facial expressions, touches, body movements, way of dressing, and communication distances.

Non-verbal communication has a great importance for classroom management. Since the communication is not a one-way interaction, what kind of non-verbal communication strategies are used by teachers and how students react to these behaviors are of a great issue for classroom management. There are many researches in the literature about classroom management, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (Çalışkan, 2003; Pektaş, 1988, Sert, 2007; Tezcan & Demir, 2006).

Since the communication is not solely a verbal way of conveying the message to the students, the effective use of non-verbal communication should be given much more importance by teachers. This research aims to highlight the shortcomings in the use of non-verbal communication and offers strategies to cope with the problems in the classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Although it has been proved by researches that most of the communication in the classroom is nonverbal, its value is still underestimated. Some teachers either lack the skill of interpreting the nonverbal cues or they do not value them. As a result, classroom teaching is still inefficient. This research is therefore geared at answering the following question:

How do the non-verbal communication behaviors of teachers affect the classroom management?

Method

Case study was used as a research design. The study group consisted of 6 teachers. The data was gathered through interviews and observations. Case study aims to interpret the situation in its own nature. Various instruments were used to gather data for verification. Case study investigates the target situation in deep and asks “why” and “how” questions to enlighten the hidden parts of the case (Yin, 2003). A school, a teacher, a group of students can be the case. In this research, the English class students in a college in İzmir province of Turkey makes up for the case.

Participants

The researcher collected qualitative data from 6 English instructors and their classes. 120 students who were enrolled into these classes were also adopted as the participants of the study. There were 20 students in each English class. I classified the teachers according to their experience of work. Teachers with 1-3 year of work-experience were named as *naïve teachers*, teachers with 4 and more years of work-experience were named as *veteran teachers*.

Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected through interviews with English instructors, class observations, and questionnaires about non-verbal communication behaviors of teachers for students. The questionnaire was developed by Çalışkan (2003). The main data collection instrument of the study was interview. The interview questions were prepared with the help of literature review by the researcher. The draft of the interview questions were checked by two academicians (a professor and a doctor) for relevance to the field. The structured forms of the interview included alternative questions to go deep during the interview. The interviews lasted 30 minutes and recorded with permission. An indepth analysis was conducted after decoding the interviews.

Class observations and questionnaires were used to supplement the data gathered from interviews.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data gathered from the interviews and class observations. Content analysis involves identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying and labelling the primary patterns/occurring themes in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Statistical analysis was applied for the data obtained from questionnaires with SPSS 20.0 program.

Findings

In this section, data from interviews, class observations, and questionnaires was discussed. It was established that teachers used quite a number of nonverbal cues in the classroom with positive impact on students’ learning and discipline.

The perceptions of teachers about “classroom discipline” were shown in Table 1. Teachers mostly describe the discipline as “order” and “disorder” in the classroom.

Table 1
Teachers’ Perceptions of Classroom Discipline

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Participants
Order	Consistent behavior	Teacher1
	Healthy communication	Teacher1,Teacher2
	Peaceful classroom	Teacher1,Teacher4,Teacher6
	Body language	Teacher1
	Respect	Teacher3
Disorder	Participation	Teacher2
	Misbehavior	Teacher1,Teacher5
	Lack of communication	Teacher1
	Stressful class	Teacher1, Teacher3

Teachers’ perceptions of student misbehavior were shown in Table 2. The most common misbehavior was described as lack of communication.

Table 2
Teachers’ Perceptions of Misbehavior

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Participants
Misbehavior	Non-participant	Teacher1,Teacher2
	Lack of communication	Teacher1,Teacher2,Teacher3
	Messy	Teacher1, Teacher2
	Unwilling	Teacher2, Teacher4
	Not prepared	Teacher2, Teacher6

Teachers’ perceptions of reasons of misbehaviors were shown in Table 3. The main reasons were described as hunger, sleeplessness and tiredness.

Table 3*Teachers' Perceptions of Reasons of Misbehaviors*

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Participants
Basic needs	Hunger	Teacher1, Teacher2, Teacher3
	Sleepless	Teacher1, Teacher3, Teacher5
	Illness	Teacher3
	Tiredness	Teacher1, Teacher2, Teacher6
Personal problems	Punishment	Teacher2
	Motivation	Teacher2, Teacher3
	Psychology	Teacher1
	Anxiety	Teacher1,Teacher3

Teachers' perceptions of ideal teacher were shown in Table 4. Teachers describe the disciplined and ideal teacher as a good instructor. He/she should attract attention to his/her lesson as well.

Table 4*Teachers' Perceptions of Ideal Teacher*

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Participants
Disciplined teacher	Good first impression	Teacher1
	Sets reasonable rules	Teacher1,Teacher2
	Good instructor	Teacher1,Teacher3,Teacher5
	Tolerates	Teacher2
	Attracts attention	Teacher3, Teacher4, Teacher5

Teachers' perceptions of outside factors were shown in Table 5. Teachers mostly wanted to have bright and technologically equipped classrooms. Additionally, teachers wanted to have settled rules from the institutions.

Table 5*Teachers' Perceptions of Outside Factors*

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Participants
Ideal classroom	Bright	Teacher1,Teacher2,Teacher3,Teacher4, Teacher5,Teacher6
	Convenient heat	Teacher1,Teacher2
	Tidy	Teacher2,Teacher6
	Equipped	Teacher1,Teacher2,Teacher3, Teacher4,Teacher5,Teacher6
Ideal constitution	Rules	Teacher1,Teacher3,Teacher4

Teachers' non-verbal behaviors for classroom management

As a result of interviews with teachers, some non-verbal behaviors were found out about classroom management. The findings were shown in Table 6. According to data from interviews with teachers, teachers mostly use either inhibiting or encouraging non-verbal behaviors. The common non-verbal behaviors for classroom management are gestures, nodding, facial expressions, dressing, and some punishments.

Table 6
Teachers' Perceptions about Non-Verbal Behaviors

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Participants	
Inhibiting	Touching with anger	Teacher.1	
	Raising voice	Teacher.2,Teacher.3, Teacher.4,Teacher.5,Teacher.6	
	Keeping silent	Teacher.3,	
	Knocking on board	Teacher.5,	
	Stepping on the ground	Teacher.3,	
	Staring	Teacher.2,	
	Talking softly	Teacher.1,	
	Keeping distance	Teacher.6,	
	Facial expressions	Teacher.1,Teacher.2,Teacher.3	
	Pulling ear	Teacher.1,Teacher.3, Teacher.4,Teacher.5,Teacher.6	
	Encouraging	Holding arm	Teacher.2,
		Using hands	Teacher.1,Teacher.2,
		Touching on shoulder	Teacher.1,
		Nodding	Teacher.1,Teacher.2,Teacher.3, Teacher.4,Teacher.5
Walking in the classroom		Teacher.1,	
Standing in front of classroom		Teacher.1,Teacher.2 ,Teacher.3,Teacher.4	
Eye-contact		Teacher.1, Teacher.2,	
Dressing clean		Teacher.1, Teacher.2,	
Well-cared hair		Teacher.2,	
Well-cared shoes		Teacher.1,Teacher.2,Teacher.3,	
Punctuality	Teacher.1,Teacher.2,Teacher.3		
Respecting the break time	Teacher.1,Teacher.2,Teacher.3, Teacher.4,Teacher.5,		

To understand the non-verbal behaviors of teachers in the classroom better, a questionnaire was applied to the students of observed teachers. Since some non-verbal behaviors may have been missed during the observations, the questionnaires provided a good source of non-verbal behaviors. Students rated the items from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (I strongly agree). The arithmetic means of items were shown in Table 7.

Table 7
Students Perceptions of Teachers' Non-Verbal Behaviors

<i>Teachers' work-experience</i>	<i>Naive</i>			<i>Veteran</i>		
	X	Ss	n	X	Ss	N
Entering the classroom						
Our teacher greets the class.	60	4,79	,60	60	4,76	,55
Our teacher usually smiles.	60	4,68	,55	60	4,29	,71

Drawing attention/Keeping silence						
Our teacher walks around the classroom.	60	4,55	,84	60	4,42	,80
Our teacher stares at us.	60	4,06	1,03	60	4,40	,69
Our teacher claps or knocks at the table.	60	3,70	1,04	60	3,73	1,13
Our teacher hits us softly.	60	2,98	1,20	60	3,20	1,35
Our teacher uses hands.	60	3,55	1,12	60	3,68	1,23
Physical Appearance						
Our teacher has well-cared hair style..	60	4,66	,50	60	4,25	,98
Our teacher has well-cared hands.	60	4,73	,51	60	4,76	,49
Our teacher has well-cared teeth.	60	4,73	,51	60	4,68	,65
Our teacher has well-cared shoes.	60	4,78	,45	60	4,77	,63
Our teacher is neat and tidy.	60	4,81	,39	60	4,83	,45
Teaching						
We can see our teacher during class.	60	4,80	,51	60	4,71	,55
Our teacher keeps eye-contact during class.	60	4,56	,87	60	4,51	,85
Our teacher sits and observes us.	60	1,38	,86	60	2,65	1,38
Our teacher walks around and observes us.	60	4,51	,79	60	4,48	,70
Our teacher teaches with pleasure.	60	4,41	,80	60	4,31	,85
Gestures						
Our teacher lets us know his discontent with gestures.	60	4,23	1,01	60	4,26	1,02
Our teacher lets us know his tiredness with gestures.	60	2,31	1,20	60	3,01	1,21
Our teacher lets us know his boredom with gestures.	60	1,81	1,11	60	2,33	1,20
Our teacher lets us know his worries with gestures.	60	2,14	1,11	60	2,64	1,19
Our teacher lets us know his anger with gestures.	60	2,68	1,32	60	3,20	1,14
Our teacher frowns.	60	2,15	1,05	60	2,81	1,30
Our teacher stares.	60	2,10	1,17	60	2,76	1,35
Our teacher nods as Our teacher gets angry.	60	1,88	1,04	60	2,18	1,24
Our teacher makes a sudden action (stands up, approaches us quickly)	60	1,48	,87	60	1,91	1,15
Space dominance						
Our teacher stands closely while speaking.	60	3,98	1,08	60	3,80	,98
Using symbols						
Our teacher nods to accept something	60	3,91	1,19	60	4,20	,81
Our teacher refuses by pushing his head behind	60	2,70	1,53	60	3,56	1,03
Using other stimuli						
Our teacher wears perfume	60	3,88	1,13	60	3,65	1,08
Punishment						
Our teacher hits us on shoulder when he gets angry	60	1,30	,69	60	1,60	1,17
Demotivating						
Our teacher does not respect break time	60	2,01	,87	60	2,10	,85
Our teacher comes to class late	60	1,53	,70	60	1,76	,92

Listening

Our teacher listens to us	60	4,64	,57	60	4,56	,61
Our teacher nods when he agrees	60	4,41	,86	60	4,42	,69

Approving

Our teacher touches our shoulder to encourage	60	3,76	1,04	60	3,66	1,11
Our teacher touches our head to show sympathy	60	3,16	1,30	60	2,76	1,30

Students’ reactions to non-verbal behaviors of teachers

To understand and find out the reactions of students to non-verbal behaviors of teachers, teachers were asked about the students’ reactions during the interviews. The observations were used to verify the data obtained from interviews.

Table 8.
Teachers’ Perceptions about Students’ Reactions

Theme	Reaction	Participants
Student behavior	Feels confidence	Teacher.1,
	Participates more than before	Teacher.5, Teacher.1,
	Accepts the teachers’ willings	Teacher.2,Teacher.4,Teacher.6

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

This research was carried out to find out how non-verbal behaviors of teachers affect the classroom management. For this reason, teachers’ classroom discipline techniques, their non-verbal behaviors in the classroom, and students’ reactions towards these behaviors were examined through interviews, class observations, and questionnaires. The findings from interviews showed that teachers use communication, keep silence in the classroom, and treat properly to students to maintain the classroom management. The findings were consistent with Weinstein’s (1996) research implying that classroom management and healthy communication in the classroom are key factors for instruction.

Teachers described the misbehaviors as not obeying the rules, interfering with the communication and instruction, spoiling the flow of teaching, and disturbing his friends. These findings were consistent with the previous researches (Akkök, Askar, & Sucuoğlu, 1995; Atıcı & Merry, 2001). According to teachers, reasons behind the misbehaviors of students were hunger, sleeplessness, illness, tiredness, punishment, and psychological problems. English class requires great amount of attention and concentration, so these kinds of misbehaviors may cause problems in the classroom.

The findings also revealed that teachers use some non-verbal behaviors to cope with misbehaviors in the classroom. These were described as inhibiting behaviors. They were used to stop misbehaviors. The common ones were touching with anger, raising voice, knocking on board, stepping on the ground, staring at students, and pulling students’ ears. On the other hand, teachers also used non-verbal communication to maintain the discipline in the classroom. These behaviors were described as encouraging behaviors. The common ones were touching on shoulder, nodding, walking in the classroom, standing in front of classroom, keeping eye-contact, dressing clean clothes, having well-cared hair, punctuality, and respecting

the break time. Students' reactions to the non-verbal behaviors of teachers were mostly positive. They either increased the participation or they accepted teachers' orders about lesson.

This research caused awareness among teachers about how they used non-verbal communication in the classroom and the importance of communication for English classes. Classroom management and communication are closely related concepts and they should be discussed in detail with in-service trainings.

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