



## The Relationship between EFL Teachers' Classroom Management Skills and Their Immediacy as Perceived by Their Learners

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### Extended Abstract:

Classroom management and immediacy have always been the interesting topics for the researchers throughout the time. However, barely has any study been done on both of teacher/learner points of view. This study is a survey type research, investigating the relationship between teachers' classroom management and verbal and nonverbal immediacy as perceived by their students. The sample contained 20 teachers and 244 students taught by these 20 teachers from three English language institutes in Tabriz. The instruments for the measurement of classroom management was Teacher Classroom Management Self-Reflection Inventory called "The Incredible Years" designed by Webster-Stratton (2012), and the questionnaire for measuring verbal and nonverbal immediacy was designed by Gorham (1988). The Wilcoxon test and spearman correlation revealed that although there was a relationship between verbal teacher immediacy (VTI) and classroom management (CM), but there was no relationship between CM and nonverbal teacher immediacy (NVTI). Further data analysis showed that teachers VTI was higher than NVTI. The basic tool for interacting with students is the behavioral cues, so some pedagogical implications were provided for the improvement of NVTI of teachers like

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including it in teacher training courses (TTC). Finally, some suggestions for further studies are stated for other researchers to conduct more comprehensible studies.

## **1. Introduction**

To make a class as effective and productive as possible, we have to manage it with orchestration and coordination of entire classroom processes (Dobrescu & Grosu, 2014). According to Van Petegem, Creemers, Rosseel and Aelterman, (2006), in order to create a classroom in which the students have good feelings, a teacher must manage the conditions of the class and be cautious and make a strong learning environment. Marzano and Marzanos' research (2003) revealed that the action taken by teachers in classrooms is important compared to what educational systems are doing. They believe that learning and teaching can't occur in a classroom which is not managed properly. Talebi, Davodi and Khoshroo, (2015, p.592) believe that teachers' aim is to create positive or negative interactions with herself/himself and the learners. If the interaction is positive, then the learners are more eager to do their duties, do exercises, carry out assignments, and learn enthusiastically.

As stated by Mehrabian (1996) for the first time, immediacy is the communication behaviors that “enhance closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another” (p. 203). He believes that by increasing “physical proximity” and “perceptual availability” of the speaker to the listener, the instructor is able to have greater immediacy. There are various studies about the relationship between immediacy and the successful learning in teaching processes. “The relationship of teacher immediacy to student learning has been explored in a series of studies which indicate that a teacher's use of communicative behavior that enhances physical and psychological closeness is positively related to learning outcomes” (Gorham & Christophel, 1990, p.46).

The study is going to answer the following research questions:

- 1- Is there any significant relationship between the learners' perceptions of their teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy?
- 2- Is there any significant relationship between the teachers' classroom management skills and the learners' perceptions of their verbal immediacy?
- 3- Is there any significant relationship between the teachers' classroom management skills and the learners' perceptions of their non-verbal immediacy?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Classroom Management**

Studies have shown that despite the courses for teacher training in most countries, teachers have always had problem with class management in real context of teaching process (Martin, Yin & Baldwin, 1998). Teachers' point of views and opinions on student behaviors and the interaction between student and teacher shapes the way they behave about classroom management tasks.

Moreover, their basic understanding of classroom management and dynamics can affect this important task (Kagan, 1992). Classroom management is not just merely the physical arrangement. A teacher should manage to teach a subject in a given period of time. Thus without the control in a teaching process, a teacher might not be successful because no one can force a student to learn a subject (Demirel, 2009).

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

##### **4.1. Results and Discussion**

This research had three parts of classroom management, verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy. For the accurate results among these three variables, the questionnaires were given to both sides (teachers and the learners). The classroom management questionnaire was filled by the teachers and the immediacy questionnaires were filled by the learners, to see if actually what do they think of the accomplishments of these variables. The previous researches were all one sided as they investigated these variables from teacher or learner point of view. However, the main aim of this research was to mix their ideas and see if there is any relationship between their ideas.

Unlike Derkhshani's (2016) study, in which the data analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between nonverbal behavior of teachers and their classroom management, surprisingly, the present research revealed the fact that there is no relationship between these two variables. The reason behind this difference of results may be the process of data gathering in which the present study gathered the classroom management questionnaire from the teacher and nonverbal immediacy questionnaire from learners of the same teacher. This comparison of the ideas of both sides may result in more accurate conclusions.

**Keywords:** : Classroom management, Verbal Immediacy, Nonverbal Immediacy

## 1. Introduction

To make a class as effective and productive as possible, we have to manage it with orchestration and coordination of entire classroom processes (Dobrescu & Grosu, 2014). According to Van Petegem, Creemers, Rosseel and Aelterman, (2006), in order to create a classroom in which the students have good feelings, a teacher must manage the conditions of the class and be cautious and make a strong learning environment. Marzano and Marzano's research (2003) revealed that the action taken by teachers in classrooms is important compared to what educational systems are doing. They believe that learning and teaching can't occur in a classroom which is not managed properly. Talebi, Davodi and Khoshroo, (2015, p.592) believe that teachers' aim is to create positive or negative interactions between herself/himself and the learners. If the interaction is positive, then the learners are more eager to do their duties, do exercises, carry out assignments, and learn enthusiastically.

Aliakbari and Darabi (2013) stated that the aim of positive educational outcomes is possible through organizing classrooms and managing learners' behaviors. Plus, teachers must have some sense of leadership in order to know the ways of motivating each learner and influence the efficiency of classroom management with this leadership style. Fideler (1997) believes that in spite of the fact that most teachers don't have the necessary training experience, most of them have the sense of leadership in them naturally. That means, they are able to make decisions about how to react with unruly learners and control the classroom. Savage and Savage (2009) mentioned two levels for classroom management: the prevention of problem, responses when problems occur. Jones (2007) believes that classroom management is the variety of techniques and models that a teacher uses to increase the motivation, learning itself, attention and focus on task and production during class hours.

As stated by Mehrabian (1996) for the first time, immediacy is the communication behaviors that "enhance closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another" (p. 203). He believes that by increasing "physical proximity" and "perceptual availability" of the speaker to the listener, the instructor is able to have greater immediacy. There are various studies about the relationship between immediacy and the successful learning in teaching processes. "The relationship of teacher immediacy to student learning has been explored in a series of studies which indicate that a teacher's use of communicative behavior that enhances physical and psychological closeness is positively related to learning outcomes" (Gorham & Christophel, 1990, p.46). Researchers who have always been interested in the relationship between teacher immediacy behaviors and students learning achievements believe "that decreased physical and/or

psychological distance between teachers and students is associated with enhanced learning outcomes" (Gorham & Zakahi, 1990, p. 354). According to Mehrabian (1971, p.1), "people approach what they like and avoid what they don't like," and he asserts that there is a positive relationship between the two individuals who communicate and try to convey their messages through their behaviors. In the case of classroom process we have the same criteria between the teacher and the learner. So as an EFL teacher we must pay attention to the ways our students think about our performance.

Gorham and Christophel (1992) noticed that one of the sources to motivate college learners was teacher behavior. About 44% of the reasons to motivate and demotivate learners belonged to instructor behavior. Data analysis presented that instructor behaviors that the learners perceived as being negative were more based on student demotivation than the positive teacher behaviors were to learner motivation. Teacher is the most significant factor in student learning (Morris, 2010). As the learners might take the teacher as their role model, so the teacher should be cautious of her/his behavior. One of the important techniques which language teachers must take care in their classes is their behavior and class management styles. Teachers set their goals for their future strategies by giving self-reflection regarding their class-management. Teacher's classroom management skills promote the socio-emotional child development and improve teacher-learner relationships (Hyland, 2014). According to Gorham and Christophel (1995), in order to reduce physical and/or psychological distance between teachers and students, we need to use nonverbal and verbal behaviors which are called teacher immediacy. Verbal behaviors are like engaging students by asking questions, praising them, calling them by name or using humor (Gorham, 1988; Neuliep, 1997). However, non-verbal behaviors are the gestures, moves, vocal expressions, smiling and eye contacts (Gorham, 1988; McCroskey, Richmond, Sallinen, Fayer & Barraclough, 1995).

Since the classroom process requires interaction between teacher and students, by relying on just the self-assessment of teachers, there will be a great loss to see if the teaching process was successful or not. According to Jones (2006), there are many teachers who have great classroom management programs, but still they are not successful enough. To this end, this study collected data on teachers' immediacy as well. Most researchers (Aliakbari, & Darabi, 2013; Beiglarzadeh, 2019; Derakhshani, 2016) have already investigated these areas in different parts of the world. However, they have mostly studied classroom management and immediacy just as perceived by the teachers only. The current study researched the relationship between the most effective elements of immediacy and class management from teacher-learner point of view. It measured the correlation between these two by a survey questionnaire

from both teachers and learners. The reason behind this study was to see if, in classes of EFL institutions in Iran, there is any relationship between classroom management of teachers and their verbal and nonverbal immediacy as perceived by their own learners. It requires both sides (students and teachers) opinions to have a more general understanding. The consequences of ignorance of these two sides may lead to unilateralism. It is better to conduct a study, then the teachers might know the relationship between classroom management, verbal and nonverbal immediacy in detail.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Classroom Management**

Studies have shown that despite the courses for teacher training in most countries, teachers have always had problem with class management in real context of teaching process (Martin, Yin & Baldwin, 1998). Teachers' point of views and opinions on student behaviors and the interaction between student and teacher shapes the way they behave about classroom management tasks. Moreover, their basic understanding of classroom management and dynamics can affect this important task (Kagan, 1992). Classroom management is not just merely the physical arrangement. A teacher should manage to teach a subject in a given period of time. Thus without the control in a teaching process, a teacher might not be successful because no one can force a student to learn a subject (Demirel, 2009).

To manage a classroom more effectively, the teacher has got the important job of managing the classroom. A study (Marzano, 2003) has shown that the actions done by the teachers in class have more effect on students' achievements than other factors like curriculum, context, assessment or testing. The relationship between classroom management and Behaviorism is a well-known theory among the EFL researchers. Behaviorism is based on the concept of 'practice'. Skinner 1953 believed that the practices called 'Behavioral Intervention Plans' support operant conditioning by which a teacher can achieve expected behavioral outcomes. Thus, he believed by rewarding learners the expected behavioral outcomes will appear. But, this theory can be used for positive and negative reinforcements. These rules and guidelines with consequences are involved in negative reinforcements, however, academic rewards represent positive reinforcements (Leon & Muarry, 1967).

One of the most important features of pedagogy is the teacher-student and student-teacher relationship which most scholars described it as caring and good relationship. Not only are these relationships influenced by age, culture, gender, but also it has effects on the learners' academic achievements and behavior (Hughes & Chen, 2011). Also Marzano (2003) believes that the reason

for resistance of the learners against rules and procedures of classroom management program may be lack of good relationship. "Faculty in all disciplines must be concerned with developing communication skills to enhance both their teaching and positive relationships with their students" (McCroskey, et al, 1995, p.289). Wentzel (1998), stated that the teacher-student support may be salient at transition points, like the transition from elementary to middle school. In his view, the teachers of these levels by doing personal communication with learners foster positive relational processes of support. "These supportive relationships help maintain students' interests in academic and social pursuits, which in turn lead to better grades and more positive peer relationships" (Derakhshani, 2016, p. 21).

Webster-Stratton developed The Incredible Years Classroom Management Program for teachers to train them to help children at classroom and have a productive session. Teachers are taught to use positive classroom management techniques and actively promote emotional literacy (Webster-Stratton et al., 2002). The broad goals of this program are to promote positive relationships with difficult learners, and strengthen social skills in the classroom; promote child social competence and academic skills. In addition, the beginner trainers after getting these training courses will be cautious to individual developmental differences for enhanced teaching efforts that are positive, enhancing and consistent (Webster-Stratton et al., 2002).

Webster-Stratton (2002) has mentioned plenty of contents and objectives for her program, but since the present study has used two of them, Building Positive Relationship with Students and Proactive Teaching, the description of them will be given below. An in-depth description of the program activities and sample materials are provided in *How to Promote Children's Social and Emotional Competence*, a book written for teachers by Webster-Stratton (1999). (Webster-Stratton et al., 2002).

### **2.1.1. Building Positive Relationship with Students**

In this section the emphasis is on building trusting and warm teacher-learner relationships. Teachers are asked to think of the ways they can build positive relationship with learners specially with those whom they have already got negative feelings. In order to increase learning and achievement in learners, which requires the effective cooperation and motivation, teachers need to make positive relationships with their learners. These bonds of relationships are important for all learners but they are vital for those who are non-compliant, shy, withdrawn and depressed. "The students who are hardest to reach are those who will benefit most from a positive relationship" (Webster-Stratton et al., 2002, p.6).

The three strategies, to show caring, belief and trust, are the suggestions of The Incredible Years Teacher Training program to help teachers build

relationship with learners during the course. The trainers instruct the teachers how to show caring by greeting each student every day in class, asking about their feelings, asking about what they have done in their real life before that session, listening to the learners and their problems, having fun times with learners outside of class, recognizing birthdays, asking them about their special hobbies and talents, sharing something personal, using descriptive comments while learners do a presentation and making them feel valued to be in the class regardless of their academic or social abilities (Webster-Stratton et al., 2002). Finally, teachers can show trust in students by giving them daily tasks and classroom responsibilities, letting them to make their own curriculum choices, encouraging collaboration among students, calling them to help each other, sharing thoughts and ideas with learners (Webster-Stratton et al., 2002).

### **2.1.2. Proactive Teaching**

Teachers may react emotionally to the learners whom are disruptive or behave in ways that are counterproductive for learning. Although this reaction to the negative behavior is understandable, it decreases the ability to think logically about how the teacher should give the most effective response to that learner. Teachers take effective proactive steps to prevent disruptive or disengaged behaviors (Webster-Stratton et al., 2002). Some of proactive teaching strategies of Webster-Stratton's programs are presented below. Further information can be found in her paper which is about this program's objectives.

Classroom rules should be developed beforehand and discussed with learners at the first session, in order to control transitions predictable schedules should be thought upon, before starting an instruction the attention of learners should be captured, learners with inattentive type and distractible behaviors should sit next to each other, the command should be clearly specific, expressed in positive terms, to redirect disengaged learners their name should be called in a question or changing the subject or standing near them and nonverbal signals should be used, if the learners exceed the limits the reminders should be in positive terms rather than negative ones, attention, praise and encouragement should be given to the learners who are continuously engaged and cautious during class, repeated commands should be avoided and nonverbal cues should be used instead (Webster-Stratton et al., 2002).

### **2.2. Immediacy**

Mehrabian (1969) defines immediacy as some communication behaviors in order to have strong "closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another" (p.302). Mehrabian (1971) believes that the basic behaviors in communicative interactions are called immediacy principles. These principles, in his view, are the ones which "people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate



highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer" (p. 1). Teachers and learners with the use of their communication channels of eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, body postures and movements can produce immediacy factors and share ideas and feelings with each other. He claims that liking increases immediacy and takes back greater liking. As the people get closer to each other and communicate more by sharing more time together, the opportunities for immediacy increase (Mehrabian, 1971).

Although non-verbal immediacy might be the focus of most researchers these days, verbal immediacy has a very important role in classroom program. Gorham (1988) described verbal immediacy as having humor, talking about personal experiences, giving feedbacks, and knowing the names of learners. Teachers who use immediacy are encouraging the learners to appreciate learning and increase the cognitive learning (Rodriquez, Plax & Kearney, 1996). Andersen, Norton and Nussbaum (1981) in a research realized that the instructor can use verbal immediacy to be perceived positively in regard to affective and behavioral learning.

The verbal immediacy cues which Gorham (1988) has found are using humor, giving positive feedback to learner's work, actions or comments, to be an active initiator all the time even outside of class. To aid the learners cognitive and affective learning, the instructor can use personal experiences and encourage the learners to participate in discussions in this way.

Mehrabian (1971) has stated that nonverbal immediacy behaviors are the abbreviations of approach and avoidance, like the lifting of a hand to greet someone is the abbreviated form of a touch. For indicating departure after a conversation, one might push back his/her chair. Rifkind and Harper (1993, as cited in Derakhshani, 2016) asserted that nonverbal immediacy behaviors are "(a) eye contact, (b) relaxed body posture and positioning, (c) gestures, (d) smiling, (e) facial and vocal expressiveness, (f) appropriate touching, and (g) physical proximity." Message receiver counts on both verbal and nonverbal signals of the message sender in Rifkind and Harper's opinion. They have concluded that sometimes the message receiver pays attention to nonverbal cues regardless of the verbal cues sent to him/her.

Gorham (1988), investigated the relationships between immediacy and learning. Unlike Andersen (1982), the focus on this paper was on the verbal behavior more than nonverbal one, he claims that verbal behavior like the nonverbal one contributes to perceived immediacy. However, in terms of process-product model for instructional interaction, verbal-linguistic behaviors have some problems. Because some variables were difficult to monitor. He concluded that as both scores of total verbal and nonverbal immediacy were significantly correlated with both effective learning and perceptions of cognitive learning, teachers use of verbal and nonverbal behaviors in class are effective.

He has developed a comprehensive questionnaire for both verbal and nonverbal behaviors of teachers, which are used in the present research to collect the data.

Konti (2011) investigated the functioning of primary school classroom management. This study investigated the qualities of teachers' classroom management studies, how they prepare teaching environment, how they prevent misbehaviors and the reasons behind them. The participants of the study consisted of teachers serving in schools. Among 308 teachers at primary schools connected to Gazimagusa County, just 170 of these teachers were included in sample. The researcher states that the questionnaire used for this study was both valid and reliable. In order to approve the validity degree of questionnaire answered by the teachers, a pilot study had been done on two schools including three classes. Then, findings revealed that there was an urgent need for teacher training programs in that country. The lack of class management skills caused insufficient control in the class. The inadequate number of inspectors in primary schools, insufficient control of teachers by the ministry, left education and teaching to teachers' conscience unfortunately.

Djigic and Stojiljkovic (2011) were interested in Martin and Baldwin's classroom management styles called: interventionist, noninterventionist and interactionist. Their aim was to study the relation between teachers' classroom management programs, satisfaction with classroom climate and learners' achievement. The sample was about 273 primary school teachers. Their instrument was *Protocol for Classroom Management Styles Assessment* (PCMSA), designed for the study purpose (Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011). The investigation revealed that teachers' classroom management style is a very important factor for effective teaching, especially considering students' school achievement. Both teachers and students are the most satisfied with the classroom climate of interactionist style. Further findings were about the evidences which showed how students' achievements were at its highest when the teachers practiced interactionist style, and at its lowest when the teachers were interventionist.

Derakhshani (2016), in his thesis for master degree, investigated the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and classroom management. His study was a mix method one with both quantitative and qualitative among 100 learners through convenient sampling in Tehran city. His questionnaires made use of Andersen, Andersen and Jensen's five point Likert scale nonverbal immediacy instrument and Behavior and Instructional Management (BIMS) questionnaire developed by Glickman and Tamashiro (1980) to measure classroom management. Both questionnaires were distributed among the learners. The research concluded that there was a clear relationship between the two variables. Also the observations of class by the researcher validated the quantitative results.

Plax, et al (1986) study was the sixth in a series of projects designed in order to examine teacher power in the classroom. Already recognizing that nonverbal behaviors prepares some frameworks to convey verbal messages, this project proposed a model of learner's affective learning as a function of behavior changing techniques and teacher's nonverbal immediacy. Their main hypothesis was to see if students' perceptions of teachers' selective use of BAT (Behavioral Alteration Techniques) and nonverbal immediacy was associated with students' affective learning or not? And whether teachers' selective use of BATs will be significantly associated with student perceptions of teacher immediacy or not? To see if a linear combination of teacher immediacy and BAT use will be positively associated with student affective learning, the model was tested on in some stages across secondary and college learners. The researchers believe that the basic design of their studies was similar to the researches done by the Richmond and McCroskey (1984) and the McCroskey et al. (1985). In the first study of this investigation, secondary school teachers were requested to have their students (N = 620) complete three instruments: BATs, teacher immediacy, and student affective learning questionnaires. The second study consisted of a sample of collage learners from various courses and various colleges at a well-known university (N = 1320) who completed the same three questionnaires. They concluded that students' affect is primarily a function of perceptions of teacher nonverbal immediacy, teachers used some selective verbal behaviors which indirectly helped for the affective learning of students.

Christensen and Menzel (1998) tried to show the relationship between the variables of immediacy behaviors and learners' learning procedure as they occur in actual relationships between college professors and learners. The sample consisted of 115 undergraduate students recruited from two sorority houses, three fraternity houses, and one introductory level communication class at a small, mid-western university. The students were given a 4-part survey, Christophel's (1990) State Motivation Scale was used to assess the "degree to which subjects were motivated" in the last class they attended, measuring state motivation, perceptions of nonverbal and verbal immediacy, and several aspects of perceived cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning. After analysis of the data, they found positive, linear relationships between teacher nonverbal and verbal immediacy and perceived cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning. Also there was positive, linear relationship between both kinds of teacher immediacy and student motivation.

The aim of the current study was to measure the relevance of immediacy and class management of teachers. There are lots of studies (Gorbani, 2017; Hyland, 2014; Jones, 2007) which have measured each of them by other elements but there is barely similar research to this one as it is a more comprehensive and general one since it takes both sides' (teachers, learners)

opinions into consideration. Unlike the study done by Derakhshani (2016), the present study will investigate both verbal and nonverbal immediacy of the teachers perceived by their learners and classroom management behaviors perceived by the teachers themselves.

The study is going to answer the following research questions:

1- Is there any significant relationship between the learners' perceptions of their teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy?

2- Is there any significant relationship between the teachers' classroom management skills and the learners' perceptions of their verbal immediacy?

3- Is there any significant relationship between the teachers' classroom management skills and the learners' perceptions of their non-verbal immediacy?

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants

In this research, 244 participants out of 254 learners and 20 teachers out of 21, including 10 male and 10 female instructors were selected among the classes of the teachers with at least two years of experiences. For the practicality of the study, the participants were chosen among intermediate, upper intermediate and advance EFL learners from language institutions from Tabriz city. Although some famous institutions of Tabriz refused to cooperate in this research, because of some unknown personal reasons of the instructors, the present study's data collection was judiciously chosen from three institutions in Tabriz city hence the researchers had only access to this city and travelling to other cities of Iran was difficult and time consuming.

**Table 3.1.**

*The Information about Advanced Participants*

	No.	Age	Gender	L1	Level	Degree
Teachers	20	23-45	Female, Male	Turkish, Azeri	Advanced	B.A., M.A.
Learners	244	16-30	Female, Male	Turkish, Azeri	Intermediate, Advanced	<u>Undergraduated</u> , B.A.

#### 3.2. Materials and Instruments

##### 3.2.1. Classroom Management

The first instrument to measure the EFL teachers' classroom management skills is a questionnaire which contains two parts from The Incredible Years' Teacher Classroom Management Self-Reflection Inventory items, which was designed by

Webster-Stratton (2011) and enjoys a high level of reliability ( $=0.91$  according to Hickey, 2017). The two chosen sets are labeled as 'Building positive relationship with children' which has 16 items and the 'Proactive teacher rules' which has eight items which were answered by teachers. The questionnaires use five scale Likert type. The reason why this questionnaire was chosen for this study is that Webster-Stratton has developed a comprehensive program for the classroom management and other programs for EFL teachers and languages in her book called *Incredible Years* and she has carried out some studies on EFL. The Classroom Management Questionnaire was previously piloted by Beiglarzadeh (2019) in the context of Iranian ELT in Tabriz, East Azarbaijan with a reported reliability of (.82) computed using Cronbach's alpha. Hence, this questionnaire was not piloted in the current study.

### **3.2.2. Immediacy**

To measure the teacher immediacy, the five scale Likert type questionnaire designed by Gorham (1988), with the reliability of 0.87 (as cited in Richmond, et al, 1987) were distributed to the students taught by the same teachers. It has got two parts of verbal and non-verbal one to obtain more precise results about the performance of teachers in classes. Verbal part has 20 items and the non-verbal part has 13 items. The reason behind the selection of this questionnaire is that Gorham's work has always been the researchers concern in the study of immediacy and is quite well-known in this field (Gorham, 1988).

Both verbal immediacy questionnaire and nonverbal immediacy questionnaire have already been validated and employed in the context of the present study and were found reliable enough with reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of 0.73, to 0.94 (Gorbani, 2017; Hosseini, 2016).

### **3.3. Procedure**

As this study is a quantitative study, two separate questionnaires for this study were used which are valid and reliable. The two sets of questionnaires related to classroom management were given to twenty teachers who teach intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced levels with at least two years of experience in this field. However, the other questionnaires related to the immediacy of the teachers were given to the learners of the same teachers.

For the distribution of the questionnaires, the co-ordination and preparations were discussed with the institution authorities beforehand. For each class, a set of questionnaires including one classroom management questionnaire for the teacher and immediacy questionnaires for the learners of that class, were distributed. For the sake of saving time and accuracy of the data collection, the researcher did the process of distribution herself. The answer sheets of learners who were reluctant to answer the items thoroughly were omitted at first hand.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

This study is about three interval variables of classroom management, nonverbal immediacy, and verbal immediacy. Firstly, the scoring process of the data was done for the clarity and honesty of the gathered data. In the scoring process the items which were negatively scored were taken into consideration carefully. Like other statistical studies, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run on the two sets of the research data to check the normality of the score distributions.

The first research question delved into the differences in the participating students' perception of their teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy. Since the samples were statistically different from each other to test the significance of the observed difference, thus, the Wilcoxon nonparametric test was employed.

For the second question, the relationship between the groups' VTI, as measured by the VTI Questionnaire, and their teachers' CM, as measured by the CM Questionnaire, was investigated using Spearman's correlation test.

For the third question, to test the significance of the relationship between the group's NVTI was measured by the NVTI questionnaire, and the CM was examined using Spearman's correlation test. The reason behind using Spearman's correlational test in these two questions was to find the strength and direction of association between the two mentioned ranked variables of each question separately.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results

#### 4.1. Normality of the Data

Prior to conducting the statistical analysis, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run on the two sets of the data to check the normality of the score distributions. Table 4.1. presents the results for the verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy scores.

**Table 4.1.**

*Tests of Normality of Learners VTI and NVTI Scores*

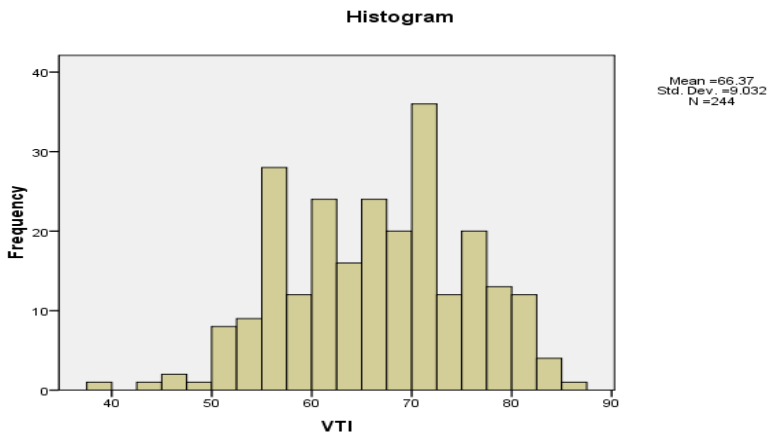
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
VTI	.058	244	.047	.988	244	.038
NVTI	.084	244	.000	.987	244	.028

**a. Lilliefors Significance Correction**

As it is displayed in Table 4.1, the score sets obtained from the verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy questionnaires were not normally distributed, ( $Sig < .05$ ). Figures 4.1. and 4.2 illustrate the score distributions of the data.

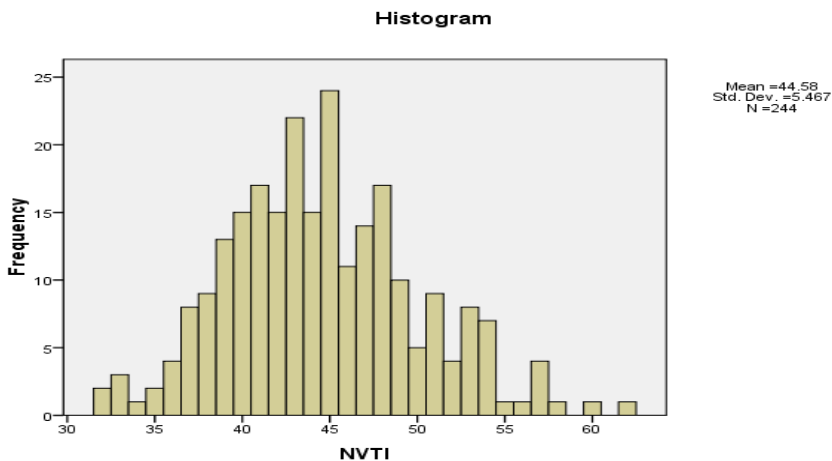
**Figure 4.1.**

*The Normality of the Group's VTI Scores*



**Figure 4.2.**

*The Normality of the Group's NVTI Scores*



## 4.2. Response to RQ 1

The first research question delved into the relationship between the participating students' perception of their teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy. Therefore, the descriptive statistics of the participants' verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy were computed and are presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2.**

*Descriptive Statistics of Learners' VTI and NVTI Scores*

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Percentiles		
		25 <sup>th</sup>	50 <sup>th</sup> (Median)	75 <sup>th</sup>
VTI	244	59.00	67.00	73.00
NVTI	244	41.00	44.00	48.00

As it is indicated in Table 4.2, the participants reported a higher score for their teachers' verbal immediacy than their nonverbal immediacy. To test the significance of the observed relationship, thus, the Wilcoxon nonparametric test was employed the results of which are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3.**

*Wilcoxon Test of Learners' VTI and NVTI Scores*

Test Statistics <sup>b</sup>	
	NVTI – VTI
<b>Z</b>	-13.53
<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.00
<b>a. Based on positive ranks.</b>	
<b>b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test</b>	

A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant relationship in the participants' VTI and NVTI,  $z = -13.53$ ,  $p < .001$ , with a large



effect size ( $r = .61$ ). The median score on the VTI scale was significantly higher ( $Md = 67$ ) than the NVTI ( $Md = 44$ ).

So for the response of the first research question which was to see if there is any significant relationship between the learners' perceptions of their teacher's verbal and nonverbal immediacy, the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant relationship between the learners' perceptions of their teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy.

**4.3. Learners' VTI and their teachers CM**

Research questions two and three dealt with the relationship between the 20 classes of the learners' verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy and their teachers' classroom management. To answer these research questions, hence, the means of the classes were first computed so that the mean of each class can be correlated with the teachers' classroom management taught by the same teacher. The results of the 20 classes mean scores and their teachers' classroom management scores are presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4.**

*The Means of the VTI and NVTI Scores and Their Teachers' CM Mean Scores*

VTI	NVTI	CM
62.76	44.71	80
70.31	43.85	84
56.36	45.64	84
73.36	42.82	102
61.50	41.67	75
81.83	46.67	101
54.86	46.43	98
71.92	41.50	103
69.35	46.53	105
69.00	45.71	104
68.00	48.44	88
72.07	42.67	95
60.67	40.73	93
63.33	45.80	90
58.45	44.36	87
59.20	40.10	82
71.38	53.69	95
71.56	47.67	95
67.27	42.27	100
73.00	41.60	101

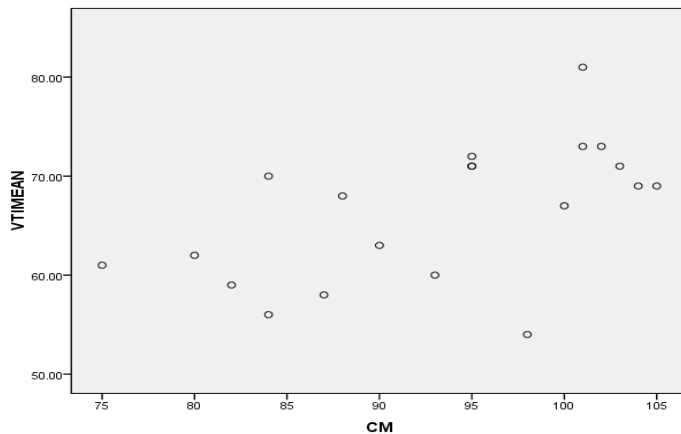
#### 4.4. Response to RQ 2

The second research question addressed the relationship between the learners' VTI and their teachers' CM. Prior to conducting any correlational analyses, however, it was essential to check the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity of the pair of variables. Figure 4.3 illustrates results of the analyses for VTI and CM.

From the output in Figure 4.3, there appears to be a slight positive correlation between the participants' verbal immediacy and their classroom management which verifies the linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions. The relationship between the groups' verbal immediacy, as measured by the verbal immediacy questionnaire, and their teachers' classroom management, as measured by the classroom management questionnaire, was investigated using Spearman's correlation test. Table 4. 5 displays the results.

**Figure 4.3.**

*Scatterplot (BIVAR) = VTIMEAN with CM*



**Table 4.5.**

*The Relationship between Learners' VTI and Their Teachers CM*

		VTIMEAN	CM
VTIMEAN	Correlation	1.00	.58
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007
	N	20	20
CM	Correlation	.581	1.00
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.
	N	20	20

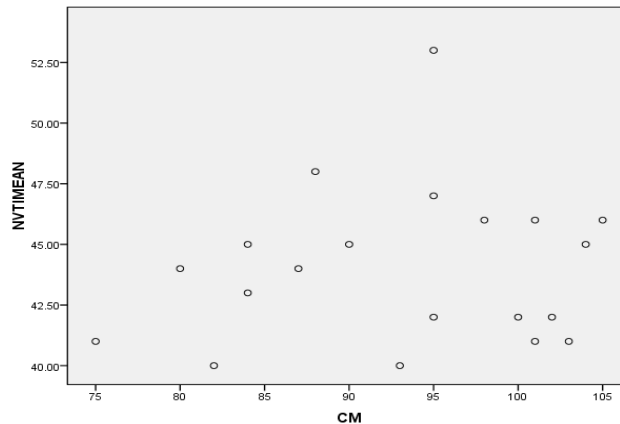
There was a significant positive correlation between the two variables,  $r = .58$ ,  $n = 20$ ,  $p < .05$ , with high levels of verbal immediacy associated with high levels of classroom management. Hence, the second research question is answered positively and the corresponding null hypothesis is rejected. So for the response of the second research question which was to see if there is any significant relationship between the teachers' classroom management skills and the learners' perceptions of their verbal immediacy, the hypothesis is accepted and the corresponding null hypothesis is rejected. So according to the data analysis there is a significant relationship between the teachers' classroom management skills and the learners' perceptions of their verbal immediacy.

#### **4.5. Response to RQ 3**

The third research question was concerned with the relationship between the learners' nonverbal immediacy and their teachers' classroom management. First of all, the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity were checked for the two sets of scores, as illustrated in Figure 4.4.

**Figure 4.4.**

Scatterplot (BIVAR) = VTIMEAN with CM



From the output in Figure 4.4, there appears to be a broad association between the two research variables, which broadly verifies the linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions. Hence, the relationship between the group's nonverbal immediacy, as measured by the nonverbal immediacy questionnaire, and the classroom management was examined using Spearman's correlation test. Table 4.6 displays the results.

**Table 4.6.**

*The Relationship between Learners' NVTI and Their Teachers CM*

		NVTIMEAN	CM
NVTI	Correlation	1.000	.149
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.530
	N	20	20
CM	Correlation	.149	1.000
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.530	.
	N	20	20

There was a small positive but insignificant correlation between the two variables,  $r = .149$ ,  $n = 20$ ,  $p < .05$ . Hence, the third research question is

answered negatively and the corresponding null hypothesis is verified; that is, there was not a significant relationship between the participants' nonverbal immediacy and their teachers' classroom management.

So for the response of the third research question which was to see if there is any significant relationship between the teachers' classroom management skills and the learners' perceptions of their nonverbal immediacy, the null hypothesis is accepted and the hypothesis is rejected. So according to the data analysis there is no significant relationship between the teachers' classroom management skills and the learners' perceptions of their nonverbal immediacy.

This chapter contained the statistical measurements of the data analysis with some brief explanation for each table and figure to clarify the findings. Firstly, the normality of the data for verbal and nonverbal immediacy was measured and shown through histograms. Then for each question the related test was conducted carefully with the results shown in tables and figures in each part. The next chapter deals with the discussion part for the findings with some implications for further studies.

## **4.2. Discussion**

As the table 4.4. indicated, this research had three parts of classroom management, verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy. For the accurate results among these three variables, the questionnaires were given to both sides (teachers and the learners). The classroom management questionnaire was filled by the teachers and the immediacy questionnaires were filled by the learners, to see actually what they think of the accomplishments of these variables. The previous researches were all one sided as they investigated these variables from teacher or learner point of view. However, the main aim of this research was to mix their ideas and see if there is any relationship between their ideas.

Unlike Derkhshani's (2016) study, in which the data analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between nonverbal behavior of teachers and their classroom management, surprisingly, the present research revealed the fact that there is no relationship between these two variables. The reason behind this difference of results may be the process of data gathering in which the present study gathered the classroom management questionnaire from the teacher and nonverbal immediacy questionnaire from learners of the same teacher. This comparison of the ideas of both sides may result in more accurate conclusions.

The study done by Konti (2011) revealed that there was a serious need for TTC (Teacher Training Courses) in his area for novice teachers to have a clear understanding of classroom management programs. The data analysis of the present research revealed that for the relationship of nonverbal immediacy and classroom management, at least, the teachers need to improve their nonverbal behaviors. As McCroskey, et al, (1995, p.289) have stated "it would seem reasonable to suggest that when the student evaluates immediate teachers more positively than non-immediate teachers, the student is at least *usually* right". Many researches have already indicated the importance of nonverbal behavioral cues in ELT (Plax, et al, 1986). Mehrabian (1971) believes that nonverbal immediacy behaviors are actually the forms of approach and avoidance and it contributes to the feelings of like and dislike. Also McCroskey, et al, (1995, p.290) have stated the importance of nonverbal immediacy behaviors in their study: "The fact that nonverbal immediacy has similar impact in both areas actually points toward the validity of student evaluations".

Christensen and Menzel (1998), after analysis of data, found positive, linear relationships between teacher nonverbal and verbal immediacy and perceived cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning. They stated the fact that "both verbal and nonverbal immediacy should always be considered when studying immediacy and learning outcomes" (p. 89). However, in this study the results revealed that there was a significant difference between these two variables and the mean for verbal behavior was higher than the nonverbal one. It again shows the lack of nonverbal behavior skills in the teachers.

Like immediacy behaviors, the right selection of classroom management programs is also important. Plax, et al (1986) stated that "in a more constructive response to the need for student control, educators and researchers alike have been examining potential classroom management techniques that elicit active student cooperation in the learning process" (p.43). Similar to the study done by Djigic and Stojiljkovic (2011), the investigation revealed that teachers' classroom management style is very important factor for effective teaching, especially considering students' school achievement. Both teachers and students are very satisfied with classroom climate of teacher-interactionist created style. So the results of this study shows that there is no relationship between the classroom management and nonverbal immediacy which means there is a need to strengthen classroom management skills which are related to nonverbal behaviors as well. Also Plax et al (1986) found out that "students evaluate highly those teachers who are immediate and who employ selective behavior alteration techniques in classroom management. Consequently, positive student affect requires both an approach orientation as well as *particular* use of control strategies from their teachers"(p. 52).

## 5. Conclusion and Implications

Calero (2005) believes that by receiving information which is not written or spoken, our mind comprehends it as something nonverbal. As a human-being, we are able to convey some information through written or spoken communication. Our five senses receive nonverbal messages. It is a kind of silent language which even existed before the invention of language.

According to Derakhshani (2016), "when it has been proven that nonverbal immediacy has positive effect on classroom management so using nonverbal actions can improve classroom management" (p. 125). As the school/English language institution administrators see teachers' poor classroom management rules as the reason for their unsuccessful teaching, so they don't hire them (Savage & Savage, 2009). Also Christensen and Menzel (1998, p.88) found out that "teachers with unacceptable manifestations of immediacy in actual classrooms, we would hope, would either change their behavior or somehow be washed out of the system". So there is a need for the teachers to improve, according to the results of this research, both classroom management and immediacy skills, especially the nonverbal ones. An efficient learning environment is not possible if the relationship between students and teachers is not strong enough.

As it was mentioned in the literature review, some immediacy behavior tips might not be applicable to all cultures, because it might have negative implications among the message receiver and message sender. Johnson and Miller's study (2002) revealed the way individuals from different cultures may perceive specific items that supposedly define immediacy for U.S. learners in their study sample. Neuliep (1997), in a comparison of American and Japanese learners, concluded that learners perceive the immediacy signs of American teachers greater than that of Japanese teachers. In the case of Iran, English language institutions can provide some TTC programs for the novice teachers to teach these basics of teaching process, behavioral cues, and the education itself. Surely they will be able to set some rules and programs for immediacy and classroom management skills suitable to Iranian culture and social behavior.

Like any other research, the process of data collection consumed a lot of time as some institutions were reluctant to participate in the procedure. It was better to collect the data from multiple numbers of institutions in Tabriz or even Iran, but due to the upper reason and the distance problems of other cities the data were collected from just three institutions. The number of the learners in each of the classes were different. Although the process was done with scoring and the mean for each class was measured, still for the classes with low number

of learners, like less than 10 learners, the results might not be accurate. In some of the classes some students were absent, however, their responds to the questionnaire might have been crucial. Some questionnaires were left out because the learners had responded to half of the items for un-knowable reasons.

The current study had an aim of finding the relationship between three variables unlike the other works done by researchers previously. It contains the idea of both sides (teacher & learner) to make it more comprehensible. The data collection consisted of 50% (N=10) male instructors and 50% (N=10) female ones to get justly results, although gender was not the concern of the research questions. Also the teachers were chosen according to the years of their experiences. Since the novice teachers might not be familiar enough with the mood and formats of teaching process, so the ones with at least two years of experience were chosen. The institutions were chosen carefully according to the years of their experience as well. More data were gathered, in case, if one class could be omitted because of various reasons.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: The Incredible Years, Carolyn Webster-Stratton, 2012

#### Teacher Classroom Management Self-Reflection Inventory

Directions: For each statement below, please mark the response that best describes what you do in the classroom. There are no right or wrong answers, so please respond as honestly as possible.

1: Strongly disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neither agree nor disagree 4: agree 5: Strongly agree

1 – Never 3 – Occasionally 5 - Consistently

<b>Building Positive Relationships with Children</b>	
1. I greet my students upon arrival with personal and positive greeting (e.g., using learner's name).	1 2 3 4 5
2. I interact with my students with warmth, caring and respect.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I speak calmly and patiently to my students.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I listen to my students and avoid judgmental or critical responses.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I provide sincere, enthusiastic, and positive feedback to my students about their ideas.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I personalize my communications with individual students (e.g., ask about life outside of school, their special interests, hobbies or favorite books, share something personal about self to children, acknowledge birthdays).	1 2 3 4 5
7. I spend special time with each of my students.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I communicate the belief to my students that they can succeed and promote their positive self-talk.	1 2 3 4 5

9. I individualize each student's needs, interests and abilities (e.g., planning activities or stories based on special interests of learners).	1 2 3 4 5
10. I help children in the classroom to appreciate each other's special talents and needs.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I am student-directed in my approach and behave as an "appreciative audience" to their attendance.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I avoid question-asking, directions and corrections when possible.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I share my positive feelings when interacting with my students.	1 2 3 4 5
14. I invite my students to help with classroom jobs and responsibilities.	1 2 3 4 5
15. I adjust activities to be developmentally appropriate for each learner.	1 2 3 4 5
16. I work to convey acceptance of individual differences (culture, gender, sensory needs) through diverse planning, material and book selections, and discussion topics.	1 2 3 4 5

1 – Never 3 – Occasionally 5 - Consistently

<b>Proactive Teacher – Rules</b>	
1. I state rules positively and clearly and they are posted on the wall. They are reviewed and practiced as needed.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I use nonverbal cues and signals to communicate rules as well as words.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I state requests or give directions respectfully using brief descriptions of positive behaviors desired.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I give students choices and redirections when possible.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I avoid negative commands, corrections, demands, and yelling at learners.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I get learner's attention before giving instructions.	1 2 3 4 5

7. I redirect disengaged learners by calling out their name with a question, standing next to them, making up interesting topics, and nonverbal signals.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I give frequent attention, praise and encouragement to learners who are engaged and following directions.	1 2 3 4 5

**Appendix 2: Verbal and Non-Verbal Teacher Immediacy Questionnaire  
Gorham, (1988)**

<b>Verbal and Non-Verbal Teacher Immediacy Questionnaire (Gorham, 1988)</b>	
Instructions: Please circle the answer that best describes your EFL teacher:	
1= Never 2= Rarely 3= Sometimes 4= Often 5= Very often	
<b>Verbal items:</b>	
1. Uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class. 1 2 3 4 5	
2. Asks questions or encourages students to talk. 5	1 2 3 4
3. Gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be part of his/her lecture plan. 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Uses humor in class. 5	1 2 3 4
5. Addresses students by name. 5	1 2 3 4
6. Addresses me by name. 5	1 2 3 4
7. Gets into conversations with individual students before or after class. 5	1 2 3 4
8. Has initiated conversations with me before, after or outside of class. 1 2 3 4 5	
9. Refers to class as "my" class or what "I" am doing. 5	1 2 3 4
10. Refers to class as "our" class or what "we" are doing. 5	1 2 3 4
11. Provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc. 5	1 2 3 4 5
12. Calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk. 5	1 2 3 4 5
13. Asks how students feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic. 1 2 3 4 5	
14. Invites students to telephone or meet with him/her outside of class if they have questions or want to discuss something. 5	1 2 3 4 5

15. Asks questions that have specific, correct answers. 5	1	2	3	4
16. Asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions. 5	1	2	3	4
17. Praises students' work, actions or comments. 5	1	2	3	4
18. Criticizes or points out faults in students' work, actions or comments. 1 2 3 4 5				
19. Will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students or with the class as a whole. 1 2 3 4 5				
20. Is addressed by his/her first name by the students. 5	1	2	3	4
<b>Nonverbal items:</b>				
21. Sits behind desk while teaching.	1	2	3	4
22. Gestures while talking to class.	1	2	3	4
23. Uses monotone/dull voice when talking to class. 5	1	2	3	4
24. Looks at class while talking. 5	1	2	3	4
25. Smiles at the class as a whole, not just individual students. 5	1	2	3	4
26. Has a very tense body position while talking to the class. 5	1	2	3	4
27. Moves around the classroom while teaching. 5	1	2	3	4
28. Sits on a desk or in a chair while teaching. 5	1	2	3	4
29. Looks at the board or notes while talking to the class. 5	1	2	3	4
30. Stands behind podium or desk while teaching. 5	1	2	3	4
31. Has a very relaxed body position while talking to the class. 5	1	2	3	4
32. Smiles at individual students in the class.	1	2	3	4
33. Uses a variety of vocal expressions while talking to the class. 5	1	2	3	4



## بررسی ارتباط بین مهارت مدیریت کلاس معلمان و فوریت کلامی آن‌ها بر اساس دیدگاه زبان آموزان (پژوهشی)

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### چکیده

همواره در طول زمان مهارت مدیریت کلاس و فوریت های کلامی مورد توجه محققان قرار گرفته است. هرچند تعداد تقریباً هیچ تحقیقی نظر هر دو طرف معلم و زبان آموز را در نظر نگرفته است. این پایان نامه یک تحقیق نظرسنجی است که مهارت مدیریت کلاس و فوریت های کلامی معلمان را از دیدگاه دانش آموزان بررسی میکند. جامعه ی آماری شامل ۲۰ معلم و ۲۴۴ زبان آموز که توسط همان معلم آموزش دیده اند، است. ابزار نظرسنجی برای مهارت مدیریت کلاس پرسشنامه ی وبستر اسرتن (۲۰۱۲) با همین عنوان بود. ابزار نظرسنجی برای فوریت های کلامی لفظی و عملی، پرسشنامه ی طراحی شده توسط گره‌م (۱۹۸۸) بود. حاصل آنالیز های مربوط آماری نشان داد که هرچند بین فوریت کلامی لفظی و مهارت مدیریت کلاس معلمان ارتباطی وجود دارد، اما، ارتباطی بین مهارت مدیریت کلاس و فوریت کلامی عملی آن‌ها ارتباطی موجود نیست. تحقیقات آماری بیشتر نشان داد که فوریت کلامی لفظی معلمان از فوریت کلامی عملی آن‌ها بیشتر است. از آنجایی که اصلی ترین مشخصه برای ارتباط با زبان آموزان اشاره های رفتاری است، پس برای بهبود فوریت های کلامی عملی آن‌ها برخی ملزومات آموزشی و پرورشی، همانند دوره های تربیتی معلمان، تهیه شده است. و در آخر، برخی پیشنهادات برای تحقیقات آینده ی محققان برای به وجود آمدن تحقیقات قابل درک تر فراهم شده است.

**کلیدواژه‌ها:** مهارت؛ مدیریت؛ کلاس؛ فوریت؛ کلامی.

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