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## On the relationship between EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and the dominant teaching style: A mixed method study

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### ABSTRACT

As a factor contributing to a successful teaching career, classroom management can be affected by many latent and explicit variables. In this mixed method study, the researchers sought to scrutinize the possible connections among EFL teachers' classroom management approaches at two dimensions of behavior management and instructional management and the dominant teaching style. To this end, the researchers administered the Behavior and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS) by Martin and Sass (2010) and the Teaching Style Inventory (TSI) by Grasha (1996) to 103 randomly selected EFL teachers working at private language learning centers. Following the quantitative phase of the study, semi-structured interview sessions were held to gain more in-depth understanding of the research problems. Descriptive statistics, Pearson moment correlational analyses, regression analyses and theme analyses were implemented to analyze the data. The results of the study showed that Iranian EFL teachers followed interventionist or controlling classroom management approaches (at both dimensions of behavior and instructional management) and predominantly use the formal authority teaching style. Moreover, their teaching style(s) significantly correlated with both behavior management and instructional management. The findings of this study have important implications for practicing teachers, teachers in training and teacher trainers. Practicing teachers need to examine their own classroom management approaches and teaching styles to see whether these practices are conducive to successful language learning.

**Keywords:** EFL teachers; classroom management approaches; teaching style; Iran; teaching English

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## Introduction

Seeking a flourishing teaching career and building a successful learning environment seem endless quests for many teachers. Through this journey, teachers might note a diverse set of influential elements relating to successful teaching and learning. Two commonly voiced issues contributing to successful teaching and learning are classroom management (Marzano & Marzano, 2003) and teaching styles (Knowles, 1980). Classroom management is defined as a wide range of teachers' efforts to supervise students' learning activities, social interactions, and behaviors (Brophy, 1988; Burden, 2005; Good & Brophy, 2003; Wolfgang & Glickman, 1986). Teaching style refers to teachers' personal behaviors and techniques used to transmit and/or receive data from students (Kaplan & Kies, 1995).

A well-managed classroom generates a stress-free environment where positive learning is experienced and students feel increased sense of belonging to classroom (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007). Brophy (1988) asserted that one of the determining factors in effective classroom management is the use of appropriate instructional methods to maximize learning which suits the academic needs of students. Further, Yilmaz and Çavaş (2008) held that teachers' teaching styles could be affected by their classroom management orientations.

Managing a language-learning classroom demands specific skills and expertise on the part of teachers (Brown, 2001). In an EFL classroom, management goes well beyond setting discipline and exerting physical control. Having said that, EFL teachers' more challenging task is developing rapport with the learners (Wright, 2005). Additionally, drawing an efficient lesson plan, selecting appropriate material for teaching that fits the learners' proficiency level, shaping a friendly learning environment and using desirable teaching styles reflect the complexity of EFL teachers' job (Harmer, 2007). Although the literature attests to the contribution of effective classroom management and teaching style to successful language learning, scant attention has been paid to the relationship between EFL teachers' classroom management and teaching style and other variables (Brown, 2007). This study aimed at capturing a more contextualized snapshot of EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and teaching styles and sought to determine whether there is any correlation between the aforementioned variables.

## Theoretical Framework

### *Classroom Management Approaches*

Although classroom management is a multifaceted phenomenon, Martin, Yin and Baldwin (1998) proposed that classroom management manifests itself in three main areas: behavior management, people management, and instructional management. Given this categorization, teachers' efforts to help students as individuals fall in the category of people management; their attempts at monitoring students' behaviors pertain to behavior management; and finally, teachers' attempts at selecting materials and setting daily routines belong to instructional management. These early categorizations underwent a few changes later on and the newly developed classroom management classifications, on which the current study is based, consist of behavior management and instructional management (Martin & Sass, 2010).

Wolfgang and Glickman (1986) proposed a model for teachers' classroom management approaches. Within this model, teachers' approaches to classroom management vary from more

controlling or interventionist to less controlling or non-interventionist. They conceptualized classroom management beliefs in three levels: interventionist, non-interventionist and interactionalist. From a non-interventionist point of view, a child needs to be driven to find his expression in the real world (Wolfgang, 2005). Therefore, a non-interventionist teacher believes he/she should be less involved in adjusting students' behaviors (Ritter & Hancock, 2007). On the other hand, an interventionist takes the control of the environment and students' manners. Interactionalists focus on the mutual give and take that can take place between learners and their environment. Halfway between the two lies the interactionalist approaches. Using this theoretical framework, Martin and Sass (2010) developed a scale for measuring teachers' classroom management approaches.

### *Teaching Style*

Jarvis (2004) provided a vivid account of teaching style: "The teachers' style is the totality of one's philosophy, beliefs, values, and behaviors, and it incorporates the full implementation of this philosophy" (p. 40).

Diverse classifications and categorizations could be observed for teaching styles, most of which are based on either teacher-centered or student-centered orientations. Grasha (1996) proposed the mostly acknowledged classification that was adopted in this study. He classified teaching styles into five types: expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator. Based on this model, an expert teacher possesses the knowledge that students need and is concerned with transmitting correct information to students. A formal authority teacher considers himself as a school member who enjoys a high status among students and believes in authoritarian system of teaching and managing classroom. The personal model teacher assumes himself as a model for students and students have to emulate his approaches. The facilitator teacher focuses on teacher-student interaction, tries to guide students by asking questions and suggesting options, and encourages students to make informed decisions. The delegator teacher is recognized as a resourceful person who is available at the request of students. Fostering autonomy in learners is of primary significance for the delegator teaching style.

The issue of concern is that teachers' teaching styles might differ depending on the context and students' needs, and that no single teacher adopts a single style in an educational setting. Grasha (1996) maintained, "Each style is not a box into which faculty Members fit. Rather, all of the dimensions shown are present in varying degrees within the attitudes and behaviors of teachers" (p.140). Teachers' dominant behavior and teaching style could be likened to the background color in a painting. According to Grasha (1996), we can "Think of each one as representing a different color on an artist's palette. Thus the colors blend together in various ways with some combinations of styles or blends becoming dominant in teaching while others fall into the background" (P.140). Given the pivotal role of teaching style, it is necessary to examine the nature of the teaching styles adopted by language teachers. This will be a pre-requisite for seeing which contribution, if any, they could make to learning.

Teaching styles which, among other things, are about decisions for presenting materials and involving students in what is going on in the classroom are influenced by teachers' beliefs about and attitudes towards classroom management. When it comes to practical classroom management, teachers need to translate their beliefs into setting proper codes for classroom interactions and teaching styles (Smart, 2009).

## Review of the Related Studies

Classroom management is a process through which teachers try to establish a convenient and positive learning environment and control everything in the classroom (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). An effective classroom management profile fosters emotional, organizational and instructional support (Hamre & Pianta (2007). Emotional support is concerned with positive climate of classroom and teacher sensitivity. Organizational support is proper behavior management and instructional support deals with effective language modeling and giving constructive feedback (Hamre & Pianta, 2007).

Review of pertinent studies into classroom management shows that teachers' management profile is affected by multiple variables. Korthagen (2004) demonstrated that teaching experience influence classroom management and novice teachers practice less controlling approach, in comparison with the more experienced ones. Later studies showed that teachers' gender influences their classroom management approaches and that female teachers seem to take a less controlling approach in managing their classroom than male teachers (Rahimi & Hosseini, 2012). In addition, classroom management approaches differ depending on the subject matter (Ünal & Ünal, 2012), the context of teaching (Martin & Yin, 1999) and the cultural background (Zhou & Li, 2015).

In a foreign language-learning classroom, where English is used as both the medium and the content of teaching, the significance of effective management becomes more pronounced (Fowler & Sarapli, 2010). In addition to developing a well-controlled classroom, EFL teachers should maximize the learners' willingness to communicate (Richards & Rodgers, 2003).

The review of related studies shows that most of the investigations carried out into EFL classroom management issues focused on the challenges. For instance, findings of extant studies indicated that lesson planning, students' motivation and the mismatch between teaching method and learning affect EFL teachers' management negatively (Aydın & Bahçe, 2001; Korukcu, 1996). To create a well-maintained classroom and minimize these challenges, most EFL teachers resort to preventive strategies and external control (Yazdanmehr & Akbari, 2015).

Teaching style has been examined in relation with different variables in various contexts. Brew (2002) showed that teaching style differed depending on teachers' age, gender, the level of education and learning styles. The study showed that female teachers and novices practiced more learner-centered styles of teaching. Riazi and Razmjoo (2006) studied language-teaching methodologies adopted in Shiraz EFL centers. They utilized observation and a self-developed questionnaire to collect the data. Their findings revealed that EFL teachers tend to practice communicative language teaching in private language centers and practice learner-centered styles of teaching. In addition, Faruji (2012) selected 24 teachers working at private language learning centers in Mashhad to examine EFL teachers' dominant teaching styles. Through teaching style questionnaire developed by Grasha (1996) and interviews conducted, she found that EFL teachers resort to formal authority style. In a similar study, Kazemi and Soleimani (2013) used the Teaching Style Questionnaire to collect their data. Using descriptive statistics, they found that EFL teachers tend to practice more teacher-centered style of teaching at private language centers. In a similar vein, Rahimi and Hoseini Karkami (2015) examined the role of EFL teachers' classroom discipline strategies in their teaching effectiveness and their students' motivation and achievement in learning English. They used Effective Iranian EFL Teacher Questionnaire and Attitude/Motivation Test Battery to collect the data. Findings of the study showed that punitive strategies were used to control disruptive behaviors and this manner led to students' demotivation for learning.

Classroom management approaches can change depending on instructional style and teaching practices. Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006) proposed a hypothetical relationship between

teachers' instructional methods and their classroom management approaches. With regard to this hypothesis, the teachers implementing deductive teaching methods seek an explicit dominance over the classroom, whereas learner-centered teachers value group discussion and peer work. Following that, Yasar (2008) tested this hypothesis and examined the relationship between the classroom management approaches and instructional practices in Turkey. The results showed that primary school teachers employing a constructivist approach to teaching tend to use a student-centered approach to classroom management.

In Iran, Rahimi and Assadollahi (2012) examined EFL teachers' classroom management orientations and teaching styles at high school. The findings of their quests indicated that EFL teachers adopt a controlling orientation to classroom management and their classroom management approaches showed significant relationship with teaching style.

In his state-of-the-art article, Richards (2002) called second and foreign language teaching an evolving and constantly changing field giving birth to new practices and courses of actions. In line with these changes, language education has undergone a sensible shift in curriculum design, teaching methodologies and classroom management teaching over the last 30 years (Richards, 2002). However, in Iran, public and private systems of education have not been equally affected by these changes and the private education system has been more open to incorporating new changes (Sadeghi & Richards, 2015), whereas more traditional methods and practices are still practices at secondary levels (Atai & Mazlum, 2013).

In addition to classroom management challenges in general education, EFL teachers might face unique challenges in classroom management, which is mainly due to the use of English in classroom (Linse & Nunan, 2005). Although classroom management is a major concern for teachers and is a factor contributing to teachers' burnout, classroom management approaches in the literature are conspicuously under-researched (Tal, 2010). Specifically, there remains a dearth of studies into details of the approaches EFL teachers pursue to manage their classroom and what styles of teaching are incorporated with management approaches to maximize the learning effects (Esmaceli, 2002). Furthermore, most of the previous studies pertinent to EFL teacher education have focused on issues at high schools in Iran and very few published investigations dealing with EFL classroom problems at private language learning centers are available (Yazdanmehr & Akbari, 2015).

Although classroom management and teaching style have been the subject of many studies in different contexts, very little research evidence documenting the relationship between EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and teaching style is available. The overarching purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between these two variables and to determine whether the lenses through which EFL teachers view teaching style and classroom management are the same.

With this in mind, this study aimed at filling the gap in literature on EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and teaching styles by answering the following questions:

1. What classroom management approaches do Iranian English teachers follow?
2. Is there any significant relationship between EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and their dominant teaching style in private language centers?
3. To what extent, if at all, can EFL teachers' classroom management approaches predict their dominant teaching style?

## Method

### *Research Design*

To answer the research questions, the researchers used a sequential exploratory mixed method research. Mixed method research or MMR, as suggested by Riazi and Candlin (2014), "is more concerned with the conceptualization of reality at different levels and with multiple dimensions and how knowledge of the object of study can be produced using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies" (p. 141). Teddlie and Tashakori (2008) maintained that MMR is an approach to research that compensates for the weakness of qualitative and quantitative methods by combining both inductive and deductive approaches. In keeping with this, the researchers adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain insights into the problems at hand.

### *Participants*

Cluster random sampling procedure was used to select the participants of this study. To this end, of the 50 private language learning centers in Yasuj and Gachsaran (two cities located in southwest of Iran), thirteen clusters comprising of one hundred and three EFL teachers whose age ranged from 18 to 36 were randomly chosen to participate in the study. For interview sessions, 10 participants volunteered, who were interviewed later. Table 1 provides rather detailed demographic information of the participants.

Table 1  
*Demographic Information of participants*

Variable	f	%
Gender (n=103)		
Male	37	35.92
Female	66	64.07
Level of education		
B.A.	61	59.22
M.A.	37	35.92
Ph.D.	5	4.85

### *Instruments*

#### *Behavior and Instruction Management Scale (BIMS)*

Behavior and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS) is a standard questionnaire developed by Martin and Sass (2010) and is a twenty-four item questionnaire based on six-point Likert scale whereby "1" means *strongly disagree* and "6" means *strongly agree*. Martin and Sass (2010) established the construct validity of BIMS. This inventory includes two main subscales: behavior management (BM) and instructional management (IM) each of which contains twelve items. The first twelve items of this questionnaire tap into teachers' behavioral management approaches. To be more specific, this section addresses teachers' performance in setting rules in classroom, controlling students' behavior and determining punishment for off-task behaviors and misbehaviors. The participants' approaches concerning instructional management in classroom are to be investigated through the second subscale of BIMS. Instructional management subscale (IM) contains twelve items asking teachers about what they do to monitor learning activities, to set daily routines and to

select teaching materials. Here are some examples of the items in BIMS: "I firmly direct students back to the topic when they get off task" (BM8), "I nearly always use group work in my classroom" (IM5) and "I use student input when creating student project" (IM6).

### *Teaching Style Inventory*

Teaching Style Inventory (TSI) is a standard scale. It is a forty-item questionnaire constructed and validated by Grasha (1996). In this questionnaire, a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree is utilized. This inventory categorizes teachers' instructional behaviors into five styles: (a) expert, (b) formal authority, (c) personal model, (d) facilitator, and (e) delegator. In fact, each subsection of TSI is composed of eight questions and teachers are supposed to mark the choice that best describes their teaching preferences. Specifically, eight questions are related to expert teaching style, eight items to formal authority, eight items to personal model, eight items to facilitator, and eight items to delegator. For example, the following items reflect expert teaching style: "facts, concepts and principles are the most important things that students should acquire", "My standards and expectations help students develop the discipline they need to learn"; "Students receive frequent verbal and/or written comments on their performance".

To ensure the reliability of TSI and BIMS, Cronbach's Alpha was run in the current study. Overall, the reliability of BIMS and TSI were 0.78 and 0.75, respectively. The reliability for behavior management was 0.75 and for instructional management, it was 0.78. When Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 or higher, then the reliability index is acceptable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A number of demographic questions were included in the questionnaire to elicit information about the participants' background.

### *Interview*

It was necessary to develop a questionnaire for semi-structured interviews. In order to accomplish this, the related literature was reviewed and an item pool was generated. The initial form of the questionnaire was piloted first to remove any problems or ambiguities. In the light of the feedback received, the final form of the questionnaire was assembled and was later administered to the participants. As quantitative data provides a general understanding of the phenomena and might not offer illuminating details (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Razavieh, 2010), the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews to gain insights into the problems at hand.

### *Procedure of the Study*

The current study was carried out from August to September 2015. Through one-to-one administration, the instruments were distributed among the participants. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 16, was used to conduct quantitative data analysis. To analyze the data, multiple statistics were used. Descriptive statistics were calculated to shed light on EFL teachers' classroom management approaches. In addition, to find the possible relationship between EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and dominant teaching styles, the Pearson correlation was run. Finally, multiple regression analysis was run to see whether EFL teachers' classroom management approaches could predict their dominant teaching style.

For the interviews sessions, ten EFL teachers volunteered to participate in this phase of the study. The researchers first sought the participants' consent to record their voice. The participants were also informed about the purpose of the study. To establish rapport with the respondents, the interview sessions were carried out in Persian and each interview session took about fifteen minutes on average (see the Appendix for the interview questions). Then the audio-recorded interviews

were transcribed verbatim and theme analyses were performed on them. In order to accomplish this, the researchers examined the transcriptions to see which themes emerge from the data. They were then checked again the data to see whether the right themes have been formulated and whether new themes emerge. To ensure reliability, the researchers did the codings independently and agreed on the discrepancies. Then, they were checked for redundancy and were constantly compared to determine the themes and the sub-themes.

## Results

Descriptive statistics of the BIMS questionnaire showed that the means of the sample in behavior management and instructional management subscales were 44.86 (SD=7.06) and 43.06 (SD=7.26), respectively (See Table 2). Each subscale consists of 12 items; hence the possible minimum score is 12 (less controlling), the possible maximum score (most controlling) is 72 and the expected mean score is 42. Because the participants marked the responses reflecting more controlling approaches to classroom management, the results showed high scores (higher than expected mean score) on both behavior management and instructional management scales, suggesting that EFL teachers tended to use more controlling (interventionist) approaches on both dimensions.

Table 2  
*Descriptive Statistics of EFL teachers' Classroom Management Approaches*

Scale	N	range	min	max	mean	Std. Deviation
BM	103	33	36	72	44.86	7.60
IM	103	26	20	70	43.06	7.26

*IM: instructional management, BM: behavior management*

In addition, EFL teachers' dominant teaching style was determined, using descriptive. According to the results, EFL teachers predominantly use formal authority teaching style (mean =30.20, SD=5.03). Given the descriptive statistics, after formal authority style, EFL teachers perform Facilitator Style (mean=28.05, SD=3.30), Delegator (mean=27.41, SD=3.84), Personal Model (mean=25.93, SD=3.16) and Expert Style (mean=25.03, SD=3.16), respectively (See Table 3).

Table 3  
*Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Styles (TSI)*

Teaching styles	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Formal authority	103	22	40	30.20	5.03
Facilitator	103	20	38	28.05	3.30
Delegator	103	15	38	27.41	3.84
Personal model	103	17	33	25.93	3.16
Expert model	103	11	24	18.78	2.66



The findings of the qualitative phase of the study supported the idea of practicing controlling classroom management approaches and teacher-centered style of teaching. Using external control over the classroom activities and learners' behavior was the recurrent theme of interview analyses. Here are some excerpts of participants' statements:

*"When it comes to setting rules and regulations for students, I guess I am the most important authority. Therefore, I try to grasp the control of everything in my classroom, I mean selecting materials of learning, designing learning activities and discussion groups. I also try to intervene when students show misbehaviors and deviance".*

*"I guess this is the first and most important role that every teacher might play in a classroom. I try to take a controlling approach in managing my classroom and show my authority to reduce the problems".*

Most of the EFL teachers believed that they were the first and foremost agent in designing teaching activities and setting deadline for homework and term projects. The participants also pointed out that their expectations direct teaching practices:

*"I believe that my style of teaching is mainly teacher-centered. I am mainly responsible for decision making in classroom and leading students' learning. I encourage my students to follow examples".*

To determine whether there is any relationship between EFL dominant teaching style and classroom management approaches, Pearson correlation was run. Correlation analyses showed that at the level of 0.01, a significant positive relationship exists between EFL teachers' dominant teaching style (formal authority) and behavior management ( $r=.287$ ,  $p<0.01$  (2-tailed)) (see Table 4).

Table 4  
*Correlation between formal authority and BM*

Variables	1	2	DF	SD	N	Sig
1. Formal authority		.287**	101	5.03	103	.003
2.BM		.287**	101	7.60	103	.003

The actual value of  $p$  was .003. Further, a positive significant association was found between EFL teachers' dominant teaching style and instructional management approach at the level of 0.01 ( $r=.254$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) (see Table 5).

Table 5  
*Correlation between Formal authority and IM*

Variables	1	2	DF	SD	N	Sig
1. Formal authority		.254*	101	5.03	103	.010
2. IM		.254*	101	7.26	103	.010

The correlations were conducted one by one for all of the variables. In total, EFL teachers' formal authority teaching style and behavior management approach were positively associated and as EFL teachers tended to use more formal authority teaching style, their behavior management tended to be more controlling (i.e., interventionist). The same positive correlation was found between EFL teachers' dominant teaching style and instructional management; therefore, if EFL teachers tend to use formal authority style, their instructional management approach becomes increasingly more

controlling (i.e., interventionist). However, according to Cohen (1988), if  $.10 < r < .30$ , then the correlation is small.

Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer the third research question. This was done to determine whether EFL teachers' classroom management approaches can predict their dominant teaching styles or not. Enter method was used to run regression analysis. R-value is the amount of correlation between all variables entered, which was 0.34 and R square (0.116) was the extent of variance in formal authority style that could be accounted for by instructional and behavior management. The significance of regression model can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6  
*ANOVA for Significance of Regression Model*

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Model	Regression	299.1025	2	149.513	6.654	.002 <sup>a</sup>
1	Residual	2285.693	100	22.8		
	Total	2584.718	102			

Then, the Standardized Beta Coefficient was considered to determine the contribution of each independent variable to the model. Based on Beta values, BM (behavior management) contributed 0.250 ( $t=2.588$ , sig. = .011) to formal authority style at the 0.05 level and was the significant predictor variable ( $p < 0.05$ ) (see Table 6). In short, for one standard deviation increase in behavior management, formal authority teaching style was expected to increase by 0.250. In addition, regarding Beta and p values, EFL teachers' instructional management scale could not significantly predict dominant teaching style.

Table 7  
*Coefficients of Predictor and Dependent Variables*

		Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
Model	constant	16.735	3.767		4.379	.000
1	BM	.191	.074	.250	2.258	.018
	IM	.164	.168	.095	1.943	.056

The results of the interview analyses showed that EFL teachers' classroom management approaches were associated with their dominant teaching style. Teaching and managing classroom happen simultaneously and teachers' policy and performance are affected by each other. When a teacher believes that he is responsible for providing guidelines and giving instruction, (s)he expects the learners to be compliant with the rules. The following is an example of EFL teachers' comments in this regard:

*"I do not permit a large degree of latitude for students' involvement in making decision at different level of teaching and classroom management. See for example when I show a controlling behavior in classroom to minimize*

*misbehavior, this inevitably affects the way I teach and my style of teaching. I guess I need consistency in my manner and everything related to my teaching and management behavior”.*

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated that EFL teachers tend to adopt controlling or interventionist approach at two dimensions of behavior and instructional management. Further, correlational analyses showed that the participants' classroom management approaches and dominant teaching style (i.e., formal authority) were significantly related to each other. Therefore, this could be taken to mean that EFL teachers in this study follow a more teacher-centered approach to teaching style and classroom management. Results of the study regarding the dominant teaching style of EFL teachers lend support to the findings of Faruji (2012), who found that EFL teachers use formal authority style. Faruji also used Grasha's TSI to collect data from 23 EFL teachers in private language centers. The similarity between findings of this study and Faruji's could be due to the data collection inventories and setting, as both studies were carried out in private language centers. Nonetheless, it needs to be pointed out that only 23 teachers participated in Faruji's study via non-random sampling and the findings might not be generalizable to other contexts. In addition, Riazi and Razmjoo (2006) found that EFL teachers tend to adopt student-centered styles in private language centers in Shiraz. The discrepancy between the findings of this study and that of Riazi and Razmjoo could be due to the different contexts in which the studies were carried out and different participants involved in the studies.

The idea of possible connection between EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and teaching styles has been vouched earlier, though in a different context. Previously, Rahimi and Assodollahi (2012) examined the relationship between EFL teachers' classroom management orientations and teaching styles in Iranian high schools and came up with similar results. They used an earlier version of the questionnaire on classroom management approaches (Martin, Yin & Baldwin, 1998) and Teaching Activities Preference (TAP) Questionnaire (Cooper, 2001) to glean their data. Among other things, the study indicated significant associations between EFL teachers' behavior and instructional management approaches and teaching preferences in Iranian high schools.

The striking similarity between the findings of the present study and those of Rahimi and Assodollahi (2012) and Yazdanmehr and Akbari (2015) could be due to the fact that in the Iranian context the factors which determine teachers' behaviors and form their beliefs are more or less the same. That is why no matter where teachers teach and what pre-service and in-service training programs they have attended, they tend to be more controlling in their approaches to classroom management. In private language centers in Iran, EFL teachers are expected to practice more student-centered styles of teaching and give latitude to students to voice their opinions. This was not the case in the present study, which could be due to the fact that in Iran, most teachers still believe in traditional methodologies and styles in educational settings and tend to maintain dominance over the students (Pishghadam & Navari, 2010). This finding is clearly at odds with the argumentation put forward by Rogers and Freiberg (1994) that a shift in instructional approach from teacher-centered to student-centered requires a shift in classroom management orientations. According to Soodak (2003), curriculum is a factor affecting teachers' classroom management plan. It appears that curriculum alone is not sufficient to bring about changes in EFL teachers' classroom management orientations.

The results of the study suggesting the relationship between teachers' classroom management approaches and the dominant teaching style were in line with the findings of a study carried out by Yasar (2008) in Turkey. Yasar was interested in finding the association between 256 elementary teachers' classroom management approaches and instructional approaches. He made use of a self-developed inventory to collect data. Findings of his study revealed that primary school teachers who employ constructivist instruction tend to use a student-centered management approach rather than a teacher-centered one. That is, teachers' management approaches were consistent with their instructional approaches. Apparently, curriculum shifts could affect teaching styles in Turkey.

The results of this study could be interpreted in the light of teachers' philosophy. Martin and Baldwin (1993) believe that teachers' philosophy is an ideological continuum one end of which shows teacher-centeredness and the other extreme is student-centeredness. Drawing a clear-cut borderline between these two extremes is not an easy task, if not impossible (Tal, 2010). Given that, seemingly, EFL teachers in this study tend to adopt a more teacher-centered philosophy and exert control when it comes to managing the students and teaching practice.

Findings of this study have important implications for practicing teachers, teachers in training and teacher trainers. Practicing teachers need to examine their own classroom management approaches and teaching styles to see whether these practices are conducive to successful language learning. Teacher trainers also need to make sure that training in effective classroom management is built into the programs intended for prospective teachers.

Equipped with the knowledge of classroom management approaches and teaching styles, teachers are expected to be in a better position to examine their practices and, thus, to make informed decisions about these important, but often neglected, areas of their teaching. This familiarity, hopefully, will result in enhancement of teacher reflectivity in EFL contexts, and assist teachers in monitoring themselves and dynamics of classroom, setting practicable rules, and adopting the most appropriate teaching style and classroom management approach. Additionally, this knowledge allows teachers to have a deeper understanding of the components of students' learning processes (Nielson, 2007).

## Conclusion

Given the significance of classroom management in a successful teaching career, this study was an attempt to examine the relationship between EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and teaching style. Findings of this study were indicative of an important fact: regardless of other factors beyond the control of the researchers (e.g. teachers' cultural background and socioeconomic status), nowadays, learning- and learner-centeredness are gaining momentum in language education. In spite of this, in the context of Iranian private language centers, a sense of teachers' authority, control and teacher-centeredness is still dominant.

On a different note, given the limitations, which the researchers encountered in conducting the current study, the findings should be interpreted with caution. To begin with, the sample was chosen from two cities only. Including participants from more cities could ensure a more representative sample. In addition, given the nature of the variables in question, the instruments used to collect the data may not be adequate. In order to get round this problem, it is possible to try triangulation to ensure that the right data are obtained. Finally, teachers' teaching experience, place of teaching, and other demographic characteristics could play moderating roles affecting the connections between EFL teachers' classroom management approaches and teaching style. These were not taken into account simply because they were not part of the objectives of the study.

Further studies are required to focus on other groups of EFL teachers (e.g. pre-service EFL teachers and EFL teachers working at high school and or university) and use other data collection instruments (observation, field notes, etc) to gain deeper insights into the problems addressed.

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## **Appendix**

### **Interview questions**

1. How much latitude do you allow your students for instructional management? (e.g. material selection and teaching routines). Explain
2. Who is the primary responsible resource for setting rules of classroom behaviors?
3. To what extent do you get involved when misbehavior takes place in the classroom?
4. Do you see any connection between the way you teach and your classroom management approach? If yes, how?