

The Impact of English Teachers' Classroom Management Style on Self-Control among Primary School Students

Yantong Zhang*

College of International Studies, Yangzhou University, Yangzhou, 225000, China

Abstract. As China keeps carrying out the “Double Reduction” Policy, the importance of quality and efficiency is increasingly highlighted in primary school. In English classes, with the need for students’ continuous input and timely feedback, there is a rising demand for self-control ability. Self-control ability, as an important part of students’ overall development, is performed to different extents in different teachers’ classroom management styles, including authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Therefore, exploring the relationship between English teachers’ classroom management styles and students’ self-control has become one of the key issues in primary school. This research focuses on the domain of the primary English classroom in China, complementing the context of the school, especially classes, and exploring the characteristics of different classroom management styles and differences in the impact of these styles on self-control behaviors, which also provides a reference for balancing management and education in future education. This study employs various research methods, such as literature review and mechanism description. Furthermore, comprehensive strategies and methods will be discussed. Corresponding conclusions are drawn based on the research findings.

1 Introduction

Under the background of the “Double Reduction” Policy, primary school class teaching pays more attention to quality and efficiency, especially in the context of the English class. As an important domain of language acquisition, the English class requires continuous input as well as timely feedback. However, students often exhibit some problem behaviors, such as frequent interruption, attention distraction, and casual walking. These behaviors reflect difficulties in self-control, which is divided into inhibitory self-control and initiatory self-control, including impulse control, procrastination, attentional control, emotional control, goal orientation, and self-control strategies. When facing such behaviors, teachers adopt different classroom management methods, including authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive, but they cannot achieve perfect effects and thus are stuck in a dilemma of teaching and managing. Hence, exploring the relationship between teachers’ classroom management styles and students’ self-control has become an important way of cultivating pupils’ self-control ability. Previous research focuses on how parenting styles affect students’

* Corresponding author: 230705126@stu.yzu.edu.cn

self-control ability, which is in the context of the family. Moreover, studies show that teachers' classroom management has an impact on academic achievement but has little effect on students' class behaviors. To fill these gaps, this research focuses on the domain of the primary English classroom in China, complementing the context of the school, especially classes, and exploring the characteristics of different classroom management styles and differences in the impact of these styles on self-control behaviors. This research not only contributes to optimizing classroom management strategies but also provides a path for developing self-control ability. At the same time, this study provides a reference for balancing management and education in future education. To address this issue, various research methods such as literature review and mechanism description will be employed to understand teachers' classroom management styles and students' self-control and their relationship in primary school English classrooms. Furthermore, comprehensive strategies and methods will be discussed. Finally, corresponding conclusions will be drawn based on the research findings.

2 Literature review

The concept of self-control was proposed by Kopp in 1982, who regarded it as an important ability of managing behaviors, including inhibiting immediate responses, delaying gratification, and conforming to social expectations [1]. However, within academia, there isn't a universally agreed-upon definition of "self-control", with scholars both domestically and internationally exploring the concepts from different perspectives. Tangney considers the core of self-control to be changing or surpassing one's inner responses, restraining negative behavioral tendencies, and refraining from acting [2]. Li Fengjie and Yang Lizhu view self-control as the capacity to initiate the regulation of emotions to achieve goals without external monitoring [3].

Various characteristics of self-control are gradually and progressively developed. Primary school students are in a key phase of physical and mental development. Self-control is the core psychological mechanism in the process of socialization of children. It often involves persistence, consciousness, possessiveness, and delay of gratification, which are malleable [4]. Self-control ability is not only related to academic performance but also affects emotional regulation, interpersonal communication, and future development.

Classroom management style is formed by teachers during the teaching process, where they guide, control, and adjust students' behaviors to maintain classroom order to smoothly give a class [5]. Baumrind presents that classroom management styles can be divided into three types: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive [6]. An authoritarian classroom management style is teacher-centered, and students passively submit to requests, which is against self-control cultivation. In contrast, an authoritative classroom emphasizes equality between teachers and students. The lack of management and a permissive teaching style leads to learning inefficiency.

Classrooms are the most important place for teaching. Effective classroom management ensures the implementation of teaching objectives and encourages students to actively participate in class. Gottfredson and Hirschi in *A general theory of crime* view a low level of self-control as the root cause of all bad behaviors [7]. Teachers' classroom management keeps classes in order and minimizes students' bad behavior. Zheng Liping shows that different classroom management styles can significantly predict students' participation in class [8]. There is a positive correlation between classroom management style and students' self-regulation. The more positive, supportive, and structured the style, the higher the self-regulation students perform. Moreover, Savage presents through clear classroom rules, routines, and expectations, teachers instruct students to learn how to delay gratification and control emotions [9]. Effective classroom management helps students internalize self-control.

It is a process that develops students' long-term self-regulation through classroom management. However, Berliana states that some classroom behaviors may show a negative impact on self-control. For instance, strict rules and teacher-centered methods restrain students' autonomy. Thus, students just follow teachers and lose motivation to control themselves [10].

3 The significance of classroom management styles in cultivating self-control among primary school students

3.1 Analysis of new curriculum standards

In recent years, the "Compulsory Education Curriculum Plan (2022 Edition)" clearly proposes teaching with students as the main body and teachers as directors, promoting class management reform [11]. Diversified management creates a relaxed atmosphere for autonomous learning, making the class full of vitality. The plan emphasizes that schools should build and optimize the curriculum construction, implementation mechanism, and strengthen the construction of teaching staff to improve curriculum execution ability. Traditional teaching makes students learn passively and pay much attention to the results, but it ignores students' learning experience and individual differences. Compared with traditional teaching concepts, the new curriculum standards advocate that teachers be teaching planners and student learning mentors, pushing students' well-rounded development.

The new curriculum standards show new expectations for teachers' classroom management ability, which means teachers should no longer rely on discipline to maintain classroom order. Instead, teachers should focus on students' needs from the students' perspective and apply humanized management methods to instruct students. Such a significant shift expects teachers to pay more attention to individual differences and stimulate students' interest in learning. Then students can better control themselves and minimize problem behaviors in class.

3.2 Analysis of the mechanisms by which classroom management styles affect self-control

3.2.1 Exploring the relationship between teacher management styles and students' behavioral regulation

Classroom management style not only determines how teachers maintain classroom discipline but also influences students' classroom behaviors and different aspects of self-control ability. Teachers' classroom management style enhances motivation and responsibility through creating a positive atmosphere, setting rules, and providing support. A recent study further demonstrates that classroom management style directly affects students' engagement and self-control behaviors [12]. Different classroom management styles influence students' self-control to a different degree.

An authoritarian classroom management style combines high-normalization and low emotional support. Teachers restrain students' behaviors from external factors through clear rules and routines to enhance task completion. Without strict supervision, students cannot maintain the same self-discipline level. Moreover, students reduce anxiety and express themselves more bravely. However, if teachers over-emphasize control, it depresses students' emotions and lowers their initiative [13]. This style also creates a structured learning

environment, and the class runs smoothly. This reduces students' distractions and improves their concentration.

An authoritative classroom management style emphasizes equality and collaboration, which is critical for self-control. Teachers and students set rules and study goals together. Students feel respected and are more willing to obey rules, which transfers external control to internal discipline [13]. For instance, when students divert their attention in class, teachers choose to ask students how they think about class activities, instead of criticizing directly. Moreover, equal teacher-student interactions enhance feelings of belonging and security. This helps students stay positive and control their emotions when facing difficulties. Diverse activities and group work draw and lengthen students' attention in class.

A permissive classroom management style indicates low control and low emotional support. A class lacking explicit rules leads to loose class orders and problem behaviors. Students in this class sometimes cannot complete tasks perfectly. Moreover, without teachers' support, students' emotions are not properly managed and may become overexcited or excessively depressed. These emotions are difficult to recover from in a short time [14]. In such a class, vague structures also cause attention distraction and poor efficiency. For instance, when organizing games like fan-tan games, teachers do not set time limits or ignore class discipline. At that time, students are addicted to games and detached from class learning.

Various classroom management styles are directly linked to students' self-control behaviors. An authoritarian classroom management style restrains behaviors. An authoritative classroom management style is helpful for emotion regulation and attention maintenance, while a permissive classroom management style tends to cause a reduction in self-control due to a lack of management. Thus, classroom management styles act as regulators of student behavior, shaping their capacity for emotion regulation and sustained engagement in the learning process.

3.2.2 Clarifying special meaning in the context of English classrooms

English is a required course of compulsory education and serves as the main language of foreign study. Compared with Chinese learning, in China, there is no natural language learning environment for students, and students' language acquisition mainly comes from class teaching. Hence, students are required to start English studies from Grade Three in China. It is critically important for primary school students to learn English, which lays a solid foundation for subsequent study. English teaching plays a major role in developing communication skills, improving thinking quality, and establishing cultural awareness.

Judging from the actual situation of primary school students, they show high curiosity for new things and are interested in activities as well as imitation. English class as a new context inspires students' interest to explore more fun. Thus, they are more willing to imitate and express their ideas. Moreover, students can accept different living habits and customs in foreign cultures more quickly. All the special situation determines special methods adopted by English teachers, including various role play activities and interesting games, which make the class more vivid but confuse teachers' management.

Different activities present differentiated requirements for class self-control. For instance, performance teaching, such as alphabet songs and role play, expects students to imitate teachers' pronunciation or characters' speeches in books instead of talking freely. As for card teaching, students need to keep track of the cards and recognize the content quickly, which requires continuous attention. Moreover, game teaching, for example, Simon Says, needs students to obey the game rules. However, students sometimes cannot control their emotions because of the killer instinct.

Particularity of English class in primary school and characteristics of students bring challenges to teachers' classroom management. The "English Curriculum Standard" expects

teachers to change from the traditional concept of teaching as much as a forty-five-minute class can to train students to learn automatically and positively, which means teaching students how to learn.

4 Strategies and methods for enhancing students' self-control through classroom management

4.1 Optimizing classroom management methods to stimulate students' self-control

4.1.1 Establishing a supportive and standardized classroom management model

The English Curriculum requires students to positively obtain knowledge and autonomously learn the language. To achieve this, teachers need to build a language communication platform for teachers and students, students and students to interact and cooperate, instead of mere learning [15]. Primary school students are in the transition period from concrete image thinking to abstract logical thinking. Therefore, teachers should adopt various methods, such as the intuitive teaching method, the Total Physical Response, and the context-based approach. Take word learning as an example, teachers show pictures or objects like a pen to help students comprehend the meanings of words. Moreover, teachers combine body movement with words to inspire students to imitate and perform. One word contains different meanings in different contexts. Teachers should put words in specified contexts. For instance, "spring is the warmest season; tears sprang down," where the two springs have different meanings. Through repeated practice, students can infer, judge, and grasp word meanings. By innovating various teaching methods, teachers achieve a balance between teaching and management. For students, they devote themselves fully to the class and control themselves.

4.1.2 Innovating English classroom teaching methods

Nowadays, meaningful learning has become popular among the whole society; the traditional classroom management model cannot meet the demands of the modern English subject. Therefore, English teachers are expected to change their management style. To achieve this, teachers need to form leadership of the whole class and regard students as independent individuals. Teachers must get familiar with the law of students' psychological and physiological development to teach scientifically.

The special English class context emphasizes various activities organized to inspire students' learning interest. However, to establish a supportive and standardized classroom management model, mere activities are insufficient. Teachers must innovate evaluation methods. Through incentive mechanisms such as oral praise and score rewards, students achieve a great sense of accomplishment and are more willing to follow class rules. In class, teachers walk around and give timely feedback, which not only corrects problem behavior promptly but also encourages well-behaved students.

To summarize, the idea of classroom teaching management has changed from 'deterministic thinking' to 'generative thinking'; the goal of classroom teaching management has changed from 'contributing to the solution of procedural problems' to 'promoting classroom growth'; the classroom teaching management mode has changed from 'control' to 'communication and communication'; the classroom teaching management mechanism has also shifted from 'punishment' to 'incentive' [15].

4.2 Cultivating study habits of self-control to internalize discipline awareness

It is important for primary school students to develop habits of self-control in class, which helps not only students improve academic performance, but also helps teachers manage the classroom effectively. To achieve this, students had better set a goal before class and remind themselves at any time. For example, “If I want to interrupt teachers, I will raise my hand.”, which is called implementation intentions. This transfers personal efforts to an automatic reaction. After class, students should write down what they did well and what needs improving. Gradually, students get used to summarizing and making plans.

Moreover, students should recognize, express, and buffer their emotions in class. When facing feelings like “being interrupted”, students try to take a deep breath and relieve themselves. However, students can just accept their emotions instead of battling with them. For instance, students say to themselves, “I feel exhausted, but I can persist”. Students can also look for fun in learning to enhance motivation and give themselves positive hints, such as “I made progress than yesterday”. Through these strategies, students feel like they are controlling their emotions and exploring self-efficacy.

Finally, before class, students need to organize things that are unrelated to class, such as books of other subjects or toys. During class, students comply with rules and imitate model behaviors. After class, students give themselves small awards to celebrate perfect behavior. These situational strategies are essential for external aid of self-control, thus developing habits of self-discipline.

4.3 Improving the relationship between students and teachers to create a positive classroom atmosphere

In primary school, the emotional connection between teachers and students influences whether students like this subject and their relationship. Teachers pass emotional signals through verbal and non-verbal behaviors, which play a critical role in students’ mood, attention, and behaviors in class. Students who like teachers or are liked by teachers focus attention on class, think seriously, and answer questions actively. They show the attitude of loving to learn.

Smiles or other facial expressions, gestures of teachers in class reflect their expectations of students. For example, when a teacher teaches with a smile on their face, gentle eyes, and words full of encouragement, students feel confident, thus focusing attention and controlling behaviors. Therefore, teachers should take advantage of non-verbal behaviors and verbal expressions like praise to transfer positive emotion signals.

It can be concluded that student who keeps interacting with their teachers must be the one who builds emotional connections, especially those who are mischievous. The reason is that these students are all touched by sincere love from teachers. Without emotional engagement, teachers cannot arouse resonance with students. Hence, students do not listen to their teachers and behave casually.

Teachers’ authority is built on the harmonious relationship between teachers and students. Respect and trust from students help teachers better manage the class and achieve perfect results. Teachers need to evaluate students objectively and overcome personal bias. Combine love and authority to build democratic authority. Thus, students behave correctly in a focused and happy mood.

5 Conclusion

This study, through comprehensive analysis, explores the relationship between English teachers’ classroom management styles and the development of students’ self-control. The

research emphasizes that different management styles show a distinct impact on students' ability to control their attention, emotion, and behavior. An authoritarian style that strictly restricts behaviors may restrain students' self-control. Authoritative management, balancing clear rules and equal interactions, is helpful to emotion regulation and attention maintenance, while a permissive classroom management style tends to cause self-control reduction due to a lack of effective management. Additionally, the study points out its special meaning in English classes. This study also proposes a series of strategies and methods to enhance students' self-control ability in classes. With the efforts of teachers, students, and their positive interactions, students' self-control ability can be effectively improved. Therefore, students' academic performances are enhanced. Ultimately, these findings are of significant theoretical and practical importance for optimizing management strategies, promoting teacher training, and helping students' all-around development.

References

1. C.B. Kopp, Antecedents of self-regulation: a developmental perspective. *Dev. Psychol.*, **18**, 199 (1982).
2. J.P. Tangney, A.L. Boone, R.F. Baumeister, High self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. In: *Self-regulation and self-control*, 173-212 (Routledge, 2018).
3. Li Fengjie, Yang Lizhu. Self-control structure of primary school students. *Psychol. Res.*, **2.02** (2009): 69-74.
4. Li, Yang, G. Dong. A study on the structure of self-regulation of children aged between 3 and 5 years. *Psychol. Dev. Educ.* **21**, 7–12 (2005).
5. K.C. Herman, W.M. Reinke, N. Dong, C.P. Bradshaw, Can effective classroom behaviour management increase student achievement in middle school? Findings from a group randomized trial. *J. Educ. Psychol.*, **114**, 144 (2022).
6. D. Baumrind, Current patterns of parental authority. *Dev. Psychol.*, **4**, 1 (1971).
7. C.H. Burt, Self-control and crime: beyond Gottfredson & Hirschi's theory. *Annu. Rev. Criminol.* **3**, 43–73 (2020).
8. L. Zheng, A study on the relationship between primary school students' participation behaviours in English class and teachers' classroom management behaviours. *Teach. Adm.* **33**, 22–25 (2016).
9. T.V. Savage, M.K. Savage, *Successful classroom management and discipline: teaching self-control and responsibility* (Sage, Thousand Oaks, 2009).
10. B.H. Cahyani, A. Alsa, N. Ramdhani, F.N. Khalili, The role of classroom management and mastery goal orientation towards student's self-regulation in learning mathematics. *Psikohumaniora: J. Penelit. Psikol.* **4**, 117–128 (2019).
11. Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. *English Curriculum Standard for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition)*. (Beijing Normal Univ. Press, Beijing, 2022).
12. T.T. Tran, H.-T.T. Nguyen, The effects of classroom management styles on students' motivation and academic achievement in learning English. *Int. J. Learn. Teach. Educ. Res.* **20**, 223-239 (2021).
13. H.L. Chang. *Teacher management style: its impact on teacher-student relationship and leadership development*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Southern California, School of Education (2012).

14. K. Soraya, F. Eryani, A. Andiyan, P. Astuti, Classroom management strategies on the teaching English to young learners at elementary school. *Int. J. Linguist. Lit. Cult.* **8**, 259-266 (2022).
15. Y. Yang, A study on English Classroom Teaching Management in Primary Schools from the Incentive Perspective——Take Y Primary School in S County as an Example. Ph.D. Thesis, Xinyang Normal University (2024).