Vocational Students' Mechanical Obedience within The Context of Teachers' Inured Behavior

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Abstract

Oppression devices in classroom discourse are the instruments of constructing vocational habitus through the mechanical obedience of students at vocational high schools (VHS). This phenomenological study investigates the awareness of oppression devices of dissident teachers in Turkey who are members of the same teachers' union whose vision is to protect and develop the economic, social, democratic, and cultural rights of education workers and to create a free democratic working life, together with the demand for a democratic and livable country. By means of thematic and critical discourse analysis of interviews, focus groups, and video recordings of both VHS students and teachers, we try to gain insight into teachers' consciousness of oppression devices in classroom discourse. This phenomenological study demonstrates that dissident teachers' classroom discourse adopts conscious and unconscious oppression devices under the burden of legitimized and oppressive external factors such as curriculum pressure, accountability, high-stakes testing, and organizational pressure. From this point of view, it is recommended to present experiences that can raise the awareness of educators at school about discourses that can deeply affect behaviors in the classroom.

Introduction

Most teachers are "dominated by conservative ideologies, hooked on methods, slavishly wedded to instrumentalized accountability measures, and run by administrators who lack either a broader vision or critical understanding of education as a force for strengthening the imagination and expanding democratic life" (Giroux, 2010, p. 715). The positivist and deterministic nature of education explained above can be related to the bond between education and employment that reproduces social classes. As Bowles and Gintis (2011) put forward, the economy produces people by using education as an apparatus, and the process of producing people is funneled by the imperatives of profit and domination.

On the other hand, a recent view nourished within the ideologists of critical pedagogy holds the argument that students and teachers are not passive subjects of social reproduction theories; on the contrary, a resistance against the pedagogical hegemony of a capitalist minority has already begun in

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educational spheres and should be broadened by teachers who grasp the requisites of such resistance (Bates, 1982; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 2016; Willis, 1981).

The literature review conducted to understand how these two opposing theses of critical pedagogy correspond in the field of practice of education demonstrates that some qualitative studies have mainly focused on the comparison of rural and urban educational institutions to understand the attitudes of teachers and students towards issues related to critical pedagogy such as inequalities, social injustice and multiculturalism (Han, Madhuri, & Scull, 2015; Miskovic & Hoop, 2006). Hoadley (2007) also carried out mixed research focusing on teachers' differing attitudes in the classroom, including language use, behavior, and teaching methods, which might impact students' success in mathematics. Participatory action research was also used in several studies to create curriculums and contents of lessons with the active participation of students to quicken students critical thinking abilities and creativity skills (Abednia & Izadina, 2013; Cammarota & Romero, 2009; Guy Wamba, 2010). Additionally, it is possible to reach several other researches which emphasize the culture industry perspective of critical pedagogy (Leard & Lashua, 2006), and inequalities resulted from ethnicity (Cati, López, & Morrell, 2015).

Even though previous research carried out in the field of critical pedagogy provided invaluable insight into how education is used for or against hegemony, the issue of teachers' consciousness of hegemonical conflict can be considered as a matter that has not received the attention it deserves; hence, the question whether teachers are conscious about the remarks of authority in their discourse in the classroom still needs to be answered. As can be seen, different perspectives of critical pedagogy demonstrate the use of two different types of discourse in the classroom: the language of authority and practical discourse with a dialectic motivation. Thus, this study aims to shed light on teachers' unconsciously inured behavior and its reflection on discourse in the classroom, which could yield to either mechanical obedience or imaginative emancipation.

A Brief History of The Over-Inducing Nature of Vocational Education and Training in Turkey

Starting with the Ahi community in the 12th century in Anatolia, vocational education and training (VET) have had a long history in Turkey (Afşar, Mıhoğlu, & Suna, 2018; Özcan, 2010; Özer, 2018). In the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire era Vocational and Technical education had a militaristic view depending on the innovations in Europe (Berkes, 2018; Koçer, 1987; Meşeci Giorgetti, 2020). Approximately after a century, VET in the Ottoman Empire slowly adopted an economic appearance that was regarded as a bridge connecting education and employment (Alkan, Doğan, & Sezgin, 1991). Parallel to this perspective, several VET schools known as 'Islahhane' [Borstal] were founded between the years 1848 and 1878. These schools were established by considering the local economic and employment demands, and their primary aim was to provide shelter, food, and employment opportunities for orphans and helpless children (Özcan, 2010, 2021). VET has been considered as a solution to the problem of unemployment in Turkey since the last quarter of the 19th century (Afşar et al., 2018; Özer, 2020). Hence, we can put forward that VET has had two main ideals which are reaching out to students in need and solving unemployment problems. Özer (2018) claims that this is the nature of vocational education in the rest of the world. Likewise, Özcan (2010) demonstrates that in countries such as France, the Netherlands, and England the target groups of VET are people between the ages of 16 and 19, the unemployed, handicapped, and people whose socio-economic levels are low. However, this target group formulation causes the VET to be considered inferior to other secondary education institutions; and hence, it is not preferred by students whose academic achievements are high (Özcan, 2021; Özer, 2018).

The reasons for successful-student behavior in rejecting VET can be found in several research in the context of Turkey. For instance, Boz (1993) demonstrates that students who prefer vocational education are motivated by reasons related to their families which leads them to look for ways to make money. The research also shows that the students in vocational education cannot have enough time to rest and are forced to work after working hours. Another research by Aslantürk (2014) puts forward findings illustrating that the quality of vocational education is adversely affected by the frequently

changing education system. Additionally, Aslantürk concluded that there is no wage difference between VET high school graduates and other high school graduates, which causes a lack of motivation for VET students and teachers. The last but not the least, work accidents should be considered as a significant deterrent that causes students and parents not to choose VET high schools. A report prepared by FİSA Children Rights Center (Yıldırım, 2021) reveals important facts in terms of work accidents in Vocational schools. According to the report, the number of insured vocational and technical education students who had a work accident in 2019 was 2385. By way of a media analysis, the same report unearths the fact that 13 heavy work accidents were experienced between the years 2010 and 2020, in which three students were killed. The reasons were electric shocks for two of the cases and falling from a height for one.

Despite the disadvantages and deterrents listed above, it is observed that the efforts to canalize students to vocational education have been adopted as a national education policy since the beginning of the republic era in Turkey. Özcan, Bayram, and Bozgün (2021) examined government programs between the years 1923 and 2021 and listed the educational aims and objectives of governments. When the list is analyzed, it is possible to come across objectives whose target is to invest in technical education with the purpose of economic growth and development in almost all government programs. The FISA report proves that this long-term target has been fulfilled to a certain degree as 42% of all formal secondary education students were enrolled in VET institutions in the year 2021. This percentage is equal to almost 2 million students. When the disadvantages and deterrents are taken into consideration, it is possible to stipulate that these students might have been enrolled in formal secondary vocational and technical schools without their own consent. This claim can be explained by the views of Tural (1994) and Ünal (1996). According to Tural, vertical education demand is seen as a tool to climb up in a hierarchical professional status, like the hierarchy in educational institutions. And Ünal (1996) clarifies that sub-sectors need qualified and highly qualified manpower to achieve their own goals. Finally, Küçüker (2017) and Atılgan (2018) demonstrate that the hierarchical construction of educational institutions and professions is managed via high-stakes tests. In other words, parents and students demand to continue with educational institutions which pledge to better professions that promise higher wages, comfort, work safety, and higher social status, and the way to fulfill this demand is to score better on high-stakes tests. Hence, the students who score lower are guided to vocational and technical secondary schools whose graduates gain the skills necessary for primary and secondary sector professions.

Furthermore, high-stakes tests operate as an obstacle for secondary VET school graduates not to continue further higher education. The 2020 transition to higher education examination (YKS) results should be considered as evidence of this detection. According to the statistics published by the Higher Education Institution, 2,436,958 candidates applied for the YKS exam in 2020. Of the candidates who took the 2020 YKS exam, 17,72% (431,822) were enrolled in an undergraduate program, 14,35% (349.785) were enrolled in an associate degree program, and 5,76% (140.279) were enrolled in an open education program. While 25,10% of high school graduates were placed in an undergraduate program, 5.32% of vocational high school graduates were placed in an undergraduate program (ÖSYM, 2020). The data here indicate that the current higher education transition system confines the vocational high school students' further education choices to associate degrees or open education. Moreover, the number of vocational high school students placed in associate and open education programs is more than five times the number of vocational high school students placed in undergraduate programs. Approximately 600,000 vocational high school students could not enroll in any higher education program.

In conclusion, the national education policy in Turkey aims to match VET students with employment possibilities in the primary and secondary sectors as soon as possible and uses high-stakes testing as a subtle oppression device that selects and places best-fitting students in VET institutions. In this research, we aim to gain insight into the awareness levels of vocational education teachers about the subtle oppression mechanisms of educational policies and practices and we hypothesize that the

inured behavior of vocational high school teachers in the classroom operates as a complementary instrument in the process of obedient worker behavior constitution in VET institutions.

Classroom discourse as an indicator of future society projections

The criticism that blames schools for restructuring social order repetitiously can be observed in the theories of social and cultural reproduction of social classes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bowles & Gintis, 2011). As a part of this criticism, pedagogy is also seen as a major instrument for the mass production of social norms and members of society who are unconscious practitioners of preconditioned interactions (Freire, 2000; Simon, 1987). Simon (1987) refers to this sort of pedagogy as the reduction of capacities by social forms. A concrete example of this reduction, as demonstrated by Simon, is the notion that better high school students are the ones who embrace traditional values, which leads to an idea of school reformation with the aim of character development compatible with the desired norm: the desired sense of identity, values, and sensibility. In the context of vocational education, the appropriate character definition can be put forth by applying it to the notion of vocational habitus. Colley, James, Diment, and Tedder (2003) define vocational habitus as a notion that necessitates the acquisition of certain characteristics that are regarded as demands of a specific occupation. Vocational habitus "operates in disciplinary ways to dictate how one should feel, look, act, as well as the values, attitudes, and beliefs that one should espouse" (Colley et al. 2003, p. 488).

The most significant device of reductive pedagogy (Simon, 1987) can be regarded as classroom discourse. "Classroom discourse involves more than just language. It includes all social and semiotic practices that shape classroom life" (Van Sluys, Lewison, & Flint, 2006, p.200). A wide variety of tacit elements are included in the classroom discourse: the arrangement of students' seats, the platform on which the lecturer stands, the magisterial monologue of the lecturer, and the distance between the lecturer and the students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Both verbal and nonverbal, conventional elements of educational interaction harbor an asymmetrical notion of the relationship between the educator and educand in which the educator holds a higher ground (Biesta, 1998) with the jurisdiction of controlling, orienting, and evaluating the discourse in the classroom (Candela, 1998). Conventional classroom discourse uses the question-and-answer method to initiate competition among students in search of a correct answer instead of an explanation (Candela, 1998), which might eventually result in the mechanical obedience of the students in the classroom.

It is possible to find the origins of mechanical obedience in the writings of Durkheim (1984), where he referred to the term as mechanical solidarity. Durkheim (1984) holds repressive law responsible for the constitution of mechanical solidarity in archaic society, which struggles to create a ratio between crime and the damage it inflicts on collective consciousness by way of talionic punishment. Hence, the repressive law demands obedience to rules without questioning, which eventually reduces social norms to the level of crime and punishment that excludes human reasoning from the process of social interactions.

The punishment that causes the mechanical obedience of the masses has not lost its oppressive nature within the process of civilization; instead, a transformation of punishment in a civilized manner has increased its domination over human groups (Foucault, 1995). Within the organizational structure of schools, supervised supervisors (e.g., school managers, vice principals, inspectors, group leaders, etc.) are responsible subjects for assessment, while they are objects of surveillance themselves, and the hierarchical panoptic gaze ends up with docile bodies that unconsciously conduct perpetual self-constraint. In the context of the classroom, docile bodies of disciplinary technologies are conveyed via classroom discourse (Cannella, 2000) that is constructed on the initiation-response-evaluation feature (Candela, 1998).

Conventional classroom discourse takes its foundations from the institutional position of the teacher in the classroom, and from the acceptance, that teacher is the only power in the classroom who holds the necessary knowledge of the topic; still, another source of power in the classroom needs to be greeted respectfully, which could be referred to as the students' resistance to learning (Candela, 1998). The conventional classroom discourse, which is also conservationist and liberal, encounters students' disinterest, violence, and in some cases silence as forms of resistance, and in return, teachers shift their concerns from teaching positive knowledge to maintaining order in the classroom (Giroux, 1997). From this point forth, an alternative discourse seems necessary that has the potential to catalyze students' resistance to imaginative emancipation.

This alternative classroom discourse is referred to as practical discourse (Bates, 1982), and its foundations are found in the ideas of Habermas. Habermas (1990) points out four epistemological aspects of healthy communication that are inclusion, participation, rightness of norms and commands, and avoiding external and internal coercion. In practice, Habermasian practical discourse set forth the elements that all potential participants must have equal rights to come up with claims and counter claims, all participants must have equal opportunities to present interpretations, all participants equally express their attitudes, feelings, and wishes, and all participants have equal opportunities to order and resist orders with the condition that they are accountable for their conducts and can demand accountability from others (Huttunen & Murphy, 2012). The reflections of practical discourse in the classroom are summarized under three titles that are individuation, emancipation, and extension of communication free of domination (Bates, 1982).

Fundamentally, practical discourse focuses on power relations in education. It is an analysis of "the way which state policy embodies and promotes particular practices that legitimate and render privileged some forms of knowledge over others, or some groups over others" (Giroux, 1997, p. 136). Moving forth from these power relations, practical discourse grants the students the right to be an equal party in the process of the social construction of knowledge; and hence, teachers must be critical of their own practices in the classroom to comprehend why main knowledge is legitimized by the dominant culture (Sarroub & Quadros, 2015). The use of practical discourse in the classroom must be established on the principles of social justice, equality, and empowerment and must be carried out in a collective manner (McLaren, 2016).

A clear transformation in the Marxist view of classroom discourse can be observed when the way discourse being discussed is taken under examination. While social theorists approach the power relations in the classroom from a critical point of view, the final product of their observations goes no further than a deterministic acceptance of the reproduction of social classes (Giroux, 1983). However, recent views in the field of critical pedagogy develop a standpoint that clearly rejects being passive during the repetitious reproduction cycle of the capitalist logic of schools (Giroux, 1997). Instead of accusing schools of being an instrument of oppression devices, these recent views argue that schools are the exact locations where necessities of a democratic society can be collectively constructed with the participation of each member of the school community (McLaren, 2016). Naturally, the outcome of this pedagogy of possibilities (Simon, 1987) is imaginative emancipation that can guide people to the expectation of an egalitarian society (Bates, 1982). Therefore, it is of great importance to gain insight into teachers' consciousness of oppression devices via observing the qualities of the discourse used in the classrooms.

Method

Design of the Study

We conducted this study under the scope of a qualitative research approach with the pattern of phenomenological design. Depending on the purpose and the main research question of the study, the phenomenon tried to be interpreted, understood, and generated as knowledge in this study is the teachers' consciousness of oppression devices in classroom discourse. Merleau-Ponty (1981) puts forth four key themes through which phenomenology can be accessed, which are description, intentionality, reduction, and essences. The purpose of phenomenological research is to understand the essence of social phenomena from the perspective of those who perceived them (Cresswell, 2007). Being both reflective and inductive, phenomenological research involves procuring insight into individuals' past and lived experiences (Barrow, 2017). In the context of phenomenology, description is the struggle to describe things from the perspectives of people who experience them to turn away from scientific knowledge and return to 'things themselves' (Husserl, 2001). Intentionality, for Husserl, is the distinction between conscious directedness toward something and the characteristics of the act of consciousness associated with the object (Christensen, Welch, & Barr, 2017). In other words, the process of grasping the existence of a thing includes both the physical and transcendental consciousness of the object; therefore, phenomenological research goes further into the meaning of the object as it is intended. This transcendental nature of phenomenology brings forward the need for phenomenological reduction, which is the first step of phenomenological research that is the suspension of all-natural belief in the objects of experience (Schmitt, 1959). As the purpose of this study is to gain insight into teachers' preferences of classroom discourse, phenomenology fits the necessities of this research since teachers' consciousness as an object is itself transcendental and needs to be described from the perspectives of teachers.

Participants

"In a phenomenological study, the participants must be individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their lived experiences" (Cresswell, 2007, p. 120-122). As the phenomenon under examination in this study is teachers' consciousness of oppression devices in classroom discourse, we selected the participants from classroom atmospheres where classroom discourse has the potential to bear the traces of oppression. Hence, three study groups were constituted to fit the necessities of this study. To constitute the first study group, we used a purposive homogeneous sampling technique. Purposive, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling relies on the judgment of the researcher when selecting the units that are to be studied (Sharma, 2017). Homogeneous sampling, a method of purposive sampling technique, focuses on candidates who share similar traits or specific characteristics. The idea is to focus on a precise similarity and how it relates to the topic being researched (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The first study group consisted of high school students and their common ground is the fact that they are all students at Vocational High School (VHS) in Turkey. As Bowles and Gintis (2011) put forth, the establishment of VHS was supported and funded by capitalists. Bowles and Gintis (2011) claim that these schools served the purpose of training and labeling a stratum of foremen who were positioned above and apart from other production workers with the tacit aim of breaking the control of skilled workers in the enterprise. Similarly, VHS in Turkey has been regarded as schools where the labor force needed for economic development is trained with the onset of the modernization process in Turkish society (Afşar et al., 2018; Özcan, 2010; Özer, 2018). In other words, VHS students are claimed to be trained as strata in the labor force whose existence relies on a close relationship with the entrepreneurs. The transformation of student behavior can be regarded as a requirement of vocational habitus, which is defined as the acquisition of preconditioned personality traits to suit the necessities of a specific profession (Zembylas, 2007). Therefore, it is possible to postulate that mechanical obedience is an acquired characteristic of VHS students. To recruit participants, we identified five VHS in the district of Şişli, a district in the city of Istanbul, and we sent invitations that briefly explained the purpose of the study to these schools. We contacted the volunteers who accepted to participate in the study; and hence, we constituted the first

study group. We selected the district of Şişli depending on research carried out in the area whose topic was equality among teachers (Kaptan, 2020); hence, as a continuum of equality research in the same district, the participants in the study groups were chosen from the district of Şişli.

The second study group consisted of teachers belonging to the same teachers' union who define themselves as dissident teachers. This union clarifies its vision as "the struggle to protect and develop the economic, social, democratic and cultural rights of education workers and to create a free democratic working life, together with the demand for a democratic and livable country". As can be understood from the vision established by the union, the members of the union are teachers who have a critical view of education with the demand of a democratic society. To create a connection between the two study groups, teachers who work at the same schools as the students in the first study group were informed about the purpose of this study, and we contacted the volunteers who were willing to participate and who were members of the same union mentioned above. To recruit the participants in the second study group, a purposeful snowball sampling technique was adopted. The strategy of snowball sampling is to identify participants intentionally who are postulated to fit the parameters put forward in the study, and the process starts by reaching out to key, well-situated people who hold necessary information and knowledge about possible participants (Babbie, 2006). To reach the participants in the second study group, the local branch of a certain teachers' union whose members defend the view of democratic education was visited and the first voluntary participant was recruited. During the interview, other prospective participants who can be interviewed were designated (Yin, 2001).

We constituted a third study group by making use of intensity sampling. Resembling in terms of logic with extreme or deviant sampling, intensity sampling focuses on differences with less emphasis. "An intensity sample consists of information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensity" (Patton, 2002, p. 234). We invited a group of students who graduated from the same VHS and used to be in different departments and/or branches of the same school. Eight volunteers replied to our invitation and the main intensity we tried to observe was the axis of the VHS graduate students' careers. While three of the participants in this group continued their careers with the same profession they had acquired in the VHS, five of them decided to proceed with a different career area other than the one they had been trained in during their high school education. Our main purpose of creating this third study group was to comprehend the convergences and divergences of the participants' views of oppression devices in the classroom and their attitude toward mechanical obedience in the context of their career choices after VHS.

Table 1. Participants

Study Group	Pseudonym	Gender	Grade (For students) / Years at Work (For teachers) / Age (For graduate students)	Department / Branch
The First Study Group (Heros)	Jason	Male	12	Art and Design
	Electra	Female	11	Art and Design
	Achilles	Male	11	Electricity and Electronics
	Medea	Female	11	Tocology Assistantship
	Clytemnestra	Female	11	Tocology Assistantship
	Aeneas	Male	11	Electricity and electronics
	Hector	Male	9	Land registry and cadaster
	Penelope	Female	10	Land registry and cadaster
	Antigone	Female	12	Fashion Design
	Cassandra	Female	10	Health care Services
The second Study Group (Gods)	Hestia	Female	20	Math
	Athena	Female	20	History
	Hephaestus	Male	20	Electrics and electronics
	Zeus	Male	30	Accounting
	Apollo	Male	20	Math
	Dionysus	Male	?	Security systems
	Asclepius	Male	18	Biology
	Hades	Male	22	Electricity
	Hypnos	Male	12	Electricity
	Ares	Male	20	Electricity and electronics
	Demeter	Female	30	Physics
The third study group (Titans)	Phoebe	Female	19	Radio and Television Programming
	Tethys	Female	19	English language and literature
	Rhea	Female	19	English language and literature
	Coeus	Male	19	Cookery
	Cronos	Male	19	Radio and television
	Hyperion	Male	19	Business Management
	Atlas	Male	19	Graphics Design
	Iapetus	Male	19	Art History

As shown in Table 1, pseudonyms used are taken from Greek mythology. For the first study group, whose members are high school students at VHS in the Şişli district, was named after mythological heroes whose faith was mostly shaped by the gods. For the second study group, whose members are teachers at VHS, was named after mythological Greek gods. And the third study group, whose members are graduate students of VHS, was named after titans who were beaten, punished, and exiled by the gods. In total, we interviewed 29 participants twelve of whom are females and seventeen are males.

Data Collection

Although rich first-person accounts of experience such as face-to-face interviews are preferred in descriptive phenomenology, other methods like written narratives, blogs, research diaries, and online interviews can be employed as data collection tools (Ataro, 2020). Since this study was carried out during times of the Covid-19 pandemic, online interviews were applied in the data collection process, and the interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. The semi-structured interview was used to collect data from the participants. "Semi-structured interviews incorporate both

open-ended and theoretically driven questions, eliciting data grounded in the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs in the particular discipline within which one is conducting research" (Galleta, 2013, p. 45). After an archival study in the field, two draft semi-structured interview forms were created to be applied during the interviews with the first and second study groups. The questions on the forms were developed depending on Habermas' four epistemological aspects of healthy communication which are inclusion, participation, the rightness of norms and commands, and avoiding external and internal coercion (Habermas, 1990). Besides, by applying the views of Sarroub and Quadros (2015) a main question inquiring views of both teachers and students about the necessity of teachers' being critical of their own practices in the classroom was added to the form. To ensure the reliability and validity of the interview questions, first, the draft semi-structured interview forms were then sent to educational administration experts in the field to be revised. The first draft form for the study group of teachers had eight questions and the draft form for the students had six main questions. After the expert reviews, the number of questions on the first and second draft forms was decreased to five. Additionally, we added possible questions for further exploration and elaboration under each main question by making use of expert reviews. The interviews lasted approximately 40-50 minutes, and each interview was recorded. For the third study group, we used focus group interviews as part of the data-collection method.

As Berg and Lune (2017) put forth, focus group interviews are not carried out to decide on how many supporters a certain opinion has; instead, the group itself is considered as a sole unit of analysis, and the data acquired from a group produces measures about that group as a unit. We used the same semi-structured interview questions with the first group during the focus group interview as with the third study group. We informed the participants about the research process and assured them that the information they gave would remain confidential. We sent the students and the teachers a copy of the research narrative that outlined the specific purposes and expectations of the study. After the online interviews, we transcribed the recordings and field notes. We had 98 pages of transcribed text from the interviews of students, 93 pages from the interviews of teachers, and 38 pages from the focus group interview with VHS graduate students, and also, collected 14 video records. Then we sent back the transcriptions of the interviews to each of the participants to read and give feedback. In this way, we obtained participant confirmation to increase the consistency of the research data.

Data Interpretation

Data acquired via semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews from three different study groups during the study was interpreted with different analysis methods. Maxwell (2012) suggests three groups of analytic options for qualitative research that are memos, categorizing strategies such as coding and thematic analysis, and connecting strategies such as narrative analysis. Maxwell also puts forward that there is no single correct way for doing qualitative analysis; hence, the strategies that are to be used need to be planned in such a way that fits the data collected and is suitable for the research questions. During the data collection process, we neatly collected memos and field notes that could shed light on the context in which data was collected. For the analysis of the data acquired from the first and third study groups through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, we conducted a thematic analysis. Patterns were constructed by reorganizing and grouping data into comparable categories and themes (Saldana, 2011). After we transcribed, reorganized, and grouped data acquired from the participants, we conducted thematic analysis and consequently obtained codes, categories, and themes.

As a second step in the data analysis, we applied critical discourse analysis (CDA), a way of interpreting the definition of reality formed by each participant in the second study group. "CDA is a theoretical perspective on language and more generally semiosis as one element or 'moment' of the social process, which gives rise to ways of analyzing language or semiosis within broader analyses of the social process" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 121). CDA is both a theory and a method that could be used both in educational research and in social interactions. As part of the struggle to understand the relationship between language and society, CDA is an instrument to help describe, interpret, and

explain such relationships; therefore, CDA is separated from other discourse analysis methods as it provides the researchers with the power to explain why and how discourses work, besides offering description and interpretation of the discourse (Rogers, 2004). CDA of oral texts also necessitates the analysis of prosodic features such as variations in pitch, loudness, and rhythm; paralinguistic features such as pauses, gaps, and restarts; and kinesic signals such as hand movements, facial expressions, and nods of the head (Locke, 2004). As the interviews with teachers were video recorded, we had the opportunity to both analyze written transcriptions of the interviews and observe semiotic indicators from the video records of interviews. Traditional discourse analysis is criticized in view of being selective and lacking rigor; nevertheless, applying content analysis with a hermeneutic perspective under the scope of CDA is also possible (Cukier, Ngwenyama, Bauer, & Middleton, 2009). Thus, before we started to analyze oral and written data, first we analyzed the content to identify codes, categories, themes, and frequencies related to the phenomena that were under examination.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Yin (2001) puts forward three key elements of trustworthiness and credibility that are transparency, methodicness, and adherence to evidence. In this study, interviews were recorded and transcribed. For the sake of transparency, transcriptions were first sent to participants and were confirmed before they were analyzed. Additionally, transcriptions were also sent to experts in the field during the interpretation process whilst codes, categories, and themes were being identified. As for the methodicness, transcriptions acquired from the participants were read by researchers and were also sent to another expert in the field. Then, a code book that included definitions of codes, categories, and themes was created; concerning the conformity among coders, codes identified were compared. Regarding the adherence to evidence principle, findings were also compared and sent to expert and peer reviews. Cresswell (2007) suggests triangulation as a means of validation. In this study, three different study groups were created who were interviewed about the same phenomena under issue as regards the triangulation principle.

In terms of CDA four validity claims appear that are truthfulness, legitimacy, and comprehensibility of the utterance and sincerity of the speaker. These four validity claims are crucial to comprehend and establish a basis for critically interrogating speech (Cukier et al., 2009). To reach the validity claims mentioned above the interviews were both video recorded and transcribed. Cukier et al. (2009) also suggest the content analysis of the data-to-be-analyzed critically for the sake of validity whose purposes are to observe the frequencies of certain elements in speech and to examine validity claims empirically. Also in this study, a content analysis had been carried out on the data that was interpreted through CDA.

Ethical Considerations

Before beginning the study, we applied to the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research involving human subjects. We obtained permission from the IRB at Yıldız Technical University to conduct this study (IRB Number: 2020/11) which was issued on 09.01.2021. We sent participants the consent form in order for them to sign and informed them that their participation in the study was voluntary. We also underlined that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that their responses were confidential. We used pseudonyms to protect participants' identities and ensure confidentiality.

Results

Direct and Indirect Oppression Leading to Internal Coercion

We reached three themes after the thematic analysis of data acquired from the interviews with the first study group and from the focus group interview which are direct oppression, indirect oppression, and internal coercion. Figure 1 demonstrates the internalization process of oppression which ultimately leads to mechanical obedience.
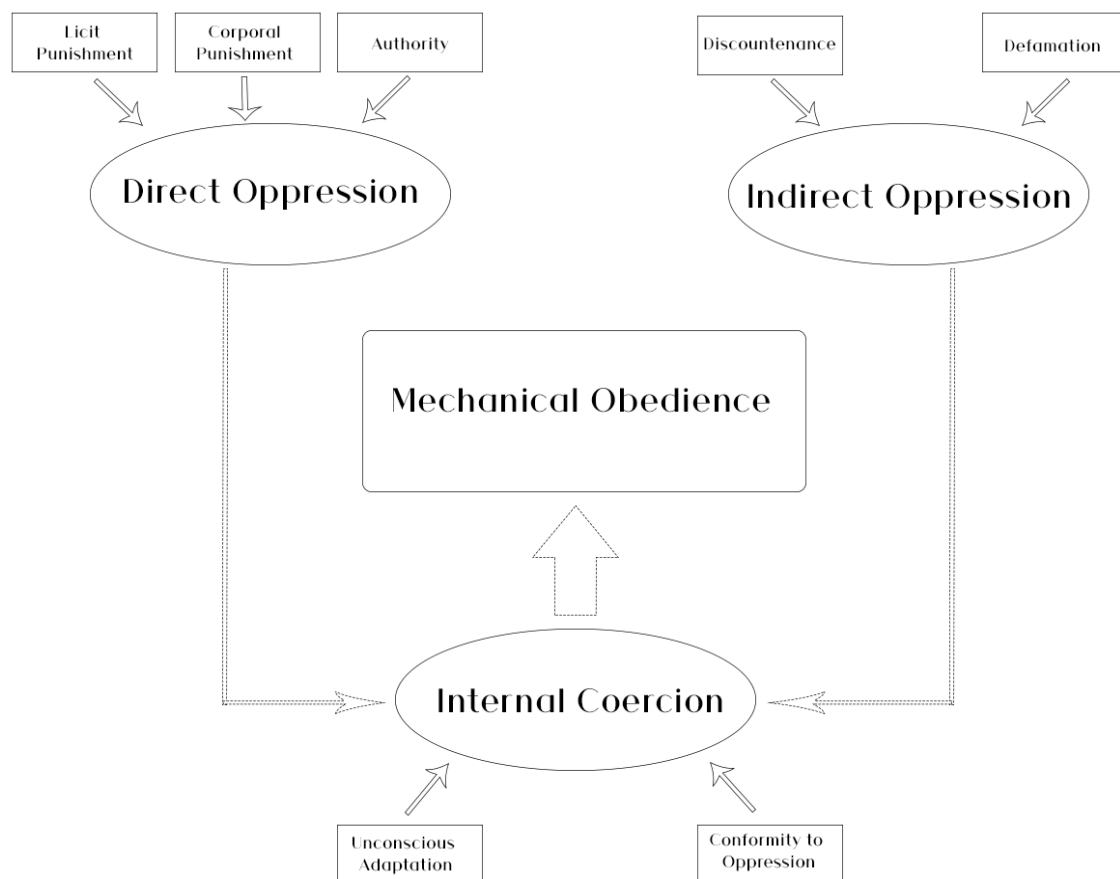

Figure 1. Mechanical Obedience Path Diagram

Direct oppression includes oppression devices that are used by teachers consciously to restore order, control students, and construct a hierarchical positioning in the classroom. The elements of direct oppression in the conventional classroom discourse can be put forth as the authority, licit punishment, and corporal punishment.

In this study, we defined authority as teachers' making use of oppression devices that are under their lawful and traditional authorities. We observed the codes of giving marks, excluding from the decision-making process, declassing, over control of the dress code, marking absent, and posing a stern attitude towards students under the category of authority.

In addition to authority, teachers make use of licit punishment to maintain order in the classroom. The second category of licit punishment includes both legal punishment under the scope of disciplinary codes and regulations, and legitimized punishment. Legitimized punishment is a form of punishment that is considered as a routine act within the process of learning and teaching. Not being under the scope of legal punishment, these sorts of punishment are usually traditional and repetitious

acts accepted as routine at school. Under the theme of direct oppression, corporal punishment is the last category which includes beating, manhandling, and shouting at students. A student narrates an experience he had about beating in the classroom which bears the traces of all three categories:

> "Achilles: When I was in the X person's lesson [He avoids giving the name of the teacher], I turned back, and I said something important [to my friend]; at least important among us. But it was no way with a loud voice or in a disturbing way; we did not do anything that could disrupt the lesson. I just turned back, and I said something. I said we could talk during break time. Then the teacher stood in front of me. He used foul language and increased his volume. You know, even though it is a student-and-teacher relationship, it gets hard to handle after some time. We are not people to be despised that much. I know it was not right, but I also increased my volume. And the conflict grew bigger. This time he insulted me [Later on in the interview, he tells the insult was 'prat']. Sitting on my chair I said 'sir' with a sort of attitude, 'Sir, please continue with the lesson', then I said, 'do not interact with me because this thing will drag out'. Then, on my shoulder or my neck, I don't remember exactly, he hit on my neck or my shoulder. He said, 'We can talk to you either in the principal's room or in another place', then he said, 'You don't know who I am'. And I said 'ok'."

Unlike direct oppression, indirect oppression focuses on the soul rather than the body. The two categories of indirect oppression can be named as defamation and discountenance. While defamation occurs utilizing disdaining, humiliation, and insulting, discountenance happens through adiaphory, nonchalance, and patronage. We observed that disdaining is mostly related to the perceived status of teachers in the classroom. Likewise, humiliation is the act of making fun of students in the classroom. Mostly teachers humiliate students' academic skills or cultural differences in their speech such as pronouncing a word differently. Nevertheless, the act of insulting can be considered as the peak of the category of defamation. Insult is the act of using abusive or outrageous language in the classroom by the teacher. We observed that mainly teachers use words such as silly, stupid, imbecile, fool, idiot, and conehead. Medea accounts for an experience she had with insulting:

> "Medea: I had a presentation subject about demons, I mean, about Angel Gabriel[…] Just because I used an animation that included a figure of a demon [In the presentation], he [the teacher] insulted me like 'You are an idiot'. He said, 'stupid' and things like that."

Like the direct oppression tool of being a stern teacher, the category of discountenance is also related to the attitudes of teachers towards students. We observed that teachers are active practitioners of oppression in the case of patronage, whereas they are under the influence of external factors in the cases of adiaphory and nonchalance. A graduate student narrates his experience with patronage during the focus group interview as follows:

> "Atlas: We were standing up in the classroom. She [the teacher] approached from my back and said, 'I will ask you something.', and I replied, 'Sure Madame.', [The participant tells this part by whispering], she asked, 'Are you Alevi?' [Alevi is a religious sect in Islam.]. I hold on a second and thought for the answer because I didn't want her to ill-treat me [because of my religious alignment]. Our relationship was already problematic. It was a tough situation. If I said 'yes', it may have caused trouble; if I said 'no', it might have caused some other troubles [He laughs while he narrates this part]. And I decided to say yes. She said, 'why didn't you tell it before'. Then my marks turned to 90 or 95 [Out of 100]. The reason why she did not mark me 100 was that she didn't want to cause patronage. You already caused it, Madame, my marks were 90 or 95 [All students laugh.]"

As in the example above, patronage is generated by teachers' judgments or impressions of students. In some cases, it is about feeling close to the students for personal reasons, but in many cases, it is due to the academic success and obedience levels of students. In the case that students were compliant and silent listeners in the classroom answering the questions of teachers during the lessons, teachers are prone to give higher marks to the students.

We observed that repetitious acts of direct and indirect oppression are legitimized by students and internalized through unconscious adaptation and conformity to oppression. In other words, though oppression devices are mostly unacceptable instruments that have no meaningful relationship with a satisfying education, they are accepted as regular items of education, which eventually brings about the understanding that education itself is an oppression device. A graduate student's remarks about education provide a summary of the cycle of mechanical obedience:

> "Iapetus: Sir, doesn't school exist to make everyone obedient? I don't say that everyone's gonna be obedient, but it's like, 'Be quiet; be docile; take whatever we teach you; get in the school at this hour and leave it at that hour'. It happens with this mentality. The school does not make everyone obedient, but it struggles to do so. Sir, when you raised your head up a little, they would cut it off, I mean, in the case of misbehavior, there comes the punishment of temporary debarment, or other disciplinary punishments, expelling from school, etc."

Without being capable of imagining an education without oppression, students also demanded an education process in which they were passive, docile, and compliant listeners in the classroom. Conformity to oppression ensues through a misunderstood concept of respect, a demand for silence, and an acceptance of strict rules in the classroom. While conformity to oppression occurs with the willingness of the student, unconscious adaptation appears through the impacts of direct and indirect oppression tools. We observed that almost all the students replied in the same way to the question of whether they have ever criticized a teacher in the classroom:

> "Electra: In the face of the teacher?"

Fear of teachers, avoiding being blacklisted, losing interest and a lack of knowledge about democracy can be named as the milestones of unconscious adaptation which appeared frequently in the interviews with the students.

External Factors, Unconscious Oppression, and Internalized Oppression Devices
Thematic analysis of the interviews with the teachers yielded three main themes which are external factors, unconscious oppression, and internalized oppression devices. Figure 2 provides a detailed mind map of the analysis.
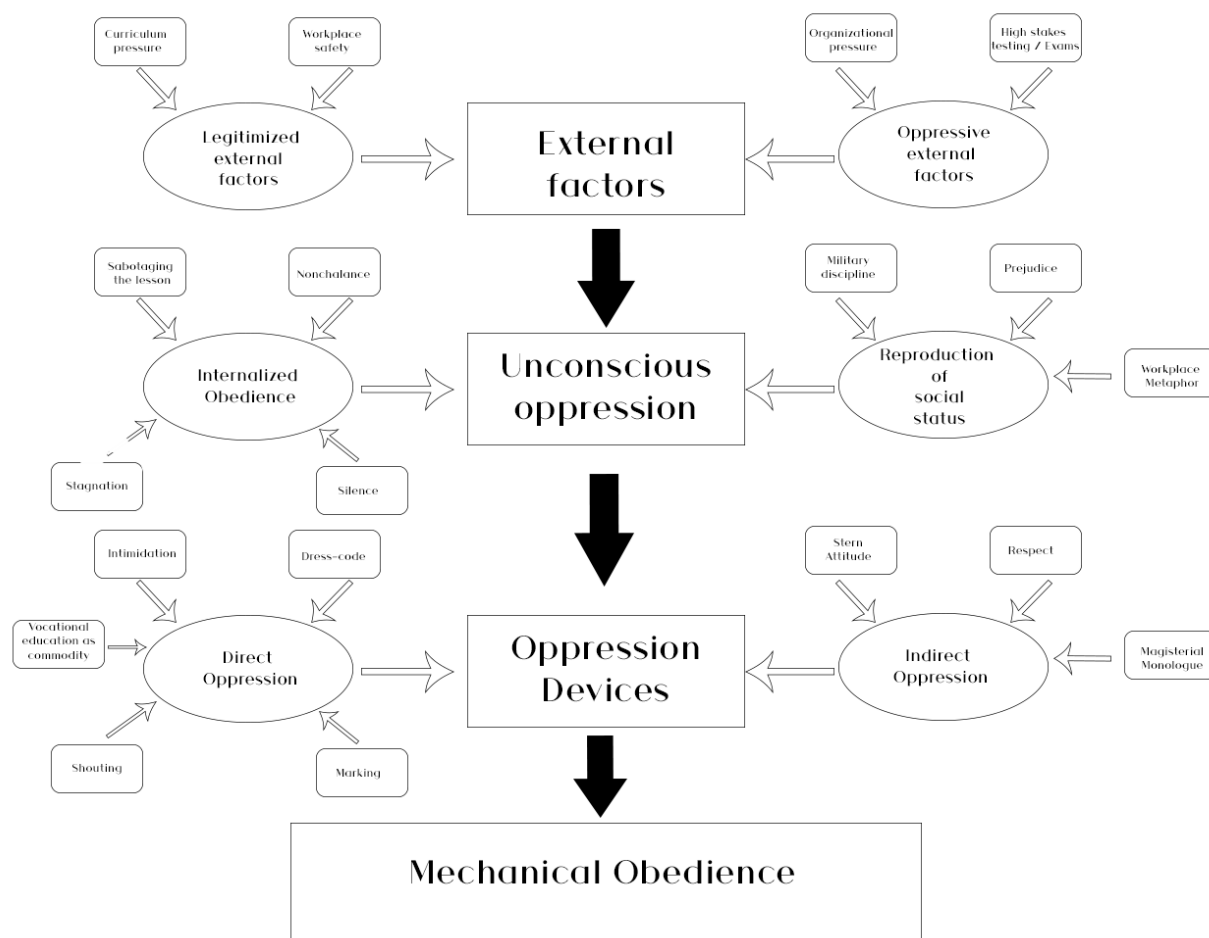
Figure 2. Mind Map of Thematic Analysis

Unconscious oppression occurs under the categories of internalized obedience and reproduction of social status, and it results from external factors that are curriculum pressure, organizational or peer pressure, and the pressure of accountability.

We observed that teachers' feeling obliged to cover every item on the curriculum emerges from the fact that students are responsible for those items at high-stakes tests, which have the potential to play a crucial role in the future life of students. Instead of resisting the heavy burden of the curriculum which is not suitable for the academic levels and backgrounds of VHS students, teachers force themselves and the students to complete the issues on the yearly plan that is prepared and dictated by the ministry of education in Turkey. Due to the mismatch between the curriculum and the academic background of students, teachers' efforts to complete the issues on the curriculum turn into a tug of war between the teachers and the students.

Internalized obedience's reflections are teachers' expectations for silence, complaints about students' sabotaging the lesson, stagnation, and nonchalance. We observed that teachers' feeling of stagnation, which ends up with nonchalance, interoperates with the demand for silence; hence, students' any behavior that causes a slight noise or a little distraction is regarded as sabotaging the lesson or preventing the flow of the lesson. A biology teacher explains the stagnation and nonchalance he experiences:

> "Asclepius: If you ask the teaching that I carry out today, I only have the concern of how I can be home and dry with the least level of interaction…I mean, teaching was not something like this for me. It shouldn't have been something like this, but today it is. I chose the easy way. Just teach something in the classroom, and if there are, hand out a

couple of tests to the students. Just like a technician, I say this part in quotation marks, it turned to stall the students with the curriculum."

As regards the reproduction of social status as an unconscious oppression device, we observed that the first factor was prejudice about VHS students. Considering their academic skills as low, teachers think of VHS children as secondary to the students at other high schools. Also, the socio-economic status of their families and the neighborhoods that the students come from contribute to the prejudice against these students. A teacher explains the social look of the student portrait of VHS as such:

> "Hades: Today, as vocational education turned to be the education of people whose socio-economic status is lower-middle class, and as everybody perceives it like this, the students who are far away from education gather in our schools. [...] Nonetheless, just because the students whose exam results are so low that they are not enough for other schools are sent to VHS. The students whose families are also far away from education and are dismissive about their children come to our school."

In addition to the prejudice against students, two key conceptions as military discipline and workplace metaphor serve the purpose of reproducing social status. Because of the prejudice that VHS students might have a problem with obeying rules, a military discipline is applied in the workshops. Especially in vocational lessons' teachers perceive the school as a workplace such as a factory or a workshop. Therefore, they struggle to create the same atmosphere in their workshops. The perception of VHS as workplaces can be considered as the transition point from unconscious oppression to internalized oppression devices of teachers because of the transformation of a school from an educational place to a commodity. Ares identifies the relationship between obedience and teachers' power in students' future careers:

> Ares: Mostly we place the students in their internship places. In their last years, and this is for them…[He pauses]. To be honest, I use this. I say, 'I do not want to find a place to work for a man [a student] who is problematic, who disrupts the flow of the lesson, who is reluctant during the lesson... Nobody wants to reckon for another here. There is this opportunity to go to the workplace as a student who is suggested by Mr. Ares. 'This kid I suggest to you is the personnel you are looking for, you can work with him in the future, too. There are some kids whom I suggested as a kid with a bright future, and now they are working for good firms with good living standards. On the other hand, I would never suggest when the time comes. Because they [the firms] call me and say, 'Sir, a student came to us, and applied for a position. What do you say?' I say, 'It is up to you'. I do not discredit [the student] completely. I explain this clearly to the kids. I say, 'this is how things work, for your information!' This also works as a sanction."

As mentioned above, the students at VHS are usually from lower-economic classes of society, which paves the way for the perception that education is a gate that opens to money-earning opportunities, and vocational teachers are the key holders.

Moving this point forth, the theme of internalized oppression devices can be examined under two categories: Direct and indirect oppression devices. We listed the codes of overcontrol of dress code, intimidation, shouting, and marking under the category of direct oppression devices. In opposition to unconscious oppression, direct oppression devices are used consciously to restore order, inflict power, and maintain control in the classroom. Zeus' remarks about restoring order demonstrate that oppression devices are used consciously though not willingly:

"Zeus: To transform the students to the shape that is required by the vocational formation, or to make students adopt the acquisitions [requisites of a certain vocation], we resort to violence by way of body language to restore discipline. Violence through body language, I do not mean physical violence. I am talking about the violence by increasing volume, or via body language. This is something I really don't want. I don't want to be someone in the eyes of the students who impose something, dictates something, threatens, blusters as he will give low marks in the case that they do not learn, or threatens in a way that they will repeat the grade level if they fail his lesson. I really don't want to make students experience such a threatening process, yet, unfortunately, I sometimes increase my volume, use my body language, and lay emphasis on the significance of this lesson for passing the grade level when I talk to the students who are like this [who insist on misbehaving.]."

Indirect oppression devices can be categorized as stern attitude, respect, and magisterial monologue. When we examined the phenomena of indirect oppression profoundly, we observed that the background of indirect oppression is found in unconscious oppression. Hestia explains her own perspective on the issue of magisterial monologue:

"Hestia: I think it strays away from time to time. I mean, first, the obligation that I am the one who lectures and their obligation to remain silent to comprehend what I teach, or my illusion to feel this way, wears off the democratic relationship…But in VHS, I guess because of the lack of students' essential knowledge, or our lack of ability to simplify our lessons to that level, we cannot carry out a reciprocal lesson. And when it is not reciprocal, my being the only active speaker in the classroom, and the students' being silent listeners of mine takes away the democratic relationship."

As can be seen in Hestia's explanations, oppression transforms into patterns of inured behavior independent of external factors. In other words, during the acquisition process of oppression devices, external factors as the initiators of oppressive behavior lose their significance as oppression itself becomes a habitual part of teachers' classroom discourse.

The analysis of the notions of respect and participation from a critical perspective

Through a comparison of common points that are existent in the transcripts of study groups, we analyzed key items from teachers' and students' perspectives. According to the analysis, we observed that some terms, definitions, concepts, and notions were perceived from opposing perspectives. As regards the notion of respect three discourses were remarkable:

"Dionysus: I mean, one of the biggest problems of teachers is about himself or herself. We all have an ego problem. I mean, classroom management is highly confused with ego. I have it, too; I am also trapped in it sometimes. I mean, I perceive the negative behavior of a student in the classroom as committed to contuse my ego. After that, there remains no trace of democracy. I feel like the only thing that I should do is to oppress the student. To be honest, I do it sometimes, unfortunately. But right after doing this, I regret it. Sometimes I apologize to the students like 'I am sorry, I rebuked a little bit.' The reason for that rebuke has nothing to do with classroom management. It is caused by the feeling that my ego was contused and I reacted because of that. Therefore, there is no democracy."

Within the discourse of Dionysus, it is apparent that he feels like he has the right to oppress students. He says, "I feel like the only thing that I should do is to oppress the student". From this line, we understand that Dionysus positions himself on higher ground in terms of the asymmetrical relationship in the classroom. Even though he is not proud of oppressing the students in the classroom, and even as he feels regret, the basic motive underlying here is his belief that he is the sole authority in the classroom. That is why he "perceives the negative behavior of a student in the classroom as committed to contuse his ego".

In the second excerpt, Ares puts forward another definition of respect:

"Ares: Respect to the teacher! Because we get into the classroom with more than one teacher. We expect the students to show respect not only to us but also to the other culture teachers who get into their classrooms. I mean, we see these students more than other teachers, and we interact with them. I mean an English teacher has only two hours with these children in a week, but I have 10 hours, 14 hours with the same kid. <u>You see, in the case of one of your kid's actions in the lesson</u>… How can I explain it? [He is looking for a word instead of action] in the case of misbehavior, you know, they ask, 'who is your master', or 'Who brought you up?', in our case they ask, 'Who is your workshop teacher?' There is this thing at our school. <u>And this returns to you, I mean, *if* you cannot restore discipline in your workshop, this reflects other lessons, culture lessons. To be honest, I take these sorts of actions under control.</u>"

The discourse of Ares clearly demonstrates that his notion of respect is related to proper and improper behavior of students. In other words, Ares considers misbehavior as a sign of disrespect. As can be seen in this study, acts of misbehavior can be put forward as making noise in the classroom, talking to other students, bantering around, dealing with something other than a lesson, etc. The second significant point in Ares' remarks is that he identifies himself with the classroom and holds himself responsible for the students' actions. In other words, Ares' main concern is not about the acquisition of terminal behavior; instead, he is concerned about being criticized by his workmates. In the case of his students' misbehavior, Ares thinks that he would be the one to be condemned. Hence, his desire to control students' actions in the classroom can be taken as a sign of a notion of respect which is in fact an indulgence. Nevertheless, another vocational teacher has a completely different approach to the notion of respect. When Hypnos was asked how he managed democratic classroom management he replied as follows:

"Hypnos: How do I achieve it? [He thinks], I will talk about the same thing over and over, but this has become a significant criterion in my teaching nowadays. <u>Respect for others. I mean the student. There is only a distribution of roles here. The students come to school to learn something, and you are at school to teach. This is our position. To learn and teach a notion of reciprocal respect</u>. I think this way [How I achieve democratic classroom management]. Students can speak in my lessons without hesitation and say whatever they want to say. But of course, we have some borders. <u>We never talk about politics directly and we do not talk much about sexuality as this is a VHS.</u> We draw a line when issues sway to these areas. At a certain level. But we can talk about everything except for those. And the kids, I mean, the kids are comfortable. I think like that about my lesson. You make it with the principles you identify from the very beginning. <u>Have respect for others, get respect from others.</u>"

The remarks of Hypnos demonstrate that his understanding of positioning is not asymmetrical in the classroom. He manages to see every component of the classroom as equal. In his understanding, both the teachers and the students should have respect for each other. In other words, contrary to other teachers' expectation of one-sided respect from the students as a necessity of traditional obedience, Hypnos holds teachers responsible for having respect for the students. Nevertheless, it is still possible to see some traces of prejudice against VHS students in Hypnos' remarks. When he talks of the emancipation of speech in the classroom, he separates the issues of politics and sexuality. Even though there is the possibility for both subjects not to be considered suitable for any classroom atmosphere, Hypnos' reason to confine these subjects is completely different. His reason is the setting of the discourse which is a VHS.

We observed another communicative confusion in the notion of participation. As a means of resistance to oppression, participation is a significant element in the practical discourse. Nevertheless, struggles for participation by way of enforcement cannot be regarded as a democratic application. Zeus expresses his remarks about participation:

> "Zeus: Now, the aim here is to include all the students. But of course, this is not always possible. Let's say ten percent of the students are always active during the lesson and follow the thing with you, participate. But there is no such thing as carrying out the lesson with only ten percent of the students. There is no thought like that, no method like that. I mean, [The purpose is to] make as many students as possible go to the board, make them answer questions. Besides, the comprehension capacities of the students are not the same. Their levels of learning and speeds of learning are not the same. During the process, within the time, as we get to know students, we try to include them with questions suitable for them. I mean, with the students who have problems with comprehending, or to the kids like that I ask simpler questions and I try to motivate them. I mean, if we are to solve a question, a monography, a transaction related to accounting, you know, I try to give the difficult question to a better student and the easy question to a more careless student, and try to include all the students to the process."

Zeus' struggle to include all the students in the process can be considered as a bona fide practice. Nevertheless, the question-and-answer process in the classroom without explanations may cause competition in the classroom which would sooner or later exclude some students as they would feel unsuccessful. Going to the board and answering questions or solving problems can be considered as a utility in conventional classroom. A second issue is that students might have the capacity to understand which students are being asked easier questions and which ones are challenged with difficult ones. As a consequence, the classification of the teacher as capable, clever, faster, and better students versus slow learners and less capable ones might become visible to the students. Therefore, the ones who are being asked easy questions are implicitly dubbed as slow learners, which is also a sort of defamation. Cassandra shares her experiences about participation through enforcement as follows:

> Cassandra: We cower away more from some teachers. Some teachers are a little bit more like, you know. They favor smart students, who act like, you know. The teachers act like, you know, and act towards others like 'This one doesn't understand, there is no need to do something to this one'. Or they get down on these students about a subject that they don't understand. But this is not with the purpose of teaching, I mean, I feel like this is something tactless. Some students are not good at some lessons, and the teachers act like... In front of all other students, they always [get down on students], especially the subjects that they don't understand. That is why doesn't get, you see, not democratic.

As can be inferred from the remarks of Cassandra, the asymmetrical notion of relationships in the classroom comes to light in the form of initiation-response-evaluation in the conventional classroom discourse. Even as the struggle to include students in the lesson can be regarded as a bona fide effort, it is perceived as a tactless act of defamation or shaming the student in front of others. From the excerpt of Cassandra, it is also apparent that she is shy and hesitant to talk about matters that have the potential to blame teachers. She tries to pick her words carefully.

As regards the power relations in the classroom one last example can be the remarks of Hades:

"Hades: I mean, for instance, the classroom. Getting in the classroom after break time. Or their notebooks. For instance, the bell rings, there is a discussion [Among teachers] should we mark absent the students who are five minutes late, ten minutes late. I don't want to involve in such matters. Because they say something like 'decide on the rules with the students, act accordingly.' No way! There is a specific timetable. You must get into the classroom exactly according to it. Or there are rules about wearing an apron, taking notes, and making drawings in the notebook. For example, about the matters related to the process of the lesson, I don't ask questions to the students like 'what should we do, how should we do, what happens if we do it like this', For example, we carry out practices and experiments, I don't ask questions like 'how should we organize the transaction order?' I don't take students' opinions about the educational applications in the classroom. But I prepare an atmosphere in which they can communicate with me about any subject at any time. I speak without increasing my volume. I am trying to be a teacher who is kind and firm."

Even though the remarks of Hades seem firm, we prefer to define them as honest. In many cases when teachers were asked whether they have recourse to the demands of students regarding how they arrange the process of the lesson, teachers replied in a way that they try to listen to the demands of the students. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that it is not possible to hear any meaningful demands from the students about educational content. Hades frankly puts forth that he has a concrete expectation from the students to obey rules. And also, Hades does not try to conceal the fact that he excludes students from the decision-making process of his lessons. In this regard, it is clear that Hades positions the teacher as the power source and the sole authority in the lesson. However, he tries to keep the balance by way of establishing a close relationship with the students.

Another issue that feeds the prejudice of teachers about VHS students results from the central exams that are used to distribute students to different types of schools. In Turkey, there are mainly three types of high schools; project schools that accept students with central test scores, schools that register students according to their residential address, and the schools that register students both through test scores and by considering residential addresses. On the one hand, the students who get high scores from the tests that are carried out at the end of secondary school are registered to project schools, which are also called Anatolian High Schools. In this case, the students with a high score on central tests have the chance to choose the high schools where they want to continue their educations. On the other hand, the students whose test scores are low are sent to available schools close to their neighborhood. In this case, the students do not have the chance to decide on the high schools that they will register. VHS usually registers students whose test scores are quite low. Hence, the teachers usually approach the students by considering their academic test results. Ares' remarks about the student profile of VHS and Anatolian high school students are as the following:

"Ares: For example, we don't have a despotic understanding of the discipline, but there is this thing: the men who listen to the education we provide seriously and comprehend. For example, I don't allow some sort of things. For example, bantering around, or jokes. I joke sometimes but when you carry to extremes, things may flow in a completely different way in VHS because the student profile in front of you is a little bit … [He hesitates to say the word that comes to the tip of his tongue, then tries to find a softer expression to describe the student profile] How can we define? A student who couldn't clarify their objectives in life yet, and I say it in quotation marks, these students are from the lower stratum of society. I think you cannot establish communication with these students like the students in Anatolian high schools. I didn't have much experience with the students at Anatolian high schools but there are students around me, in my family chamber. The students [at VHS] both lag in terms of intelligence and educational background. To be honest, there should be discipline."

Ares' definition of vocational students demonstrates his notion which considers VHS students lagging in intelligence and educational background when compared to the students at Anatolian high schools. Even though he does not define his understanding of the discipline as despotic, what he avoids in the classroom can be seen as making jokes or bantering. He prefers a serious atmosphere in the classroom. Also, Hestia puts forward her comparison of VHS students and Anatolian high school students:

> "Hestia: In fact, I define a disciplined classroom as a classroom in which students participate, but unfortunately I experience it in practice as restoring silence in the classroom with students whose participation is low. <u>For example, we had the chance to have more active lessons with actively participating students in Anatolian high schools. I could define it as discipline, but in vocational Anatolian high schools, as the participation of students is not so strong, I just try to create an atmosphere where they only listen to what I tell.</u> Unfortunately, the discipline at VHS is a little different. It is founded on maintaining silence in the classroom."

As Hestia demonstrates, the discipline at VHS results from the academic levels of students and results in the acquisition of social class codes. Silencing, oppressing, and a frequent enforcement of rules such as dress code, marking absent in the case of being late, and declassing tacitly directs students to vocational habitus. Hestia considers participation in a question-and-answer context in which students compete with each other to answer questions.

As regards the teachers' dispositions about the notions of respect, participation, and student profile, it is possible to make a description of the vocational habitus dictated to VHS students.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, we analyzed VHS students', graduates', and teachers' discourses in terms of oppression devices that could yield to mechanical obedience. As regards to mechanical obedience, Milgram (1973)'s remarks which consider obedience as a strong instinct that nullifies the notions of ethics, sympathy and moral conduct were also parallel to our findings. Milgram explains the obedience to authority phenomena as being proud of doing a good job with the motivation to obey authority under difficult circumstances. Similarly, the insight we reached with this study demonstrates that the oppression devices of education are carried into the classroom discourse by following a path ignited by external factors listed as curriculum pressure, workplace safety, organizational pressure, and high stakes testing, which results in the unconscious oppression of teachers on students; thereafter, unconscious oppression of teachers is transformed to voluntary oppression by way of internalization and legitimization. We reached the insight that teachers themselves turn into the embodiment of authority in the classroom once external factors cause mechanical obedience of teachers to authority, which establishes the necessary foundations for direct and indirect oppression devices to be carried into the classroom.

The major external factor that yields to the mechanical obedience of teachers can be put forth as accountability, which is a comprehensive term that includes curriculum pressure, standardization, organizational pressure, and high-stakes testing. In a rhetorical analysis, Suspitsyna (2010) analyzes 164 US Department of Education speeches covering three years between 2005 and 2007, and it is seen that accountability was referenced in the speeches approximately 250 times. Suspitsyna suggests that accountability in education is an instrument to transmit neoliberal values to sustain neoliberal political rationality, put the openness of educational institutions under government's supervision, and enable entrepreneurial subjectivities. Another study by Irons, Carlson, Lowery-Moore, and Farrow (2007) that analyzes teachers' perceptions about standards and accountability implementation demonstrates that teachers are held accountable for students' learning. Just as the students are required to pass state tests to graduate from high school, lesson plans are designed to make students successful in these tests, and the lesson plans are neatly reviewed by the school administrators. Irons et al. (2007) conclude that high-stakes testing integrated to standards has the potential to confine content knowledge to content validity,

which reduces educational action to a struggle for answering test questions. Parallel to the findings of these two recent pieces of research, we observed that teachers' feeling of responsibility for the students to make them successful in high stakes tests forces them to fulfill all the items in the curriculum, which makes it imperative for the teachers to establish a one-sided communication in the classroom as they rush to complete the issues in the standardized curriculum in a limited period which is relatively short compared to the content of the curriculum. As a requisite of this one-sided communication, teachers make use of direct and indirect oppression to restore order and silence in the classroom. Considering much of the student behavior as disruptive behavior, teachers resort to licit punishment, corporal punishment, and authority, or defamation and discountenance, which could be considered as groups of actions that result in mechanical obedience. In other words, one of the most valuable insights of this study could be seen as the demonstration of the link between accountability and mechanical obedience, which ultimately maintains the exploitive connection between VHS and the market by way of establishing submissive vocational habitus.

Weiss, Muckenthaler, and Kiel (2020) examine disruptive behavior in the classroom in four categories. The first category of classroom disruptions includes behavior such as interrupting the flow of the lesson by talking without being asked, making noises, running around the classroom, and commenting on the teachers' actions. The second category named aggressive behavior is described as insults, verbal abuse, threats, blackmail attempts, and physical violence. The third category of disruptive behavior is defined as making unusual noises, screaming, or self-harming, and the last category is described as taking advantage of emotional and behavioral problems by way of special treatment. Kapoor, Inamdar, and Kaufman (2021) put forth five main themes as the environmental factors that cause misbehavior in the classroom. These are teacher-related factors, curriculum-related factors, school or institutional factors, peer group-related factors, and out-of-school factors. Parallel to the findings of this study, teacher-related factors include the quality of teaching, low emphasis on learning, and low or no sanction by the instructor. Additionally, curriculum-related factors are also similar to the findings we reached. The curriculum being challenging or easy, disinterest in the curriculum, and especially the grading system appears as the reasons for misbehavior in the classroom. Explaining what a disruptive behavior or misbehavior is, and establishing the reasons which cause disruptive or misbehavior, these recent studies do not set forth teacher reactions or strategies against disruptive or misbehavior. However, qualitative research carried out in Turkey on managing disruptive behavior in the classroom reveals two main themes on strategies used by teachers regarding the management of undesirable student behavior in the classroom, which are preventive strategies and behavior control strategies. While preventive strategies include setting rules, establishing good relationships, and instructive/directive interaction, behavior control strategies are indirect intervention (verbal and nonverbal insinuation), direct intervention, talking with the student after class, directing the student to specialists or others, and punishment (Özdere & Karacabey, 2020). Though preventive and behavior control strategies can be regarded as standard classroom management protocols, it is possible to consider these strategies as oppression devices in the classroom discourse from a critical perspective. In other words, considering student misbehavior as resistance (Caplin, 1969) depending on the legitimate reasons that cause misbehavior in the classroom, classroom management strategies could be regarded as oppressive instruments instead of ameliorating misbehavior.

As another solid concept of classroom management, the notion of authority also has the potential to transform into an oppression instrument. Bulterman-Bos (2022) approaches authority from a different perspective and claims that authority and power are different notions. By applying Arendt's views on authority, Bulterman-Bos (2022, p. 4) argues that "inner consent and freedom of man is retained in the face of authority because authority is always derived from a source external to its own power". This transcendental approach to authority requires an acceptance of an external source of power, otherwise, authority leaves its seat to sole power combined with violence. In the study mentioned, Bulterman-Bos (2022) tries to build a New Authority Network via participatory action research in which shared leadership and group work plays an active part. Likewise, Graham (2018) also underlines the fact that democracy and authority are regarded as contradicting notions although they

cannot exist without each other. What Graham suggests is a balance in terms of authority shared between co-working teacher and student. In this study, we reached the insight that the misconception of teachers in the notions of respect and participation prevents equitable distribution of power and authority. We observed that teachers' understanding of respect was not mutual; on the contrary, it required acquiescing obedience of students on a hierarchical plane by locating the teacher to a sacred position in the classroom. As Kappeler and Sluder (1994) suggest, acts of direct and indirect oppression constitute acts of crime that are caused under the convention of academic freedom that provides great latitude in the classroom to the teacher to employ instructional methods to facilitate learning. Furthermore, teachers' understanding of participation remained at a question-and-answer level instead of including students in the decision-making process via shared leadership and group work. Parallel to the findings of previous research, we concluded that misplacing power in the classroom leads to the transformation of authority to the sole use of power and violence; nevertheless, the insight that identifies the falsified conceptions of respect and participation as central to the misplacement of power could be regarded as a field of further research.

We observed that the reproduction of social status occurs under the influence of prejudice against VHS students. The notion of the pedagogy of poverty used by Haberman (2010) puts forward the conventional classroom discourse practices as giving information, asking questions, giving directions, making assignments, giving tests, reviewing tests, assigning homework, reviewing homework, setting disputes, punishing noncompliance, marking papers, and giving grades. Parallel to the notion of the pedagogy of poverty, which can be defined as teaching poor urban students (Ladson-Billings, 1995), VHS students are also considered as students coming from poor and troublesome neighborhoods whose families are indifferent to the education their children received. As Özcan (2010, 2021) and Özer (2018) suggest, the perception that VHS is inferior to other secondary schools as regards to education quality was also observable in the interviews conducted with VHS teachers. The teachers' complaints about the academic achievement levels of VHS students and their insight that supposed the students whose academic achievement levels were low were placed in VHS schools by the local education authorities and the central exam system as a whole can also be explained by the views of Tural (1994) and Ünal (1996): As a reaction to comply with the hierarchical positioning of professions, educational institutions are stratified in terms of the students' academic levels.

As a result of the clustering of low-scorer students in VHS schools, it becomes thorny for the teachers to cover academic lessons and establish a healthy environment to study in the classrooms. Hence, teachers try to keep VHS students under constant control with a military discipline understanding which tries to engrave vocational requisites to the minds and personalities of the students (Colley et al. 2003). The militaristic appearance of vocational education in Turkey can be traced back to the first examples of vocational education institutions founded in the 18th century. As Berkes (2018), Koçer (1987) and Meşeci Giorgetti (2016, 2020) describe the effect of innovations in Europe and Bonapartism on vocational and technical education still carries its mark on VHSs. Singing the national anthem at every entrance to the workshops, forming a line, and following orders strictly are the evidence reached throughout the research process. Moreover, the teachers interviewed explained this behavior as a measure taken against work accidents, which is also parallel to the FİSA report findings that demonstrate work accidents as a significant deterrent in terms of VHS preference of parents and students. We concluded that workplace safety was one of the major threats that directed teachers to use direct oppression devices in the classroom.

As a result, we suggest that the disciplinary understanding of dissident teachers who aspire to a democratic society serves the social and cultural reproduction of social classes by way of sinking into the language of authority (Biesta, 1998; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Candela, 1998) even though their classroom discourses bare a few traces of practical discourse.

Suggestions

Moving forth from the findings and conclusions of this research, it is possible to propound various suggestions for different spheres. In the broader sense, the main problem seems as though the inferior perception of vocational and technical education in Turkey and the curriculum prepared according to the vertical education demand. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that VET institutions should be made more attractive for the students at the National Ministry of Education level and a more suitable curriculum for VET institutions that is parallel to the employment opportunities in the country should be prepared. However, this sort of transformation requires more comprehensive research on the characteristics of VET in Turkey. Thus, we confine our suggestions to the level of classroom management and classroom discourse. Additionally, we limit our proposals to the teachers who are members of the same teachers' union since the research was conducted only with the participation of these teachers.

Our first suggestion is that regular workshops should be arranged by the union to contemplate oppression devices in the classroom discourse with the attendance of experts in the field. This way, it would be possible to raise awareness levels of teachers in terms of inured behavior that carries traces of oppression. Secondly, the union can organize meetings in which teachers can share experiences and exhibit examples of classroom management techniques that are free of oppression. Lastly, the union should arrange training for teachers on effective ways of teaching especially by making use of advanced classroom activities which are suitable for the realities of VHS classrooms. This training's main objective should be to ease the pressure caused by the dense curriculum by receiving help from experts in the field.

We consider it necessary to put forward suggestions at the student level. VHS students in Turkey should also be informed about the oppression devices and their awareness level about the oppression devices in the classroom and the apprenticeship environment. Nongovernmental organizations can be employed to arrange seminars and webinars to raise awareness on issues such as children's rights, work safety regulations, and by-laws related to apprenticeship applications. The students should acquire information on how and where to apply legal grounds in case of violations such as improper working conditions, unpaid extra work, lack of work safety, and abuse.

Additionally, the use of the Habermasian communication model in the classroom should be broadened by researchers in the educational sciences field. Experimental and quasi-experimental research designs can be used to observe the effect of practical discourse on student achievement and on-the-job training can be arranged to initiate healthy communication applications in the classrooms.

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