PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN CLASSROOMS WITH STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at revealing the problems experienced by primary school teachers in classroom contexts which involve different cultures (Turkish, Iranian, Afghan, and Syrian). Phenomenology design was adopted in the study. The study group was defined through criterion sampling approach. Teachers serving at classrooms involving different cultures and teachers having different professional seniority were included in the study. Nine primary school teachers in total were interviewed, and the data were collected through open ended semi-structured interview questions. The data were analyzed through content analysis. After analysis of the data, the problems experienced by primary school teachers were gathered under three categories as; 1) problems experienced by themselves as teachers, 2) problems experienced in terms of students, and 3) problems experienced in terms of parents.

HOW TO CITE

Highlights

- *It is seen that teachers have various problems in education contexts where students from different cultures come together.*
- *Insufficient teaching experience, time and classroom management, discipline, and insufficient foreign language knowledge are among the most experienced problems by teachers and students.*
- *Teachers' attitudes towards foreign students and groupings among students affect learning - teaching processes negatively.*
- *Indifference of foreign students' parents affects the students' cognitive and affective skills.*
- *The fact that teachers do not have a specific curriculum to manage the learning-teaching process in a classroom environment where different cultures coexist poses a major problem for them.*

INTRODUCTION

Education contexts have recently been transformed into pluricultural and plurilingual environments due to international student exchange programs, migration, study programs, and, the participants of these education contexts bring their own cultural assumptions and experiences to the common practices conducted in these contexts (Holmes, 2006). Understanding and tolerating others in these contexts prevent misjudgments and prejudices which may otherwise cause communication problems among individuals (Reid, 2015). Students' having beliefs and attitudes which stem from their own experiences may lead them to understand situations differently from the intended purposes in contexts (Kramsch, 1993), and this highlights the importance of awareness of similarities and differences among different cultures. At this point, language may not ensure mutual intelligibility at desired level (Deardorff, 2011).

Culture as a notion has distinct definitions in different disciplines as it is viewed from particular perspectives due to the nature of study areas, and, it is regarded among the most intricate words (Moran and Lu, 2001; Nadeem, Mohammed and Dalib, 2017; Williams, 2014). Culture can be accepted as fixed common interpretations on feelings, values, norms shaped or shared by a group of individuals and can influence others' actions in group. Similarly, culture affects students' roles, teachers' roles, their self-analyses, and their responsibilities to take part in processes in a classroom (Israelsson, 2016; Kramsch, 1993; Lustig and Koester, 2003). Recently, understanding of culture has changed, and it has begun to refer to the practices devised

and generated via interactions among people in education contexts (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Godley, 2012). Thus, new cultures and communication types are produced through social interactions within school contexts (Israelsson, 2016). Moreover, school success can be enhanced significantly, if education processes, cultural inclinations are compatible with experiences and learning styles. This success is obvious in school environments where culturally related content, teacher attitudes, expectations and actions come together (Gay, 2000). Intercultural awareness is not an orderly process to develop, and many factors can contribute to its enhancement (Krajewski, 2011). Individuals of the 21st century need to learn how to show empathy towards others as cultural diversity has become a forefront issue due to technology, globalization, mass migrations etc. (Chen and Starosta, 1996; Zimmerman, 1995), and they need to commence intercultural communicative competence to interact with the people from different cultural backgrounds (Arslan, 2018; Fantini and Tirmizi, 2006). Within this context, the individuals who have intercultural awareness benefit from successful and influential communication through their competences (Krajewski, 2011). Intercultural competence can be defined as the ability to participate in intercultural conversations actively and properly relying on intercultural resources such as knowledge, ability, and manners by ensuring mutual understanding as social agents (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002; Deardorff, 2006). Byram (1997) enlarges the term intercultural competence to intercultural communicative competence by taking discourse, linguistic, and sociolinguistic aspects into consideration.

Multicultural education aims to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skill, and cultural capital to maintain their lives in society (Banks, 2009). Furthermore, multicultural education is a complementary in preparing students for a democratic citizenship and developing academic success of students from different cultures in a pluralist society (Gay, 2016). Bennet (2003, cited in Ogletree and Larke, 2010: 3) defines multicultural education as "an approach to teaching and learning based on democratic values and beliefs and supporting cultural plurality at culturally different societies at national and international levels", and sequences four aspects of multicultural education as movement, curricula knowledge, processes, and commitment. An important purpose of multicultural education is to redesign schools for all students in order to adapt them into knowledge, attitudes and skills at ethnically and racially different societies and nations. Multicultural education intends to carry out equal education for students from different cultures, and to include them into national culture as critical and reflective individuals (Banks, 2009).

Teachers in Intercultural/Multicultural Education Contexts

Multilingualism, nowadays, is a globally accepted phenomenon as many students use different languages in education contexts and in their private lives; and this situation necessitates teachers to be equipped with essential skills to confront unexpected challenges that stem from cultural differences (Kasmer and

Billings, 2017). Education contexts should provide learners and teachers suitable atmospheres in which they can easily take part in both intracultural and intercultural conversations. Teachers, as primary figures in classrooms, need to have necessary skills in order to communicate with learners from various cultures by keeping mutual intelligibility in an open and respectful manner without harming their cultural sensitivities. Additionally, teachers need to be prepared to cope with both students' available problems and increasing number of students from different cultures, and getting ready for becoming active and responsible citizens (Clewell and Villegas, 2001). They are also responsible from bringing their students up as active students who can see differences as positive factors. Thus, developments must be followed to overcome these problems, and teachers must be able to adapt different values, communication types by relating them successfully, if they are at these positions (Spinthourakis, 2006).

Most of the teachers are not convinced on the importance of multiculturalism in developing academic skills and forming a united society. Even teachers who believe in multicultural education are suspicious of its applicability. While some of the teachers state that they know nothing about multicultural education, the others state that getting prepared to accomplish standards takes their all time. Also, the teachers underline that overloaded curricula do not enable them to include multicultural education (Gay, 2016). An important finding of studies is that untrained teachers are not ready satisfactorily in designing learning contexts for students of different countries (Gay, 2002). Correspondingly, studies highlighted the profound influence of teachers' organizing sound education contexts in which they can feel free in making mistakes in complicated subjects for their learners, and these processes may not be conducted satisfactorily by teachers (Müller-Hartmann and Schocker, 2013). Organizing learning environments involving learners from different backgrounds may be troublesome for teachers while designing tasks. At this point, multicultural qualifications that teachers are expected to have includes, a) being aware of their own cultures and prejudices, b) being tend to learn perspectives of different cultures, and c) developing cultural sensitive teaching ways (Başbay and Bektaş, 2010).

Teachers' demographic profiles may remain nearly the same while the number of learners from different cultural contexts constantly increases; and, including intercultural competency in teacher training programs may be suggested to overcome this dilemma in such contexts (Chval and Chávez, 2012; Cushner, McClelland and Safford, 2009; Kasmer and Billings, 2017). Also, field experiences at the beginning of teacher training programs, designing international education programs, providing teacher candidates with studying abroad opportunities, and implementation of standardized documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) in teacher training programs can be sequenced among effective approaches to enhance intercultural competence of both teachers and teacher candidates (Mewborn, 2000; Mirici, 2015; Ries, Cabrera and Carriedo, 2016; Smalley and Retallick, 2011; Şentürk and Mirici, 2019; Yüce, 2019).

Though there are many research studies available in the literature dealing with intercultural competence, intercultural communicative competence, and intercultural competence in learners, there are comparatively few research studies focusing on intercultural competence of teachers (Aguilar, 2007; Belz, 2002; Ghanem, 2017; Kohler, 2015; Liddicoat, 2002). Teachers have primary roles in intercultural education processes. Because, understanding and accepting cultural differences, conveying values, and developing intercultural problem-solving skills are among great problems experienced by students. Currently, teachers try to carry out teaching and learning processes under the same conditions for many students who come from different roots affected by cultural norms and values, and face numerous intercultural problems. Revealing and understanding these problems hold crucial importance for designing a culturally sensitive and successful education context for all students, and it can also contribute to education contexts positively by enhancing teachers' awareness and attitudes on intercultural education.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to reveal the problems faced by teachers in classrooms where students with different cultural backgrounds study together. The research question of "What are the problems experienced by teachers in classroom contexts in which students from different cultural backgrounds study together?" was formulated in the study. Accordingly, the following sections were organized in the paper. Design, participants, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the study are explained in Materials and Methods section. Themes and categories obtained from the data as a result of interviews with teachers are presented in Results section. The findings of this study are compared to the findings in international and national literature in Discussion. Conclusion section briefly summarizes the main findings.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study adopted phenomenology as research design. The purpose in research studies based on phenomenology was to depict experiences of participants regarding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). This design was chosen as the research aimed at revealing the problems that classroom teachers experience in classrooms where there are students coming from different cultural backgrounds.

Participants

"In phenomenology, data resources are individuals or groups who live this phenomenon and can reveal or reflect this phenomenon" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 74). The participants of this study were classroom teachers who had been teaching at classrooms with students from different cultural backgrounds in one of the provinces of Central Anatolia Region in Turkey. Criterion sampling, one of purposeful sampling methods, was used in defining the participants (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Criterion was defined in terms of teachers' teaching experiences as 1-10 years, 11-20 years, and 21 and above years. Profiles of the participants are presented in Table 1 as follows:

Codes	FT1*	FT2	FT3	FT4	FT5	FT6	MT1**	MT2	MT3
Teaching Experience (Years)	8	15	20	19	23	10	24	17	18

*FT1: Female Teacher 1; **MT1: Male Teacher 1

Table 1: Profiles of the participants (source: own calculation)

Nine classroom teachers in total were interviewed in the study. There were three male teachers, and six female teachers. The teaching experience of teachers ranged from 8 (the lowest) - to 24 years (the highest). The teachers participated in the study were serving in two different schools, and Turkish, Iranian, Afghan, Iraqi, and Syrian students were studying in their classrooms.

Data Collection

Interview is employed as a primary data collection instrument in phenomenology. The aim is to reveal experiences of participants regarding phenomenon through interaction, flexibility, and probe questions directed by researchers (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 74). Data of the study were gathered through semi-structured interview questions. A question and probe questions in parallel with this question were directed at the teachers. The question directed at the teachers was: Can you share your experiences of classrooms in which foreign and Turkish students studying together? The interviews were conducted at the schools where the teachers worked, and only the volunteer teachers were included in the study in these schools. The interviews were commenced after getting their consents. The shortest interview lasted 19 minutes and 48 seconds, the longest interview lasted 35 minutes and 40 seconds, and the average length of all interviews was approximately 25 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in phenomenology aims to reveal experiences and meanings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 75). Content analysis was used in analyzing the data. The interviews were deciphered, and 34-word document pages were obtained from voice recordings of the interviews. Themes and categories were sought in the transcriptions. Responses to the same questions were written one under the other in order to reveal the themes and categories easily. The views undergoing the same theme were collected in coding process. Emergent coding was used during the processes (Elliott, 2018), and the themes and categories were explained within the light of phenomenon by the researchers. The themes were also visualized.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Multiple data sources were utilized in the study to enhance inner validity of the study (Merriam, 2013; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Math teaching classes of 2 classroom teachers were observed in order to ensure the data obtained from

the interviews. One of the observed teachers had 8 years of teaching experience, and the other observed teacher had 19 years of teaching experience. The observation reason of math classes was that math is a global lesson in which students from different cultures can easily express themselves. Observation form was developed by the researchers, and sent for evaluation to an associate prof. dr. (classroom education) and a professor (curriculum and instruction). The form was finalized based on the feedback from these two experts, and implemented in the process. Sample items from the observation form are as follows:

Items	Observed	Partially Observed	Satisfactory
Interaction between teachers and students can be achieved.			
The teacher encourages the participation of all students.			
The teacher respects all the students from different cultures.			
...			

Table 2: Sample items from the observation form (source: own design)

Purposeful sampling and thick description strategy were followed to provide outer validity of the study (Merriam, 2013; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). The participant group was formed from the teachers who directly experience the phenomenon through purposeful sampling as they have students from different cultural backgrounds which makes easier to reveal experiences and meanings for the study. Teachers who have different teaching experience years were included in the study to get an insight into views related to experiences of classrooms with students from different cultural backgrounds. Points mentioned by the teachers were highlighted through the thick descriptions. Views mentioned by the teachers were expressed under the themes via thick descriptions. An external audit was consulted to enhance reliability of the data (Merriam, 2013; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). The themes were re-coded by another expert. Also, findings of the study were compared to other research findings presented in the literature.

RESULTS

This part of the study aims to present the problems arising in classrooms in which students from different cultural backgrounds studying together. Within this scope, findings obtained from the analyses were collected under three themes, namely teacher, student, and parents.

Findings regarding classroom problems experienced by the teachers

Themes and subthemes regarding problems experienced by classroom teachers teaching in classrooms with students from different cultural backgrounds were presented in Figure 1. It is seen that the problems experienced by classroom teachers were categorized under five main sub-themes (Figure 1). These are; teaching inexperience, time management, classroom management, communication skill, and attitudes and prejudices.

According to Figure 1, inability of favoring individual differences, not knowing what to do in basic science classes, lack of communication between Turkish parents and foreign parents are among the most mentioned problems in the theme of teachers' lack of experience. Inability of sparing enough time for teaching, and inability of caring foreign students sufficiently are among the most mentioned problems in the theme of time-management. Chaos in classrooms, conflicts between Turkish students and foreign students, and foreign students' not participating in the learning processes are among the most mentioned problems in the theme of classroom management. Inability of understanding students due to language differences, inability of communicating with students, and inability of communicating with parents are among the most mentioned problems in the theme of communication skill. Inability to acknowledge foreign students and inability to show interests to foreign students are among the most mentioned problems in the theme of attitude and prejudice. Views of the classroom teachers regarding their problems in their classrooms are as follows:

FT1: [...] Processes are too slow. We could not follow our syllabi regularly. We cover topics in different times. [...]

MT3: [...] We had problems in terms of class instruments, pencils, and other resources. Also, the parents of these students could not spare enough time to their children due to their hard life conditions, and the students could not continue their education and they left school.

MT2: [...] Not knowing our language is the biggest problem both for us and for them, Syrian students. For example, the students coming from Afghanistan are a bit more motivated and they learn Turkish language faster than Syrian students. Our biggest problem with Syrian students is their forced and fast migration to our country, and not knowing our language. This automatically affects them. [...]

FT3: [...] Workload of teacher increases. Teacher needs extra effort. This situation tires out teacher. [...]

FT4: [...] Students do not continue to their education, instead they sell handkerchiefs on the streets. For example, I have 12 foreign students currently but most of them do not attend classes. As a result, they fall behind the topics. When they come again, you need to cover the same topics again. This bores the other students. Additionally, their protecting classroom materials are different. Local students are more conservative than other foreign students in protecting materials. [...]

FT6: [...] They always speak in their native languages in my classes though I warned them many times. You cannot respond them as you do not know their language. Language is a serious problem. [...]

MT1: [...] I have not a serious problem with foreign students actually, I say once a new word and they easily understand it. The problem occurs with the ones who come without any knowledge of the language, and this necessitates time to overcome problems. [...]

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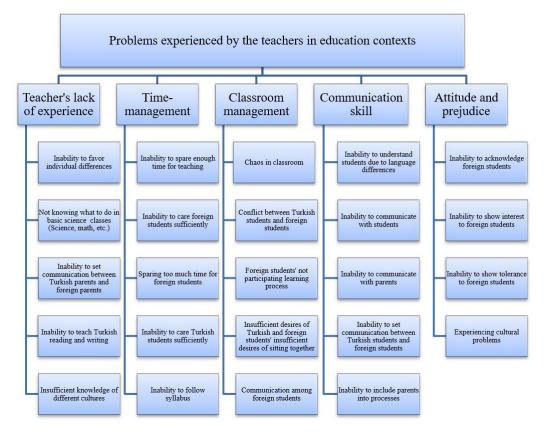
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Figure 1: Problems experienced by the teachers in classrooms with primary school students from different cultural backgrounds (source: own calculation)

Findings regarding problems experienced by the teachers in terms of students

Themes and subthemes regarding problems experienced by classroom teachers teaching in classrooms with students from different cultural backgrounds are presented in Figure 2.

Problems in terms of primary school students coming from different cultural backgrounds are described under 6 subcategories (Figure 2). These are problems regarding learning, discipline problems, communication skill, insufficient knowledge, basic needs, and attitudes and prejudices. Inability to understand what is read, inability to understand what is said, and not fulfilling responsibilities are among the most occurring problems under the subtheme of problems regarding learning. Orientation problems of foreign students, conflicts or grouping problems between Turkish students and foreign students, and attendance problems are among the problems of the subtheme of discipline problems. Language problems among the students, and language problems between teacher and students are among the most occurring problems under the subtheme of communication skill. Not knowing Turkish language, being insufficient in basic science classes, and not being familiar with the Turkish culture are among the problems under the subtheme of lack of knowledge. Hygiene, and malnutrition problems are among the problems under the subtheme of basic needs. Lastly, Turkish students' underestimating foreign students, and students' isolating each other are among the problems under the subtheme of attitude and prejudice. Teachers' views on problems in terms of their students are as follows:

MT3: [...] I asked their phone numbers, and used to call the parents whose child was absent every morning. I used to inform the parents about their children. They either used to respond my callings several hours later or not to respond back. [...]

FT1: [...] We have a course duration. To what extent can we deal with these students, ant there are many students with different levels in classrooms. We are unable to spare enough time for these children. You need to teach letters from the very beginning and need to deal with them constantly. You cannot teach letters just in 2 minutes. [...]

FT3: [...] Language is a crucial problem for them. [...] If they knew language, there would not be any communication problems [...]

FT4: [...] There are constantly conflicts among students. They can isolate newcomers at their first arrival. [...]

MT2: [...] Acknowledging each other takes time for students. Foreign students did not feel themselves belong in here. Local students did not accept them as foreign students performed behaviors different to local culture. Differences in languages and cultures caused prejudges among students. [...]

FT2: [...] Cultural problems occurred at first years. [...]

MT1: [...] One of the students damaged a desk in the classroom, and I warned him. But, he did not clearly understand me because of insufficient language. [...] When I was monitoring halls, I saw two students, from different countries, fighting with each other. [...]

MT2: [...] Math is a global lesson, but our classes a bit slow due to language problems. Besides, the curriculum is not intensive. So, our classes are neither bad nor good. [...]
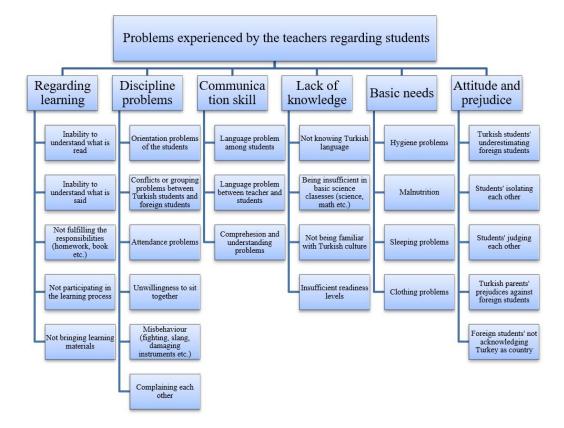
Figure 2: Problems experienced by the teachers in classrooms with primary school students from different cultural backgrounds in terms of students (source: own calculation)

Findings regarding problems experienced by the teachers in terms of parents

Problems experienced by the classroom teachers in classes with students from different cultures in terms of their parents were described in themes and subthemes in Figure 3. These problems were categorized under four subthemes, and, these are academic support, basic needs, communication skill, and attitude and prejudice (Figure 3).

When Figure 3 is analyzed, it is seen that inability to understand the reading activities, and inability to support their children are among the most occurred problems under the subtheme of academic support. Hygiene problems, and economic problems are among the most occurred problems under the subtheme of basic needs. Language related problems are among the most occurred problems under the subtheme of communication skill. Lastly, incomprehension of Turkish culture, and understanding of students are under the responsibility of schools are among the most occurred problems under the subtheme of attitude and prejudice. Views of the classroom teachers on problems regarding parents are as follows:

FT6: [...] We organized parents' meeting, but most of them did not attend. Even though they come, they do not understand us as they cannot speak Turkish. We cannot communicate. [...]
MT2: [...] They say that our children are unable to learn due to other students. [...]
FT3: [...] We can say similar things for the parents as well. Parents had difficulty in accepting other student from different countries. They also questioned several hygiene issues [...]

MT1: [...] We have several furious and reacting parents. [...]
FT4: [...] though they say that they could not buy resources due to economic problems, they had everything interestingly. They said to one of my colleagues buy book for a student who did not have. Once our photocopier did not work, they said why did not you buy a new one! [...]
FT5: [...] Students have hygiene problems and you can easily recognize their problems. They do not care for themselves sufficiently. [...]

Important points stressed by the classroom teachers regarding problems occurring in classrooms with students from different cultural backgrounds (final words)

Important points stressed by the classroom teachers regarding problems occurring in classrooms with students from different cultural backgrounds were presented in Figure 4. Educating foreign students in separate classes, training need on management of classroom having different cultural backgrounds, teaching primarily Turkish language to foreign students, need for assistant teachers, a separate curriculum for foreign students, and educating foreign students in a different classroom among points suggested by the classroom teachers. Final words provided by the classroom teachers are as follows:

FT4: [...] I think that it would be better to have a second teacher in crowded classes. Teachers should be more tolerant. [...]
MT2: [...] We need to provide extra classes for these students [...]

FT2: [...] It would be better to provide education opportunities in schools specifically arranged for them with experienced teachers in order to overcome orientation problems easily. [...]

FT1: [...] Seminars focusing on specific teaching methods can be arranged for teachers as we do not have any idea how to teach. We do not know which curriculum we need to follow, our own curriculum or a specific one for them [...]
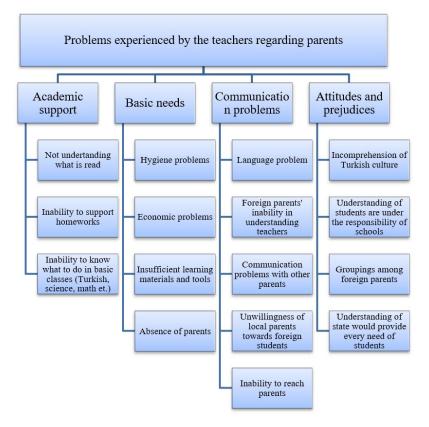

Figure 3: Problems experienced by the teachers in classrooms with primary school students from different cultural backgrounds in terms of parents (source: own calculation)
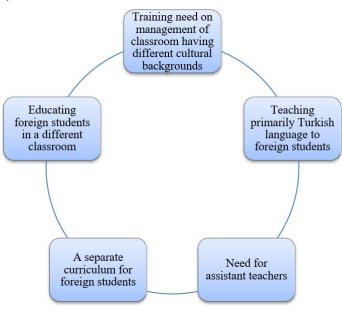

Figure 4: Final words by the classroom teachers regarding problems occurring in classrooms with students from different cultural backgrounds (source: own calculation)

DISCUSSION

The current study aimed at investigating the problems occurring at classroom contexts involving different cultures (Turkish, Iranian, Afghan and Syrian) studying together. In that respect, the findings were gathered under three categories: the problems occurring in multicultural contexts in terms of teachers, the problems in terms of students, and the problems in terms of parents.

When the problems experienced by teachers are analyzed, it can be said that there are problems in planning teaching and learning processes. *Lack of teaching experience* (inability to consider individual differences, inability to know what to teach at basic science classes such as math, science), *time management* (inability to spare enough time for teaching and dealing with students in classes sufficiently etc.), *classroom management* (chaos/disorders in classes, conflicts among native and foreign students, inability of foreign students to participate in learning processes etc.), *communication skill* (inability to understand students due to language differences, inability to communicate with students and their parents), and *attitudes and prejudices* (inability to acknowledge and show interest towards foreign students, etc.) are the areas that seem to have multidimensional problems. In this respect, it can be stated that the teachers who participated in the study have problems in conducting teaching-learning processes in which there are students from different cultural backgrounds successfully.

There may be many reasons for teachers to come across problems in leading teaching-learning processes having different cultures effectively. The first of these are knowledge and skills that teachers have. The participant teachers of this study stressed that they did not have any training during their university education on management of education contexts having different cultural backgrounds. For this reason, Hermans (2002) states that one of the basic responsibilities of teacher training programs is to prepare prospective teachers for multicultural classroom contexts. Also, Eryaman, Genc and Aktan (2011) stress that teacher education programs need to give more importance to multi-cultural education in order to better cope with the problems that stem from differences both in classrooms and society. A recent study indicated that more than half of the teachers do not feel themselves ready for lecturing to students from different cultural backgrounds (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda, 2008, cited in Nieto, 2009). Therefore, it is important to provide teachers and prospective teachers with necessary skills which enable them to design education contexts for students from different cultural backgrounds. Especially prospective teachers must have skills to develop culturally sensible teaching methods (Başbay and Bektaş, 2010). Besides, teacher education programs must be aware of their responsibilities of presenting better education contexts for multicultural classrooms and multicultural society reality (Hermans, 2002).

One of the reasons experienced by teachers may result from the fact that there are not any curricula that can be followed in education contexts involving different cultures. The curricula in Turkey are prepared centrally and have a standard nature. It can be said that the curricula are not flexible in terms of including intercultural awareness. For this reason, it is possible that teachers who have no experiences in intercultural education may have problems in education contexts. Similar findings were suggested in the study conducted by Aslan (2017). In the study, the teachers stated that they had problems resulting from curricula and constitutional concerns. Additionally, Manning, Baruth and Lee (2017) stated that educational materials that are compatible with students' cultural backgrounds are necessary in organizing a successful intercultural education context. These materials should contribute to students' identity developments, engage students in classroom activities, and present examples, words, and models regarding students' cultural backgrounds. Materials need to be original and multidimensional in order to help students to understand ethnical differences and cultural diversity. Furthermore, these materials should include both cognitive and affective skills (Manning, Baruth and Lee, 2017). Likewise, Gay (2000) states that school success will increase profoundly when education processes are compatible with cultural tendencies, experiences, and learning styles. This success is apparent in learning contexts where content regarding culture, teacher attitudes and expectations, and educational actions come together.

Another problem experienced by teachers in terms of intercultural education may stem from attitudes and prejudices towards different cultures due to insufficient experiences regarding knowing and recognition of features of other cultures. Most of the participant teachers expressed that they have no efforts in searching the cultures of their students. Besides, it can be said that they have prejudices towards foreign students after the observations conducted in math classes. Similar findings were revealed after the study conducted with Turkish teachers carried out by Aslan (2017). The participant teachers expressed that they do not have any information about parents, environments, and different cultures. However, one of the competencies that teachers must have regarding multiculturalism is the tendency on learning worldviews of the groups from different cultures (Başbay and Bektaş, 2010). Therefore, if teachers want to carry out a culturally sensitive effective teaching, they need to understand how ethnically different students learn (Gay, 2000). Attitudes form an important part of professional expertise of a multicultural teacher. Attitude as a phenomenon is mostly related with feelings, thinking ways, diversity in a classroom and a teacher's tendency towards communication (Sinagatullin, 2003). When teachers respect to differences and similarities, students get most of it. Teachers' searching and understanding intercultural and individual differences can contribute to students' learning motivations, students' willingness to show positive manners, and to develop a positive understanding towards their cultural past (Manning, Baruth and Lee, 2017). For this reason, teachers need to understand these students' values, traditions, and expectations in order to organize learning contexts comprising culturally different students in the same classes.

Next, classroom teachers experience some problems regarding students in education contexts with students from different cultural backgrounds. The problems caused by students involve learning problems, discipline problems, deficiencies in communication skills, inadequate knowledge, shortcomings in basic needs, and attitudes-prejudices. Especially misunderstandings due to language differences, foreign students' inability of adaptation to

classrooms, conflicts and groupings among local students and foreign students, inability to speak in Turkish, failures in basic sciences (science, math etc.), and insufficient knowledge in Turkish culture are among the problems experienced by teachers in terms of students. Similarly, malnutrition and hygiene, being despised by local students, students and parents' rejecting each other are among the substantial problems experienced by the teachers.

It can be said that teachers experience problems mostly caused by students during multicultural education. The most experienced problem is prejudices towards students from different cultures and disrespectful behaviors towards them by local students (Aslan, 2017). Similar problems are experienced in different countries as well (Manning, Baruth and Lee, 2017). It can be said that generally members of minority groups, students from the low-income families, students who are culturally different or speaking another language apart from English cannot obtain a proper place in the USA school system (Manning, Baruth and Lee, 2017). Whereas, individuals from different cultural backgrounds have chances of living a coherent life together by developing their knowledge and experiences as a result of communication at common life areas (Gencer, 2011). Especially, cooperative learning processes can enhance school studies of culturally different students. Cooperative learning fosters communication among students, provides feeling of group membership, engages learners in joyful activities, and directs group members for a common goal (Manning, Baruth and Lee, 2017). A recent study showed that students can apply different cultural roles and understand lives of individuals from different cultures through presentations, games, and drama performed in classrooms. The study also revealed that it is possible to bring students in attitudes, skills, and behaviors positively towards multiculturalism by planning multicultural education contexts (Aktın et al., 2015). Above all, it is under the responsibility of the schools to develop an insight for each student and to maintain teaching and learning experiences effectively (Manning, Baruth and Lee, 2017).

A number of teachers and teacher trainers express that they come across incompatible cultural diversity in subjects (especially math and science) covered during teaching and learning processes, or many notional problems arising from unifying subjects. This cannot be accepted as there is always a place to foster cultural diversity in each subject taught at schools (Gay, 2002). Moreover, students need both time and support to overcome problems and to be successful in academic areas in the education contexts comprising different cultures (DomNwachukwu, 2010; Spinthourakis and Karakatsanis, 2011). Language learning has a critical role by taking longer times than other areas contrary to what people believe. Reading develops simultaneously with teaching of writing skill (Gay, 2000; Spinthourakis and Karakatsanis, 2011). Teachers can overcome the problems regarding students by supporting language acquisition effectively.

Parent based problems are also among the problems faced by teachers in classroom contexts having students from different cultures. Foreign parents' inability to speak Turkish language and to support their children academically are important problems experienced by the teachers. Also, language-based problems complicate the communication among family, school, and teachers. Communication problems bring along other problems regarding attitudes and prejudices. Staying away from Turkish culture can create attitudes and prejudices for foreign parents. Koustelini (2011) states that increasing migration flows can cause possible xenophobic attitudes and negative consequences. Migrants especially from non-European countries are generally more affected from these negative behaviors and feelings than the European origin migrants. This can be explained through low economic conditions of their countries, lifestyles, and great differences in their value systems. Nevertheless, the inclusion of families in multicultural education is important because this emphasize the value of their children in their lives, understands differences in ethics and insights in society, provides an instrument to solve problems cooperatively, enhances opportunities for all students to learn at schools (Banks, 2015). Participating in classroom activities, preparing extra-curricular activities, paired reading, artistic, musical, dramatic, linguistic or scientific and technologic programs, supporting distribution of ethnic curriculum, maintaining school facilities, serving in executive committee and other committees hold crucial importance for parents. Parents' taking parts in these activities insofar strengthen the relationship between school and its immediate surroundings (Lalor and Mulcahy, 2011).

Several problematic issues experienced by the teachers at education contexts with students from different cultural backgrounds in Turkey were reported in the current study. When we consider the migration trends and refugee problems across the world, the obtained findings in this study can help to prevent possible problems that may arise due to insufficient experience on intercultural, multicultural education contexts by giving insights to policy makers, program developers, professionals, stakeholders, and school directors.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the problems faced by teachers in classrooms where students with different cultural backgrounds study together. The results indicate that the problems stemmed from mainly three areas; the problems regarding teachers themselves, the problems regarding students, and the problems regarding students' parents. Teaching inexperience, time management, classroom management, communication skill, and attitudes and prejudices were among the problems experienced by the teachers related to themselves. Learning problems, discipline problems, communication skill, insufficient knowledge, basic needs, and attitudes and prejudices were among the problems experienced by the teachers in terms of students. Academic support, basic needs, communication skill, and attitude and prejudice were among the problems experienced by the teachers in terms of parents. Based on these conclusions, several suggestions can be proposed. Revealing teachers' problems and taking necessary steps to eliminate these problems may contribute positively to education contexts with students from different cultures. Seminars and in-service training programs regarding teaching to students from different cultures may contribute to professional developments of teachers. Redesigning teacher education programs in an intercultural/multicultural friendly way may eliminate anticipated problems for preservice teachers in their future professional lives.

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