

Metaphorical analysis of early childhood teachers on classroom rule

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Abstract

This study aims to provide educational implications for classroom rule management by identifying how early childhood teachers recognize classroom rules and analyzing their perception of classroom rules. The study conducted a metaphorical analysis regarding classroom rules in a group of 180 teachers from early childhood education institutions in Seoul, South Korea. According to the analysis results, early childhood teachers' perception of classroom rules classify into seven categories: for class safety, what fosters basic living habits of children, for curriculum operation, what a teacher instructs, what sets the standard of behavior of children, for regulation, what a teacher decides. The results of this study provided an opportunity for early childhood teachers to observe various angles regarding the function and operation of classroom rules, and further suggested implications for the conception and operation of classroom rules.

Key words: Classroom rules, Children, Metaphorical analysis, Teachers

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Introduction

Humans belong to communities and interact with others beginning from birth. Communities with more than one person should have standards of conduct (Chung & Kim, 2009). The standards of conduct that all members of the community must follow are called rules. Community members pursue common objectives by establishing and adhering to rules (Pennington, 2002). Rules allow the prediction of community member's behavior, which maintains the community and represents the fundamental values that the community seeks in order to avoid conflicts within the community (Cangelosi, 1988; Feldman, 1984). Also, rules serve as the basis for regulating society by directing or coordinating the actions of members (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004). As such, humans can learn community behavior standards and values by learning and following rules.

Kindergarten, a community of children, also has rules. Classroom rules are behavior guidelines that tell children what they can and cannot do (Miller, 2007). Rules help children stay in harmony with others (Kostelnik et al., 2009). The rules maintain order in a class by enabling children to practice self-control (Choi, 2005), and create a pro-social atmosphere and help resolve peer-to-peer conflicts (Katz & McClellan, 1997). Children can naturally socialize by learning the proper behavior of the community by observing and comprehending the rules in the classroom.

Kindergarten teachers guide children through classroom rules. Childhood guidance is an education that fosters self-control, empathy, and self-esteem so that children can make the right decisions on their own (Gartrell, 2004). The teacher sets rules for children to behave appropriately and guides children to follow the rules. By guiding the children to abide by the rules, the teacher can educate children about respect, cooperation, consideration of others, and foster the essential daily habits, including organization, cleanliness, eating manners, and sleeping routines (Cho & Choi, 2004). Rules partake in the classroom in the form of consideration for others, public morality, safety guidelines, substitute teachers, and the protection of fundamental rights (Kim, 2007). Also, as children understand and comply with the rules, they have a better grasp of their community and what it means to live as a part of it (Chung, 2011). Children adapt to their groups through rules and learn the behavior and values of their groups and societies (Markstrom & Hallden, 2009). 'Keeping the rules of

children' is a teaching method that respects the autonomy of children rather than instructions and commands because children control themselves in the process of experiencing rules.

The behavior of children depends on the teacher's method of rule guidance. In a classroom with a strict atmosphere where teachers control all behaviors like the military to children, children show inconsistent behavior that depends on whether there is an authoritative figure present or not. In an efficiency-conscious classroom, like factories and companies, they show heteronomy by suppressing behavior and emotions. On the other hand, in a democratic atmosphere where children communicate and share their decision-making rights, children solve problems autonomously and cooperatively and develop their internal morality (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Early childhood teachers can guide children to learn and comply with classroom rules eventually. Compliance with classroom rules can be divided into three categories: conformity, obedience, and obedience to authority. Conformity is when the child understands the rules and follows the rules willingly. In contrast to conformity, obedience is performed through direct and coherent demand that pressures the child to follow the rules. Obedience to authority is when a child unwillingly accepts and abides by the rules due to an authoritative figure (Baron et al., 1992). Compliance with rules means both; that children obey the rules on their own and that they are bound to obey the rules by an authoritative figure. Therefore, when guiding children, early childhood teachers should encourage children to learn the rules naturally by experiencing and understanding the rules in the classroom, rather than using the teachers' one-sided authority to have their classroom under control.

The teachers in early childhood education institutions are using democratic methods, involving children in the operating rules. Early childhood teachers operated the rules in a democratic way, such as having children set their own rules in class and discussing why they should follow them (Goncu & Weber, 2000). Also when the rules needed to be revised, they talk with children about how to modify them (Goh & Chung, 2009).

However, most early childhood teachers use teacher-led methods to set and operate classroom rules. Teachers exercise tacit and routine authority in the name of helping the facilitation of safe daily routines and the formation of essential living habits for children (Lee, 2004). Teachers can use their power not only by planning routines and the order of daily tasks but also through distributing class activity equipment and toys. When a teacher's authority occurs in a unilateral manner in which a child is unable to raise an opinion or make

decisions, the child learns heteronomous morality, where the child is obedient and reacts passively(Sohn, 2011; Lee, 2004). Besides, according to Choi (1995), teachers carry out 'making promises together' activities where the teacher and children should have sufficient discussions and share opinions. However, the reality, the activity is superficial and was carried out unilaterally by teachers for their convenience in class management. Carrying out classroom rules are based on the teacher's perception of classroom rules. Therefore it is critical to observe how teachers perceive the rules.

Studies that have so far looked at the perception of classroom rules are limited. Perception studies on rules include those of Akdag and Haser (2016), Han and Yoon (2015), Holligan (1999), Kim and Kwon(2018), Lee (2004), Lester et al. (2017), Won (2019). The study by Han and Yoon(2015) looked at how the rules of clean-up and the clean-up time are perceived by children, which suggested implications that the study considered the meaning of classroom rules from the view of the children. Kim & Kwon(2018) examined what teachers experienced by administering classroom rules, and found out that the teachers said that the children did not participate in rule operation due to their egocentric and developmental characteristics. Won (2019) looked at early childhood teachers' perception of restrictions on the number of children and time limits by interesting areas of kindergarten free play time. This study is meaningful in discussing the meaning and necessity of the free play restriction rule in conjunction with the play rights of children. Lester, Allanson, and Notar (2017) studied the perception of the daily routine and the consistency of rules. Holligan (1999) explored teachers' perceptions of how teachers teach rules and infants learn, based on the main concepts of the post-structuralist philosopher Foucault (knowledge, power, normalization, and domination). This study is significant in that it looked at the rules from a post-structuralist perspective. These studies have shown how rules are perceived by children, what experiences teachers have in running them, routine rules that are repeated throughout the day, and how rules are perceived by teachers from a post-structuralist perspective. However, it is difficult to understand teachers' overall perception of the classroom rules. Furthermore, previous studies pointed to teacher-led and authoritative rule management as a problem. Lee (2004) said the most teachers exercise implicit power in the name of safely running classes and forming the habits of daily life of children. This teacher's power even acts on the problem of dividing active materials or determining the sequence of activities in

a day's work, and when the teacher's power is presented as a one-sided force that children cannot resist, the children learns to respond passively to the teacher's power. Akdag and Haser (2016) addressed that first-year teachers realize that they should include children in the decision-making process. Classroom rule management ground on how teachers feel about rules. Therefore, in this study, we will explore the overall perception of the rules of teachers in early childhood education institutions. By closely analyzing teachers' views on classroom rules, we try to examine the problems of applying and operating rules and seek ways to improve the field of early childhood education. This would provide implications for appropriate rule operations. The research questions for this study are as follows.

1. What metaphors do early childhood teachers use to describe classroom rules?
2. How do early childhood teachers perceive classroom rules?

Method

Participants

The participants for this research are a total of 180 early childhood teachers currently working at kindergartens and daycare centers located in the Seoul metropolitan area. The general backgrounds of teachers are as follows. Among types of early childhood education institutions for teachers were 32 public kindergartens, 55 private kindergartens, 22 private daycare centers, 28 workplace daycare centers, 31 corporations daycare centers, and 12 public daycare centers. Their teaching experinces raged from less than 5 years to more than 15 years, 41 had less than 5 years, 68 had 5 to 9 years, 33 had 10 to 14, and 38 had more than 15 years. The teacher's education background was 62 with Associate's degree, 93 with Bachelor's degree, and 25 with Master's degree. The questionnaire was distributed to the director by visiting the institution, and the director distributed and collected the questionnaire to the teachers again. The researcher retrieved the questionnaire from the director. All the participants were informed on the research process and were encouraged to participate autonomously. This study aims to identify the early childhood teacher's perception of classroom rules; therefore, the participants must have experience in running classroom rules

in order to understand the questionnaires distributed by the researchers. That is why the researchers only selected the teachers currently working at kindergartens and daycare centers as participants. The researchers distributed 220 questionnaires in total and analyzed 180 responses, excluding 40 questionnaires whose answers were not faithful or whose reasons and the explanation of metaphor was unclear.

Research tool

In the study, researchers used metaphorical questionnaires to identify the perception of classroom rules by early childhood teachers. A metaphoric analysis is an analytical approach that collects metaphorical expressions and reasons of the participants, and group the data into each category to identify a particular topic or a phenomenon, specific group's thought patterns and insight toward the subject (Amstrong, 2008). Accordingly, this research presented a semi-structured sentence completion metaphor questionnaire, as shown in Table 1, to explore the awareness of 'classroom rules' of early childhood teachers. The participants are to write metaphorical expressions in the first parenthesis and depict the reason for supporting the metaphorical expressions in the second parenthesis. Metaphorical expressions and reasons are located at the top of the questionnaire, as an example to ensure the participants in the study understand the survey correctly. The participants filled out the questionnaire anonymously, and the total time taken to complete the questionnaire is approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Table 1. *Example of Metaphorical Analysis Questionnaire for Classroom Rules* #

My mother is (love).
Because (my mother always listens to me with a warm smile on her face and gives me everything unconditionally.)
The classroom rule can be defined as (safety).
Because (if children follow the rules, they can avoid hurting themselves and others.)

Research process and data analysis

The data collection for this study took approximately nine weeks from Sept. 2, 2019 to Oct. 31, 2019. In order to analyze how early childhood teachers perceive rules through metaphor analysis, the content analysis method used in the previous research of Jang (2017) was used. Content analysis is a research technique that creates valid inferences of context from the text (Krippendorff, 2004). Table 2 illustrates the data analysis of this study based on the content analysis.

Table 2. *Data Analysis Process*

Step 1: Primary Category	Step 2: a Secondary Category	Step 3: a Tertiary Category
- Repeatedly read and recapture the original materials. - Based on that, collect and chart data by the significance of early childhood teachers' perception of classroom rules - Reclassify the ten semantic categories created based on their similarity	- Rebalancing Primary Category in Step 1: Integration of Similar Categories	- Reclassify data, adjust opinions, and change category names by referring to secondary categories with two early childhood education experts - Frequency analysis and case selection based on the established categories
Primary categorization into 10 categories	Secondary categorization into 8 categories	Tertiary Categorization into 7 Categories
(1) for class safety	(1) for class safety	(1) for class safety
(2) for curriculum operation	(2) for curriculum operation	(2) what fosters basic living habits of children
(3) what children must do daily	(3) what a teacher instructs	(3) for curriculum operation
(4) what sets the standard of behavior of children	(4) what children must do daily	(4) what a teacher instructs
(5) what a teacher instructs	(5) for regulation	(5) what sets the standard of behavior of children
(6) what children must keep	(6) what a teacher decides	(6) for regulation
(7) what children learn	(7) what sets the standard of behavior of children	(7) what a teacher decide
(8) for regulation	(8) what children must keep	
(9) what a teacher serves as good examples		
(10) what a teacher decides		

In the first step, the metaphors of the research participants were listed, and then the metaphors with similar properties were categorized based on the reasons for the research participants' selection of the metaphors. Even if the metaphors were different, they were included in the same category as long as they had similar reasons. If the metaphors were similar but had different reasons, they were classified into different categories because the reason was the standard of categorization. For example, the 'safety line,' which means a child can be safe and enjoyable in the classroom, and the 'safety hat,' which means the child can stay safe without getting hurt, are put into the same categories. The first ten categories were based on classified metaphors and reasons.

In the second step, based on the primary categorized concepts, the categories were readjusted after rereading the reasons for the metaphors. The second categorization was modified into eight categories by combining similar categories. In the second categorization, 'what children learn' and 'what a teacher serves as good examples' categories were included in the 'what a teacher instructs' category. It is appropriate to incorporate the two contents because 'what children learn' is when children learn what the a teacher teaches, and 'what a teacher serves as good examples' is when the teacher teaches the classroom rules by demonstrating following the rules. For example, the 'demonstration' metaphor that means teachers instruct rule-keeping by following the rule themselves, and the 'learning' metaphor which means that rules are not something we acquire, but something that we must learn, were integrated into the 'what a teacher instructs' category.

In the third step, with the two early childhood education specialists, the answers of the research participants were reclassified based on the second category, and if they were reclassified, the opinions were adjusted, and the final category was determined. In the third category, the two categories 'what children must do daily' and 'what children must keep' were integrated into 'what fosters basic living habits of children.' That is because it is the essential living habits that early childhood education institutions must learn and live in the classroom (Kang, 2011). The metaphor of 'habitualization' in which children need to learn rules and keep them as habits, and the metaphor of 'community necessities' that the children can stay in harmony with others only if they obey the rules in community life, has been integrated into 'what fosters basic living habits of children.' Based on the modified tertiary category, the contents filled in by the study participants were reclassified with early

childhood education specialists and confirmed as the final category. Finally, the researchers analyzed the frequency of the contents filled in by the participants in the study according to the final category and selected and discussed metaphors that could represent each category.

Results

The metaphorical tendency of early childhood teachers toward classroom rules

Early childhood teachers expressed their awareness of class rules through various metaphors. The metaphor of early childhood teachers for classroom rules was analyzed into seven different categories. The results of investigating the metaphoric tendencies of early childhood teachers in each category are shown in Table 3.

The categories of classroom rules recognized by early childhood teachers were shown in order of for class safety (21.11%), what fosters basic living habits of children(20.56%), for curriculum operation (17.22%), what a teacher instructs (16.67%), what sets the standard of behavior of children (12.77), for regulation(7.78 percent), what a teacher decides(3.89). In looking at the categories presented, the categories in the upper ranks described classroom rules from a positive perspective for the safety of the class and the operation of the class, while those in the lower ranks described from a negative perspective that rules are set and rules regulate children. For example, the top categories 'for class safety' and 'for curriculum operation' mean that children can live safely and teachers can smoothly operate the class curriculum, and 'what fosters basic living habits of children' means that children learn to socialize by learning the basic living habits necessary for community life through classroom rules. On the other hand, the categories on the lower ranks such as 'for regulation' and 'what a teacher decides' expressed the teacher's initiative in rule management and the regulation of early childhood children by the power of teachers. A frequency study of the metaphorical analysis of early childhood teachers' rules showed that early childhood teachers tended to perceive the rules as a positive element for classroom safety and curriculum operation rather than as a negative to controlling children by the teacher's power.

Table 3. *Early Childhood Teachers' Perception of Classroom Rules* (N=180)

category	Metaphors for classroom rule	frequency (%)
	safety(6), protection(3), family(3), fence(2), education(2), safety device(2), safety line(2), safety education(2) traffic lights(2), requirements(4), practice, a manual, essentials(2), safety helmet, safety belt, life vest, vaccination, accident prevention, shield	38 (21.11)
what fosters basic living habits of children	living habits(4), order(4), repetition(4), basic living habits(3), promise with friends(3), vitamin(3) bulletin board(3), promise(2), law(2), daily routine(2), peace, communal living guidelines, etiquette, practice, mandatory, game rules, a ticket number	37 (20.56)
For curriculum operation	lubricant(3), helper(3), guidance(2), education(2), mandatory(2), an important part, timetable, chocolate, instruction, power of one year, comfort, a smooth lesson, ease, abbreviation, the other-self, a single activity, power, rest, responsibility, water, air and water, a meal, teaching method, community	31 (17.22)
what a teacher instructs	Learning(2), role model(2), task(2), lesson, daily routine, partner, help, belief, class, patience, promise to be fair, consistency, orbit, activities throughout the year, thinking, teachers, education, understanding, growth, important things, development, shoelaces, buttons, study, demonstration, example, mirror	30 (16.67)
what sets the standard of behavior of children	consideration(2), friends(2), friendship(4), socialization(2), first social life, direction of action, standards of action, assessment, line, ruler, scale, first step in community life, my friend, amicable relations, group life guidelines, community harmony, social life	23 (12.77)
For regulation	control measures(2), only strength, regulation, help, whistle, helper, pan balance, gives stability yet hard, difficulty, first patience in life, the process of becoming an adult, puzzle, oppression	14 (7.78)
What a teacher decides	a promise with a teacher, word of an adult, what must be followed, assignment, a teacher's guidance, a teacher's law, a promise	7 (3.89)

Early childhood teacher's awareness of classroom rules

Early childhood teachers expressed their thoughts regarding the function of the rules and the nature of the rule operation in various metaphors. The metaphorical analysis of early childhood teachers' classroom rules for early childhood education institutions is shown below.

For class safety

Early childhood teachers recognized the rule as ‘for class safety.’ Early childhood teachers expressed the rules through the metaphor of ‘fence,’ ‘safety,’ ‘requirements,’ and ‘safety education.’ The following are examples of metaphors presented by early childhood teachers.

The rule is a ‘fence.’

Because children do not know what will happen if they cross the fence.

(case 2)

The rule is ‘safety.’

Because it helps children stay safe in the classroom.

(case 7)

The rule is ‘requirements.’

Because without rules, children can become distracted, and accidents can happen.

(case 29)

The rule is ‘safety education.’

Because rules can educate children about safety.

(case 75)

Early childhood teachers recognized that rules allow children to stay safe and provide safety education for children. Teachers said the rules serve as a safety fence for children, preventing them from getting hurt and accidents. Children are curious to explore their surroundings, but their self-control and physical development are immature and do not respond quickly to dangerous situations. Most educational activities in early childhood education institutions involve active movements, which are highly likely to result in safety accidents, so early childhood teachers respond sensitively to safety and emphasize safety rules (Kim & Kwon, 2018). Rules can be a safety guide for young children, meaning that teachers should set and follow appropriate rules for safety.

What fosters basic living habits of children

Early childhood teachers recognized the rules as ‘setting basic living habits for children’ and expressed by using metaphors such as ‘basic living habits,’ ‘water,’ ‘repetition,’ and ‘group life guidelines.’ The following are examples of metaphorical expressions of what a rule is.

The rule is ‘basic living habits.’

Because early childhood institutional rules include tidying up, lining up, keeping a turn, and courtesy among friends, and because the contents of these rules are similar to our basic living habits.

(case 6)

The rule is ‘water.’

Because just as we need water in our bodies, the rules are necessary and must be kept for children.

(case 11)

The rule is ‘repetition.’

Because rules must be repeated and practiced to become familiar as habits.

(case 45)

The rule is ‘group life guidelines.’

Because it is necessary in a place where people live with consideration for others.

(case 77)

Teachers recognized that the rules of early childhood education institutions resemble basic living habits and that they must be habitualized and adhered to through the daily lives of children. Teachers recognized that the classroom rules for children include "cleaning up and organizing," "staying in line," and "keeping turns," and the contents of these rules are similar to basic living habits, so the rules should be guided repeatedly to make these a habit for children. Basic living habits are concepts related to life as a whole, in which children learn the behavior patterns of their society or culture(Shin & Yu, 2003). When basic living habits are formed correctly, it is easy to socialize with people and act according to the norm principles accepted by society, so children can smoothly adjust to society(Lee & Kang, 2002). This means that children can learn and adapt to the values, attitudes, and manners of their

communities through rules.

For curriculum operation

The early childhood teachers recognized that the rules were for curriculum operation. Teachers expressed the rules through metaphors such as 'lubricant,' 'chocolate,' 'water,' and 'helper.' The following are examples of metaphors suggested by early childhood teachers.

The rule is 'lubricant.'

Because it allows the class to proceed smoothly.

(case 48)

The rule is 'chocolate.'

Because if children follow the rules well, the whole class can live smoothly, which is sweet for teachers.

(case 50)

The rule is 'water.'

Because rules are necessary, like water, to run the class and conduct a curriculum.

(case 84)

The rule is 'helper.'

Because children are allowed to live inside the fence of rules, which reduces the number of things teachers should instruct.

(case 101)

Early childhood teachers recognized the rule as a helper that facilitates class instruction and reduces teacher guidance. Teachers perceived the rules as essential to the curriculum operation of the class, reducing the amount of instruction the teacher has to give children, just as water is essential for human survival. This means that the rules serve as assistant teachers to guide children on behalf of teachers. In early childhood education institutions, children's independent or unexpected behaviors make it difficult for teachers to proceed with their lessons, so early childhood teachers remind children of the rules and teach children to

follow the rules as they proceed with the class.

What a teacher instruct

The early childhood teachers recognized the classroom rules as ‘what teachers instruct.’ They expressed the rules through metaphors such as ‘partner,’ ‘role model,’ ‘development,’ and ‘lesson’. The following are examples of metaphors provided by the teachers.

The rule is a ‘partner.’

Because the rules always guide children like a teacher.

(case 8)

The rule is a ‘role model.’

Because children learn by watching adults, teachers should take the initiative to teach children the rules.

(case 17)

The rule is ‘development.’

Because educating and guiding children well helps their social and cognitive development.

(case 24)

The rule is a ‘lesson.’

Because the teacher should guide the children and teach the rules well.

(case 162)

Early childhood teachers recognized that throughout the day, they should guide and teach the children the rules in detail. Teachers recognized that they should repeat the rules, and teachers should set an example for themselves to teach the rules to children. They also thought that rules could help children develop cognitive and social development. It means that early childhood teachers know that children cannot understand and follow the rules in a single demonstration or explanation, and they recognize that they need to guide the rules according to the level of a child's development. In a study by Ha and Hong(2015), the teacher in the three-year-old classroom repeatedly explained the rules to children at the beginning of

the semester, guiding them to understand the rules clearly. Teachers thought that rules are the process that teachers should teach, and children need to learn.

What sets the standard of behaviour of children

The early childhood teachers recognized the rule as what sets the standard of behavior of children. The rules were expressed using metaphors such as ‘direction of action,’ ‘standard of action,’ ‘socialization,’ and ‘scale.’ The following are examples of teachers metaphorically describing what a rule is.

The rule is ‘direction of action.’

Because we can see what children should do by setting the rules.

(case 91)

The rule is a ‘standard of action.’

Because it guides you to the right standards of conduct.

(case 125)

The rule is ‘socialization.’

Because children learn the rules and learn about appropriate behavior, which is the beginning of socialization.

(case 127)

The rule is a ‘scale.’

Because children can judge for themselves whether their actions are right or wrong.

(case 148)

The early childhood teachers recognized that rules as a criterion for judging proper behavior for children. Teachers recognized that children could experience the rules so that they know what the right behavior was and that they could judge the right or wrong of their behavior. Children first experience social life in early childhood education institutions and become socialized by learning the beliefs, values, and behaviors that are considered appropriate for their community. This means that rules serve as a tool for socialization to inform children of the appropriate behavior of their communities.

For regulation

Early childhood teachers recognized that the rules are for regulations. Teachers expressed their rules through metaphors such as ‘the only strength,’ ‘whistle,’ ‘means of control’ and ‘oppression.’ The following are examples of metaphors given by early childhood teachers.

The rule is ‘the only strength.’

Because there is no other way to control and regulate children other than using the rules.

(case 34)

The rule is a ‘whistle.’

Because we can control children through rules.

(case 47)

The rule is a ‘means of control.’

Because through rules, teachers can effectively regulate, control, and guide children.

(case 79)

The rule is ‘oppression.’

Because from the standpoint of children, rules restrict their behavior.

(case 89)

Early childhood teachers said that a rule is for the teacher to regulate children, and children can think of this as oppression about their behavior. This can be seen as a teacher exercising power to regulate the behavior of children through rules. It also means that the rules can be operated without taking into account the individual characteristics or level of development of children and only reflecting the teacher's position. Teachers at early childhood education institutions exercise power called rules because they need to efficiently carry out various activities such as conducting snacks, lunch, and extensive group activities at the same time with many children (Lee, 2004). Therefore, rather than recognizing the rules as regulating children, teachers should recognize that rules are what children themselves reflect on the desired actions they should take.

What a teacher decides

The early childhood teachers recognized the rule as 'what a teacher decides.' They expressed the rules by using metaphors, including 'a promise with a teacher,' 'assignment,' 'a word of an adult,' 'what must be followed.' The following are examples of metaphors offered by the teachers.

The rule is 'a promise with a teacher.'

Because the set rules are learned through the teacher, and if you do not follow them, you will be scolded by the teacher.

(case 62)

The rule is 'assignment.'

Because the teacher must continuously think about what rules to set.

(case 66)

The rule is 'a word of an adult.'

Because adults decide.

(case 69)

The rule is 'what must be followed.'

Because children have the perception that the rules set by the teacher must be followed.

(case 90)

The early childhood teachers recognized the rule as 'what a teacher decides.' The teachers said that the rules are made available to children through their teachers and that teachers think and decide what rules to set. Besides, because the rule is a promise with the teacher, the children recognized that they must follow the rules set by the teacher. This means that the teacher takes charge of setting rules and excludes the opinions and thoughts of children. Children can exchange ideas with each other through discussions and establish a solution to a class problem or promises applicable in their classroom (Na, 1997). Therefore, teachers should try to reflect the opinions of children in setting rules.

Discussion

This study analyzed how early childhood teachers perceive classroom rules through metaphorical analysis. Through the study, we would like to explore the perspectives of the rules of early childhood teachers and suggest an appropriate direction for the operation of classroom rules. Based on the results of this study, the discussion is as follows.

Early childhood teacher's awareness on classroom rules

First, early childhood teachers recognized the classroom rule as 'for class safety'. Teachers can educate children about safety through rules, and children can lead safe lives by keeping rules. In a study by Kim and Kwon(2018), teachers recognized that rules are necessary because they help children with safety education, which was similar to the results of this study. Also, a study by Tikunoff and Ward(1978) supported the results of this study, because there were also rules in their study such as 'no running indoors,' and 'no bouncing the ball in the classroom,' so that children could live safely with the rules as a guide to specific actions. This means that safety education is a tool and a standard of safe behavior for children.

Second, teachers recognized the rules as 'what fosters basic living habits of children.' In a study by Ha and Hong(2019), the three-year-old class's rules are similar to the basic living habits of 'keeping order,' 'keeping your surroundings clean,' and 'sitting properly while eating.' This means that children can learn and abide by the rules and adjust to their kindergarten classrooms. Also, children getting used to the rules are related to their living habits, and it takes a long time for them to understand the rules and act on their own(Kim, 2016). Therefore, when teaching the rules to children, the teacher should guide repeatedly and wait until the child shows positive changes.

Third, early childhood teachers recognized the rules as 'for curriculum operation.' The teacher compared the rule to a 'lubricant,' saying that it helps keep the class progress. In a study by Ha and Hong(2019), there was also a rule for curriculum operation, such as 'no wandering around without teacher's permission during group activities.' This means that the rules only reflect the positions of teachers who are required to educate children. Large group activities, which are classes provided in kindergartens, are the most structured and have the

most significant physical and spatial constraints among children compared to free choice activities. Since kindergarten classes are meant to sit in designated areas for a certain amount of time and participate in activities with other children, they should not be allowed to wander around or engage in sudden behaviors(Ewha Womans University's College of Education Ewha Kindergarten, 2002). This suggests that the rules set by teachers for curriculum operation may have children feel that rules are regulation or coercion depending on the level of development, characteristics, and the individual differences of the child. Therefore, when teachers operate classroom rules for curriculum operation, they should operate flexibly to reflect the development level, individual differences, and the rule compliance situation of the child.

Fourth, early childhood teachers recognized the rules as 'what a teacher instructs.' This means that rules are something that is taught by a teacher, and children learn. Chung's study (2003) is similar to this study in that the classroom rule is a process of teachers teaching and children learning, and because the beliefs and values of their society interacted well, one can see the process of socialization. This means that the rules are a tool for socialization in which children learn appropriate behavioral norms or values in their societies through interaction with teachers.

Fifth, teachers recognized the rule as 'what sets the standard of behavior of children.' The teachers perceived that the rules became guidance to instruct proper behavior to children. The study by Ha and Hong(2019) also reported that children resolved peer conflicts in play situations based on rules as a judging criterion, and protected their rights based on rules against unfair behavior of their peers. Children are in a phase where they learn the behavioral standards of the community, and their distinction between right behavior and wrong behavior is unclear (Berk, 2007). Rules serve as an action guide for children and guide them when they do not know which actions are appropriate in the community.

Sixth, early childhood teachers recognized the rules as 'for regulation' of children. Teachers likened the rules to 'the only strength' and 'control measures,' meaning that teachers regulated the behavior of children with their authority and power and did not take into account the level of development or personal situation of children. In a study by Kim and Kwon (2018), teachers have greater power over children and unilaterally set rules, and children just repeat what the teacher emphasized when making rules, or become overly

conscious of teachers. Children are less likely to resist rules that do not match the level of development or personal situation (Holigan, 1999). This is because children are at a development stage where they lack the ability to understand the situations where communication occurs and explain logical situations (Essa, 2003). Ha (2018) said that children also violate the rules because they interpreted rule situations from their perspectives, were unable to control themselves, had personal circumstances, and were not able to adapt to their classes. Considering the level of development of children, the teacher's perception that the rules are regulation should be reconsidered. Children's compliance with the rules should not come from regulation, but from experiencing and understanding the rules, so that they can follow them on their own (Wee, 2008). Therefore, teachers should recognize rules as a place of communication with children about what is appropriate in the community, rather than as something to regulate children.

Seventh, the early childhood teacher thought the rule as 'what a teacher decides.' This means that it is difficult to reflect the opinions or thoughts of children in setting the rules. In fact, early childhood teachers limit children's participation in the operation of the rules, citing practical reasons like safety, class management, cognitive immaturity, and self-centered thinking of children, rather than the educational effects the rules have on children (Kim & Kwon, 2018). However, children are not only able to express their opinions about the rules or participate in the process of setting the rules but have also been found to be adhering to the rules they set (Kim, 2014). When teachers try to promote autonomous opinions and listen to children's ideas, and these opportunities are provided to children, children can foster positive self-concepts and democratic attitudes (Rashed, 2001). Therefore, it should be reconsidered for early childhood teachers to recognize that rules are set by teachers. Teachers should make rules based on the two-way interactions in which all members of the class express their opinions and communicate in detail (Lee et al., 1998). Teachers should be able to guide the children in detail so that they do not violate the rules, while children try to change their ideas about the rules or try to be recognized by explaining their positions, the teacher should be able to offer alternatives when the children's needs are deemed appropriate (Wee, 2007). Therefore, teachers should pay attention to and reflect the children's thoughts and opinions about the rules when setting and operating classroom rules.

Implication

This study explores the perception of classroom rules among early childhood teachers. It attempted to examine the rules of early childhood teachers and their views on rule operation. As a result, early childhood teachers perceived that rules make classes safer, make it easier to run class curriculums, and children learn basic living habits through rules and judge their behaviors to adapt to society. This means that class rules are essential for safety and progression and are socialization tools that inform children of community values or attitudes. Meanwhile, the early childhood teachers recognized that rules are set by teachers and are necessary to regulate children, meaning that the authority or power of teachers can run rules and that children's ideas or opinions can be ignored in setting rules. Class rules are created by the needs and interactions of community members and can be modified according to circumstances (DeVries & Zan, 2003). Children can exchange and discuss with each other to create and develop rules that are appropriate to the situation and context of the classroom and peer culture (Kim, 2014). Therefore, rather than viewing classroom rules as a necessity for teachers to set and regulate children, early childhood teachers should recognize that it is an opportunity for children to determine and practice the appropriate behavior of the community.

Limitation and future direction

Based on the results of this study, suggestions for further study are made as follows. First, since the study argued that children should be involved in establishing and operating class rules, an action study should be conducted on how to involve children in the operation of class rules. Second, we propose a study of awareness of rules for prospective early childhood teachers through metaphor analysis. This is because we can look at the perceptions of prospective early childhood teachers and develop appropriate teacher education programs for the awareness and operation of classroom rules.

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