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Turkish adaptation of the mentoring for EFL teaching survey

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the reliability and validity of the adaptation of The Mentoring for English as a Foreign Language Teaching (hereafter MEFLT, Hudson, Nguyen & Hudson, 2009) survey into Turkish. The instrument is intended to examine the mentoring experiences of pre-service EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers' during their teaching practice. Through the use of the instrument, the study intends to examine the mentoring practices provided by the cooperating teachers for teaching English from the perspectives of pre-service teachers. The survey method was used in this study and the data gathered from the pre-service teachers were used for Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis to determine the structure of factor loadings of the survey. Results of the factor analysis will revealed the number of the factors and sub-scales remained in the Turkish version. In addition, the results of the pre-service EFL teachers' responses to the survey described their mentoring experiences during practice teaching.

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1. Introduction

Practice teaching is a compulsory component of the teacher education programs in Turkey. Three main purposes of practice teaching are to integrate educational theory with practice and provide pre-service teachers the opportunity to teach and participate in multiple teaching experiences essential for their professional learning. Throughout the field experiences, pre-service teachers are exposed to various mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers and the university supervisor. Malderez (2009:260)

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defines the mentoring practices as “being the supportive of the transformation or the development of the mentee and of their acceptance into a professional community”. Although supervisory process is considered as more concerned with the maintenance of standards within an organization, or system (Malderez, 2009), in Turkey setting, university supervisors also conduct mentoring practices during field experience courses. Mentoring is considered as an important construct in fostering the professional learning of pre-service teachers during their field experience (Okan & Yıdırım, 2004). Pre-service teachers as mentees need comprehensive guidance in the school setting during their field experiences. In mentoring practices it is aimed to be the role model to the pre-service teachers through creating a teaching awareness and making changes in the professional beliefs of the mentees (e.g., pre-service teachers).

Mentoring has a number of aspects in approaching pre-service teachers’ challenges in the process of learning to teach. Amongst them, the personal attributes of the cooperating teachers, which includes their dispositions and interpersonal skills, plays the most important role in advancing the professional development of pre-service teachers (Hudson, Uşak & Savran-Gencer, 2009). Cooperating teachers as mentors are the experienced role models who provide pedagogical advice and guidance for developing the teaching practices of the pre-service teachers.

There are many challenges faced by the university supervisors, cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers during practice teaching. Currently, there is no systematic mentoring system offered by the Council of Higher Education (CHE) in Turkey. Although in 1998, Council of Higher Education, World Bank and the Ministry of National Education cooperated in the restructuring of faculties of education, and highlighted the importance of the Faculty-School Partnership, there is no national framework for the application of the practice teaching process. Although the CHE defines the roles of the participants of the practice teaching; there is a confusion and lack of communication between the participants throughout the application process.

Therefore, the study aims to define the mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers by considering the personal accounts of the pre-service teachers. In order to examine the mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers, the MEFLT Survey (Hudson, Nguyen & Hudson, 2009) was used. The aims of the study is twofold: to investigate the reliability and validity of the adaptation of MEFLT scale into Turkish, and to examine the mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers from the perspectives of pre-service EFL teachers teaching English during their practice teaching in the spring semester of the senior year.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The research subject was comprised of 140 pre-service teachers who were enrolled in English Language Teaching program at a state-run university in Ankara, Turkey. All senior pre-service teachers taking the practice teaching course were selected as participants for this research. The pre-service teachers were chosen as being convenient for the research objectives since they were enrolled in the practice teaching course and took the School Experience course in the previous semester which showed that they had experiences with mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers.

Of the total number of participants, 16,4% (N=23) were male and 83,6% (N=117) were female pursuing the last year of their undergraduate degree. Among the participants, the age ranged from <22 (N=80,

57,1%) to 23-29 (N=60, 42,9%). The pre-service teachers attended primary schools (N=73, 52,1%) and high schools (N=67, 47,8%) for the practice teaching course.

2. 2. Data Collection Instrument

MEFLT Survey evolved through a series of preliminary investigations on Mentoring for Effective Primary Science Teaching (MEPST; Hudson, 2003, 2004; Hudson et al., 2005), which identified a link between the literature and items on the survey instrument. The MEFLT survey instrument, focused on five factors (See Table 1) that had been previously identified, namely, personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modeling, and feedback (Hudson, 2003).

Table 1 Sample MEFLT Scale items

<i>During my last field experience for teaching English my mentor.</i>	
Personal attributes	made me feel more confident as a teacher of English.
System requirements	discussed with me the school policies used for teaching writing.
Pedagogical knowledge	gave me new viewpoints on teaching English to students.
Modeling	modeled the teaching of English.
Feedback	clearly articulated what I needed to do to improve my teaching of English.

According to Hudson et al. (2009a), the five factors and the items associated with each factor were empirically established. The 34 survey items and the position of these items in the MEFLT survey remained the same with two exceptions. The first one was the word *writing* was replaced by the word *teaching*, and the second change was the introduction of the scale focused on EFL teaching rather than writing as the original scale proposed.

In the current study, the participants responded to a Turkish version of the MEFLT Survey (Hudson, et al. 2009a) translated from English for this research. Reverse translation process between Turkish and English was carried out by three senior lecturers of English who are specialists in English and Turkish language. In the reverse translation process, each statement was considered within the consistency to the original inventory and the cultural accuracy of its translation.

2. 3. Data analysis procedures

Data were collected from the pre-service teachers by the researchers from six classes in the class session towards the end of the spring semester of the 2010-2011 academic year. Participation was on a voluntary basis in this research. The pre-service teachers were given the opportunity to clarify any question that they had about the administration of the survey. The participants finished responding to the scale in a total of 15 to 20 minutes.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with maximum likelihood factor extraction (MLFE) and promax rotation (cut off .40) (Costello & Osborne, 2005) was run to check the factorability of the data. The goodness of fit of the model which emerged from the EFA was then assessed with CFA, which is a theory driven, confirmatory technique in which the researcher can determine how well a set of data fits to a hypothetical model (Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora, & Barlow, 2006). A number of indices are generally used when assessing model fit. In the current study, the most commonly preferred normed χ^2 statistic, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) (or Normed Fit Index) and Root Mean Square

Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were calculated (see, e.g. Schreiber, et al., 2006). The minimum cut off point for model validation is ≤ 3 for the normed χ^2 statistic, and $\geq .90$, $.90$ and $<.06$ to $.08$ for CFI, TLI and RMSEA in that order (Kline, 2005). All statistical tests were run with SPSS 15.0 and LISREL.

3. Results and discussion

According to the results of the independent-samples *t* test, there were no differences amongst pre-service teachers' views regarding gender. There was not a significant difference in the scores for female pre-service teachers ($M= 117$, $SD= 3,06$) and male pre-service teachers ($M=23$, $SD=3,27$); $t(138)=1,06$, $p=.289$).

3. 1. Results of the exploratory factor analysis

The current data set was shown to be factorable (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy = $.95$; Bartlett's test of sphericity, $p=.000$). The results of the EFA with MFLE and promax rotation revealed that four factors of eigen values greater than 1.00 explained 69.00% of the variance in the current data set. The pattern matrix of this model is given in Table 2. Item 16 was deleted because it had a communality estimate of greater than 1.00. Items 21 and 22 failed to load on any factor, and item 19 loaded as a single item on a fifth factor, hence these three items were also discarded. Thus, a four factor structure of 30 items was elicited from the EFA.

3. 2. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis

CFA was run on the four factor model elicited from the EFA stage to assess the goodness of fit. The calculated indices showed that the model had good fit to the data ($\chi^2/df=1.85$, $CFI=.98$, $TLI=.96$, $RMSEA=.07$). Cronbach α values for factors 1 to 4 and the total scale were, in order, $.96$, $.94$, $.75$, $.82$, and $.97$ which indicated that the scale and sub-scales had acceptable to excellent internal reliability. Taking into consideration the original factors of the items, the factors of the current model were named as Modeling (items 1-10, 12, 15), Pedagogical Knowledge (items 14, 23-30, 32, 33), Personal Attributes (items 13, 17, 31, 34), and System Requirements (items 4, 11, 18).

3. 3. Discussion

Factor loadings among the sub-scales were different from the original instrument. The number of the factors in the original instrument decreased in the Turkish version. Although the original instrument was consisted of five sub-scales, the factor extraction conducted in the study yielded in a four-factor structure; namely, Modeling, Pedagogical Knowledge, Feedback, and System Requirements. The results of the Factor one, labeled as Modeling, was a combination of a majority of modeling, pedagogical knowledge and personal attributes; factor two, label as Pedagogical Knowledge, consisted of a majority of pedagogical knowledge, personal attributes, feedback, modeling and system requirements; factor three, labeled as Feedback, was equally consisted of personal attributes and feedback and factor four, labeled as system requirements, consisted of a majority of system requirements and pedagogical knowledge. The current data set did not yield a factor specifically for personal attributes, which was not parallel with the findings of Hacıömeroğlu&Şahin-Taşkın (2010) and Hudson, et al. (2009b).

Table 2. Pattern matrix of the Turkish version of the MEFLT Survey (Hudson, et al 2009a)

Item	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
2	.94			
9	.80			
5	.78			
8	.74			
6	.74			
15	.74			
1	.73			
10	.58			
7	.58			
3	.55			
4	.44			
12	.43			
25		.93		
30		.84		
24		.79		
33		.74		
23		.67		
29		.66		
28		.56		
32		.52		
26		.49		
27		.47		
14		.42		
34			.77	
13			.77	
17			.59	
31			.45	
4				.55
11				.48
18				.41

The instrument is considered as valid, reliable, and appropriate to use in the Turkish setting. The striking finding of the current study is the fact that the sub-scale items of the Personal Attributes were integrated to the other factors of the survey. The findings revealed that mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers were assumed to be their personal attributes which could be explained by the emergence of the sub-scale items in other factors of the scale. The reason of the integration of Personal Attributes in other sub-scales could be due to the fact that pre-service teachers compared their experiences with different cooperating teachers, and examined their mentoring practices in terms their personal

attributes. The comparison of mentoring practices of different cooperating teachers could be resulted from the unsystematic mentoring practices of the cooperating teachers. Participants of the study also considered feedback as a personal attribute which can be explained by the inconsistent mentoring applications of the cooperating teachers to provide feedback. Moreover, the way of exposing the pedagogical knowledge of the cooperating teachers was examined as a way of modeling.

The fact that some of the original survey items were not validated and some were eliminated from the analysis suggests the necessity of validating the MEFLT Scale before using it in empirical studies in different contexts due to the fact that different participant groups can yield different factor structures. There are a number of limitations to the study. First, it was conducted with a group of participants from only one university. Further studies could be conducted with larger samples from various universities. Second, the collected data could be enriched by means of interviews or self-reports in order to enable different data sets to explain and deepen the results of the study.

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