

Extended Abstract for the ATEE Conference

Development of a Professional Development Scale for EFL Teachers

This study, part of a Marie Curie Career Integration Grant supported by the European Commission, is set out to develop a scale to understand English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' individually-guided and professional activities. One of the objectives of this large-scale project is to investigate foreign language teachers' professional development activities in Turkey in order to identify any needs for new, innovative professional development programs. In order to find out what types of professional development activities EFL teachers are engaged in, we first conducted structured individual interviews with 26 teachers across Turkey. Since Creswell (2007) suggests developing questionnaires based on preliminary descriptive data, the scale was initially drafted in light of the data coming from these 26 interviews. The initial draft was reviewed by field experts and was piloted with seven EFL teachers and in each round, necessary revisions were carried out. A test-retest reliability was also conducted with 31 teachers, and .86. was obtained as the correlation coefficient. The final draft had three sections; demographics (16 questions) and professional development scale of EFL teachers (61 questions) and 4 open-ended questions. Even though Özçelik (2010) claims that a sample of 400 participants would be sufficient for such a scale development study, we have already collected data from more than 800 teachers and the data collection is still in progress.

When analyzing data, factor analysis will be conducted. The model we are planning for data analysis is principal component analysis (PCA). With current data, when the PCA was conducted by restricting the analysis to five factors and without using any rotation methods, 49% of the total variance accounted for the principal components. Since it is assumed that the factors are correlated with one another, an oblimin rotation procedure will be preferred for the analyses. The items that are irrelevant to any factors and items that are closely correlated with more than one factor will be removed from the scale and the analyses will be repeated once again. We are still in the process of labeling the factors; however, as of now, some of the possible factors are "individually guided activities geared towards language proficiency", "need for professional development", "reasons for lack of professional training" and "individual/institutional professional development activities".

At the end of this study, a scale having high validity and reliability will be developed in order to obtain data regarding EFL teachers' professional development in many aspects. It is hoped that this scale will have important contributions both to the literature on EFL teacher development and to the real-life practices in different educational settings. Karaata (2010) reveals that the majority of EFL teachers feels a need for professional development. In order to design and develop efficient professional development programs, a needs analysis towards understanding EFL teachers' professional development activities both at the individual and professional levels bears a lot of importance because it is known that teachers are reluctant to

join the professional development activities if they do not feel a need for them (Fullan, 2005; Hixon & Buckenmeyer, 2009).

The scale that the current study has been trying to develop will provide future studies with an instrument to investigate EFL teachers' professional development activities in a scientific and systematic way with its strong statistical methods. The scale will also be applied in other European countries which will allow for cross-cultural comparisons. In addition, the final form of this scale will help gather evidenced-based data on EFL teachers' professional development regarding their current conditions and needs to convince the stakeholders in teacher education and development for any future improvements, revisions, and innovations in professional development practices and programs.

References

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