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Research on Prospective Foreign Language Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs

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Abstract

This study aims at determining prospective foreign language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and examining the correlations between self-efficacy belief and such variables as gender, age, department, school of graduation, academic achievement and socio-economic level. The study group of the research, which was conducted by employing the survey model, was composed of randomly chosen 270 undergraduate students of foreign languages department of Gazi Faculty of Education of Gazi University who attended the French Language (N=111), English Language (N=79), and German Language (N=80) departments in the 2012-2013 academic year. The self-efficacy scale developed by Schmitz & Schwarzer (2000) was used as the tool of data collection. The Cronbach Alpha value was found to be 0.79 for the scale. The research has demonstrated that no significant differences are available between the prospective teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and the above mentioned variables.

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Introduction

Self-efficacy belief is one of the basic elements of achievement in education and teaching, and needs emphasising. Teachers' self-efficacy belief influences the teaching quality, the methods and techniques used, students' participation in learning, and their comprehending the topics of teaching, which – in turn - is determinant of students' achievement status (Klausmeier and Allen, 1978). Hence, well-trained prospective teachers are expected to have high levels of self-efficacy belief above all. Teachers' fulfilling the required proficiency of teaching profession

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is closely related with their belief in their capability to perform their duties and liabilities as well as with receiving high quality education (Yılmaz, Köseoğlu, Gerçek and Soran, 2004). Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as “an individual’s judgements about his/her capacity to organise and perform the activities necessary for displaying a certain amount of performance” while Zimmerman (1995) defines it as “an individual’s judgements concerning his/her capabilities to fulfill or achieve a task”.

Teachers’ self-efficacy involves the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for fulfilling the duties and liabilities of teaching profession. This is a concept related to a successful teaching. The research conducted by Aşkar and Umay concluded that “individuals with high perception of self-efficacy for a certain situation make great efforts to achieve in a task and they do not give up when they encounter negative conditions, but keep on working towards their goal with patience and insistence” (2001:1). Some research studies demonstrated that correlations were available between teachers’ self-efficacy and students’ motivation (woolfook et al., 1990) and achievement (gibso and Dembo 1984; Ross 1992). Ashton contends that teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are their expectations of their capacity to affect students’ performances. “It has been revealed through research that teachers’ self-efficacy belief behave with more desire and more passion in terms of teaching” (quoted by Bıkmaz, 2004). A review of literature demonstrates that research studies concerning self-efficacy are available in various fields: Yabaş and Altun (2009), Üstüner, Demirtaş, Cömert and Özer (2009), Aşkar and Umay (2001), Tuncer and Tanaş (2011), Fırat Durdukoca (2010), Korkut and Akkoyunlu (2008), Akkoyunlu and Kurbanoglu (2003). It is important that teachers hold self-efficacy beliefs in the field of foreign language, as in any other field, and it is one of the most important elements capable of influencing achievement to be attained. This research, which is considered important in raising quality in teacher training, examines prospective teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs.

1.1. The Purpose of the Research

This research aims to determine prospective foreign language teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and to examine the correlations between self-efficacy belief and such variables as gender, age, department, school of graduation, academic achievement and socio-economic level. In line with this purpose, the answers are sought to the following questions:

1. At what level are prospective foreign language teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs?
2. Do prospective foreign language teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs differ significantly on the basis of gender?
3. Do prospective foreign language teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs differ significantly on the basis of age?
4. Do prospective foreign language teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs differ significantly on the basis of department of study?
5. Do prospective foreign language teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs differ significantly on the basis of socio-economic levels?
- 6.

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

This descriptive research employs a survey model. Survey models are the approaches which aim to describe the existing situation in the past and at present (Karasar 1995: 77).

2.2. Study Group

The study group was composed of randomly chosen 270 undergraduate students attending the French Language (N=111), English Language (N=79), and German Language (N=80) sections of the Foreign Languages Department of Gazi Faculty of Education of Gazi University in the 2012-2013 academic year.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

The 8-item self-efficacy scale which was developed by Schmitz and Schwarzer (2000), and which was adapted into

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