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Analyzing pre-service teachers' skill-level on summarizing informative texts

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Abstract

Since learners who can summarize a text learn informative texts better and also they can remember them, this skill should be taught in schools. In this process, teachers have a great responsibility. For this reason, in this study, these questions are wanted to be answered: what is the summarizing level of pre-service teachers?, Are there any differences between pre-service teachers on summarizing skill-level in terms of their disciplines, genders, reading habits and subscribing a consist magazine? The universe of this study was occupied by the learners who were attending "Pedagogical Formation Course" Program in Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University in Turkey in 2014. In this study, 'Maslow's Needs Hierarchy' (Şahin, 1983, p. 3-7) was selected as a natural and informative text for the learners in order that the learners summarize it. As a result of the data gathered from the study, it was seen that the summarizing skill-level of the pre-service teachers was in the middle level. That result was a promising finding for the pre-service teachers to help the learners on summarizing skill.

1. Main text

The general point that is mentioned by teachers on teaching process is teaching learners how they can learn as using strategies and techniques designed for learning. For this reason, teachers should mainly concern with teaching the learning strategies. Learning strategies and using techniques of them should be acquired in practicum process because knowledge and skills that have been acquired in practicum process will be effective for pre-service teachers in their teaching lives. In this study, it is aimed to determine the level of pre-service teachers' summarizing skill that

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is one of the learning strategies. Summarizing technique basically used in this study is clarified under the title of interpretation strategies. (Erden and Akman, 1995, p. 156).

'Reading comprehension' is the keystone of school learning. Yet, reading comprehension is one of the learning skills that we cannot improve sufficiently (Tekin, 1980, p. 66). Bloom (1979, p. 48) states that school learning is based on reading comprehension capacity of learners. Studies in reading comprehension emphasize that there are some techniques in order to make reading comprehension easy and also these can be taught to learners (Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick and Kurtia, 1989). One of these techniques is summarizing. Summarizing is highly significant for reading comprehension and remembering the key points. Studies conducted in this field (Day,1980; Brown & Day,1983; Rinehart, Stahl, &Erickson, 1986) clarify that summarizing is a teachable skill and it can improve reading comprehension and remembering abilities. Summarizing means that covering the text and representing the main points in a text. While summarizing, some unnecessary and extra points can be eliminated from the general text and a macro structure that consists of main points can be conducted. Meanwhile, teaching the summarizing skill means that helping learners on their reading comprehension process (Brown, Day&Jones 1983; Çıkrıkçı, 2012; Erdem, 2012; Karatay and Okur, 2012).

Summarizing is a skill that requires obeying some rules. Brown and Day (1983) have analyzed the summaries which have been written by children and adults as using a summarizing model suggested by Kintschand and Van Dijk (1978). As a result of the analyses, six summarizing rules have been determined (as cited in Garner and Hahn, 1985). Those rules are: 1) making short that given as a list, 2) cleaning the repeated sentences and just using one of them in the summary, 3) cleaning the unnecessary sentences, 4) selecting the important knowledge to use in the summary, 5) cleaning unrelated sentences, using topic sentences in the summary and 6) if there isn't any topic sentences, write a topic sentence. Those rules used in outlines have underpinned for some researches as being used in summarizing technique (Çakır, 1995; Çıkrıkçı 2008; Karatay and Okur, 2012). Kintsch and Van Dijk (1978) also claim that the rules mentioned here are not just some specific rules used for summarizing but rules that can be used to comprehend a text in general (as cited in Brown and Day, 1983).

Since learners who can summarize a text learn informative texts better and also they can remember them, this skill should be taught in schools. In this process, teachers have a great responsibility. Yet, first of all, determining the summarizing ability of pre-service teachers is important. For this reason, in this study, these questions are wanted to be answered: what is the summarizing level of pre-service teachers?, Are there any differences between pre-service teachers on summarizing skill-level in terms of their disciplines, genders, reading habits and subscribing a consist magazine?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The universe of this study was occupied by the learners who were attending "Pedagogical Formation Course" Program in Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University in Turkey in 2014. Sample was conducted with totally 171 in some different departments such as 47 of those learners in Turkish Language and Literature Department, 38 of them in History Department, 38 learners in Mathematics Department, 23 in Physic Department and 25 learners in German Language Department. In this study, 103 of the learners were female and 68 of them were male.

2.2. Data collection instruments

Study Material; In this study, 'Maslow's Needs Hierarchy' (Şahin, 1983, p. 3-7) was selected as a natural and informative text for the learners in order that the learners summarize it. This text was consisting of 42 sentences and 526 words and also it was about psychology. Because the participants tick the summary answering form for each sentence that they decided to use in summary, all of the sentences in that text were numbered.

Summary Answering Form (SAF); This form was composed of two sections. In the first section, pre-service teachers were wanted to fulfill the information gaps about their disciplines, genders, read books for the last one year, whether they have subscribed to a magazine or not. In the second section, those pre-service teachers were wanted to select and tick the sentences that they decided to use in their summaries. Thanks to this section, pre-service teachers

would decide the sentences which used in the summary. In order to get information about each participants' total points, those forms were pointed and those points were used as a summary point for each participant.

Summary Answer Key (SAK); For pointing the pre-service teachers, SAK was designed. As there was a natural text, it was impossible to use all of the summarizing process. In oder to design SAK, these steps were followed: the researcher and two other experts in Education Programs and Teaching Department summarized the text as using summarizing process and rules. The situation of how many rules can be used in which sentences were determined. Therefore, the text was solved via summarizing rules. As a result of the analyses, the most frequently used rule was 'cleaning repeated sentences' for 10 times, the others were 'cleaning the unnecessary information' for 6 times, 'cleaning unrelated sentences' for 2 times, 'selecting important information' for 7 times and 'selecting topic sentences' for 7 times. For each correct answer (1) point, for each false answer or unanswered item (0) point was used. So, the highest point was 32 and as a result of this criterion, SAK was designed. Learner answering forms were pointed via SAK.

2.3. Data analysis

The text used in this study was just suitable for selecting and cleaning rules of summarizing. For this reason, the pre-service teachers got (1) point for each correct answer and they got (0) point for each false answer. As counting the correct answers, there was a total point for each participant. Arithmetic mean for each form was calculated. In data analysis process, frequency, levene homogeneity test, t-test and variance analysis were used.

2.4. Procedure

The text and SAF were delivered to pre-service teachers. They were wanted to complete SAF with the help of that instruction: "Firstly, carefully read the text in which each sentences are numbered. When you need to summarize this text, which sentences do you use in your summary? Which ones do you clean? Read the text again and just determine the sentences that can be useful for a summary. Write the numbers of determined sentences into your forms". So, each participant completed SAF as writing the numbers. Each SAf was compared with SAK and they were pointed. As in this way, the general points for each participant were determined.

3. Findings

In order to answer the question: "what is the summarizing skill-level of pre-service teachers?, arithmetic mean and standard deviation were calculated. As it can be seen in Table 1, general mean was $\overline{x}$: 19, standard deviation was Ss: 3. The learners got 1 more or less point on general mean were determined as normal(16;22); participants who were over this mean were determined as high (23;28) and participants being under this mean were determined as lower level (15;12). The descriptive statistics about the points of pre-service teachers were given in Table 1.

Table 1: The results of descriptive statistics about the summary points of pre-service teachers

N	$\overline{X}$	Ss	The lowest point	The highest point	Summary Skill-level					
					Low		Middle		High	
					N	%	N	%	N	%
171	19	3	12	28	23	13,5	128	74,9	20	11,7

As it can be seen in Table 1, it might be said that the summarizing level of the pre-service teachers was "normal (middle)" because most of the points of pre-service teachers were changed between 16-22 and that means "middle" level. 11, 7% of the group had "high" level, 13, 5% of the group had "low" level and 74, 9% of the group had "middle" level. As conclusion, 86, 6% of the pre-service teachers in the field of Turkish language and Literature, Mathematics, German Language and History had "middle" level and more than it in summarizing skill.

The question in this study was "Are there any differences between the pre-service teachers in terms of their

disciplines?" and in order to answer this question, the general points of the pre-service teachers in different disciplines were used in this study. For this question, ANOVA was used to determine the difference on different disciplines. The results based on that analysis was given in Table 2.

Table 2: ANOVA results of the pre-service teachers on summarizing skill in terms of their disciplines

Group	N	$\overline{X}$	Ss	Sd	F	p
1- Turkish L.	47	19,38	3,2		.994	.413
2- History	38	18,13	3,3			
3- Physic	38	19,26	3,6	4-166		
4- German L.	23	19,44	2,9			
5- Mathematics	25	19,02	3,1			

p< .05

The summarizing skill points were (19, 38) for Turkish Language and Literature Department, (19, 44) for German Language, (19, 26) for Physic Department, (18, 13) for History Department and (19, 02) for Mathematics. As a result of the Table 2, there was no meaningful difference between different disciplines. In terms of that data, it could be said that the summarizing skill was similar for all disciplines in this study.

The other question in this study was "Are there and differences between the pre-service teachers on summarizing skill in terms of their genders?" and to answer this question Independent Samples t-test was used. The results were given in Table 3.

Table 3: The t-test results of the pre-service teachers on summarizing skill in terms of their genders

Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	Ss	Sd	t	p
1- Male	68	18,63	3,4	169	-1,262	.209
2- Female	103	19,27	3,1			

p< .05

The summarizing skill-level of the pre-service teachers were (18, 63) for male; (19, 27) for female participants. As a result of the Table 3, there was no meaningful difference between two genders in terms of summarizing skill.

The other question that has been wanted to be answered in this study was "Are there and differences between the pre-service teachers on summarizing skill in terms of their reading habits?" and to answer this question, the general points and the numbers of books that were read by the pre-service teachers were used. For this reason, One-Way ANOVA analysis was used and the results were given in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA results of the pre-service teachers on summarizing skill in terms of their reading habits

Frequency of Reading a book	N	$\overline{X}$	Ss	Sd	F	p
1. Never	7	17,42	4,5		.906	.462
2. 1-5	63	18,71	3,1			
3. 6-10	46	19,08	3,2	4-166		
4. 11-15	25	19,68	3,09			
5. 16 and more	30	19,36	3,1			

p< .05

The pre-service teacher who stated that they had never read books were in (17, 42 mean) points in summarizing, the pre-service teacher who stated that they had read 1-5 books were in (18, 71 mean) points, the pre-service teacher who stated that they had read 6-10 books were in (19, 08 mean) points, the pre-service teacher stated they had read 11-15 books were in (19, 68 mean) points, the pre-service teacher who stated that they had read 16 and more books were in (19, 36 mean) points.

As a result of the Table 4, when the reading habit frequency was going on over and over, the level of summarizing skill was increased, but nevertheless, there was no statistically mean difference between reading habit and summarizing skill. According to Table 4, it could be said that the reading habit frequency of the pre-service teachers was 6-10 books for each year.

The other question that has been wanted to be answered in this study was "Are there and differences between the pre-service teachers on summarizing skill in terms of their subscribing on a journal?" and to answer this question, the general points and the subscriptions of the pre-service teachers were used. For this reason, Independent Sample t-test was used and the results were given in Table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA results of the pre-service teachers on summarizing skill in terms of their subscription on a journal

Subscribing on a journal	N	$\overline{X}$	Ss	Sd	t	p
1- Yes	100	19,21	3,4	169	.919	.359
2- No	71	18,74	2,9			

p< .05

The summarizing skill-level of the pre-service teachers in terms of subscribing on a journal were (19, 21 mean) points and there were (18, 74 mean) points participants who have not subscribed on a journal. As a result of the t-test, there was no meaningful difference on having a subscription on a journal in terms of summarizing skill.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of the data gathered from the study, it was seen that the summarizing skill-level of the pre-service teachers was in the middle level. That result was a promising finding for the pre-service teachers to help the learners on summarizing skill.

According to Haas and Graff (1981), "In a text, especially in a long text, as reproducing the context via summarizing is one of the most important clue of learning" (as cited in Çıkrıkçı, 2008). For this reason, having a summarizing ability gives a chance for the teachers in text-based learning. Summarizing is important for being gained and being used both reading/listening skills and writing/speaking skills. So, this point states that summarizing skill should be acquired to the learners (Ülper and Karagül, 2010).

In terms of that data collected in the study, it was stated that the summarizing skill was similar for all disciplines and there was no mean difference between different disciplines. According to that result, it could be said that the pre-service teachers who were graduated from a university have had summarizing ability independent from their disciplines. Also, even if there was no mean difference, the pre-service teachers in Turkish Language and Literature Department and German Language Department had more points than the others.

As a result of the study, female participants had more successful than male participants on summarizing skill, yet there was no meaningful difference between two genders.

It was determined that there was no mean difference between reading habits and summarizing skill-level of the pre-service teachers. That result could be reasoned because the participants were newly graduated from the university, there was no lesson-book on the questionnaire or it could be because it was asked just the books that have been read in the last one year. Also, as a result of this conclusion, it could be said that not the numbers of books read by the teachers but the learning style was more important for the summarizing skill. Additionally, getting summarizing skill has been a long process and it should be started in primary or secondary school. The studies on reading habits showed that the pre-service teachers have had middle level (6-10 books) on their reading habits in just one year (Yılmaz, 2006; Karatay, 2007).

Finally, there was no mean difference on summarizing skill-level and having a subscription on a journal. But it was seen that the general points of the participants who had a subscription had more points than the others. In the studies conducted on this field stated that there was a relationship between having a subscription on a journal related their disciplines, the level of using reading strategies and individual awareness on this field (Karatay, 2007; Özbay, Bağcı and Uyar, 2008; Çiftçili, 2008).

5. Recommendations

The reading habits of the participants were limited just one year, instead of that it could be designed to get more information the participants reading habits.

In other studies, different disciplines can be compared as using summarizing rules on application level.

In order to develop the summarizing skill-level of the pre-service teachers, lesson contexts should be organized and there should be some different activities that can give a chance to summarize texts.

There should be some seminar for the pre-service teacher on reading comprehension.

It can be suitable to be designed the linguistic courses as an applied format in all degrees on the formal education when the relationship between writing and summarizing was considered in detail.

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