Original Research

Benchmarking Mentorship: Creating and Validating a Quality Scale for ELT Mentors

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Abstract

In the context of language teaching, mentorship can be a valuable tool to support the ongoing professional development of language teachers, improving the quality of language teaching and learning and fostering a sense of community within the teaching profession. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the qualities that characterize a good mentor. This study aimed to develop and validate a Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale for use in L2 educational contexts. The study employed a qualitative research design with a quasi-experimental component, which was of a qualitative nature. It involved the use of structured interviews and observations to explore the Iranian EFL teachers' opinions about the qualities of a good mentor in Iran, with a particular focus on evaluating mentors. The sample consisted of 10 experienced EFL teachers and 100 novice EFL teachers teaching at various private language institutes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher with the mentors and mentees, each lasting approximately 30 minutes to gather data. Five interview questions were developed based on a list of 10 themes. The interviews elicited the participants' perspectives and opinions regarding the requirements good mentors need to meet in an ELT context. Based on this interview, relevant constructs were extracted, patterns were identified, and items were determined. The transcription of the recorded interview followed this. Then, the transcribed data were interpreted in light of existing literature. Ultimately, the data were analysed using NVivo software. Based on the data extracted, a Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale was developed. The results of the Rasch rating scale model and Cronbach's alpha indicated that the developed questionnaire had satisfactory validity and reliability indices. The GMQ scale can serve as a valuable tool for evaluating and selecting mentors, as well as for assessing the effectiveness of mentorship programs. The results are discussed, and further applications for EFL teachers and learners are explored.

Keywords: EFL Teachers, ELT, Good Mentor Qualities, Scale

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1. Introduction

In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), the professional growth of teachers is not only reliant on formal education but also on the support they receive during their teaching journey. Mentorship has emerged as a powerful tool for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. Through effective mentoring, novice teachers gain access to a wealth of experience and insight, enabling them to navigate the complexities of teaching with greater confidence. This study aims to investigate how mentorship can be optimised in ELT settings by identifying the specific qualities that make a mentor successful in supporting the development of novice teachers. Understanding these qualities is essential to ensuring that mentorship programs are both impactful and sustainable in supporting educators.

1.1.　　Background

English Language Teaching (ELT) is a complex and constantly evolving field that requires ongoing professional development and support for teachers (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), teaching in a rapidly changing environment, where knowledge, technology, concepts, and philosophies are constantly shifting, is particularly challenging. Continuous development is necessary to maintain high-quality teaching standards. Mentoring plays a vital role in supporting novice teachers by helping them develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence (Creswell, 2014). Mentorship involves an experienced person providing guidance and support to a less experienced individual, promoting personal and professional growth (Kram, 1985; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

1.2.　　Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of mentorship in teacher development, not all mentors are equally effective. The qualities that define a good ELT mentor remain unclear, which may lead to inconsistent or inadequate mentoring experiences. Ineffective mentorship can leave novice teachers feeling unsupported and undervalued, negatively impacting their teaching practices and job satisfaction. Conversely, effective mentorship is essential for novice teachers, particularly in ELT, to develop their instructional skills and confidence. However, identifying the qualities that characterize an effective ELT mentor presents a

challenge, as mentoring styles and practices may vary widely across different contexts (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to identify the key qualities that characterize good mentors in the ELT context. The study also aims to develop and validate a Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale to help assess the effectiveness of mentors in this field. Additionally, the research aims to provide insights into how mentorship relationships can be enhanced for novice teachers, ensuring consistent and high-quality support across various institutions.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. Firstly, developing a mentor qualities scale can inform the selection and training of mentors, improving mentoring relationships and benefiting newly recruited instructors (Creswell, 2014). Secondly, the GMQ scale can serve as a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring programs, enabling institutions to make targeted improvements (Valli & Cruz-Janzen, 2022). Ultimately, by standardising mentoring practices across institutions, this research can help ensure that novice teachers receive consistent and high-quality support, thereby fostering their professional development and enhancing the overall quality of ELT programs.

2. Literature Review

In the context of teacher development, the role of mentorship has gained increasing attention as an essential component of effective professional growth. Mentoring serves as a bridge between theoretical knowledge gained during teacher education and the practical challenges encountered in the classroom. The following section explores the concept of mentoring and its significance in supporting novice teachers, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT).

2.1. Mentoring

Mentoring is a valuable process that involves providing guidance, support, and feedback from a more experienced individual, known as the mentor, to a less experienced individual,

the mentee (Smith & Johnson, 2023). This relationship-based process involves sharing knowledge, experience, and skills to aid in the development of the mentee's professional practice (Kram, 2022).

Mentoring can take various forms, such as one-to-one mentoring, peer mentoring, and group mentoring. It is a strategic approach to helping newly recruited teachers manage the challenges of instruction, facilitating their growth into effective educators. Recent research highlights the importance of mentoring as a bridge between an instructor's initial training and their ongoing career development (Wang et al., 2022). In the field of language teaching and English Language Teaching (ELT), mentoring is particularly valuable as it provides critical insights and feedback to novice teachers (Chen & Zhang, 2023). Additionally, studies have explored the benefits of mentoring for newly recruited instructors, including its impact on teaching effectiveness and professional development (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2021; Valli & Cruz-Janzen, 2022). According to Anderson and Zhang (2024), a mentorship program for new ELT teachers led to a noticeable improvement in their ability to manage classrooms and their overall teaching self-assurance. In fact, after six months, 78% of participants reported positive changes in their teaching methods.

2.2. Mentoring and Professionalism

The beginning years of a teacher's career are exceptionally challenging and crucial times (Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002). Schön (1983) stated that successful teachers reflect on the qualities of their own teaching experience and that of others. As a result, they come to recognise their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the challenges related to their teaching experience; put another way, they engage in a critical examination of their classroom instruction (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2011). Kim and Johnson (2024) emphasise the importance of cultural competency in English Language Teaching (ELT) mentorship programs. Their research suggests that when mentors are culturally sensitive, it leads to more positive outcomes for both teachers and students. The quality of classroom teaching can be enhanced through continuous and dynamic support provided to teachers.

To ensure success in instructional delivery, professional development opportunities must be organised in a manner that enables teachers to feel secure in their ability to make mistakes, engage in self-reflection, and share their learning (Alotaibi, 2019). The

advantage of mentoring lies in its ability to not only develop skills but also cultivate teacher relationships that can extend beyond the realm of pedagogy that is covered in a one-time professional development workshop. In contrast, workshops offer only short-term benefits, whereas mentoring enables the development of ongoing relationships founded on trust and negotiation.

Nir and Bogler (2008) highlighted the ongoing challenge within the teaching profession of aligning the knowledge acquired by teachers during their pre-service education with the skills they develop in their careers. Effective decision-making remains a crucial component of teaching. Recent research continues to support the view that teachers' value systems significantly influence their instructional practices, shaping their decision-making processes by considering various factors and making consistent choices (Mohammadi et al., 2022). Furthermore, mentoring teachers to enhance their decision-making abilities remains essential, as teachers are increasingly seen as decision-makers in their own teaching (Lee & Wang, 2021). The issue of poor quality in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has been frequently attributed to inadequate professional development opportunities (Johnson & Wang, 2023; Nguyen, 2022).

Consequently, mentoring has been advocated as a professional development activity that allows teachers to refine their teaching practices through peer collaboration. Recent studies also emphasise the importance of initial mentor-mentee interactions, suggesting that the first classroom meeting should be brief and focused on building rapport, without extensive observation or note-taking, to ensure a positive and non-intimidating experience for the mentee (Fuller, 2023).

2.3 . Why is Mentoring Important in Language Teaching?

According to recent studies, mentoring remains crucial in the field of language teaching, given the complexities of language learning and instruction. Language teachers need to possess a wide array of skills and knowledge, including an understanding of language acquisition theories, knowledge of language structure, proficiency in the target language, and the ability to design and deliver effective language instruction (Richards & Farrell, 2022). Novice teachers may lack some of these skills, making it challenging for them to teach effectively and confidently. Similarly, mentoring is recognised as an essential tool for supporting teachers in L2 teaching, particularly when they feel overwhelmed by the

demands of the job due to their limited experience and expertise (Ingersoll & Strong, 2022). Mentoring also provides emotional support to novice teachers, helping them navigate the challenges and stresses of teaching (Grainger & Barnes, 2023). Furthermore, mentoring enhances the teaching and learning features in language classrooms by promoting reflective practice, encouraging innovation, and fostering a culture of continuous learning (Mohammadi et al., 2022).

Mentorship is a valuable tool for helping instructors manage the ever-evolving requirements associated with recent educational reforms, which often necessitate the adoption of new teaching practices (Washburn-Moses, 2023). Moreover, mentoring newly recruited instructors can provide them with the knowledge and expertise shared by their more experienced colleagues, thus improving student academic achievement. Furthermore, mentoring not only supports novice teachers but also benefits experienced teachers by offering opportunities for professional development and growth. Mentors can learn from their mentees by observing their teaching, reflecting on their own practice, and exploring new teaching methods and approaches, which helps them stay current with the latest developments in language teaching and enhances their own teaching practice (Grainger & Barnes, 2023).

2.4. Mentoring Can Be a Game-Changer for Novice Teachers

Novice teachers often rely on experienced colleagues for guidance and support as they transition into the teaching profession, particularly when they face challenges and conflicting situations (Jenkins, et al., 2009; Kent, et al., 2009). Mentors are critical in providing information and opportunities that help new teachers not only survive but also thrive in their teaching role. Through their mentoring relationship, novice teachers gain valuable experience that helps them become effective educators. According to Nicholls (2002), as cited in Onchwari and Keengwe (2010), mentoring is based on the idea that individuals learn best through observation, active participation, reflection, and inquiry rather than passive listening. By asking 'why' questions, mentors can encourage reflection, share best practices, and collaborate with mentees to improve their teaching practice. (Gholipour et al., 2022) argue that mentoring offers a personalised approach, enabling mentees to discuss their weaknesses and explore strategies for improvement openly.

Moreover, it promotes a growth mindset in teachers, encouraging them to be open to new ideas and to explore their teaching styles with the guidance of their mentor, rather than simply adopting someone else's style. Most importantly, through the mentoring process, inexperienced or novice teachers can benefit from the vast experience and knowledge of their experienced mentor teachers (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2010).

Recent investigations (e.g., Crasborn et al., 2011; Zeichner, 2010) have revealed that mentoring new instructors helps improve their learning. In particular, studies have revealed that distinct models of mentoring packages provide a powerful aid to beginning teachers as a means to develop higher levels of coaching skills and pedagogical knowledge (Hobson et al., 2009) and coaching efficacy (Yost, 2002). Furthermore, modern-day studies suggest that mentoring can be used as an essential strategy for the professional development of new instructors. Indeed, Kram's (2022) framework could be considered a comprehensive approach to analysing issues in mentoring in teacher education. This framework can underpin the analysis of mentoring.

2.5. Validating Tools and Scales in Teaching and Education

Effective teaching practices are paramount to student learning, but measuring and evaluating these practices can be complex. Educational researchers rely on validated tools and scales to assess various aspects of teaching, such as teacher knowledge, instructional practices, and classroom climate. This review examines the significance of validation in educational research and explores various approaches to validating tools and scales employed in this field. Validated tools and scales provide researchers with reliable and accurate data for making educational decisions. An instrument with strong validity ensures that it truly measures the intended construct (Messick, 1989). Without proper validation, research findings may be misleading or lack generalizability. For instance, a poorly validated scale measuring teacher empathy may capture student perceptions of classroom management instead. As a result, policymakers could base decisions on inaccurate information about teacher effectiveness.

Validation in educational research typically involves a multi-pronged approach that addresses different aspects of the tool or scale. Here are some key approaches:

- Content Validity: This ensures that the instrument's items adequately represent the intended construct (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2019). Researchers might involve subject

matter experts to review the items and confirm their alignment with the targeted teaching behaviors.

- Construct Validity: This assesses whether the instrument accurately measures the intended construct rather than measuring something else (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education). Techniques such as factor analysis can be used to identify underlying factors captured by the scale and ensure they align with the theoretical framework.

- Criterion-Related Validity: This examines the correlation between the instrument's scores and established measures of the same or a related construct (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2019). For example, a new teacher self-efficacy scale could be compared with student achievement data.

- Internal Consistency Reliability: This measures the consistency of scores within the instrument (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2019). High internal consistency indicates that the items within the scale are measuring the same construct. Techniques such as Cronbach's alpha are used to assess reliability.

3. Method

The present study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the qualities of effective mentors in the context of Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. This section outlines the procedures, participants, and data collection methods used in the study. The research involved a combination of semi-structured interviews and a newly developed Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale, both of which were designed to gather in-depth insights from experienced and novice teachers. The following subsections provide detailed descriptions of the instruments and techniques used to collect and analyze the data.

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

This study employed a qualitative research paradigm with a quasi-experimental design to investigate the qualities of effective mentors in Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. The research was conducted over a one-year period, during which extensive data collection and mentorship activities took place. The study setting

encompassed various private English language institutes in the Khorasan Razavi province of Iran, specifically in the cities of Torbat-e Heydarieh and Mashhad.

The research design incorporated multiple qualitative data collection methods, primarily utilizing semi-structured interviews and a newly developed Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale. The quasi-experimental aspect of the study was evident in the structured mentorship program, which involved pairing 10 experienced mentors with 100 novice teachers in a controlled setting. Each mentor was assigned to work with 10 novice teachers throughout the study period.

The year-long investigation included regular monthly meetings, weekly dialogue journaling, and systematic classroom observations. Data collection was conducted through both in-person and technology-mediated interactions, including Skype, Telegram, and Instagram, allowing for flexible and comprehensive data-gathering approaches while maintaining the qualitative integrity of the research design.

3.2. Participants

This study gathered data from a group of 100 novice Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and 10 experienced mentors in the Khorasan Razavi province of Iran, specifically in Torbat-e Heydarieh and Mashhad. The novice teachers were selected based on their age, gender, and having less than one year of teaching experience. All participants were native Persian speakers and had not previously lived in an English-speaking country. Each mentor was paired with 10 novice teachers for this study who were enrolled in English language institutes. For this research, a purposive sampling method was employed to select participants who represent a diverse range of experiences and perspectives related to the phenomena under investigation. The sampling process ensured that key constituencies were included and that the construct being investigated could be explored in detail within the specific context. The selected participants were selected to represent a diverse range of experiences, and diversity was taken into consideration to ensure that the study's findings would be comprehensive.

Table 1.

Demographic Background of the Participants

No. of Participants	110 (100 Novice Iranian Learners of English, 10 Experienced Mentors)
Gender	61 Females & 49 Males
Native Language	Persian
Universities	Torbat-e Heydarieh and Mashhad Universities
Academic Years	*2023 -2024*

3.3. Instruments

As the present study was qualitative, two instruments were used, the validity and reliability of which were also verified and confirmed. The process and instrumentation flow is as follows.

3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interview

The qualitative part of the study involved conducting semi-structured interviews with the participants. The interviews were conducted either in person or via technology, such as telephone, Skype, Telegram, or Instagram, depending on the participants' availability and preference. With the participants' permission, the interviews were recorded and subsequently analysed using content analysis with NVivo software. To facilitate the interview process, the researcher used interview questions from Flanagan's (2006) research. The participants, consisting of EFL mentors and mentees, were asked to respond to five open-ended questions. To ensure the validity of the interview questions, two language professors at Islamic Azad University, Torbat-e-Heydarieh branch, confirmed them. The researcher then developed a list of 10 themes derived from the 5 interview questions, which directly related to the research topics. The researcher conducted interviews with mentors and mentees at the end of the project, with each interview lasting around 30 minutes.

3.3.2. Newly developed Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) Scale

The researcher collected opinions from EFL teachers in Iran regarding the qualities that make a good mentor in the context of ELT to develop the GMQ (Good Mentor Qualities) scale. The scale was developed based on the interviews conducted with the participants. To ensure the validity of the scale, the researcher used the Rasch model in Winsteps software

and computed Cronbach's alpha to assess the instrument's reliability. The researcher utilized the GMQ scale to obtain EFL teachers' perspectives on the aspects of a good mentor in the context of ELT in Iran. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the researcher applied Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and also computed Cronbach's alpha to assess the instrument's reliability.

3.3.3. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the semi-structured interviews and the newly developed Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale, several steps were taken. For the interviews, content validity was established by consulting two language professors from Islamic Azad University, who reviewed and confirmed the appropriateness of the interview questions. The interviews were further validated through triangulation, as data was collected from both mentors and mentees across different platforms and analyzed using NVivo for in-depth content analysis. In terms of the GMQ scale, its validity was assessed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate the underlying constructs. Additionally, the reliability of the scale was confirmed through the Rasch model analysis in Winsteps, where Cronbach's alpha was computed, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability of the instrument. These steps ensured the robustness of the tools used in the study.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The following procedure was implemented in order to identify the qualities of a good mentor in the context of the ELT in Iran:

In the first stage, a purposive sampling method was employed to select a group of 10 experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and 100 novice EFL teachers from various private institutions who expressed their willingness to participate in the research. The experienced teachers or mentors were chosen based on specific criteria, including having at least six years of experience, being highly skilled in interpersonal communication, being among the top teachers at their institute, and other relevant factors. Moreover, mentors were compensated for their participation. The criteria used for selecting novice teachers focused solely on their years of experience, which ranged from 0 to 1 year. As the second step, two introductory courses were conducted to train and debrief the

mentors on how to maintain effective communication with their mentees. The purpose of these courses was to equip mentors with the necessary skills to establish and maintain productive relationships with their mentees.

Following the mentor selection, multiple briefing sessions were conducted for both mentors and mentees. During the first session, mentors sought to familiarise themselves with their mentees. For example, mentors provided mentees with checklists to help them develop a 'to-do' list of actions they planned to take in their classes. Additionally, mentors exchanged phone numbers and emails with mentees to provide support in the event of any issues. As a next step, two-week training sessions were held for mentors to learn how to administer the mentorship program effectively. During the one-year treatment period, various activities were conducted, including 12 monthly meeting sessions where the mentees would discuss the problems they were facing in their classrooms. The mentors would also provide feedback on the mentees' dialogue journals and observe their classes monthly. The mentees were also asked to observe their mentor's classes and provide feedback on their actions and procedures.

Additionally, once a month, the mentor's classes were videotaped, and the mentees were also asked to watch and provide feedback to evaluate the teacher. All 12 meeting sessions focused on addressing the problems each mentee faced during that specific month and seeking advice from their mentors. The advice provided not only helped the mentee but also offered valuable lessons for the rest of the group's mentees.

The next activity involved maintaining weekly dialogue journals for a year, resulting in a total of 48 journals for each participant. The format of the dialogue journals was based on Richardson and Díaz Maggioli's (2018) model, which consisted of two sections—one for the mentor and one for the mentee. Each section was further divided into two subsections, one for reactive and another for reflective aspects. The reactive aspect required the participants to express their personal feelings toward their weekly performance, while the reflective section required them to evaluate the entire procedure. These dialogue journals were required to be emailed. The next mentoring activity involved observing classes. The mentors were required to observe each mentee's class once a month and provide feedback, while the mentees were asked to observe their mentor's classes to reflect on their actions. Additionally, the researcher randomly observed some mentees' classrooms during the project. As the fourth step, the researcher selected one teacher out of

ten and interviewed them after the treatment had been administered.

At the end of the course, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather the EFL teachers' ideas about the aspects of mentorship in the ELT context in Iran. During these interviews, the participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of mentorship, which were recorded. The interviews were then transcribed, and the underlying themes were deduced. The data were coded according to Creswell's (2002) guidelines, and subsequently, the gathered data were interpreted in light of existing literature. The data were analyzed using NVivo software. Based on the interview data, specific constructs were extracted, patterns were identified, and items were determined. Subsequently, a Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale was developed based on the extracted data.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis process began with the transcription of the semi-structured interviews, which were then imported into NVivo software for content analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the qualities of good mentors in the Iranian EFL context. Using Creswell's (2002) coding guidelines, the transcribed data were first subjected to open coding to break down the text into meaningful segments. Afterward, axial coding was used to connect categories and identify relationships between themes.

For quantitative validation of the Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale, the Rasch model was applied using Winsteps software. The model was employed to evaluate item difficulty and response patterns, ensuring that the scale's items accurately measured the desired constructs. The scale's reliability was further confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, providing an internal consistency check.

Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the underlying relationships between the identified themes and the scale items, thereby ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the data. The results from these analyses provided insights into the mentorship characteristics valued in the Iranian EFL context and validated the developed GMQ scale.

4. Results

This section presents the results of data analysis and the study's findings regarding the aspects of mentorship addressed in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context in Iran.

To meet the study's purposes, a questionnaire was designed, developed, and validated by the researcher to investigate aspects of mentorship in the ELT context. The results of the Rasch analysis are discussed in the first section of this section. After the required data were gathered, they applied various statistical methods to derive the study's results. The findings and results of the statistical procedures are discussed afterwards.

4.1. Results of the Rasch Analysis

A questionnaire was designed and developed to investigate the characteristics of good mentors in Iran, focusing on the qualities of effective mentors in the Iranian English Language Teaching (ELT) context.

4.1. Good Mentor Questionnaire

Validity evidence for the ELT Good Mentor Questionnaire (ELT-GMQ) was provided using the Rasch model (Rasch, 1980). Rasch rating scale model (Andrich, 1978) was employed using Winsteps Rasch measurement program (Linacre, 2017).

4.1.1. Individual Item Characteristics

Results of Rasch rating scale analysis of the ELT-GMQ are reported in Table 1. 'Measure' indicates item difficulty or agreeability. The higher the values of 'Measure', the harder the item is to agree with. The lower the item measure, the easier it is to agree with.

Table 1.

Item Measures And Fit Statistics For the ELT-GMQ

Entry Number	Measure	Model S.E.	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ
1	-0.08	0.11	1.29	1.3
2	-0.31	0.12	1.07	1.06
3	0.16	0.11	1.2	1.22
4	0.38	0.1	1.24	1.25
5	0.08	0.1	1.2	1.16
6	-0.03	0.11	0.94	0.94
7	-0.69	0.14	1.14	1.1
8	0.4	0.1	0.91	0.92
9	-0.3	0.12	0.8	0.76

10	-0.01	0.11	1.22	1.22
11	-0.01	0.11	0.91	0.9
12	-0.01	0.11	1.28	1.25
13	-0.04	0.11	0.81	0.8
14	-0.09	0.11	1.13	1.15
15	0.29	0.1	1.03	1.05
16	-0.14	0.11	1.13	1.11
17	0.15	0.1	1.26	1.3
18	0.17	0.1	0.77	0.76
19	-0.22	0.11	0.84	0.81
20	0.36	0.1	0.77	0.76
21	0.01	0.11	0.89	0.9
22	-0.04	0.11	0.94	0.94
23	0.12	0.1	1.07	1.07
24	-0.14	0.11	0.75	0.75
25	0.04	0.11	0.85	0.85
26	0.06	0.1	0.68	0.68
27	-0.04	0.11	1.2	1.2
28	0.25	0.1	0.84	0.84
29	0.01	0.11	0.78	0.78
30	-0.19	0.11	1.18	1.18
31	0.23	0.1	1.04	1.04
32	-0.05	0.11	0.91	0.91

Table 1 shows that Item 8 (Measure = 0.40) is the most difficult item, and Item 7 (Measure = -0.69) is the easiest. Item 8 involves reflective listening to others (mentees and students), and Item 7 is to *provide constructive feedback and guidance*. This indicates that the majority of teachers disagreed with Item 8, i.e., they do not believe that good mentors must be reflective listeners. But the majority of them agreed with Item 7, i.e., they think that good mentors should provide constructive feedback. SE shows the standard error of the estimated item difficulties. The lower the standard error (SE), the more accurately the item difficulties have been estimated.

The following columns show 'Infit MNSQ' and 'Outfit MNSQ'. Infit and outfit mean square (MNSQ) values are the means of the residuals. The residuals are the

differences between Rasch model predictions and observed responses to the items. The smaller the differences between Rasch model predictions and actual responses, the better the data fit the model. The ideal value for infit and outfit mean square statistics is one. However, values between .60 and 1.40 are acceptable (Linacre, 2017). Misfitting items do not belong to the construct being measured by other items and should be deleted. They introduce construct-irrelevant variance to the data (Baghaei, 2008). Table 1 shows that all the items fit the Rasch measurement model. In other words, all the items contribute to the measurement of a good mentor. This further indicates that the scale is unidimensional. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale is 0.76.

Table 2.

Reliability of the ELT-GMQ

Scale	Reliability
ELT-GMQ	0.76

4.2. Response scale analysis

Table 2 displays the statistical data for each of the five categories on the scale. In Column 1, the score for each category is shown, while Column 2 indicates the number of times each category was selected, along with its corresponding percentage. Columns 3 and 4 display the infit and outfit mean square values for each category, respectively.

An expected value of 1 is considered ideal for these statistics, and significant deviations from this value indicate unexpected responses. Values below 1.50 are deemed acceptable. As demonstrated by Table 2, all categories exhibit acceptable infit and outfit values. Thresholds on the rating scale represent points where the probability of choosing either of two adjacent categories is equal. Since the first category has no prior category, it lacks a threshold. Threshold estimates provide insight into the level of difficulty associated with observing each category. We anticipate that threshold estimates will increase with category values. Disordered threshold estimates, where thresholds fail to advance with category values, suggest that the category is seldom selected and has a narrow interval on the variable or that the definition of categories is problematic (Linacre, 2017). The threshold parameters for the ELT-GMQ were ordered with values of -1.23, -0.10, .30, and 1.03.

However, these values are very close to each other, and one can safely reduce the number of categories to four. The Category Measure shows the mean of those who selected each category on the entire scale, or more precisely, the general trend of everyone who

selected each category. They should also be ordered and advanced with category scores. As for Table 3, it can be seen that the column 'Category Measure' shows that these values are ordered. Figure 1 shows the category probability curves for the scale. Each category curve shows the probability of selecting each category for respondents with different locations on the latent trait scale.
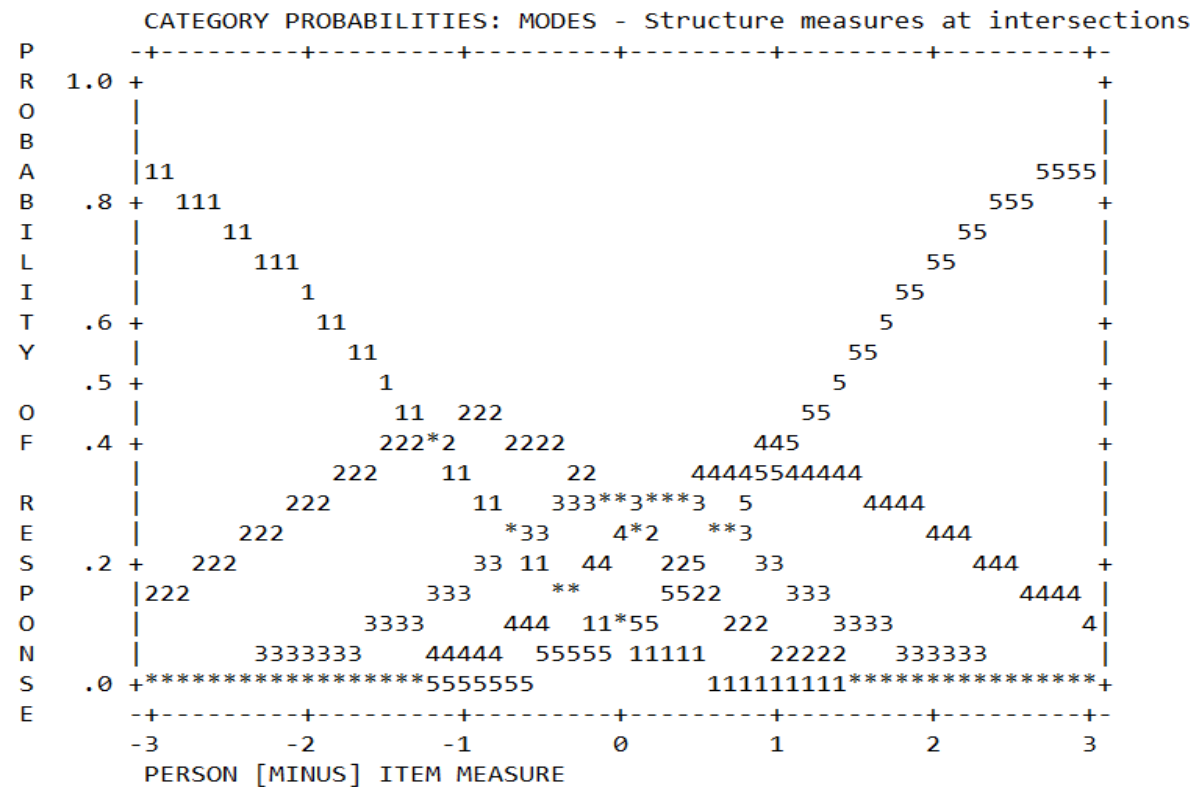
Table 3.

Summary of Category Structure for ELT-GMQ

Score	Observed Count (%)	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	Threshold	Category Measure
1	36 (1)	1.05	1.05	-	-2.53
2	249 (8)	.98	.99	-1.23	-.93
3	624 (20)	.98	.97	-.10	.04
4	1156 (36)	.95	.97	.30	.96
5	1135 (35)	1.01	1.01	1.03	2.41

Figure 1.

Category Probability Curves

5. Discussion

In this study, it was found that a good mentor possesses several key qualities, such as extensive knowledge and expertise, being a reliable source of information for consultation, having a relevant background, mastery over the subject matter, eagerness and motivation to share knowledge, good behavior, and a genuine interest in developing a mutual relationship with mentees. These findings align with the existing literature on mentorship in teacher education, which emphasises the importance of fostering professional expression and reflective abilities in student teachers.

The literature also supports these findings with various studies that have demonstrated the effectiveness of mentorship in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). For instance, Kim and Johnson (2024) explored the role of mentoring in the professional development of English language teachers in Turkey. This study employed a qualitative research design, collecting data through semi-structured interviews with 15 mentor teachers and 15 mentee teachers. The results indicated that mentoring provides valuable opportunities for reflection and learning, thus supporting professional growth. Yavuz's study highlights the significance of mentors in promoting reflective practice and continuous learning among English language teachers.

Similarly, Wulyani (2017) examined the perspectives of Indonesian English language teachers on mentoring in teacher education. Using a qualitative research design and semi-structured interviews with 12 English language teachers, Wulyani(2017) found that mentoring effectively supports professional development by facilitating learning and reflection. The study highlighted the mentors' role in providing guidance and feedback, which helps mentees to develop their teaching skills and professional competencies.

Alotaibi (2019) investigated the impact of a mentoring program on the professional development of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Saudi Arabia. This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, comprising pre- and post-tests, as well as interviews with 12 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The findings revealed that the mentoring program had a positive impact on professional development by providing opportunities for learning, reflection, and support. Alotaibi (2019) emphasizes the structured approach to mentoring and its benefits in enhancing teachers' professional knowledge and instructional practices.

These studies collectively underscore the importance of mentorship in ELT, corroborating the findings of the present study. The consistent theme across different contexts and methodologies highlights mentorship as a critical component in the professional development of English language teachers. Mentorship enhances reflective practice, provides emotional and professional support, and fosters the continuous improvement of teaching practices (Wulyani, 2017).

This study makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature by developing and validating a quality scale for English Language Teaching (ELT) mentors. This scale provides a strong framework for evaluating and enhancing mentorship practices in the field. By identifying and validating the essential qualities of effective mentors, this research has practical implications for teacher education programs, mentoring initiatives, and professional development efforts. The quality scale can be used to evaluate current mentorship programs, identify areas for improvement, and guide the training and selection of mentors in English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts.

6. Conclusion

In language teaching, mentorship plays a crucial role in fostering the continuous professional growth of teachers, enhancing the quality of both teaching and learning, and fostering a sense of community among educators. As such, identifying the traits that define an effective mentor is essential. This study aimed to create and validate a Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale designed for use in second language (L2) educational settings.

This study aimed to develop and validate the Good Mentor Qualities (GMQ) scale in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Iran. Through Rasch analysis, the results demonstrated that the scale items fit the Rasch rating scale model, indicating that the variations in test scores were reflective of a latent trait—mentorship quality. The 5-point Likert scale functioned adequately, though it was suggested that the scale categories could be reduced to four for improved precision. Overall, all the items were found to contribute effectively to measuring a good mentor, providing a reliable tool for assessing mentorship qualities.

The study's findings can be useful for ELT institutions and educators in Iran and other similar contexts to identify and develop effective mentorship programs. The GMQ scale can serve as a valuable tool for evaluating and selecting mentors, as well as for

assessing the effectiveness of mentorship programs. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on mentorship in the ELT context, highlighting the importance of effective mentorship in enhancing the quality of learning and teaching. Moreover, this study contributes to the field of psychometrics by demonstrating the validity and reliability of the GMQ scale through Rasch analysis. The Rasch model is a powerful tool for evaluating the psychometric properties of a scale, as it enables the examination of the relationship between items and the underlying latent trait. The fit of the data to the Rasch model indicates that the items of the GMQ scale consistently measure the same construct and that the scale is a valid and reliable measure of good mentor qualities in the ELT context.

This study focuses on mentorship in Iranian private language institutes, specifically examining the impact of mindfulness and reflectivity on mentees. However, certain limitations may affect the generalizability of the findings. The research was limited to teachers and students within these institutes, excluding those in universities and public schools. Additionally, the sample size was relatively small and concentrated in just two cities: Mashhad and Torbat. The use of purposeful convenience sampling may also limit the representation of the broader population.

Furthermore, the scope of the study is narrow, as it only considers mindfulness and reflectivity within the Iranian context, overlooking other important aspects of mentorship, such as the integration of technology.

The chosen methodology also has its limitations. The absence of an ethnographic approach or a control group restricts the applicability of the findings. Additionally, the research heavily relies on the researcher's experience, which may limit the generalizability of the conclusions drawn. Finally, the short duration of the mentorship program may not have allowed for the development of deeper insights that a longer program could have yielded.

Future research could expand the scope of the study by including teachers from public institutions or a wider variety of educational settings. Moreover, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of mentorship on teaching practices and teacher development. Further investigation is also needed to explore the specific challenges that mentors face in providing individualised, effective support, and to identify strategies to overcome these challenges in diverse English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

Mentorship has the potential to transform teaching practices by promoting reflective and mindful approaches to teaching and learning. However, for mentorship to be effective, it must be conducted in an environment conducive to professional growth and characterized by thoughtful, customized support. By focusing on developing strong mentorship programs, educational institutions can better support teachers in addressing their challenges and improving their instructional practices, ultimately benefiting both educators and students.

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