The impact of contextual factors on English language teachers' beliefs[*]

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is threefold. First, the relationship between teachers' beliefs and contextual factors is explored. Second, the factor which is most significant as perceived by the teachers themselves will be presented and finally, the existence of a meaningful difference between public and private school English teachers in terms of perceived impact of contextual factors will be examined. A scale was developed by the researchers having pre-interviews with English teachers and reviewing relevant literature. The scale developed was piloted with 82 public and private school English teachers working in different parts of Turkey and the collected data were subjected to reliability analysis with SPSS. 210 public and private school English teachers participated in the study. For further data, 14 participants were interviewed. The collected data revealed a significant relationship between contextual factors and English language teachers' beliefs and practices. It was also found out that student oriented contextual factors have the greatest impact on English language teachers. Except teacher and management oriented contextual factors, meaningful difference was observed between public school and private school English teachers in terms of policy, classroom, inspection, and student oriented contextual factors.

Keywords: Contextual factors; teacher beliefs; student oriented contextual factors; policy oriented contextual factors; classroom oriented contextual factors

1. Introduction

Teaching is a complex phenomenon that can be practiced in a number of different personal ways by its practitioners. A certain teaching activity can be practiced in various styles and ways by different teachers. In order to understand the reason of a specific teacher action, it is vitally important to comprehend the underlying idea behind it. To put it in another way, it is necessary to examine the teacher's beliefs and personal theories to understand the teacher practice in the classroom. In this sense, what teachers do in the classrooms is the reflection of what he/she stores in his/her belief system. Therefore, beliefs play a crucial mediating role in teachers' professional development by shaping how they think, feel and act out in the classroom.

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1.1. Literature review

A wide range of terms have been used to describe teacher's belief in literature. Clark and Peterson (1986) use teachers' theories and beliefs in order to refer to the rich store of knowledge teachers have that would directly influence their planning and their interactive thought and decisions. To Tabachnick and Zeichner (1984), belief is "a reflective, socially defined interpretation of experience that serves as a basis for subsequent action ... a combination of beliefs, intentions, interpretations, and behavior that interact continually" (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 287). Similarly, Goodman (1988) preferred to use teachers' perspectives referring to beliefs claiming that two teachers may exhibit different actions for the same events on the basis of their beliefs constructed through the interpretation of guiding images. Richards (1996) uses maxims to imply personal working principles which reflect implicit personal teaching philosophy of teachers (as cited in Borg, 2003, p. 86) whereas Borg chooses the term cognition when he refers to what teachers know, believe and think.

Belief in this study refers to personal theories and implicit assumptions about teaching and learning constructed through experience and observation of prior learning. However, it is quite difficult to point from where teachers' beliefs originate exactly. As Pajares cited, "belief does not lend itself easily to empirical investigation" (1992, p. 308). However, in the light of previous studies (Numrich, 1996, Johnson 1994, Bailey et al., 1996), it is possible to say that prior experiences of teachers and teacher education are the two major sources shaping teachers' beliefs. To Lortie (1975), these beliefs are built from the events the teachers experience during the "apprenticeship of observation" (cited in Roberts, 1998, p. 66). Similarly, Woods (cited in Borg, 2003) suggested that there are external and internal factors shaping teachers'' decisions and the teachers rely upon their experiences and previous language learning history.

The research indicates that teachers modify their instructional practices in line with their beliefs but particular contextual factors appear to be influential in such a process. Flores and May (2006) pointed out that normative and bureaucratic side of teaching and unwritten, implicit rules at school affected the new teachers negatively according to the data gathered. Therefore, the teachers shape their existing beliefs according to the demands, norms and the values of the context and adopt a more compliant attitude.

Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff (2011) studied the effect of contextual factors on teachers' retention decisions. They analyzed first-year teachers' perceptions of school contextual factors and the relationship between school contextual factors and teacher attrition. . The results indicated that working conditions were strongly influential in teachers' professional development and career decisions.

Studies in English Language Teaching (ELT) field also display similar findings. Sakui's two year longitudinal study (2004), for example, suggested that although the teachers in Japan indicated that they incorporated Communicative Language Teaching into their classroom, their practices displayed strong incongruity because of the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, Sakui (2004) concluded that teachers' teaching practices are often driven and influenced by internal and social factors.

Similarly, Richards and Pennington's study (1998) on novice teachers in Hong Kong revealed that although these teachers were trained with Communicative Language Teaching during the formal training and were expected to apply its principles into their classrooms, they departed from it because of large classes, unmotivated students, exams, syllabus, pressure to conform from more experienced teachers and students limited level of English proficiency.

Gorsuch (2001) found out that university entrance exams and students' expectations have significantly strong effect on the teachers' acceptance of Communicative Language Teaching activities. On the other hand, pre- and in-service teacher education programs and privately undertaken courses have insignificant influence. Moreover, the participating teachers all agreed that students' English abilities, class size, students' expectations, the textbook, teachers' English speaking abilities and teachers' English learning experiences have powerful preventive influence on the teachers' practice and decisions.

In their research with four science teachers Savaşçı and Berlin (2012) inquired into the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice concerning the implementation of constructivism in two different school settings by collecting data through interviews, survey and classroom observations. The data revealed that although the teachers are willing to implement constructivist principles into their classrooms, certain contextual factors such as student misbehaviour, large class size, school type, curriculum, centralized exams and parental involvement hinder the teachers from applying what they considered as ideal and effective.

In a more recent study, Cuayahuitl and Carranza (2015) investigated the influence of contextual factors on six Mexican teachers in their in-class instructional decisions using a qualitative research design. The study uncovered that contextual factors, namely, time constraints, institutional mechanisms deciding on the course content and the selection of the textbooks, students' proficiency level, class size and teachers' perceptions of freedom to make decisions on the materials are highly influential in the participating teachers' belief which in turn shape their classroom behaviour and decisions.

All in all, the study of teachers' beliefs is important in order to understand in-class decisions and practices of the teachers but the role of contextual factors cannot be ignored because of the sophisticated nature of teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is essential to investigate teachers' beliefs within the context they bound to as the contextual factors are quite influential in forming and shaping teachers' decisions and practices.

1.2. Research questions

Within the scope of the study, the following research questions aimed to be answered.

1. Do contextual factors have an impact on English language teachers' beliefs in Turkish schools?
2. If so, which contextual factor is most influential on English language teachers' practices in the classroom?
3. Is there any difference between teachers working in state schools and private schools in terms of the extent they feel they are affected by the contextual factors?

2. Method

Mixed method design is used for the present study as the data is analyzed qualitatively and the numerical data is used in order to present the instrumentation results.

2.1. Sample / Participants

There were five groups of participants as the study consists of two phases. In the transition phase, ten English teachers were interviewed on a voluntary basis in order to obtain data about the influences

of contextual factors on their teaching practice in order to compare it with the data gathered from extensive literature review and construct questionnaire items.

The second group of participants consisted of eight English teachers (six male, two female) and were consulted to check whether the instrumentation had any confusing and unclear questions. They were selected from the researcher's entourage for practicality reasons and no criteria were taken into consideration for the selection.

The participants for the pilot study in the transition phase were eighty-two English teachers teaching at primary and secondary levels. Of these eighty-one English teachers 87% is working at state schools while only 12% is private school English teachers. This significant difference stems from the difficulty in reaching private school teachers as the number of private schools is very limited compared to state run public schools. With respect to school district, sixty-three of the participants are working at schools located in urban setting while eighteen of them are teaching at rural setting schools. All private school English teachers are working in urban settings.

After the piloting is over, the questionnaire was given to 210 English teachers working both at state and private schools all around Turkey. In terms of gender 130 of them were female and the other 80 were male. Concerning the type of the school, 130 participants were working at state-run public schools while 80 of them were working at private schools. Of these 210 participants, 159 were working at schools located in an urban setting. In this respect, it was observed that all private schools included in the study were located in urban areas. The remaining 51 participants were working at rural areas. Fourteen English teachers selected randomly among the participants were invited for the follow-up interviews.

2.2. Instrument(s)

In this study, mainly two types of data collection methods were used which are in line with mixed method research design: a written questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Moreover, field notes during the interviews were used when necessary.

2.2.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was designed for English language teachers working at public and private schools in Turkey. In this process, first, a pool of items was developed on the basis of relevant literature and the data gathered through interviews held with 10 Turkish teachers of English. Second, previous studies were reviewed once again to see if an instrument containing items similar to the pool exists. The layout of Lumpe et al. (2000) which was designed to investigate Science teachers' beliefs about the context presumed to be relevant and adapted for the current study.

The first draft was developed with 32 items and interviewees were consulted to check the clarity. Some changes were made in the wording of the items. The initial instrument was pilot tested with 82 English teachers. While recommendations for item-to-response ratios vary from 1:4 (Rummel, 1970) to at least 1:10 (Schwab, 1980); there are also studies in the literature showing that a ratio of 1:1,25 and 1:31 (Barrett and Kline, 1981) and 1:1,3 and 1:19,8 (Arrindell and van der Ende, 1985) did not affect the factor stability (as cited by Morgado, Meireles, Neves, Amaral, & Ferreira, 2017). The ratio in this study is 1:2,56, so the appropriateness of the data to the confirmatory factor analysis was checked through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value which is used to calculate the adequacy of sampling and the reliability was checked through Cronbach's Alpha. KMO was found to be 0,906. In this respect, for the current study, the obtained value indicates that factor analysis is appropriate for these sets of data. Rotated component matrix was used to develop factor structure and define the components of each factor. In order to find out the number of factors that the instrument was made up of and how much of the information from the original variables could be explained by the factors, total

variance explained table was put into practice. As a principle, it is preferred to choose the components as factors with eigenvalues greater than one. The items with the highest loadings under the same factors were grouped and the factor structure was constructed. As a result of the analysis there were six components with eigenvalues greater than one. This instrument which was composed of 32 items and 6 factors explains the 65,323 % of the total variables. In other words, the questionnaire evaluates the phenomenon which is intended to investigate in percentage of 65, 323. In terms of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha value of part B is 0,940 which shows a high internal consistency for the instrument according to Field (2009). Similarly, Cronbach's Alpha value of Part C is 0,884 suggesting that the items in Part C have high correlations with each other. In this respect, no changes were made in the structure of the instrument and the items and the questionnaire was applied to 210 participants.

In the analysis of the actual study data, it was seen that certain items which were expected to be under certain factors were observed under different factors with the highest loadings. In this respect, three variables were extracted from the analysis of Part B and factor analysis was repeated in order to reach more reliable findings. After extracting the items, KMO and Bartlett's Test value which is used to calculate the adequacy of sampling as mentioned before undergoes a small change (0, 903). Like KMO value, Cronbach's Alpha changed with a small decrease in the value (0, 934) which is regarded as an ideal in terms of internal consistency. According to total variance table, six factors explain 67,002 % of the total variables that represents unremarkable increase compared to the value obtained in the preceding factor analysis.

Consequently, the following factors were obtained for the first scale (Part B) on the basis of the analysis.

- Factor 1: Policy Oriented Contextual Factors

The twenty third variable makes the highest contribution to the factor with 0, 752 value. This factor includes variables that are out of teacher's control. In other words, policy oriented contextual factors are external agencies that are related to foreign language education policy, foreign language education decisions made by policy-makers.

- Factor 2: Classroom Oriented Contextual Factors

This factor is made up of four variables.). Classroom oriented contextual factors include the issues that are related with the physical layout of the classroom such as size, technologic equipment etc.

- Factor 3: Inspection Oriented Contextual Factors

As the name implies, inspection oriented contextual factors include the items that come out as a result of the structure of inspection or supervision and the attitudes of inspectors. This factor is also made up of 4 variables.

- Factor 4: Student Oriented Contextual Factors

These factors include four variables and represent the contextual factors emerge from students such as motivation and attitudes towards English lesson, academic background and so on.

- Factor 5: School Management Oriented Contextual Factors

This factor deals with the attitudes of the school management towards English lesson and English teachers and questions whether it supports or hinders the flow of the lesson.

- Factor 6: Teacher Oriented Contextual Factors:

Teacher oriented contextual factors are those that emerge from teachers' deficiencies.

As mentioned before, the questionnaire is made up of two parts. Therefore, the same procedure was repeated for the second scale (Part C). Certain items were removed for the analysis as they were observed under different factors. Factor analysis was carried out again. Five items (item1, 3, 5, 27, 32) were extracted from the instrument. KMO Bartlett value of the instrument after the extraction for Part C is 0,786. Six factors explain 61,605 % of the twenty-seven variables according to total variance explained table. In terms of reliability analysis, Cronbach's Alpha value of the instrument which is composed of 27 number of items is 0, 864 that is regarded as a high value of internal consistency. After the latest factor analysis for part C, the factors were constructed as follows:

- Policy Oriented Contextual Factors and Teacher's Practices
- Inspection Oriented Contextual Factors and Teacher's Practices
- Classroom Oriented Contextual Factors and Teacher's Practices
- Student Oriented Contextual Factors and Teacher's Practices
- School Management Oriented Contextual Factors and Teacher's Practices
- Teacher Oriented Contextual Factors and Teacher's Practices

2.2.2. Interviews

After the application of questionnaire, semi structured interviews were conducted with 14 English teachers who were chosen randomly. Each interview lasted about twenty minutes. The questions were all open-ended as to make the participants free to talk about anything they prefer. Additional questions were forwarded to illuminate what the interviewee really meant. The recorded and transcribed data were analysed and presented together with the quantitative data.

2.3. Data collection procedures

The basic data collection tool for quantitative data in the actual study was internet. As soon as the instrument was finalized, an online form was created using Google Documents and sent to potential partners using social media tools

For the interviews fourteen English teachers were selected as mentioned before. Before the interview, each interviewee was contacted through telephone asked for a proper day for the application. Some of the interviewees were visited at school for the interview while some of them preferred to have interviews out of the school.

2.4. Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis for the questionnaire was conducted using SPSS 20 package programme. Correlation analysis was applied in order to observe the relationship between contextual factors and English teachers' beliefs. In order to find out mostly related contextual factor with English teachers' beliefs and practices, Linear Regression Analysis was conducted. For the purpose of observing meaningful difference between public school and private school English teachers in terms of the extent they feel they are affected by contextual factors, independent samples "t" test was used as an analysis method.

Qualitative data was analysed using descriptive analysis and reliability was confirmed with inter-rater reliability.

3. Results

3.1. Findings for the Relationship between Contextual Factors and English Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

To find out the relationship between contextual factors and English teachers' beliefs and practices a Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted between belief and practice factors and strong positive correlation was observed between the variables. The following tables summarize the results of Pearson Correlation.

Table 1. Belief-Practice Correlation in terms of Policy Oriented Contextual Factors

			Teacher Belief	Teacher Practice
				Contextual Factors
				Policy
Contextual Factors	Policy (POL)	Pearson Correlation		,739[**]
		p		,000
		N		210

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table clearly illustrates that there is a strong positive correlation between teachers' beliefs' and practices in terms of policy oriented contextual factors, *r = .739, N = 210, p < .01.*

The interviews also support the preceding finding. The relationship between policy oriented contextual factors and the beliefs and practices of teachers could be deduced from the interviewees' statements' about the policy oriented contextual factors. In the following extract the participants mention foreign language education policy in Turkey and its effect on their practices in the classroom:

*P.9 Quote A***:** *The foreign language education policy in Turkey is a failure. First of all, policy makers are planning to expose the students to intensive English lessons in the primary school and secondary school which is very illogical because English teachers are limited in number. Therefore, the teachers from different branches with limited English level are assigned for the English lessons and the result is the students with prejudices and lack of motivation towards English. Moreover, exam oriented education system is another barrier in front of us. The lessons are unfortunately grammar and reading oriented because the students do not give enough attention to listening and speaking practices as those skills are not tested in the exams. Furthermore, the books developed by the policy makers are not attractive in design in terms of layout, pictures, cover etc. The content does not address to students' needs. You are constrained to use such a book in the classroom by the Ministry of National Education. This is contrary to human reasoning.*

The similar positive strong correlation is observed between beliefs and practices of teachers in terms of classroom based contextual factors r = .688, N = 210, p < .01.

Table 2. Belief-Practice Correlation in terms of Classroom Oriented Contextual Factors

			Teacher Belief	Teacher Practice
				Contextual Factors
				Classroom
Contextual Factors	Classroom (CLASS)	Pearson Correlation		,688**
		p		,000
		N		210

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Several interview participants reported that classroom based contextual factors sets an obstacle for effective English teaching except the ones working in private schools or colleges which shows the relationship between classroom- based contextual factors and the belief and the practices of teachers. Private school English teachers did not stress its effect on their practices as their schools are well-equipped technologically, the classes are not crowded and classroom area is well organized in terms of physical environment. In the following extract, the participant mention about the effect of classroom based contextual factors:

P.1 Quote B: First of all, it is impossible have an effective English lesson with thirty or forty students. Most of the English teachers working in state schools have to conduct the classes with at least 30 students today. For an effective English teaching the number of students in the classroom should not exceed 15 students. In these classes the teacher can deal with each student individually. Moreover, English teaching should be as audio and visual as possible for the students. However, the classrooms are made up of only blackboard and desks. There isn't any technologic equipment necessary for language teaching such as projector, computer, CD player etc. Therefore, you have to survive in the classroom only with your course book and blackboard.

In terms of inspection oriented contextual factors, it is possible to observe strong positive correlation between teacher's beliefs and practices $r = .699, N = 210, p < .01$.

Table 3. Belief-Practice Correlation in terms of Inspection Oriented Contextual Factors

			Teacher Belief	Teacher Practice
				Contextual Factors
				Inspection
Contextual Factors	Inspection (INSP)	Pearson Correlation		,699**
		p		,000
		N		210

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

It is possible to talk about relationship between inspection oriented contextual factors and the beliefs and practices of English teachers when the following interview extracts are analyzed in detail.

P.3 Quote C: The inspectors aren't expert in their fields. As there are no inspectors from the field of English teaching, we have been inspected from the inspectors of the different fields. Therefore, they are inexpert of English language teaching so they are not able to observe the students' progress in the classroom. In order to conceal their incapability, they prefer to blame us for not following the

contemporary practices in the field. Moreover, they are very rude because they don't even introduce themselves.

As with the student oriented contextual factors, it can be seen from the dataset in table 4 below that there is a linear, strong correlation between English teacher's beliefs and practices *r = .798, N = 210, p < .01*

Table 4. Belief-Practice Correlation in terms of Student Oriented Contextual Factors

		Teacher Belief	**Teacher Practice**
			Contextual Factors
			Student
Contextual Factors	Student (STU)	Pearson Correlation	,798**
		P	,000
		N	210

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The following teacher's comment reveals their concerns about the effect of student oriented contextual factors on their beliefs and practices. The teacher further elaborated that the effect is so strong that they have to shape their practices in the classroom. When asked about the student oriented contextual factors, the following participant commented:

P.8 Quote D: I am suffering about students a lot. I am working at a state school in a village. The government provides the essential material for the class. However, forget about motivation, preparation for the lesson, the students do not even bring the course book into the classroom. As a result, I realized that no matter how hard you try, it means nothing with unmotivated and aimless students.

With regards to management oriented contextual factors, it is apparent from the table that teachers' beliefs and practices are correlated. However, this correlation is not as strong as the previous correlations. *r = .590, N = 210, p < .01.*

Table 5. Belief-Practice Correlation in terms of Management Oriented Contextual Factors

		Teacher Belief	**Teacher Practice**
			Contextual Factors
			Management
Contextual Factors	Management (man)	Pearson Correlation	,590**
		P	,000
		N	210

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The interview participants also did not elaborate on management oriented contextual factors transparently which presents similar findings to correlation analysis results. This may be due to fear from the pressure of school management or the teachers do not feel any hindrance related to management oriented contextual factors.

P.3 Quote E: We are carrying out projects, lots of activities but they are all ignored by the school management. Classes such as Maths and Sciences are regarded more important than English classes by the school management.

As with teacher oriented contextual factors, there is moderate positive correlation between English teachers' beliefs and practices *r = .575, N = 210, p < .01.*

Table 6. Belief-Practice Correlation in terms of Teacher Oriented Contextual Factors

			Teacher Belief	Teacher Practice
				Contextual Factors
				Teacher
Contextual Factors	Teacher (teach)	Pearson Correlation		,575**
		P		,000
		N		210

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The moderate relationship may be due to the fact that the teachers are not open to accept the drawbacks originate from themselves causing to hinder to be an effective English teacher. On the basis of interviews, it is quite difficult to talk about relationship between teacher oriented contextual factors and teachers' beliefs and practices. Almost all the participants blame the experienced teachers referring teacher oriented contextual factors by excluding himself/ herself. The extract below reveals it explicitly:

P.3 Quote F: Most of the newly graduate English teachers like me are capable of using technology in the classroom as were exposed to use technology during the undergraduate education. However, the teachers who have more than 10 years of experience are lacking it as they do not need technology in the classroom because of their grammar and memorization oriented practices. Moreover, they don't need to follow contemporary practices in the field as they follow the same procedure every year.

Overall, in the light of the previous data, it is possible to talk about strong relationship between contextual factors and English teachers' beliefs and practices in Turkish schools.

3.3. Findings for the Mostly Related Contextual Factor with English Language Teachers' Practices in The Classroom

To find out the mostly related contextual factor with English language teachers' practices in the classroom for the purpose of giving answer to research question two, each factor was analyzed individually using linear regression analysis. The following tables illustrate regression analysis results. Significant variables ($p < 0.005$) which contribute to the model were given in the table. The other variables which have no impact on the criterion variable were ignored.

Table 7. Regression Analysis of Belief Based Policy Oriented Contextual Factors

Variable	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	Std. Error	t	sig. (p)
Policy (Practice Based)	,667	,100	12,268	, 000
Student (Practice Based)	, 252	, 126	4,629	, 000
Notes: R²=, 599 (p < 0.005)				

The table clearly points out that there is a significant meaningful relationship between belief based policy oriented contextual factors and practice based policy and student oriented contextual factors. Moreover, the model accounts for % 59, 9 of variance. Practice based policy oriented contextual factors has a large effect on the criterion variable according to the standardized coefficient beta value.

Table 8. Regression Analysis of Belief Based Classroom Oriented Contextual Factors

Variable	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	Std. Error	t	sig. (p)
Policy (Practice Based)	,537	,066	9,040	, 000
Student (Practice Based)	, 229	, 069	3,960	, 000
Notes: R²=, 547 (p < 0.005)				

According to the table above, statistically significant relationship exists between belief based classroom oriented contextual factors and practice based policy and student oriented contextual factors. The model accounts for % 54, 7 of the total variance. Among the given variables in the table, practice based classroom oriented contextual factor has stronger influence on the criterion variable compared to the other variables in the regression (t=9,040).

Table 9. Regression Analysis of Belief Based Inspection Oriented Contextual Factors

Variable	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	Std. Error	t	sig. (p)
Inspection (Practice Based)	,577	,057	11,148	,000
Policy (Practice Based)	,219	,050	3,903	,000
Student (Practice Based)	,181	,063	3,225	,001
Notes: R²=, 574 (p < 0.005)				

The table clearly illustrates that there is meaningful association between belief based inspection oriented contextual factors and the given variables in the table according to the sig. (p) values. According to the R square value the model fits the population and % 57, 4 variation in the dependent variable is explained by the regression model.

Table 10. Regression Analysis of Belief Based Student Oriented Contextual Factors

Variable	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	Std. Error	t	sig. (p)
Student (Practice Based)	,707	,059	14,432	,000
Policy (Practice Based)	,193	,047	3,957	,000
Notes: R²=, 676 (p < 0.005)				

According to the table above both practice based student and policy oriented contextual factors are significant in the model and provide strong evidence of association between the dependent variable (belief based student oriented contextual factors) and the predictor variables (practice based student and policy oriented contextual factors). As can be seen from table above the value of R^2 is ,676 which means that % 67,6 of the total variance in the model has been explained.

Table 11. Regression Analysis of Belief Based Management Oriented Contextual Factors

Variable	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	Std. Error	t	sig. (p)
Management (Practice Based)	,521	,054	8,337	,000
Student (Practice Based)	,291	,071	4,577	,000
Notes: R²=, 455(p < 0.005)				

In the regression table given above meaningful relationship was observed between belief based management oriented contextual factors and practice based management and student oriented contextual factors ((p < 0.005). The model accounts for the % 45,5 of the total variance which represents a poor fraction of the variance as it is preferred to have more than % 50. The practice based management oriented contextual factors have greater effect on the dependent variable according to the standardized coefficient beta value.

Table 12. Regression Analysis of Belief Based Teacher Oriented Contextual Factors

Variable	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	Std. Error	t	sig. (p)
Teacher (Practice Based)	,551	,056	8,993	,000
Student (Practice Based)	,220	,061	3,258	,000
Notes: R²=, 385(p < 0.005)				

In the last regression model output given above meaningful relationship exists between the dependent variable and the predictor variables as observed in the other models given before. The model accounts for the %38, 5 of the total variance. The value indicates that it is not very useful for making predictions since it is close to -1. The biggest contribution to the model is made by practice based teacher oriented contextual factor with ,551 standardized coefficient beta value.

In the light of the regression models above, it is clear that student oriented contextual factors is mostly related with English teachers' practices in the classroom with % 67, 6 R^2 value. Policy oriented contextual factors follow student oriented contextual factors with % 59, 9 R^2 value.

In compatible with the findings of the regression model, student oriented contextual factors are the most frequently stressed one in the interviews compared to the other factors as observed in the following excerpt:

P.3 Quote G: My school is located in a suburb area of the city. Therefore, socio-economic level of the students is very low. The parents cannot support their children financially. Moreover, they are indifferent to their children's progress. The students' education is restricted to what they learn at school. At home, they have to take care of their siblings, help mother and so on. As a result, the students are unmotivated, unprepared and unready for English lesson.

3.3. Findings for the Difference between Public and Private School English Teachers in terms of Perceived Impact of Contextual Factors

For the third research question an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare state school and private school English teachers to find out any significant difference if exists in terms of the extent they feel they are affected by the contextual factors. The following table displays the group statistics and the independent samples t-test result and output.

Table 13. Independent Samples T-Test Output

Contextual Factors	State School	Private School	*t*	*df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
Policy	41,20 (6,81)	33,27 (9,43)	6,544	129,778	,000
Classroom	14,93 (3,90)	10,30 (3.93)	8,335	208	,000
Inspection	15,48 (3,84)	12,61 (4,20)	5,067	208	,000
Student	16,16 (3,62)	10,96 (4,15)	9,538	208	,000
Management	12,12 (3,93)	10,90 (4,58)	2,054	208	0,41
Teacher	7,57 (3,49)	8,07 (3.38)	-1,015	208	,311

The Table 13 clearly illustrates that there is a significant difference in scores between private school and state school English teachers in terms of policy oriented contextual factors. Since p= ≤ .05 this test is statistically significant. State school English teachers' perception of policy oriented contextual factors (M= 41,20, SD= 6,81) is significantly higher than that of private school English teachers (M=33,27, SD= 9,43).

The findings obtained from Independent Samples T-test corresponded to the findings of the interview data in terms of policy oriented contextual factors. The private school and public school English teachers revealed significant difference in terms of perception of policy oriented contextual factors as observed in the following extract:

P.10 Quote H: ......as we are working in college, we do not stick to the curriculum sent by the Ministry of National Education as strictly as state school English teachers. Moreover, we don't use the book provided by the Ministry as they are not good enough for English teaching. In fact, we seem to use them but we chose books developed by the foreign publications.

In a similar vein, significant difference was observed between state school English teachers and private school English teachers in terms of classroom oriented contextual factors. The test is statistically significant according to the *p* value given in the table above (*p= ≤ .05*). State school English teachers have higher mean (*M= 14,93, SD=3,90*) than private school English teachers (*M= 10,30, SD=3,93*).

With regard to inspection oriented contextual factors, scores were higher for state school English teachers (*M= 15,68, SD=3,84*) than for the private school English teachers (*M= 12,61, SD=4,20*) . As *p* value is lower than .05, it is possible to talk about significant difference between the two groups of teachers in terms of impact.

When the private school teachers were asked about the inspection oriented contextual factors, they made similar comments with public school English teachers but they stressed that they don't take the

inspectors into consideration a lot which implies that the effect of inspector oriented contextual factor on private school English teachers' beliefs and practices is quite smaller than that of public school English teachers. In the following extract, the teacher was asked to comment on the inspection oriented contextual factors:

P.10 Quote I: One would wish that the inspectors were literate in English teaching but they are not. They don't have any specific criteria to observe me. They just compare me with another private school English teacher in another school. If your papers are ready when they come to inspect, you don't have to worry about anything. They don't even check the students' progress because they don't know English.

As with the perceived impact of student oriented contextual factors, significant difference is found between state school English teachers ((*M= 16,16, SD=3,62*) and private school English teachers (*M= 10,96, SD=4,15*).

The difference was also observed in the comments of the interview participants which could be regarded as the clear indicator of perception difference between private school English teacher and public school English teacher in terms of the impact of student oriented contextual factors.

P.13 Quote J: As I am working in college, the students are quite interested and motivated towards English lessons because the parents are aware of the importance of second language and they stick it to their children's mind. Moreover, they are involved in their children's achievement. Therefore, the students are intrinsically motivated during the lesson and voluntarily engaged in the activities.

A significant difference was not observed between the means of state school ((*M= 12,12, SD=3,93*) and private school English teachers (*M= 10,90, SD=4,58*) with respect to perceived influence of management oriented contextual factors.

However, the analysis of the interviews presented contradictory results with the outputs of independent samples t-test. A significant difference was observed between public and private school teachers in terms perceived influence of management oriented contextual factors on the basis of interview participants' comments. It was also seen that the influence of management oriented contextual factors is far stronger for public school English teachers when compared with private school English teachers. The following comments of the teachers are presumed to support the argument above. When asked about management oriented contextual factors, a public school English teacher commented as in the following extract:

P.2 Quote K: In fact, school management does not interfere in your practices in the classroom. However, they evaluate the success of the teacher on the basis of students' achievement in SBS exam. They don't care if the students are able to speak English or not. Therefore, English lesson is ignored when compared with the other lessons such as Math and Turkish as they have wider coverage in terms of question in SBS exam.

The situation is totally different in private schools as mentioned in the following extract:

P.10 Quote K: The school management is leaving us the authority of all decisions about English teaching as they see us as specialist in the field. Therefore, I haven't encountered any constraints or obstacles originated from school management.

In terms of teacher oriented contextual factors, the observed difference in the means of state school and private school English teachers is not significant as p value is not less than alpha .05. Therefore it is not possible to talk about difference between state school and private school English teachers.

4. Discussion

Despite the fact that the nature of the link between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices remains controversial, it seems that the fundamental premise should be acknowledged, that is, the relationship between the beliefs and practice might not be causal but is interdependent. Specific instructional decisions that teachers make are influenced by their beliefs, which, in turn, influence student' learning.

Indeed, a relationship was found between contextual factors and English teachers beliefs and practices (as in the study of Flores & May, 2006; Boyd & Grossman et al., 2011). Policy oriented contextual factors, for example, appeared to have great influence on the beliefs of teachers and so constrain them to adopt practices which do not coincide with their earlier pedagogical beliefs. Most of the participants commented on the hindering effect of course book which is fundamentally grammar based and that they had to follow it because of heavily centralized education system with strictly controlled syllabus. Kayaoğlu's study (2011) has also shown that teachers have no say in the selection and implementation of the course book.

To the participants, this situation is exacerbated by an exam oriented education system. The teachers are constrained to act out contrary to their existing beliefs by ignoring speaking and listening skills in the classroom as the exams are mostly grammar-oriented. On the other hand, the effect of such policy oriented contextual factors seems to differ according to school type and location. English teachers working in private schools with students from high socio-economic backgrounds do not complain as much as public school English teachers do.

One prevalent complaint from public school side is related to classroom oriented contextual factors. They suggested that because overcrowded classrooms they have to adopt practices which are contradictory to their existing beliefs. Instead of creating a communicative classroom atmosphere in the classroom, they resort to activities that require individual student work because of classroom management concerns. (See Nishino 2008 for a similar finding). The fact that public schools are not well resourced adds extra pressure for teachers working in these institutions.

With regards to inspection oriented contextual factors and teacher belief and practice relationship, the data reveal that most of the teachers adopt similar attitudes towards inspectors and inspection system in Turkey. To them, instead of dealing with educational matters such as students' progress, the inspectors evaluate the teachers on the basis of documents such as daily plan and yearly plan. The feedback of the inspectors, they claim, is far from being constructive. Yaman, Evcek and İnandı (2008) have reported a similar finding which indicated that main duties of the inspectors are not just controlling teachers and collecting papers, but guiding, aiding, training, supporting and motivating them. As for the type of the schools and to what extent they are being subjected to the inspection policy of the Ministry, it is interesting to note that teachers working in private schools report being under considerable pressure from parents and school administrators as they also evaluate teachers' performance sometimes more than inspectors themselves.

No significant relationship was found between school management oriented contextual factors and teacher belief. This was not an unexpected finding as the study of Boyd et al. (2011) also suggested, school administration is mostly influential in teachers' professional development and career decisions. However, the data on the relationship between teacher-oriented contextual factors and teacher belief and practice did not reveal such a clear cut picture. While the questionnaire data provided support for a relationship, the interview data presented contrary findings. One suggestion could be that teachers tended to emphasize the factors such as class size and unmotivated students but not those related to themselves as teachers.

The relationship found between student oriented contextual factors and teachers' belief is the most significant one. It appears that they are closely related to the practices of English teachers. Factors included prejudiced and negative attitudes of students towards English lessons, achievement and motivation levels of the students and the socio-economic group that students belong to. Similar findings have been reported other works (Bailey 1996; Howe 2011) that have acknowledged the impact of student related factors on interactive decisions and practices of the teachers in the classroom.

In response to the third research question, the findings clearly present that there is a significant perceptual difference between state school and private school English teachers in terms of policy, classroom, inspection, and student oriented contextual factors. Statistically, the difference was not observed in management and teacher oriented contextual factors. However, it is possible to talk about difference in terms of perceived influence of management oriented contextual factors according to the qualitative data. The results were interpreted as policy, classroom, inspection, student and management oriented contextual factors cause greater hindrance in classroom for public school English teachers than private school English teachers.

Some limitations to the current study need noting. First, the sample of teachers participated in the study was quite small. A larger number of sampling would yield more valid and reliable results. Second, in the process of collecting items for the questionnaire, despite its significance, factors related parents were not included. In fact, such data would yield valuable insights into the subject under study. Nevertheless, several interesting findings pave the way for future research to further explore teacher beliefs and contextual factors. Such research would allow reform efforts aimed at facilitating change in the beliefs and practices of the teachers.

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Bağlamsal faktörlerin İngilizce öğretmenlerinin inançları üzerindeki etkisi

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. Öncelikle, öğretmenlerin inançları ve bağlamsal faktörler arasındaki ilişki araştırılmıştır. İkinci olarak öğretmenlerin algılarına göre inançları üzerindeki en etkili faktör sunulmuş ve son olarak özel okul ve devlet okullarında çalışmakta olan İngilizce öğretmenleri arasında bağlamsal faktörler açısından anlamlı bir farklılaşmanın varlığı araştırılmıştır. Bu amaçlar doğrultusunda araştırmacılar tarafından İngilizce öğretmenleri ile ön görüşmeler yaparak ve ilgili literatür taranarak bir ölçek geliştirilmiştir. Geliştirilen ölçek Türkiye'nin farklı illerindeki özel ve devlet okullarında çalışmakta olan 82 İngilizce öğretmeninin katılımıyla pilot çalışmaya tabi tutulmuş ve toplanan veri üzerinde SPSS ile güvenirlik analizi yapılmıştır. Devlet okulları ve özel okullarda görev yapmakta olan 210 İngilizce öğretmeni çalışmaya katılmıştır. Daha fazla veri elde etmek amacıyla 14 katılımcı ile görüşme yapılmıştır. Toplanan verilerin ışığında bağlamsal faktörler ile İngilizce öğretmenlerinin inanç ve uygulamaları arasında yüksek düzeyde ilişki gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca öğrenci kaynaklı bağlamsal faktörlerin katılımcı İngilizce öğretmenler üzerinde en yüksek etkiye sahip olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Öğretmen kaynaklı ve okul yönetimi kaynaklı bağlamsal faktörler dışında politika, sınıf, teftiş ve öğrenci kaynaklı bağlamsal faktörler açısından özel okul ve devlet okullarında çalışmakta olan İngilizce öğretmenleri arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur .

Anahtar sözcükler: Bağlamsal faktörler; öğretmen inançları; öğrenci kaynaklı bağlamsal faktörler; politika kaynaklı bağlamsal faktörler; sınıf kaynaklı bağlamsal faktörler

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