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Abstract

This instrumental-comparative qualitative case study attempts to investigate the relations between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. For this purpose, five Iranian EFL teachers from three private language institutes were interviewed for their beliefs. Then, their classroom practices were observed and videotaped. The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method around common categories, which were identified as distinctive features of teachers' beliefs; these same themes were then compared with their practices. The data for each case were also compared with the others so that possible causes of the inconsistencies could be traced. Based on the causes, some suggestions for teacher education and educational management are made.

Keywords

Teachers' Beliefs, Teachers' Practices, Contextual Factors, Iranian ELT

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Consistencies and Inconsistencies between the Iranian EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

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This instrumental-comparative qualitative case study attempts to investigate the relations between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. For this purpose, five Iranian EFL teachers from three private language institutes were interviewed for their beliefs. Then, their classroom practices were observed and videotaped. The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method around common categories, which were identified as distinctive features of teachers' beliefs; these themes were then compared with their practices. The data for each case were also compared with the others so that possible causes of the inconsistencies could be traced. Based on the causes, some suggestions for teacher education and educational management are made. Keywords: Teachers' Beliefs, Teachers' Practices, Contextual Factors, Iranian ELT, Case Study

It has always been a thought-provoking question why there are discrepancies between what teachers believe to be appropriate and what they actually do in their classes. The topic has been challenging enough to attract researchers' attention. In response to the call of different researchers including Kane, Sandretto, and Heath (2002, pp. 196-204); Munby (1982, p. 223); Pajares (1992, p. 327) for more detailed and explanative attention to the teachers' beliefs and also due to the significance of the topic itself, many studies have attempted to "sift clarity from complexity" (Pajares, 1992, p. 324). Among them, some reported a degree of inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and practices. In her review of literature, Basturkmen (2012) found studies indicating limited correspondence outnumbering those suggesting a general convergence between beliefs and practices. Exploring the issue, situational factors have been understood to mediate the relations between beliefs and practices (Basturkmen, 2012). Through his work with the action theory, Li (2013) similarly observed the relations between espoused theories and the theories-in-use complicatedly mediated by the context, both micro and macro. Further, a study by Devine, Fahie, and McGillicuddy (2013), outstanding in terms of the participants' number, found shared beliefs like passion and commitment differently played out when it came to practice: "sociocultural factors...influence how teachers construct and *do* teaching" (Devine et al., 2013, p. 105). By the same token, T. S. C. Farrell and Bennis (2013) together with Basturkmen, Loewen, and Ellis (2004) argue that "[teachers'] complex beliefs are not always realized in classroom practices" (T. S. C. Farrell & Bennis, 2013, p. 163) due to contextual factors: "These results indicated a somewhat tenuous relationship between the teachers' practices and stated beliefs" (Basturkmen et al., 2004, p. 243). Equally important, Kissau, Algozzine, and Yon (2012) drawing on the evidence provided through in-depth interviews identified some challenges, mostly contextual, on how beliefs inform practices and thus suggested other studies to incorporate context more. In other words, classroom realities in some cases resulted in a disconnect between beliefs and behaviors (Kissau et al., 2012). Not to ignore the alternative theoretical frameworks, Zheng (2013) through his work with complexity theory could not deny the role of context: "The mechanism underlying the relationship between the teachers' beliefs and practices lies in the interaction between their core and peripheral beliefs in different teaching contexts" (Zheng, 2013, p. 192). Taking qualitative and emic approach, all

these studies fed the field with new insights which according to S. Borg (2003, p. 83) were mostly untouched till the turn of the century.

Teacher Beliefs

Available literature suggests different definitions for teacher beliefs from different theoretical perspectives, including beliefs as “a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior” (M. Borg, 2001, p. 186). Partly similar to this definition, Basturkmen et al. (2004) introduce beliefs as “statements teachers made about their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what *should be done*, *should be the case*, and *is preferable*” (p. 244). Taking this stance, Basturkmen et al. (2004) consistently with M. Borg (2001) view beliefs as value systems. Beliefs are “used to characterize a teacher’s idiosyncratic unity of thought about objects, people, and events, and their characteristic relationships that affect his/her planning and interactive thoughts and decisions” (Mansour, 2009). Pajares (1992, p. 307) represents beliefs as “the best *indicators* of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives.”

These definitions especially Pajares (1992) and M. Borg (2001) suffer a degree of oversimplification because they seem to have assumed a linear relation between beliefs and behaviors. Stemming from the criticism pointed at the theory of planned behavior, Vygotskian social developmental psychology has been gaining ever more attention to the extent that Ajzen and Fishbein, as the planned behavior theoreticians, have impliedly admitted the inadequateness of beliefs as an indicator of behaviors. Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) humbly accredited the role of contextual factors besides beliefs in behavior prediction. Further, Vygotski (1978) fed the relation between beliefs and actions with a social view in terms of interconnectednesses between an individual and the world. Having applied the Vygotskian views into educational research, Poulson, Avramidis, Fox, Medwell, and Wary (2001) advocated the existence of complex and “dialectical” relation between teachers beliefs and behaviors. The nonlinear and multi-facet approach to beliefs and behaviors can also be justified from the interactionist vantage point of action theory, which regards the relations between the espoused theories (beliefs) and theories-in-use (behaviors) as a complex one in terms of the interactions between the agent and the environment (Li, 2013). Action theory takes a sociocognitive approach because it defines cognition in terms of adaptive intelligence, entailing symbiotic interactions and alignment (cf., Argyris & Schon, 1974; Atkinson, 2011). Putting it more simply, the inconsistencies between self-reported beliefs and in-reality action could be witnessed. In line with the theoretical discussion, contemporary social psychological reviews like (Armitage & Conner, 2001) have observed a low prediction power between beliefs and the observed-behaviors which can be attributed to the contextual factors, sometimes referred to as constraints.

Beliefs and Behaviors

Table 1. An Overview of the Recent Studies on the Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices

	Study	design	Participants	context	Data collection
1	T. S. C. Farrell and Bennis (2013)	Case study	2 English teachers: one experienced another inexperienced	Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews • In-depth observation • Teacher profiles • Background survey
2	Basturkmen et al.	Case study	3 English teachers: one experienced (15 years),	New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi structured interviews (as lead-in)

	(2004)		one semi-experienced(11 years) a newbie (1 year)	private language school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstructured interview • In-depth observation(audio recorded) • Cued response scenarios • Stimulated recalls
3	Kissau et al. (2012)	Mixed method	A. Quantitative component: 222 language teachers(k-8 and secondary school) B. Qualitative component: 14 language teachers (5 Spanish, 5 French, 1 German,2 Chinese, 1 Japanese) along with 7 supervisors	South eastern United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Semi-structured interviews
4	Li (2013)	Case study	1 really experienced English teacher(26 years)	Beijing, China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews • In-depth observation(video recorded): Conversation analysis
5	Mansour (2013)	Case study	4 science teachers	Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews • Observation(field-notes) • Teacher journal
6	Harfitt (2012)	Case study	3 English teachers: all experienced(6-20 years) and all female	Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews • In-depth observation(video recorded)
7	Devine et al. (2013)*	Mixed method	A. Quantitative component I. Questionnaire: 126 primary and secondary teachers II. Observation 78 primary and secondary B. Qualitative component I. Interviews: 73 primary and secondary <hr/> *75% of participants were experienced teachers (more than 6 years)	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Observation (field notes)() • Semi-structured interview(post lesson)
8	Nishino (2012)	Mixed method	A. Quantitative component I. Questionnaire: 139 high school English teachers B. Qualitative component I. Interviews: 4 experienced teachers (24,27,26,26 years of experience respectively) II. In-depth observation: The same as interviews	Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Observation(field-notes and video recorded) • Semi-structured interviews (post-lesson)

Methodologically, most of the works tabulated above (Table 1) share a social constructivist philosophical approach to the research as far as data collection instrument is concerned (cf., Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). However, few studies (e.g., Devine et

al., 2013; Harfitt, 2012) looks as if taking a step further and opting for an advocacy liberatory approach in terms of their attempt for affecting the current practices. The methodological choice talks clearly of the great complexity and the black-box nature of the phenomenon, i.e. howness of the relation between beliefs and practices.

Although variation among the foci of different studies can be seen, specific trends cannot be difficult to identify with regard to the results. Firstly, the notion of consistency and inconsistency (convergence and divergence) is found to be of a degree type rather than a dichotomous one. In the work of T. S. Farrell and Lim (2005) on the relation between espoused theories (beliefs) and classroom practices, It could be seen that different aspects of grammar did not behave monolithically. Basturkmen's preference for inclusion of studies only considering both consistencies and inconsistencies at the same time can be taken as an another evidence for the grayscale nature of the relations between knowledge *for* and *in* practice, that is, beliefs and behaviors (cf., Basturkmen, 2012). Some studies report cases in which beliefs and practices are observed to be simultaneously divergent and convergent:

With respect to error correction, beliefs both converged and diverged with practice Troy stated it was important to correct student errors; however, there were several observed instances when errors were not corrected. When errors were corrected, Troy was observed most frequently echoing the error and, sometimes, he gave an opportunity for the students to self-correct. This converges with his belief that students should be able to self-correct prior to being told an answer. At other times, Troy echoed an error and corrected it himself. (T. S. C. Farrell & Bennis, 2013, p. 172)

...our findings reiterate...the centrality of teacher beliefs...to practise in classrooms. The *messiness* of such links is also borne out in our data, (Devine et al., 2013, p. 104)

This view is also clearly corroborated by the finding of the Li (2013), that is, one “cannot simply say whether a teacher's espoused theories are in alignment or in contrast with his or her classroom practice; evidence of both is to be found in what a teacher says and does, even relating to one aspect of his beliefs in just one lesson” (p.185).

By and large, different contextual factors can have a more or less role in fostering the limited correspondence. As Li (2013) observed, lack of knowledge might make the teachers whistle different tunes: “his own lack of cultural knowledge also made [the teacher] switch to the topic that he felt he had more control over” (Li, 2013, pp. 185-186). Among the factors unsettling the correspondence between beliefs and practices, situational constraints like time constraints and washback are known to be involved (Basturkmen, 2012, p. 286; S. Borg, 2003; Devine et al., 2013; T. S. Farrell & Lim, 2005, p. 9; T. S. C. Farrell & Bennis, 2013, p. 173; Kissau et al., 2012; Li, 2013, p. 185; Nishino, 2008, p. 42; 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 387). Referring to these situational constraints as macro context, Li (2013) advocated that macro context is not the sole player in the field. He views the inconsistencies between beliefs and practices a product of the interactions between both the macro and the micro context.

Almost all the studies recognized teaching experience as one of the determinants of the correspondence. Basturkmen et al. (2004) reckoned that experience might be among the factors bringing about a higher convergence between espoused theories and theories in use, and thus more illuminative studies have been called for. Accordingly, Basturkmen (2012) reviewed thirteen doctoral thesis along with three journal articles and found that “across the studies beliefs were reflected in the practices of more experienced teachers” (p.286). Likewise, T. S. C. Farrell and Bennis (2013), in a comparative case study, found a higher

degree of correspondence between beliefs and practices for the case of experienced teacher: “The findings indicate that...the experienced teacher’s classroom practices were more clearly related to his beliefs” (T. S. C. Farrell & Bennis, 2013, p. 175). Further, Devine et al. (2013, p. 103) realized “age and length of experience” as shaping teachers online classroom practices. Although findings show a higher degree of correspondence for experienced teachers, this claim should not be taken as the more, the merrier since “sample to population extrapolation” (Firestone, 1993, p. 28) based on the findings of qualitative research is neither recommended nor credible.

Besides experience, teacher decision-making seems to be a point of interest. Basturkmen et al. (2004), in comparison to the incidental ones, advocated that the foot print of beliefs on the planned practices could be more easily seen. Basturkmen (2012), through her literature review, observed planned aspects of practice as being informed by teachers’ beliefs: “It is not surprising that teachers’ beliefs would be reflective of their planned practices” (p. 290). Caution, here, is needed because incidental aspects are yet to be peered into more (Basturkmen, 2012, p. 291).

Reviewing research on the relations between teachers’ beliefs and practices, one inexorably will have been taken to give S. Borg (2003) a reference. S. Borg (2003) through the influential literature review comes up with a conceptual model of teacher cognition (Figure 1) which, in his book, can be taken as a starting point for research consolidation: “[such a framework] militates against the accumulation of isolated studies conducted without sufficient awareness of how these relate to existing work” (S. Borg, 2003, p. 105). He acknowledges the vital importance of context in the study of teacher cognition and suggests future studies to explore the contextual factors in greater detail (S. Borg, 2003, p. 106). Borg’s conceptual model has not been statistically tested until recently, partly due the context sensitive nature of teachers’ cognition. Nishino (2012) statistically tested the conceptual model of teacher cognition within the Japanese EFL context and surprisingly found no direct significant relations between teacher’s beliefs and practices. Even the indirect effect of the beliefs on the practices is reported to be very weak ($\beta=0.12$) (Nishino, 2012, p. 388). However, interpretation of the first statistical model of teacher cognition should be done with utmost caution since teacher cognition has been operationalized in terms of three constructs namely, Positive CLT Beliefs, L2 Self-Confidence and CLT Self-Efficacy. In other words, the teachers’ beliefs did not incorporate the L2 Self-Confidence and CLT Self-Efficacy. If they had been integrated, the effect of beliefs on practice might have been much stronger. Indeed, this model regards the divergence between beliefs and practices largely due to the contextual factors.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Teacher Cognition (Borg, 2003, p. 82)

As the last word, almost none of the studies reviewed above provided an explanatory view of the curricula employed, though sporadic accounts were offered. The essence of thick descriptions of the curriculum would be justified with regard to the effects of curricular choices on the practices. According to Richards (2013), each approach to curriculum development makes different assumptions about the context, and thus different approaches will be demanding to varying degrees not only on the part of the teachers, which might inspire limited correspondence, but also the educational context. For example, a forward approach is mostly opted for mandatory and/or commercial material in which large class sizes and central assessments are known to be an indispensable part. So much of the planning and the development for forward design is done by the specialists rather than left to the individual teachers (Richards, 2013). So, it can act as a potential threat to the correspondence between beliefs and behaviors on the part of the teachers partly because teachers neither have the autonomy nor the curriculum planning is of high accountability.

Iran's Context

While in other Asian countries, especially the eastern ones like Japan, CLT has been endorsed by the educational systems, they have still difficulties in implementing it in terms of the divergence between teacher beliefs and practices (cf., Kam, 2002; Nunan, 2003), let alone Iran in which not only CLT has not been formally embraced until recently but also ELT, in general, has ever been being marginalized (Darani, 2013; Farhady & Hedayati, 2009).

From a bird's eye view, Iranian ELT can be classified into the formal and the private. Formal education is still abounding with traditional grammar-translation methods, or what Nishino (2012, p. 382) calls "*yakudoku*". On the other hand, private language institutes have been welcoming modern language education, i.e., CLT, for at least 10 years. Recently (2013-2014 school year) a new book was developed for the 7th graders namely, Prospect 1, which is advocated to be based on the CLT principles (Alavi Moghadam & Kheirabadi, 2013). Although this initiative seems promising, the implementation would bring about many challenges mostly due to its forward design (cf., Richards, 2013). Besides, washback effect of the universities entrance exam, known as *Konkoor*, overshadows ELT in Iran at least for the school age learners.

Given the context, the friction between different belief systems (i.e., formal ELT and private) would normally be expected to end in a degree of inconsistency between teacher beliefs and their practices, particularly in the latter case i.e. private ELT. Teachers schooling and Professional coursework along with contextual factors, among which are constraints (cf., S. Borg, 2003; Nishino, 2012) might inevitably inspire paradoxical beliefs and behaviors with regard to CLT. About a decade of educational career provided the Authors insight of the classes or even language centers, commonly private, in which constructivist transformational purports were mostly used to candy-coat the didactic traditional underlying practices. The state's sociopolitical and socio-educational status, partly depicted by Farhady and Hedayati (2009), might reinforce this challenge and conflict even further.

Qualitative Research Sub-Questions

This study attempted to provide detailed response for the following sub-questions so that systematic comparisons can be made between the cases:

1. What are the beliefs of EFL teachers who work in Iran?
2. How their beliefs are informed by the state-of-the-art theories?
3. How their beliefs are reflected in their practices?

4. What factors do they identify to be involved?

Methodology

Participants

Available literature (e.g. Basturkmen, 2012, p. 292; S. Borg, 2003, pp. 105-106; Li, 2013, p. 188; Nishino, 2012, p. 395), already discussed above, was drawn on to arrive at the intended characteristics of the participants. Comparison between inexperienced and the relatively experienced teachers, planned aspects and the unplanned ones along with the class size were among the criteria based on which key informants were to be found. Personal contacts were made with the principals of three private non-compulsory language institutes, all located in the suburban areas of Iranian capital, and the entry to the sites were gained through detailed talks on the scope, the significance and the ethics of the study. Researcher used the gatekeepers' daily valuable knowledge and information of their employees to arrive at the participants (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 113). Participants' demographics can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants

Participant	Education	Occupation	TTC/TDC	Teaching Experience
Jeff (QMT1)	Farsi Literature, B.A Eng. Translation, B.A Clinical Psychology, M.Sc.	<i>EFL Teacher at:</i> • The Dog Inst. • Public School (Secondary edu.) <i>Tour Guide</i>	No	14 yrs.
Henry (QMT2)	Eng. Translation, B.A TEFL, M.A	<i>EFL Teacher at:</i> • The Dog Inst.	No	2 yrs.
Beth (QMT3a)	Eng. Translation, B.A TEFL, M.A	<i>EFL Teacher at:</i> • The Cat Inst.	Yes	4 yrs.
Beth (QMT3b)	Eng. Translation, B.A TEFL, M.A	<i>EFL Teacher at:</i> • The Cat Inst.	Yes	4 yrs.
John (QMT4)	TEFL , B.A	<i>EFL Teacher at:</i> • The Bird Inst.	Yes	6 yrs.

Jeff and Henry (pseudonyms) were colleagues at the Dog Institute (pseudonym) teaching at the intermediate level to male learners, aged 16 on average. Officials at the Dog institute described the learners' economic status as medium. Beth (pseudonym) taught the same course to two different classes at the Cat (pseudonym) institute. The classes were all-girls classes and the learners aged 20 on average, as the officials reported. There were seven students in the first class (QMT3a) and eleven in the latter one (QMT3b). The Institute principal described the learners as medium to high when asked about the economic status. Although John's case has been crossed out due to the credibility concern, to be discussed later on in detail, his case is described. John (pseudonym) was teaching teenage boys at the

Bird institute (pseudonym). Learners aged 18 or so, and their economic status has been described as medium by the institute officials.

While the principals described the learners economic status solely based on the subjective judgments, the findings seems valid since all the institutes were placed in the suburban areas of Tehran whose socio-economic specifications are not expected to be that different.

Data Collection

In order to strengthen the credibility of the research, there was an attempt to use data from different sources so that as naturalistic as possible image is arrived at. Data were collected by using various sources (i.e., Class observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis).

Observations: At first, each class was to be observed and videoed for four consecutive sessions by the researcher himself so that the Hawthorne effect is minimized. However, some inconveniences took place when it came to practice. Firstly, since Beth was teaching in a girls-only institute, the gatekeeper did not allow the researcher, a man, to personally attend the classes to have them observed and only fixed cams were allowed to be used. Secondly, the researcher needed to reduce the observations to only two consecutive sessions due to lack of resources, especially digital video taping equipment. For the cases of Jeff and Henry, two consecutive sessions were both videoed and observed from the beginning till the end. Beth classes were just videoed for two consecutive sessions. The researcher opted for the “observer as participant” (Gold (1958), as cited in Lodico et al., 2010) role during the observations so that research ethics are not violated. But this choice increased the Hawthorne effect and that is why more extended observations are suggested. More details on the observations and description of the physical settings can be found in appendix A.

Besides extending observation and videoing to two sessions, another step has been taken to have the Hawthorne effect minimized. The principals were asked to elicit and report the students’ opinions and feedback on the observed sessions to the researcher so that any deviation from the typical daily class could be identified. Students’ feedback, reported by the principals indicated that John’s performance in the observed classes was more energetic and productive than ever. So John’s case has been crossed out to protect credibility. The principal of the Bird institute through a phone call reported: “Students came to me and told: Oh Sir, Mr. John was fantastic today.”

Interviews: Retrospective individual interviews were done with participants two days after the 2nd observation to avoid immediate transfer of practice to beliefs. Semi-structured interviews were drawn on to provide in-depth information about the beliefs. To provide as naturalistic story as possible, probes were greatly employed to seek clarifications, interview lengths are a proof. The second round of interviews was carried out in relationship to classroom observations and included stimulated recall events. The intention of the 2nd interviews was to illuminate the relationship between participants’ beliefs and practices.

As far as the procedure is concerned, the interviews were conducted in Farsi (participants’ L1) and audio recorded so that no idea is left unvoiced or forgotten due to the English (L2) proficiency or memory limitations. The interviews were transcribed and translated into English by the researcher. Afterwards, the translations were returned to the participants for the member check to assure credibility. Participants carefully read the renderings and commented on them for improvement.

Document analysis: Teaching materials, attendance lists and lesson plans if available were drawn on to enrich the findings.

Data Analysis

The interview data were coded into categories with the help of MAXQDA™ 11. During the coding and recoding process, some themes emerged which were tabulated and reported to the participants for the second member check. The participants confirmed the credibility of almost all the themes. The themes suffering an extent of credibility concern were improved by the participants if possible; otherwise, they have been lined out. Participants' comments were applied to the few themes with great caution through negative case analysis. On the event of contradictory results from different sources, the themes were preferred to be eliminated rather than improved. And this does not seem to threaten credibility because the themes commented on were infrequent enough.

Classroom observations, videos and field notes, were carefully examined for key episodes. Examples of these episodes included: teacher's role, student's role, student-teacher interactions and relations, error correction, less able students, group work, individual differences, class management, role of syllabus, classroom evaluation, important skills, accuracy or/and fluency, affective factors, culture, views towards language development, classroom activities/tasks and homework.

Once themes emerged for each case, they have been compared with practices using the videos, observation data and documents. When inconsistencies observed, the position of the seeker (e.g., 01:05:46-01:07:35) along with the respective belief were taken note of to be shown to the participants later on. The instances of inconsistencies were marked on the videos using MAXQDA so that they can be easily replayed. In the second interview, each participant has been shown salient instances of inconsistencies individually and his/her comments were sought and audio recorded. Details on the interviews could be found in the Appendix B.

In this paper and especially within the data analysis, two labels (i.e., *traditional* and *modern*) are frequently used to describe beliefs and practices. Semiotically speaking, each symbol including these labels is prone to be equivocally interpreted by different persons unless the association conventions between forms and meanings are clearly presented. This study draws on the Kohonen (1992, 2006) to differentiate between traditional and modern language education. Kohonen (1992) operationalizes traditional and modern as behaviorism and Constructivism respectively. Further, he contrasts these two models against ten dimensions including:

- a) view of learning,
- b) power relation,
- c) teacher's role,
- d) learner's role,
- e) view of knowledge,
- f) view of curriculum,
- g) learning experiences,
- h) control of process,
- i) motivation, and
- j) evaluation.

Besides, Kohonen (1992) seems to be more inclined towards social constructivism in his definition of modern model of language education.

Findings

Jeff's Case

Teaching Material: Besides the syllabus recommended by the Dog institute, Jeff used some other sources, including “VOA Breaking News” and a series of self-prepared idioms. VOA Breaking News is an anthology of hot news, mainly political, broadcasted by VOA which is transcribed. The book comes with a listening disk. Jeff asked the students to have some pages of the book duplicated, so minutes after the start of the class two learners left to have the copies made. This took around 20 minutes. As far as self-compiled idioms are concerned, he wrote the idiom on the board and started making a story about each of them. The main syllabus included Interchange 1, 3rd edition, units 8-12.

Institute Context: The Dog inst. included one room equipped with data projector for all, to be used if needed with prior arrangements. All the classes had good enough PCs with speakers. No library or computer site was observed.

Institute's Principal: The principal was a retired geography teacher around 50 who was managing the institute with the help of his wife. His wife holds an undergraduate degree in English Translation (internationally known as Translation Studies). The principal welcomed me warmly and hospitably and did his best to pave the way for the research. Upon entering the site, decorations of the Iranian ancient civilization (Emperor of Persia) and the principal's personal bookcase, including about 1000 volumes on different issues from geography, history, art and language, caught the researcher's eye. He was running the boys and girls classes in the same building but in different days (boys: Sundays and Tuesdays, girls: Saturdays and Mondays). During a friendly chat, he let the researcher know that he has received several official warnings from the Department of Education to separate boys and girls building: "This is the third warning which I have received but I will keep on, unless the institute is officially sealed off by the authorities" (Principal of the Dog Institute). He frequently criticized the running educational policies and complained about lack of research and meritocracy in educational bodies of Iran. When asked how policies are made, he named a number of academic figures that constituted the advisory body of the institute.

Beliefs: Jeff's beliefs were mainly modern except his view towards error correction. Contrary to his humanist claims made about other episodes, he believed that errors should be corrected directly and immediately i.e. a behaviorist argument. Besides error correction, the way he looked at language development does not seem to be completely in line with his other humanist beliefs: "Language is acquired through *exposure* with L2, speakers or other authentic material" (Jeff-1st interview: 00:16:07:620-00:16:54:122).

Beliefs: Jeff's case

Language Development	Practice makes perfect
Syllabus	Methodology proposed by the book should not be necessarily followed
	Side sources should be introduced because course books are not effective enough.
	Students need things which can satisfy their immediate needs, not formal peripheral considerations.
Error Correction	Teachers should be autonomous enough to decide, not the syllabus to decide for them
	Errors should be corrected directly and immediately.
Roles	A teacher should firstly be a counselor and the second hand a transmitter.
	Students should not feel how time passes. They should lose themselves in the activities.
	Students should be helped to <u>learn</u> not taught.
Affective factors	Motivation and anxiety are the gatekeepers (prerequisite) to learning.
	Students should feel psychological safe.

Less able students	Personal contact and rapport between teacher and students is really important
	Less able students should be motivated, not humiliated.
Group work	Pair work is better than individual learning.
	With regard to the output, group work is more productive than pair work
Important skills	Communicative skills are a priority because the students should be able to use their knowledge
	Speaking should be paid more attention to because the students will need it in their professional and social life.
	Speaking should not be identified with vocabulary. Vocabulary per se does not lead to speaking.
Culture	We should teach foreign language culture
	Cultural differences are natural
	We can teach cultural differences with the help of visual aids.
Assessment	Score and examination should not be the only attraction (goal) for the students.
Accuracy/Fluency	Fluency is more important than accuracy but accuracy could not be completely ignored.
	I believe that books do not provide authentic conversations because they just provide formal language.
Activities	Grammar teaching should be reactive.
	An English class should be creative, inventive and dynamic
	While he believed a class should be creative, he had no clear idea of the processes which might lead to creativity in the class.[he dodged the question].
	L1 is not a good means for informing students of new concepts. Teacher should provide students with a context(a story about the expression) using which they can guess what the expression might mean
	Grammar and vocab are complementary; if one is strong at one, focus on the other helps him to improve more.
	Concepts should be selected so as to match the students' level of cognitive growth
	Teacher should not jump from one part to the other one. Transition should be gradually done.
Homework	In courses with a strict syllabus, work book is just necessary in reminding the concepts taught during the session.
	Home work should not be judged as something which should be fulfilled. If so, it's of no practical use.
	Home work should lead to learning. Homework especially for intermediate and higher levels should provide students with something new and not just for the purpose of revision.

In Reality Practices: When it came to practice, some instances of limited consistency were observed. Though Jeff believed that gradual transition among topics are appropriate in the class, the researcher could easily divide the class into three parts including street talk, political expressions and course book with clear-cut boundaries. Confusion among learners can be taken as another evidence for the erratic move between different components. As the second salient instance of inconsistency, Jeff advocated that in a good English class, students should not feel how time passes. Nevertheless, students frequently asked: “sir, what are they talking about?” indicating lack of interest and boredom, when the teacher was playing some excerpts from the VOA Breaking News and asked the students to read the transcriptions. Meanwhile, the amount of student talk considerably decreased which can also be taken as a sign for passivity. The next instance of inconsistency has come across when the amount of teacher talk has been dealt with. Contrary to his beliefs that the class should be creative and dynamic, teacher talk has been observed to constitute around 45% of overall class time. While the teacher was lecturing on the definition of the idioms, students were seen to silently scribble the notes on the board in their note books. While Jeff claimed that material and concepts should match the students level of cognitive growth, he introduced students some political expressions from the VOA Breaking News and then asked them to have the

meanings checked using their dictionaries. When students attempted to look the expressions up, great confusion arose in the class. Some students complain that the words are not available in their pocket learner dictionaries. Even when the students managed to find the definitions, they could not make it out so they started haphazard wild guesses. To manage the uncertainty and confusion among the students, the teacher used many follow up questions to have the meaning established but his effort finally failed and at last, translations were provided by the teacher.

One other interesting instance of limited consistency concerns how the less adept learners are treated. While in some cases the teacher personally helped the less adept students, he addressed a pair of students who were role playing a conversation before their fellow learners in this way: "Ok, you are not ready enough!" Upon hearing this sentence one of the students returned to his seat silently and rapidly while the next one kept standing and surprisingly insisted that he is ready and confident enough for the task. The more adept student frequently requested the teacher for another chance but his effort was futile in that the teacher nominated another pair for the role play. While returning to his seat, the more adept student severely blamed the less adept one for the failure in a humiliating way. This incident took about 3-4 minutes and meanwhile the teacher did nothing special and was busy finding some capable volunteers. Since then on, the less adept student has been seen looking at his watch till the end of the session. Jeff seemed to be unobservant of how the less adept student might feel when he obtrusively interrupted the role playing process.

Comments: During the second interview, the instances of inconsistencies were shown to the Jeff. Jeff, firstly, complained about too much socio-cultural diversity: "some students will misuse the totally learner centered classes so I need to be cautious (Jeff-2nd interview). Also, he complained about circumscribing regulations which do not allow him to use excursions so that students can have contact with the international tourists. Moreover, he viewed single-sex classes, especially in ELT, as a real threat to motivation. Lack of resources namely time, educational space, and technology was seen as another hindrance towards a transformative language class. He complained that he cannot implement group work due to the fact that the class is not big enough. Likewise, he blamed limited time and lack of authority on the part of teachers for teacher centered classes. When asked about culture teaching, he considered lack of data projectors as a great limitation.

Henry's Case

Teaching Material: Henry followed the syllabus suggested by the Dog institute. The syllabus comprised of *Interchange 2 (3rd Edition)*, *504 Must Have Words* and *Grammar in Use (Intermediate)*. They were not to be completely covered in a semester; rather, divided into sub sections, each for a specific semester.

Institute Context: The same as Jeff's excluding that his class was smaller due to the fewer students.

Institute's Principal: The same as Jeff's case, because Jeff and Henry were colleagues at the Dog inst.

Beliefs: Henry's beliefs could be viewed as modern to a large part excluding his attitude towards diversity, language development and syllabus. Henry advocated that homogeneity in terms of age is an ideal. To support his claim, he brought an example from one of his classes: "In the last class [in the Dog inst.], there are two learners who are younger than the others. The older ones mock the youngsters and this usually leads to a quarrel between them. This is a daily happening. When the students are of the same age, they will have similar ideas and interests and less argument could occur" (Henry, 1st interview 01:01:50-01:03:02). Following this argument, the researcher posed Henry some probes to

explore how the situation should be managed. In response, Henry provided no clear answer and just beat around the bush. Seemingly, Henry is tired of diversity and longs for a homogenous class. This view is not completely in line with the modern views towards diversity, which regards it as a resource not a threat. Besides, it could be understood that he is not happy with a demanding class. Furthermore, his beliefs toward language development indicate an inclination towards behaviorism in that he vividly supported memorization and repeated exercises. The other non-modern belief was his viewpoint towards syllabus. While he impliedly talked of needs analysis, he seemed more willing towards a predefined syllabus the institute. When asked about individual tastes and desires, he did not give rights analysis even an incidental note.

Beliefs: Henry's case

Language Development	In comparison to exposure, practice is a short cut to language learning. (practice makes perfect)
	Learning is a change in the cognition of the students so that they can talk in another language.
	I have positive attitude towards memorization because it leads to learning
Syllabus	In long term courses , teachers should move at a specific rate and conform syllabus
	Students' collective preference is superior to the syllabus because learners are the one who should learn.
	Elementary and intermediate learners need a lesson plan and the teacher should follow the plan.
Error Correction	Errors should not be corrected immediately and directly because students will be demotivated.
Roles	A teacher should be a sophisticated caring friend for the students so that learners feel stress free and at ease while in the class
	Somewhere between student centered and teacher centered classes is the most appropriate so that students' opinions are valued and their involvement is encouraged.
	Depending on the current class room discourse and the class atmosphere, teachers should decide and devise specific or even different strategies so that students' desire is satisfied and they are activated(got involved).
Affective factors	Learner should feel at home while in the class.
	Stress and anxiety has a really significant role in language learning. Stress is really important and directly affects the performance.
	Stress should be lowered but there won't be any panacea due to individual variations, especially in terms of socio-cultural background.
	Teacher should be observant of his students' individual characteristics.
	Students can be motivated through pre-tasks.
Less able students	Teacher should listen to his/her students attentively to motivate them.
	In the instruction/presentation phase nothing could be done for the less able students since teacher presents the content collectively to all.
	While students are working on their own doing exercises, the teacher can help the less able students personal and individually.
Group work	Pair work is more effective and more appropriate than group wok because during group work there might be some free riders but in pair work the learner has to participate otherwise the work yields no results.
	Pair work should be promoted because language is a social communicative phenomenon which cannot be effectively learned through self-study or individual learning.
	Pair work gives teacher opportunity to solve the students' problem more easily.
Important skills	Four skills should be given equal attention because ,in Iran, students can communicate with English speakers only through chat, Facebook and email.

	Students should learn to use functions at first because they are really important for communication.
Culture	Cultural differences should be clarified.
	Socio-cultural should be taught since its absence brings miscommunication about.
	Language should be taught imbedded in the L2 culture. Showing students the authentic movies will help them to get acquainted with the L2 culture. Students enjoy watching films.
Assessment	Assessment is a part of education so there should be regular quizzes, oral or written, in the class.
	Quizzes are tools through which learning could be improved. They should make students think.
Accuracy/Fluency	I do not believe that much in formal examinations.
	Fluency should be given more value than accuracy.
Activities	Pronunciation is a sub-skill and should not be given much weight.
	Grammar teaching should be an inductive practice which ends in a deductive wrap up to give students assurance of their grasp.
	The atmosphere of a language class should be warm, lively and dynamic.
	New words and expressions should be contextualizedly introduced to be memorable.
	L1 should not be utterly ignored but should be seen as the last choice.
	Conflicts among learners should be prevented.
	Students in a class should be homogenous in terms of the age because the possible conflicts between students are avoided.
Homework	Direct introduction of the topic to the class by teacher could not be that successful in attracting the learners attention so the topics should be gradually and contextualizedly introduces for example using narrations.
	Homework mostly improves writing, rather than listening
	Listening is a better choice for home work, than writing exercises offered by workbooks.
	Teachers should not define or ask for a specific homework because students naturally do some exercises at home.

In Reality Practices: Not in alignment with his beliefs, Henry directly signaled students of their errors using facial expressions, intonation and silence; and then, provided the correct forms immediately. One of the students, after being corrected, repeated the correct form but since he could not get why he was wrong asked follow up questions on the topic which were ignored by the teacher. During the 1st interview Henry provided a considerable account on the benefits of pair work, but when the rubber met the road, not only he did not employ pair work but also overlooked those pair work tasks, suggested by the course book (p. 67, Interchange 2).

Comparatively, his perceived beliefs about grammar teaching, classroom management and roles were not consistent with the observed practices. Henry not only deductively lectures on the grammar but also employs structural approaches and linguistic terminologies, even in L1, to get the point across. Secondly, his online decision making did not consider the running atmosphere of the class. For a couple of minutes, the teacher kept on a discussion with one of the students who was going to lecture on verb tenses, and meanwhile the other learners were wearily sitting, either looking at their watches or leafing over their books rapidly. Additionally, to utmost surprise, how students can feel at home and actively participate in the class when the teacher turns into a lecturer for around 75% of the class time.

Important skills and the less adept students are not exceptions to the above story. Firstly, the learners were never seen to use English for communication. Student-initiated talks were mainly in Farsi even when the most basic classroom language such as simple requests

was involved. As far as the episode of less adept students is concerned, the following conversation was observed:

When the class is over a student waits for the teacher.

Teacher: why are you staying?

Student: How can I learn this...the grammar, if I want to study?

Teacher: Grammar?

Student: this book

Teacher: it's easy, you can self-study.

Student: that's easy but I can't understand what it's exactly about.

The student opens his backpack and gives his book to the teacher with alacrity

Teacher, unwillingly, opens the book on the first unit and tells: It would be better if you start from the beginning. There are many examples, you can study, and explanations on how to build them. If you read yourself, you will completely make it out. Really easy, it is. It's nothing complicated. And there are exercises too.

Student: when I went to buy the book, the translated one was available. I don't know whether the translation was just a literal translation or some explanations were also included.

Teacher: Explanations must be translated. It's easy. It's simple English. Simplified English. Read them and if you came across any problem ask me.

Student: Thanks. Non-satisfied (Henry's case, the 2nd observation)

Henry in reality does not provide the student with any practical help and just beats around the bush using "It's easy" frequently to fudge the question.

Comments: Henry considered local singularities on the part of students as an undeniable reality which should be taken care of. He noted that students have been studying in an educational context which familiarized them with deductive memorization-oriented practices. So the learners would feel sort of uncomfortable if encounter with sort of totally new practices. His other claim revolved around the washback effect of the high stakes university examination: "Though not directly affecting Private ELT, its indirect effect in norm formation could not be ignored." When asked about the affective factors, Henry named culture as a barrier:

You know, here, students are too different...from different families, originally from different cities. While pulling someone's leg might be motivating for a student, the other one might take offence. Getting too close to one student might cause him to feel frustrated while the others might enjoy the friendly relations. (Henry, the 2nd interview)

He also complained about lack of time and technology, especially visual aids like pictures and video projectors. The last but not the least was his claim that he is not provided with any sort of hands on teacher training.

Beth's Cases

Teaching Material: Beth does not seem to go any step beyond the institute's fixed predefined syllabus comprising of *New Interchange 3*.

Institute Context: Classes are equipped with PCs but no data projectors. The physical space is partitioned and a part is dedicated to the bookstore. Lots of announcements have been pinned to the boards and walls on the regulations. No computer site or library were seen.

Institute's principal: He is a retired English teacher around 55 who has founded and been managing two branches of the Cat inst., boys and girls, himself for 17 years. He strictly adheres to the authoritative orders especially when it comes to sex segregation. So, boys and girls classes are held in different buildings. During a chat he complained why there are some institutes, which hold coed classes. Despite a six-year acquaintance between the principal and the researcher, he did not allow him to observe the classes in person and just use of cams were permitted as long as its focus is restricted to the teacher but not the learners. His main justification for this revolved around rules and regulations to which research is no exception.

Beliefs: while modern claims could be found among her stated beliefs, a rather dominant traditional inclination was evident especially when it came to language development, syllabus, error correction and the less able students. Firstly, she introduced CLT as a method rather than an approach. Secondly, she talked of it in an absolutist tone, which is not in alignment with exigencies of the post-modern era talked here and there in terms of particularity, practicality and possibility (e.g. Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Pishghadam & Mirzaee, 2008); further, though she feels sympathy for the less adept students, she is willing to pass the buck, visible in her claim that nothing could be done, less could be done or tutoring might be needed. She gives tired-task or other more modern counterparts no reference when asked how they should be treated. She also prefers to reteach when errors are made:

Error originates from where the students do not know how to say. If students commit errors, I start a new lecture on the topic and *reteach* it. It's even possible that it take more than half of my class time. When student commit errors, there is something missing so I need to provide them with instruction. (Beth-1st interview 00:18:33-00:19:01)

It might be true if one describes her views toward error correction in terms of “building blocks metaphor” (Nunan, 1999, pp. 107-108).

Conflicts or competing beliefs also emerged within the perceived beliefs. As far as the roles are concerned, she sometimes talks of a learner centered class and after a while advocates that the grammar should be lectured on or she views predefined syllabus as the final word. While she believes that affective filter is of great role in learning, she introduces negative reinforcement as an extrinsic motivation. Moreover, she admires CLT while she regards grammar as the base. Due to room constraints, a full account of competing beliefs could not be offered here, but they can be grasped through a look at the beliefs or via a personal contact with the author.

Beliefs: Beth case

Language Development	Acquisition is a subconscious process for L1 while L2 learning is conscious and needs class.
	The most complete <u>method</u> is CLT.
	Language should be worked on , not taught.
Syllabus	Syllabus should be defined by the institute and I like it. I'm a teacher and not a syllabus designer.
	Classes should be homogenous in terms of knowledge and age.If not , the syllabus could not be covered.

	To manage diversity and individual differences among students we should regard <u>course book as the base criterion or the final word</u>
Error Correction	<p>If students commit errors, I start a new lecture on the topic and reteach it because errors show that they have not learned something.</p> <p>Errors should be corrected in terms of howness and whyness because that's a good beginning which makes a good ending.[building block view towards language learning]</p>
Roles	<p>Students and teachers should be friends but this should not be taken as if students can get too big for their britches. If so, they should be reminded, though implicitly, that they are students.</p> <p>Class is for learner. Learner should be active in most parts of the class</p> <p>Contrary to the science a course like math in which teacher transmits the content, L2 teaching teacher is just facilitator. The teacher in L2 class should not be the only speaker.</p>
Affective factors	<p>While a bit of stress is facilitative, it should not get too much.</p> <p>Reinforcement, mostly negative, is helpful in motivation creation but we should not scare the students.</p> <p>Classes should be heterogonous in terms of gender because motivation is promoted through competition.</p>
Less able students	<p>All the students should learn. Students who are less able do not practice enough and teacher can do a little if any.</p> <p>External negative reinforcement might be needed to encourage the less able ones to practice more.</p> <p>I can talk privately and personally or advise some tutoring to the less able student and I can do nothing in the class.</p> <p>Learners should not be marked as strong or weak. But strong ones can be introduced to the class as an exemplar.</p> <p>When the learner does not learn, the teacher is not responsible and should not be blamed for.</p>
Group work	<p>Individual, pair work and group work all should exist together.</p> <p>Pair work is just to help the less able students. So an able student should be paired with his/her less able fellows.</p> <p>Group work is more productive than the other forms</p>
Important skills	Listening and speaking are more important than reading and writing since Students' needs define what is appropriate for them.
Culture	<p>The most important component of language which should be learned is culture.</p> <p>I use the books method to teach culture, like role play.</p> <p>Movies also can be shown to teachers.</p>
Assessment	<p>Students should not memorize.they should learn.</p> <p>Their learning should not be score oriented.</p> <p>Speaking should be tested.</p>
Accuracy/Fluency	<p>Grammar is the base of L2 learning. Without grammar, comprehension would be disturbed.</p> <p>Accuracy or fluency should both be incorporated but with relatively. Speaking needs fluency more while writing needs higher level of accuracy.</p> <p>But higher importance of fluency in speaking should not be taken as if grammar can be avoided.</p>
Activities	<p>Teacher should teach [lecture] grammar herself.</p> <p>Grammar should be taught inductively.</p> <p>Grammar and form adherence is an inevitable prerequisite for writing.</p> <p>Reading strategies should be taught.</p> <p>Speaking is not teachable. It is something like swimming. Speaking can be learned through practice.</p> <p>Listening should be taught rather than tested.</p>

Homework	Listening strategies are really important.
	Work book is a sort of self-assessment which should be done but not in the class.
	Work book is a grammar and vocabulary practice so it's only necessary for the writing but not the other skills.

In Reality Practice 1: For the less populated class (7 learners), some degree of inconsistency was observed in the areas like roles, grammar teaching, language development, syllabus and the affective factors. Contrary to her stated beliefs that the learners should be active in the class, about 65% of the class time was allocated to the didactic teacher centered lectures on different topics from grammar to phonology. The lectures took a deductive form where grammar was involved. For example, lecturing on the passive voice, she draws on a structural approach in the learners L1:

Beth: What's subject?

Students: [Silence]

Beth: Thing or the person who has done the action. In Farsi. (Beth, 1st class, the 2nd observation)

The dominance of lectures also indicate a transmissionist, not a transformative, view towards learning which in turn is not in alignment with her beliefs that the language should be worked on but not taught. While lecturing on grammar, Beth extends the focus from simple pronunciation practices, devised by the course book (syllabus), to a phonological discussion on vowel reduction. Last but not the least is the limited correspondence when it comes to affective factors: while working on pronunciation, one of the students has volunteered to practice and read the items. But she read the sentences as if she is reading separated words to emphasize the unstressed vowels. At this point, the teacher interrupted her humiliatingly, in that the other students laughed at her, and asked for modification.

In Reality Practice 2: For the more populated class (11 learners), the teacher reported to feel a higher degree of rapport in comparison with the 1st class (7 learners). Beth chose to implement a free discussion when received frequent complaints from the students that they are tired. Not to mention, this is not in accordance with her belief that the syllabus is the criterion. More interestingly was the free discussion:

She asks the students for their opinions on the topic but finally chooses herself. Since the topic did not receive any popularity from the learners, she inevitably changes it. Topic changes for 5 times until learners somehow welcome one namely, "role model in life."

The free discussion seemed more like an interrogation session in which the teacher nominates the students and asks them about their role model. Less speech was initiated by the learners. During the class time, always non-constructive student talk on different topics rather than the free discussion could be heard. This sometimes reached to an extent in which the teacher shouted, hit her marker on the desk or threateningly told *Hushh!*. During the pseudo-free discussion, one student started to talk but her wording and use of syntax was not appropriate. While the learner was trying to reword her sentence so that she can get the point across, the teacher obtrusively ignored her, turning her face and changing the topic rather than valuing the courage the less adept student invested to talk. At the end of the class, the teacher started to preach for 10 minutes on how valuable parents are and the fact that they are our heroes. In the very last minutes a student voluntarily reads a poem in L1.

Comments: Beth recounted a personal history about the use of movies to teach culture. The story indicated that she was officially warned and received complaints from learners' parents and the institute officials for the use of movies in which some scenes of dance and kiss could be seen. When asked about the deductive teaching, Beth reported: "sometimes, inductive grammar teaching is not effective for some students because of age factor. As far as my experience shows, the younger and older learners (12 years old and 35) cannot work the inductive grammar teaching out as good as a 14, 15 year-old student can understand." She also complained about the course books for introducing the listening parts as audio tracks-only rather than the videos. She believed that this might be one of the constraints, which has limited the consistency between her beliefs and practices because these books demand some other teaching model.

Discussion

The cases, during the second interviews, directly talked of some *immediate* factors (tabulated below), which has impeded the transfer of their beliefs into practices.

Case	Case-reported Impeding Factors
Jeff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumscribing policies and regulations • Too much socio-cultural heterogeneity • Lack of resources namely time, technology and finance • Single-sex classes • Insufficiency of autonomy and authority on the part of the teachers.
Henry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of hands-on in service education. • Local singularities on the part of students and washback • Cultural barriers • Lack of resources namely time and technology
Beth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources namely, time and updated-enough material. • Already shaped learning styles. • Cultural intolerance

A comparison between different cases (Beth vs. Jeff) reveals the significant role of the higher-up's ideology in practice shaping. Jeff's beliefs were mostly informed by the modern calls while he was not in contact with mainstream modern ELT research. Contrary to Beth, he was neither a master's holder in TEFL, nor free enough to self-study since he works, as a family man, at three places simultaneously all-round the week, even on the weekends. Jeff's more modern beliefs could hardly be attributed to the institute's syllabus since both institutes, namely Cat and Dog, recommended almost similar syllabi. That seems to be the ideology of the Dog's inst.'s principal that provided Jeff with both freedom and insight to make use of some initiatives. This finding can show the greater influence of the work place running ideologies in comparison with what Simon Borg (2003) names "professional coursework" (i.e., training courses, on teachers practice). This finding qualitatively supports Nishino's (2012) statistical claim that teacher training informs classroom practice indirectly and through the educational policies. In this research, it has been observed that higher-up's ideologies (i.e., policies) have an override on teacher training.

As far as beliefs organization is concerned, *Jeff* can be observed to have much more coherent and stabilized beliefs than *Beth* and *Henry*. This was evident in Jeff's shorter and less frequent use of hesitation markers (*hm*, *uh*, *em*, *let see*, and *silence*) throughout the first interview. I think graduate schooling might have injected a *mishmash* of ideas into the minds

of Beth and Henry and thus, their beliefs were less coherent and stabilized than Jeff's. Although attention to alternative theories and practices is an integral part of the graduate programs all over the world, the question would be whether a high academic rank can sufficiently qualify someone as an EFL (English as a foreign language) teacher. More simply put, would a PhD or an MA in applied linguistics help one to teach more efficiently or, unwantedly, puts him/her at the dilemmas within the class context to choose from the forest of theories and ideas? All in all, "schooling" and "professional course work" (S. Borg, 2003, pp. 81-82), especially the graduate programs, seem to be a double edged sword, as for *Beth* and *Henry*, in that they might unwantedly expose teachers with unmanageable doubts and uncertainties while feeding them new insights. This finding elaborates on S. Borg's (2003, p. 91) comment that cognitive change does not guarantee behavioral change. Indeed, unsystematic cognitive change, as for *Beth* and *Henry*, weakens the teachers' decision-making capability and thus encourages more volatile behaviors.

This study clearly shows the inconsistencies between the cases' beliefs and real class practices. *Teaching experience* was observed to be among the factors affecting the degree of inconsistency. No need to mention that the experienced teacher's (*Jeff*) beliefs informed his practices much more than the inexperienced ones, namely *Beth's* and *Henry's* did. This finding buttresses the result of previous studies like Basturkmen et al. (2004) and T. S. C. Farrell and Bennis (2013).

Also *teacher's experiences* have been seen to affect their beliefs. Participants' different life experiences brought them different beliefs and practices. For example, Jeff's definition of culture as the "Large C" (Chastain, 1988, p. 303), that is fine art, social and political history, is clearly rooted in his experience of tour leadership. Within the tourism industry, prominent works and events have always been more attractive than the "small c" culture (Chastain, 1988, p. 303), that is ordinary daily life. Presentation of the political expressions to the class, done by *Jeff*, can also be due to this interpretation of culture. In other words, this is to say that the way teachers are taught as students, their life experiences and interests greatly affect their practices. Similarly, a teacher who has been taught Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) through Grammar Translation Method (GTM) could not be expected to teach communicatively; as *Jeff* could not be expected to ignore all his interest for political history to the privilege of daily life. Nishino (2012) also corroborates this finding in that she found teachers in-reality practices "...rooted in their local historical contexts as well as in their own previous learning and teaching experiences" (Nishino, 2012, p. 394).

As far as micro context, i.e., online classroom interactions, is concerned, the unplanned practices seem to be thought provoking. As T. S. C. Farrell and Bennis (2013, p. 173) and Basturkmen et al. (2004) reported, error correction is among the unplanned areas in which inconsistencies would be more evident partly due to the situational constraints. Through this study, inconsistencies between beliefs and practices (*Henry's* case) were also observed especially for the error correction. The convergence between beliefs and practices (*Jeff* and *Beth* cases) concerning error correction should not be taken to rebut the previous findings since *Jeff* and *Beth's* beliefs were mostly traditional and thus, highly proceduralized. It could be concluded that when unplanned practices are involved practical knowledge will be resorted to and probably, that would be the nature of the practical knowledge which defines the degree of consistency.

This article also found the case of less adept students as one of the unplanned aspects in which considerable inconsistencies were observed. A degree of divergence from the stated beliefs has been observed for all the participants when they were dealing with the less able students. This divergence might be partly justified in terms of the halo effect. In other words, teachers, though subconsciously, do not enjoy helping them as much as they do so for the

more adept ones. The available literature does not seem to provide a rich account of research on the teacher cognition, which taps the less adept students. So, further studies are suggested.

It has also been found that the syllabus change does not necessarily bring about a curricular one, that is, classroom change. Iran's formal language education has been severely attacked for its didactic teacher centered nature. And that is the main impetus for the nation-wide syllabus change. However, this study shown that even within the private institutes context, in which modern and learner centered material are used, the teachers' practices were not that modern and communicative. It might be sound to argue that the foci of criticism should be redirected towards the teacher education and human resource management, rather than the syllabi.

Implications

Firstly, educational decision makers should be aware of the fact that a new idea cannot be implemented just because some in-service programs have been offered. Given that in-service training is successful in belief modification, teachers are so much constrained by the contextual factors like their own personal experience, micro context, and the lack of resources that their real classroom behavior would naturally deviate from their beliefs. So an attempt should be made to have the contextual constraints decreased.

Secondly, it could be understood that, as long as the higher-up's ideology has not been changed, teacher education by itself cannot guarantee a change in classroom practices since teachers are in turn part of an educational system run by the higher-ups. Teachers should be educated and be given enough freedom and trust to implement their beliefs.

Thirdly, teacher education is not only those formal sessions or programs in which there is a lecturer. The daily interaction of the teachers and the higher-ups can be a sort of longitudinal educational programs whose benefits have been clearly observed for *Jeff* within this study.

Fourth, higher academic degree should not necessarily be identified with better practice since it might serve as a double-edged sword. Graduate programs, even in TEFL, cannot take the place of the teacher education since they are strongly theoretically oriented and they are developed to yield good scholars rather than the skillful teachers. Unsurprisingly a person *at the same time* cannot both survive the theoretical forest and manage a class. In other words, teacher-training courses should be designed so that they bring about *systematic* cognitive change rather than haphazard, perhaps ambivalent, ideas.

Fifth, teachers should not be made to give up their beliefs during the in-service training since, as it has been observed, the life experiences are an integral part of their professional identity. Instead they, themselves, should be enabled to balance their preferences with the new methodologies.

Sixth, teacher education programs are advised to give the unplanned aspects of classroom practice, like error correction and less adept students, special attention since this study along with a couple of others (e.g., Basturkmen et al., 2004; T. S. C. Farrell & Bennis, 2013) observed them to be potentially trouble making. Further, teachers were observed to be unable to handle the situation as they assume it should be done.

Finally, this study has a peripheral managerial lesson. *Henry* during the 2nd interview when non-judgmentally been asked on the inconsistencies stated:

“Wow! ...I didn't know this. Yes hmm but no one has listened to us before and now what do you think be the better choice given the context.”

His utterance supports the Human Relations Movement within the Organizational Behavior. Human Relations Movement advocates that productivity increases when employers take an interest in workers needs and attentively listen to the them (Seyed Javadein, 2007, pp. 25-28). Probably, the teachers would feel much better if they are valued throughout the careers; if given chance to directly voice their opinions; if they feel that their needs and problems count.

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Appendix A: The Observation Details

Time & Date

Participant	1 st observation	2 nd observation	Place of observation
Jeff	Sunday, October 6, 2013 19:05 -20:30	Tuesday, October 8, 2013 19:05 -20:30	The Dog Inst.
Henry	Sunday, October 6, 2013 17:30-18:50	Tuesday, October 8, 2013 17:30-18:50	The Dog Inst.
Beth 1	Sunday, October 13, 2013 16:00-17:40	Sunday, October 15, 2013 16:00-17:40	The Cat Inst.
Beth 2	Sunday, October 13, 2013	Sunday, October 15, 2013	The Cat Inst.

	18:00-19:40	18:00-19:40	
John	Monday, October 21, 2013 17:30-19	Wednesday, October 23, 2013 17:30-19	The Bird Inst.

Physical Settings

Figure 1: Jeff’s Class- the 2nd Observation

Figure 2: Henry’s Class- the 2nd Observation

Figure 3: John's Class- the 2nd Observation

Figure 4: Beth 1's Class- the 2nd Observation

Figure 5: Beth 2's Class- the 2nd Observation

Appendix B: The Interviews

Case	Length of the 1 st interview*	Date of the 1 st interview*	Date of the 2 nd interview**
Jeff	41:51	Thursday, October 10, 2013 20:30-21:12	Tuesday, October 15, 2013
Henry	01:08:20	Thursday, October 10, 2013 9:50- 10:55	Sunday, October 20, 2013
Beth 1	01:36:26	Thursday, October 17, 2013 17:15-18:50	Thursday, October 24, 2013
Beth 2	01:36:26	Thursday, October 17, 2013 17:15-18:50	Thursday, October 24, 2013

*As evident, the interview length might be a couple of minutes longer than the time intervals reported, that is due to the fact that sound recorder have been stopped after the end time has been jot down on the interview protocol.

**Since the researcher kept no record of the 2nd interview time, the times are not reported to avoid inaccuracy.

Author Note

Mohammad Tamimy, B.A, English Translation, Alborz Institute for Higher Education, Qazvin, Iran, finalized his master's degree in TESOL. He has been working as an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher for about a decade. He has also presented at some international conferences like TELLSI 11. Small group research and qualitative works, especially those entailing socio-cultural dimensions are among his academic interests.

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