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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE 'COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE' AMONG EFL TEACHERS WORKING AT STATE AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Teachers have a very significant role in the implementation of the CEFR effectively. Teachers working at MONE have been offered training related to the CEFR; however, not every teacher had access to the training around Turkey. That is why; what language teachers know about the CEFR and how they implement the principles of the document needs to be investigated. This study aims to find out language teachers' views on the use of the CEFR. The researchers conducted the study among English language teachers working at private and state secondary and high schools in different cities around Turkey. Quantitative data analysis has been used to reveal the differences between the perceptions of English teachers regarding the CEFR. The findings of the study revealed that teachers working at the private schools are more aware of the practices of the CEFR in their teaching.

Keywords: EFL in Turkey, the CEFR, Private and State Schools

1. Introduction

The Council of Europe (CoE) was founded in 1949 with the aim of promoting linguistic diversity, democratic citizenship and social cohesion. With its 46 member states, the CoE aims to preserve the rich linguistic heritage of Europe while supporting “language learning for European citizenship” at the same time (CEFR, 2001). Therefore, the council started a project on learning, teaching and assessing languages in 1989 and the final version of the project was released in 2001 as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. The Common European Framework is a framework prepared by the language Policy Division located in Strasbourg, France which is operated by the Council of Europe. The CEFR methodology is transparent, comprehensive, coherent and descriptive. The pedagogical implications of the framework are self-assessment, autonomy, cultural diversity. Skills and competencies are determined for effective communication. The CEFR is intended to be a practical and action-oriented document; that is why, scales and grids for self-assessment are provided for the users (Council of Europe, 2001). The CEFR illustrates 6 different levels: A1 and A2 (Basic Users), B1 and B2 (Independent Users), C1 and C2 (Proficient Users). The framework consists of 9 detailed chapters in which philosophy and implementation of the framework and its descriptors are explicitly conveyed. The document includes methodological descriptions of the framework in a political context, overview of common references levels, description of language use and language user, summary of language learning and teaching, curriculum design with specific curriculum scenarios; life-long language learning, assessment and assessment types.

These considerations imply that, this reference tool is designed for the use of coursebook designers, educational trainers, teachers, testers and other shareholders on the objectives of keeping a standard. The framework led to the introduction of many other educational documents such as European Language Portfolio, European Profile for language teacher educators, Europass and EPOSTL.

2. Literature Review

2.1. History of the CEFR

The CEFR, one of the products of the Council of Europe, has evolved as a result of Council of Europe's decades of work on language learning and teaching (Little, 2006). Language learning was encouraged as mutual understanding, cultural and educational exchange and the mobility of citizens were priorities.

The language education policy of the Council of Europe has developed its political, cultural and educational views since the early 1970s. These views are constructed on the tenets of language learning for communicative aims. This led to two main outcomes for language education. The first one is to analyze communicative needs of learners, and the second one is to describe the language they must learn to comply with these needs. To execute this plan, there has been great work in three areas: needs analysis of learners, development of functional and notional approach and the concept of learner autonomy in language learning. Each of these concepts have shaped the CEFR and the ELP (European Language Portfolio) (Little, 2006).

2.2. The Features and the Impact of the CEFR

The CEFR has a great impact on different areas in language teaching and learning. Before setting the scene for the impact of the CEFR, it is significant to reveal how it is used for educational purposes.

First, the CEFR describes the knowledge and skills language learners have to acquire in order to be successful communicators (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001). Second, the CEFR is not language specific, which means the communicative functions that learners should be able to perform at different levels are described, but the foreign language is not specified (Little, 2007). Besides, the CEFR provided assistance in designing L2 curricula, language syllabuses and the assessment of L2 learning outcomes. Little (2007) discusses the impact of the CEFR on curriculum design and the assessment, and states "its impact on language testing far outweighs its impact on curriculum design and pedagogy" (p. 648).

The ALTE (Association of Language testers in Europe) is good evidence to the proposition above. The ALTE gathered European language testing agencies and associated its tests with six-level scale. Similarly, web-based DIALANG was prepared to provide diagnostic tests in 14 languages in line with six distinct CEFR levels (Alderson, 2007; Little, 2007). Moreover, it has an impact on FL classrooms through ELP (European Language Portfolio), whose components are described in the latter sections below in a detailed way.

Finally, the consequences and the products of the CEFR have inspired US based educational practitioners in a project commonly referred to as LinguaFolio USA (Byrnes, 2007).

2.3. Implications of the CEFR in Turkey

With its 76.1 million population, 17.588.000 students and 923.000 teachers (MONE, 2016), Turkey has made considerable progress in improving the quality of education since 1997. In 1997 educational reform movements in Turkey intended to meet the challenges of present-day classroom and society.

In order to make language lessons more effective and communicative, the Turkish Ministry of Education Board of Education changed the English language curricula and for compliance with the EU. The students began to receive 8 year-compulsory education and that is the time when students received 4 skills-based English language education for the first time-on paper. MONE prepared the model curriculum for foreign language teaching in line with the CEFR principles in 2002, 2006, 2011 and 2013. Besides, for the successful implementation of the new curriculum collaboration among the teachers was sought and teachers received intensive in-service teacher education nationwide to keep up with the new curriculum between 2002 and 2007. The council of higher education renewed the curriculum of foreign language teaching training programs, by the same token. Teaching English to young learners and School Experience courses were introduced and in 2003, Effective Communication Skills, Listening and Phonetics, Drama and Contextual Grammar courses were added to the existing pre-service language teacher education program. Generic Teacher competencies were developed in collaboration with scholars from universities and MoNE members. The project aimed to foster teacher development understanding and quality improvement of students, parents, school and thus the education system.

The ministry of Education initiated a training program which aimed to train language teachers in the light of the principles of the CEFR. To this end, seminars have been carried out to train language teachers working in different cities in 2009. Language teachers were trained in terms of curriculum design, integrated language teaching, portfolio assessment and materials adaptation within the framework of the CEFR (Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012).

Recently, the 5th grade in education system has been transformed into an intensive language learning program and in 2017-2018 academic year pilot study of the program is being conducted among 110.000 learners in more than 600 schools (MoNE, 2017).

In general, the CEFR has three main effects on Turkish national education: curriculum, teacher education and course materials. Teachers working for MONE are prohibited from adopting course books different from the books the state has suggested. However, Anatolian and private schools use commercially available course books which are based on principles, approaches and targets of the CEFR. It is evident that there is a big difference between the state and private high schools in terms of program, syllabuses and materials. Consequently, the factors which constitute the education vary at this point.

2.4 Role of CEFR in FL teaching and Teacher Education

CEFR is a key reference document and valuable tool as it is related to all who are directly involved in language teaching and testing (Little, 2005; Sülü & Kır, 2014). In other words, it can be used as a compass to direct our studies in FL teaching. It is used for curriculum and syllabus design and testing. The CEFR principles implemented according to the curriculum developed in 2013 include language use in authentic communicative environment, encouraging life-long learning, creating motivating learning environment, fostering learner autonomy through self-assessment tools.

Among those self-assessment tools, ELP (English Learning Portfolio) is an important one to be utilized for FL teaching in language classrooms. It was developed by the Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe to foster plurilingual and multicultural European

citizenship identity. It includes some concrete documents such as Language Biography, Dossier and Language Passport. ELP increases learner autonomy as it allows learners to keep track of their own progress (Little, 2005). Additionally, it promotes language proficiency, plurilingualism, intercultural awareness and competence (Little, 2007; Mirici, 2015). The three documents mentioned above serve for different purposes. Language Biography helps learners plan and assess their learning process. The Dossier includes some documents related to students' language studies such as certificate, diplomas, articles, letters. Language Passport displays the summary of the proficiency level of language user in different languages specified at a certain time (Cephe & Asik, 2016; Mirici, 2015).

The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Language (EPOSTL) is a tool for student teachers studying at teacher training programs in Europe to reflect upon their academic competencies. It encourages candidate teachers to monitor their progress, get prepared for their future professional experiences, to foster discussion and development among peers and among teacher educators. Furthermore, providing self-assessment opportunities, it fosters autonomy among student teachers to evaluate their progress (Newby et al., 2007). It contains 3 main sections. The first one is personal statement, which covers student teachers' previous experiences regarding language learning and teaching. The second part is self-assessment part with 196 descriptors and the third part is a dossier, in which a student teacher can keep any document about teaching such as lesson plans (Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012).

2.5. CEFR Related Studies

Kınsız and Aydın (2008) examined the websites of all state universities in Turkey and they discovered that only six of the universities had language teaching programs in line with the CEFR at their preparatory schools. Another study was conducted by Maden, Ere, and Yiğit (2009) with a different perspective. They investigated whether language proficiency exams done at Turkish universities are consistent with the principles of the CEFR.

The following two studies are quite similar to this one. Sülü and Kır (2014) investigated the FL teachers' perceptions on the CEFR. They researched FL teachers working at different levels (tertiary level, primary school, high school) and at different institutions. Most of the teachers who participated in the study stated that they did not follow the studies conducted on the issue though they had read the document before. Another result deduced in the study was that teachers did not attach importance to culture issues or process-based learning which are strongly emphasized in the CEFR. Most teachers believed in the necessity of the adaptation of the CEFR into teacher training programs. Çağatay and Gürocak (2016) conducted a similar study, which aimed to explore the perceptions of FL teachers working at state and private universities. They found that majority of the instructors had insights about the CEFR; however, most of the instructors did not have sufficient knowledge about the CEFR. It was also concluded in the study that instructors teaching at private universities knew more about the implementation of the CEFR as they had the opportunity to take in-service training about the subject at their institutions.

Hişmanoğlu (2013) also researched whether English language teacher education curriculum promoted the CEFR awareness of prospective EFL teachers. The results of the study revealed that prospective EFL teachers had a high level of CEFR awareness and therefore the researcher suggested a CEFR related English language teacher education curriculum so that student teachers could be equipped with instructional skills in line with CEFR.

3. Methodology

Quantitative data was obtained to investigate the EFL teachers' perceptions about the CEFR and the implementation of CEFR in their teaching contexts. Research aims, participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures are explained here to shed light onto the results and discussion parts.

3.1. Research Aims

Curriculum and syllabus design processes, writing novel coursebooks in line with the principles of the CEFR, preparing new testing materials, providing in-service training in several cities around Turkey and research conducted to reveal the pros and cons of the new guide show that there has been great effort to adapt CEFR based instruction into foreign language effectively. However, there is a lack of study regarding the perceptions of the FL teachers working within the Ministry of Education, and a comparison between the state and private schools' implementation of the CEFR. To this end, the primary aim of this study is to analyze perceptions of language teachers on the use of the CEFR based curriculum at primary, secondary and high school levels by comparing the implementation at private and state schools. In this context, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the general perceptions of EFL teachers working at primary, secondary and high schools in Turkey in relation to the CEFR?
 - 1a. Is there a significant difference between the EFL teachers regarding their perceptions of CEFR in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics?
 - 1b. Is there a significant difference between the EFL teachers working at private and state schools concerning their perceptions about the CEFR?
2. What are the general perceptions of EFL teachers working at primary, secondary and high schools in Turkey in relation to the usefulness of CEFR in some specific teaching activities such as curriculum/syllabus design, material adaptation or testing?
 - 2a. Is there a significant difference between the EFL teachers regarding their views on the usefulness of CEFR in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics?
 - 2b. Is there a significant difference between the EFL teachers working at private and state schools concerning their perceptions about the usefulness of CEFR?

3.2. Participants

A hundred and five (105) English Language Teachers working at state and private schools of Turkish Ministry of Education participated in this study. The schools were selected randomly regardless of their location. Hence, the participants taught English in different regions and cities in Turkey such as Ankara, İzmir, Aydın, Zonguldak. 36 teachers from Ankara, 32 teachers from Zonguldak, 17 teachers from İzmir, and 20 teachers from Aydın participated in the study.

When the survey participants were examined in terms of their gender, it was determined that 95 (90.5%) were female and 10 (9.5%) were male. In terms of teaching experience, 15 participants (14.3%) were between 1-5 years, 24 (22.8%) were between 6-10 years, 36 (34.3%) were between 11-15 years and 30 (28.6%) have been working for over 16 years.

It was determined that 76 persons (72.4%) graduated from English Language Teaching, 14 (13.3%) were from literature and 10 (9.5%) graduated from linguistics, 2 (1.9 %) teachers graduated translation and 3 (2.9 %) teachers graduated from other departments. It was also determined that 75 participants (71.4%) had Bachelor's degree, 27 participants (25.7%) had MA degree, and 3 participants (2.9%) were studying at doctorate level when the survey was conducted.

In terms of institution, 48 participants (45.7%) worked at private schools and 57 participants (54.3%) worked at public schools; Of these, 28 (26.7%) teachers taught at primary school level, 34 (32.3%) teachers taught at middle school level and 43 (41.0%) teachers worked at high school level. When the level of proficiency was asked, it was concluded that 31 (29.5%) teachers were teaching at elementary level, 25 (23.8%) participants were teaching at pre-intermediate level, 41 (39.0%) participants were teaching at intermediate and 8 (7.6 %) participants were teaching at upper intermediate level.

3.3. Instruments

To investigate the perceptions of English Language teachers about the CEFR and the use of the CEFR, the researchers adapted the questionnaire developed by Kır (2011), to the context of this study. The questionnaire consists of three sections. In the first section, background information of teachers is obtained through questions such as years of experience, departments of graduate, academic studies, level they are teaching. In the second section, there are 10 items related to English teachers' levels of agreement concerning their current knowledge about the CEFR and in the last section there are items which reveal their opinion about the implementation of the CEFR. The statements are presented on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree.

3.4. Data Collection

The researchers used convenience sampling model in the current study. Dörnyei (2007) reports that convenience sampling is a kind of nonrandom sampling in which participants are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as availability at a certain time, easy accessibility, or the willingness to volunteer. Therefore, researchers administered the questionnaire at private and state schools among the available English language teachers.

3.5. Data Analysis

The researchers used descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentages) for demographic information. The statements in the questionnaire were evaluated separately and "Single Sample T Test" was applied to investigate the difference between the answers given to the statements. In addition, the One-Way ANOVA test was used to investigate the differences in terms of teaching experience, graduation, academic level, teaching levels and teaching levels of participants in the research. In order to test the differences among the different expressions, Post-Hoc Tukey and LSD have been used. Reliability analyzes were carried out with regard to the reliability of the variables included in the questionnaire, by looking at the values of Alfa Value (Cronbach Alpha) and item total correlations. As a result of the analysis, the α value of the whole scale was calculated as 0.932. The resulting alpha (α - Cronbach 's Alpha) coefficient represents a very high reliability ratio.

In the evaluation of the arithmetic mean of Likert type scale; by using the formula "Range Span = Array Span / Number of Groups", $4/5 = 0,800$ points range is determined. (Tekin, 1996)

The determined score ranges are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Scores for likert type scale

(5) Strongly Agree	4,21 – 5,00
(4) Agree	3,41 – 4,20
(3) Undecided	2,61 – 3,40
(2) Disagree	1,81 – 2,60
(1) Strongly Disagree	1,00 – 1,80

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Research Question 1

‘What are the general perceptions of EFL teachers working at primary, secondary and high schools in Turkey in relation to CEFR?’

The response to the first research question will be discussed with Table 2 below. The mean and standard deviation values of the responses given by the EFL teachers related to the general knowledge about CEFR and the use of CEFR in the curriculum are displayed below.

Results about demographic differences are displayed in the formerly illustrated tables and the differences between the institution (private or state) are illustrated in the latter tables.

Table 2. EFL teachers' levels of agreement with respect to the items concerning the general knowledge about CEFR and the implementation of CEFR

	Items	Mean	SD	T	P
1.	I know about the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).	4,1143	,92315	45,669	,000
2.	I can understand the contents of European documents (e.g., the CEFR, the ELP) and I can adapt them to my teaching.	4,0190	,87685	46,967	,000
3.	I took a course / got education concerning the CEFR or the CEFR related subjects.	3,3905	1,47736	23,516	,000
4.	I have sufficient amount of knowledge with respect to the CEFR.	3,7619	1,09653	35,155	,000
5.	The CEFR has impact on the coursebooks used for teaching English in our school.	3,6190	1,25101	29,643	,000
6.	The CEFR has impact on the tests used in our school.	3,4476	1,29333	27,315	,000

7.	The CEFR has impact on language teaching techniques used in our school.	3,5810	1,26172	29,082	,000
8.	The teaching program practiced in our institution is CEFR specific.	3,3918	1,27040	27,731	,000
9.	It is necessary that the CEFR and the ELP (European Language Portfolio) be incorporated into English language teaching programme in our school.	3,7143	1,22250	31,133	,000
10.	I can plan and organize an interdisciplinary project work by myself or with other teachers.	4,0000	1,00957	40,599	,000

As Table 2 depicts, the average of EFL teachers agree with the statements regarding the use of the CEFR in the teaching programs. They agree that they know about the CEFR, they agree that they can understand the contents of European documents and they know how to use them in their teaching contexts. Most of the EFL teachers agree that they have sufficient amount of knowledge about the CEFR. They also think that the CEFR has an impact on the teaching materials and teaching techniques they use to teach English at their schools. Moreover, they agree on the necessity of incorporating the CEFR and Language portfolios into their teaching contexts. They think that they can plan and organize an interdisciplinary project work using the CEFR. However, some teachers express unsettled opinions about the compatibility of teaching programs implemented at their schools with the CEFR and similarly, the average teachers remain undecided when they are asked whether they have attended any training sessions or taken any courses in relation to the CEFR. These findings reveal that the majority of the teachers have an insight about the CEFR and its components; however, the average teachers did not take any in-service training about the subject. This finding supports the studies of Çağatay and Gürocak (2016), Hişmanoğlu (2013), and Sülü and Kır (2014) in that training about the CEFR and how it is implemented in FL classrooms should be provided for the language teachers.

4.2. Research Question 1a

‘Is there significant difference between the EFL teachers regarding their perceptions of the CEFR in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics?’

No statistically significant difference is found when the EFL teachers' level of agreement with respect to the items concerning the CEFR is examined in terms of the gender of the participants and departments of graduate.

When the level of agreement of EFL teachers is examined in terms of the year of teaching experience, the following table is portrayed. No statistically significant difference is found for the items in terms of teaching experience apart from item 6 in the questionnaire.

Table 3. Differences between the responses of EFL teachers with respect to the impact of CEFR on tests in terms of Teaching Experiences

Item	Teaching Experience	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	P	Post hoc Significance
6. The CEFR has impact on the tests used in our school.	1-5 Years (1)	3,93	1,38	3,546	,017*	3-1 3-2
	6-10 Years (2)	3,58	1,34			
	11-15 Years (3)	2,91	1,25			
	Above 15 Years (4)	3,73	1,05			

One-Way ANOVA, * $p < 0,05$

A significant difference in the teachers' years of experience was determined at the level of agreement with the item "CEFR has effect on exams applied in our school". It is found that teachers having 1-5 and 6-10 years of experience think the CEFR has impact on the tests used in their school whereas teachers having 11-15 years of experience remain undecided. Similar to the findings of Hişmanoğlu (2013), newly graduated teachers have more awareness about the CEFR.

When the level of agreement of EFL teachers is examined in terms of the participants' academic degrees, the following table is depicted. No statistically significant difference is found for the items in terms of academic degrees apart from item 3.

Table 4. Differences between the responses of EFL teachers with respect to the course taken concerning the CEFR or the CEFR related subjects in terms of participants' academic degrees impact of the CEFR on tests in terms of Teaching Experiences

Item	Academic degree	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	P	Post hoc Significance
3. I took a course concerning the CEFR or the CEFR related subjects.	BA	3,16	1,44	3,758	,027*	2-1 3-1
	MA	3,88	1,47			
	Phd	4,66	0,57			

One-Way ANOVA, * $p < 0,05$

The table above describes the results of the responses given for item 3 in terms of participants' academic degrees. It is found that EFL teachers having MA and Phd degrees have more knowledge about the CEFR than teachers with BA degrees as they got courses on the CEFR related subjects. This finding supports the study of Hişmanoğlu (2013) which was conducted with prospective language teachers. As he suggested courses on the CEFR can be added into the curriculum for pre-service teachers so that they become more equipped with the knowledge and skills the CEFR requires.

The responses of EFL teachers regarding the general knowledge about the CEFR and the implementation of the CEFR are also compared in terms of the level of school they are working at. Responses given for items 6,7, and 8 are found significant. Table 6 reveals the results below.

Table 5. Differences among the responses of EFL teachers regarding the CEFR in terms of the levels of schools they are working at.

Items	Level of School	Mean	SD	F	P	Post hoc Significance
6. The CEFR has impact on the tests used in our school.	Primary	3,85	1,26	6,681	,002**	2-1 2-3
	Secondary	2,82	1,38			
	High school	3,67	1,06			
7. The CEFR has impact on language teaching techniques used in our school.	Primary	3,92	1,24	5,312	,006**	2-1 2-3
	Secondary	3,02	1,40			
	High school	3,79	1,01			
8. The teaching program practiced in our institution is CEFR specific.	Primary	3,82	1,24	3,985	,022*	2-1 2-3
	Secondary	2,97	1,38			
	High school	3,55	1,09			

*One-Way ANOVA, * $p < 0,05$*

As is clearly seen in Table 5, a statistically significant difference is found in the responses to items 6,7, and 8. Teachers working at primary level and at high schools agree that CEFR has impact on the tests used in their schools; however, teachers working at secondary level remain undecided. Similarly, teachers working at primary level and at high schools agree that CEFR has impact on language teaching techniques used in their schools and the same group teachers agree that the teaching program practiced in their institutions is CEFR specific. However, most teachers working at secondary level remain undecided. All in all, when primary, secondary and high school levels are compared in terms of these three items, the results are found statistically significant as the level of agreement of EFL teachers working at secondary level schools is lower than that of the EFL teachers working at primary and high school levels. It could be concluded that the curriculum, syllabus and assessment should be revised to make it more compatible with the CEFR for secondary level language instruction.

4.3. Research Question 2a

‘Is there a significant difference between the EFL teachers working at private and state schools concerning their perceptions about the CEFR?’

Table 6 exhibits the responses of EFL teachers about the general knowledge of CEFR and the use of CEFR at their teaching contexts are examined in terms of the institutions they work at (private/state).

Table 6. Differences among the responses of EFL teachers regarding the CEFR in terms of the institutions they are working at.

	Items	Institution	Mean	SD	T	P																																																																																						
1.	I know about the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).	Private	4,37	0,86	2,737	,007**																																																																																						
		State	3,89	0,91			2.	I can understand the contents of European documents (e.g., the CEFR, the ELP) and I can adapt them to my teaching.	Private	4,18	0,93	2,127	,041*	State	3,87	0,80	3.	I took a course / got education concerning the CEFR or the CEFR related subjects.	Private	3,77	1,43	2,480	,015*	State	3,07	1,44	4.	I have sufficient amount of knowledge with respect to the CEFR.	Private	4,12	1,04	3,254	,002**	State	3,45	1,05	5.	The CEFR has impact on the coursebooks used for teaching English in our school.	Private	3,97	1,24	2,794	,006**	State	3,31	1,18	6.	The CEFR has impact on the tests used in our school.	Private	3,81	1,39	2,734	,007**	State	3,14	1,12	7.	The CEFR has impact on language teaching techniques used in our school.	Private	3,91	1,36	2,568	,012*	State	3,29	1,10	8.	The teaching program practiced in our institution is a CEFR specific.	Private	3,81	1,34	2,866	,005**	State	3,12	1,11	9.	It is necessary that the CEFR and the ELP (European Language Portfolio) be incorporated into English language teaching programme in our school.	Private	4,04	1,20	2,586	,011*	State	3,43	1,18	10.	I can plan and organize an interdisciplinary project work by myself or with other teachers.	Private	4,31	0,92	3,022
2.	I can understand the contents of European documents (e.g., the CEFR, the ELP) and I can adapt them to my teaching.	Private	4,18	0,93	2,127	,041*																																																																																						
		State	3,87	0,80			3.	I took a course / got education concerning the CEFR or the CEFR related subjects.	Private	3,77	1,43	2,480	,015*	State	3,07	1,44	4.	I have sufficient amount of knowledge with respect to the CEFR.	Private	4,12	1,04	3,254	,002**	State	3,45	1,05	5.	The CEFR has impact on the coursebooks used for teaching English in our school.	Private	3,97	1,24	2,794	,006**	State	3,31	1,18	6.	The CEFR has impact on the tests used in our school.	Private	3,81	1,39	2,734	,007**	State	3,14	1,12	7.	The CEFR has impact on language teaching techniques used in our school.	Private	3,91	1,36	2,568	,012*	State	3,29	1,10	8.	The teaching program practiced in our institution is a CEFR specific.	Private	3,81	1,34	2,866	,005**	State	3,12	1,11	9.	It is necessary that the CEFR and the ELP (European Language Portfolio) be incorporated into English language teaching programme in our school.	Private	4,04	1,20	2,586	,011*	State	3,43	1,18	10.	I can plan and organize an interdisciplinary project work by myself or with other teachers.	Private	4,31	0,92	3,022	,003**	State	3,73	1,00						
3.	I took a course / got education concerning the CEFR or the CEFR related subjects.	Private	3,77	1,43	2,480	,015*																																																																																						
		State	3,07	1,44			4.	I have sufficient amount of knowledge with respect to the CEFR.	Private	4,12	1,04	3,254	,002**	State	3,45	1,05	5.	The CEFR has impact on the coursebooks used for teaching English in our school.	Private	3,97	1,24	2,794	,006**	State	3,31	1,18	6.	The CEFR has impact on the tests used in our school.	Private	3,81	1,39	2,734	,007**	State	3,14	1,12	7.	The CEFR has impact on language teaching techniques used in our school.	Private	3,91	1,36	2,568	,012*	State	3,29	1,10	8.	The teaching program practiced in our institution is a CEFR specific.	Private	3,81	1,34	2,866	,005**	State	3,12	1,11	9.	It is necessary that the CEFR and the ELP (European Language Portfolio) be incorporated into English language teaching programme in our school.	Private	4,04	1,20	2,586	,011*	State	3,43	1,18	10.	I can plan and organize an interdisciplinary project work by myself or with other teachers.	Private	4,31	0,92	3,022	,003**	State	3,73	1,00																
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*Independent Samples T Test, *p<0,05, **p<0,01*

A statistically significant difference is found in all the items in the scale favoring teachers working in private institution when the type of the institution the EFL teachers work at is compared. Teachers working at private schools are more likely to agree with the items concerning the CEFR than the teachers working at state schools. Most of the teachers working at private schools strongly agree that they have prior knowledge about the CEFR (mean: 4,37) and they can take part in planning or organizing interdisciplinary project work

using the CEFR alone or with other teachers (mean: 4,31). Furthermore, most of EFL teachers at private schools took a course or training about the CEFR (mean: 3,77) whereas most of the EFL teachers at state schools remained undecided for this item (mean 3,07). When the responses given to item 4 were examined, it was found that the level of agreement of EFL teachers at private schools is higher than that of EFL teachers at state schools, which means teachers working at private schools thought they had comparatively sufficient knowledge about the CEFR while average EFL teachers at state schools remained undecided. Moreover, the responses given to items 5, 6, and 7 represent significant difference in terms of their views about the impact of the CEFR on course books, tests prepared at schools and language teaching techniques used at schools. EFL teachers working at private schools had higher levels of agreement with the mentioned items than EFL teachers at state schools. Moreover, teachers at state schools had unsettled opinions about whether their teaching programs are compatible with the CEFR or not; however, EFL teachers working private schools agreed that their program was the CEFR specific. Both groups of teachers agree that the CEFR should be incorporated into the syllabus covered in their schools.

All in all, teachers who work at private schools have a higher rate of perception of using the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in the curriculum than teachers at public schools. Similar to the findings Çağatay and Gürocak (2016) yielded, teachers working at private institutions have more awareness about the CEFR as in most private institutions in-service teacher programs are provided for language teachers.

4.4. Research Question 2

‘What are the general perceptions of EFL teachers working at primary, secondary and high schools in Turkey in relation to the usefulness of the CEFR in some specific teaching activities such as curriculum/syllabus design, material adaptation or testing?’

The purpose of the third part of the questionnaire is to examine to what extent participant teachers think the implementation of the CEFR will be useful in education and for what purposes it will be beneficial. The same formula as the Likert type scale is applied for the interpretation of the results.

Table 7. Scores for Usefulness Questionnaire

(5) Very useful	4,21 – 5,00
(4) Rather useful	3,41 – 4,20
(3) Not very useful	2,61 – 3,40
(2) Not at all useful	1,81 – 2,60
(1) Cannot be estimated	1,00 – 1,80

Table 8 displays the views of the teachers regarding the usefulness of the implementation of CEFR in their teaching contexts.

Table 8. EFL teachers' levels of agreement with respect to the items concerning the benefits of the implementation of CEFR in their teaching contexts.

Items	Mean	SD	T	P
1. How useful would the CEFR be in curriculum/syllabus development?	4,0952	1,08773	38,579	,000
2. How useful would the CEFR be in in-service teacher training?	4,0627	,97590	43,000	,000

3.	How useful would the CEFR be in testing/assessment?	4,1048	1,00884	41,693	,000
4.	How useful would the CEFR be in textbook writing/ production of educational materials?	4,1143	1,07698	39,145	,000
5.	How useful would the CEFR be outside class/in other contexts?	3,9429	1,15882	34,865	,000

The mean values for five items in Table 4 exhibit that all of the teachers who participated in the research agreed that the use of the CEFR would be useful in designing curriculum and syllabus (Mean: 4,09), in in-service training (Mean: 4,0627), in testing and assessment, (4,1048); participants also thought that the CEFR would be very helpful when preparing textbooks and other educational materials (Mean: 4,1143) and out-of-class practices (Mean: 3,9429).

4.5. Research Question 2a

‘Is there are significant difference between the EFL teachers regarding their views on the usefulness of the CEFR in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics?’

Participants’ responses to the items regarding the usefulness and practicality of the Common European Framework of Reference in the curriculum are examined in terms of gender, teaching experience, departments they graduated from, and levels of schools participants work at. A statistically significant difference is not observed for the mentioned characteristics. However, the responses analyzed in terms of participants’ academic degrees reveal significant difference only for item 5 in the third section of the questionnaire. The table below pictures the difference.

Table 9. *Differences between the responses of EFL teachers with respect to the usefulness of CEFR outside class in terms of Teachers’ Academic Degrees*

Item	Academic degree	Mean	SD	F	P	Difference
5. How useful would the CEFR be outside class/in other contexts?	BA	3,76	1,27	3,426	,036*	1-2
	MA	4,33	0,57			1-3
	Phd	4,40	0,74			

*One-Way ANOVA, *p<0,05*

Table 9 depicts that the difference is significant between the EFL teachers having only a graduate degree and the EFL teachers having a post graduate degree when the responses to the question ‘How useful would the CEFR be useful outside class or in other contexts?’ are examined. In other words, teachers having a PhD degree and MA degree think more positively about the implementation of CEFR outside the class than the teachers who have a BA degree.

No statistically significant difference is found when the levels of agreement with the items related to the usefulness of CEFR are analyzed in terms of levels of schools that participants work at.

4.6. Research Question 2b

‘Is there a significant difference between the EFL teachers working at private and state schools concerning their perceptions about the usefulness of the CEFR?’

Participant teachers' levels of agreement with the items related to the usefulness of the CEFR in curriculum, syllabus and materials development are examined and EFL teachers' perceptions about the benefits and practicality of the CEFR are compared in terms of the institutions they work at.

Table 10. *Differences among the responses of EFL teachers regarding the usefulness of the CEFR in terms of the institutions they are working at.*

	Items	Institution	Mean	SD	T	P
1.	How useful would the CEFR be in curriculum/syllabus development?	Private	4,37	0,86	2,478	,015*
		State	3,85	1,20		
2.	How useful would the CEFR be in in-service teacher training?	Private	4,33	0,85	2,343	,021*
		State	3,89	1,02		
3.	How useful would the CEFR be in testing/assessment?	Private	4,47	0,82	3,696	,000*
		State	3,78	1,04		
4.	How useful would the CEFR be in textbook writing/ production of educational materials?	Private	4,47	0,85	3,337	,001*
		State	3,80	1,15		
5.	How useful would the CEFR be outside class/in other contexts?	Private	4,29	0,89	2,932	,004*
		State	3,64	1,27		

Significant differences are found in all of the expressions favoring the teachers who work at private institutions. According to the teachers working at private schools, the CEFR is found to be more useful in teaching contexts such as production of teaching materials, testing, curriculum and syllabus development. Likewise, EFL teachers working at private institutions think the CEFR would be useful in in-service teacher training. Our findings are in line with the findings of Sülü&Kır (2014) in that practical knowledge about the CEFR should be supported by in-service teacher training programs. The findings above suggest that teachers at private institutions are more likely to have innovative method designs of language teaching.

5. Conclusion

The present study investigated EFL teachers' perceptions about the 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages'. The researchers particularly aimed to reveal if there is any significant difference between EFL teachers working at state and private schools. Researchers were also interested in the differing perceptions related to participant teachers' socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, year of experience, academic degree, department they graduated from, level of the school they work at.

The results of the study revealed that the majority of EFL teachers had general knowledge about the CEFR. More specifically, most of the EFL teachers working at private schools took course or got training concerning the CEFR; had sufficient amount of knowledge about the CEFR; consider CEFR as having an impact on course books used to teach English, on tests implemented at their schools, on language teaching techniques used at their schools. However, most of EFL teachers working at state schools remained undecided with the items

mentioned above. Participants were asked to what extent they found the implementation of the CEFR useful in curriculum and syllabus development, testing, production of language teaching materials. Compared to the EFL teachers at state schools, the ones working at private schools have more knowledge about the CEFR. A possible explanation for this may be that the private sector is more demanding and teachers might get training on specific issues such as the CEFR. However, in state institutions job security is at higher levels, which might be counterproductive as the teachers might make less effort to grow professionally.

The results were also examined in terms of participants' socio-demographic characteristics. The results showed that novice teachers are more aware of the impact of the CEFR on the tests implemented at their schools. Moreover, EFL teachers having their MA or Phd degrees have more knowledge about the CEFR than teachers working at primary level of schools, which refers to first 4 years in the new educational program in Turkey, were found to be more aware of the impact of CEFR on tests, on language teaching materials and they thought that the teaching program was the CEFR specific. The researchers also found that there was no significant difference regarding EFL teachers' gender, department they graduated from or the level of students they are teaching.

In conclusion, the results of the survey show that the CEFR should have a place in both pre-service teacher training and in-service teacher training. EFL teachers working at the state schools should be provided more opportunities to get in-service teachers training about the CEFR. How to use the CEFR as a tool in preparing tests, developing materials and designing syllabus is another dimension that should be taken into account. EFL teachers can be trained in these specific areas in order to utilize the CEFR in their teaching environment.

The study offers some implications for Language Teacher Education (LTE) as CEFR related courses are not conducted sufficiently in undergraduate programs. Hence, language teachers who do not have the opportunity to continue their education with a post-graduate program cannot fully master how to implement the CEFR in their teaching context. What is more, as this study reveals, working at a state school might inhibit the professional growth of these language teachers as there is paucity of in-service teacher training. To this end, teacher training programs could be restarted by the Ministry of Education and could be made generalized around Turkey.

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