REPEAT LEVEL PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENTS' CAUSAL DIMENSIONALITY AND THEIR CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS TO PERCEIVED SUCCESS AND FAILURE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY
SEVİNÇ BIÇAK

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

APRIL 2019

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Tülin Gençöz
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin Demir
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin Demir
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Erten (Hacettepe Uni, ELT) _____

Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin Demir (METU, EDS) _____

Asst. Prof. Dr. Nur Akkuş Çakir (METU, EDS) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Sevinç Bıçak

Signature :

ABSTRACT

REPEAT LEVEL PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENTS' CAUSAL DIMENSIONALITY AND THEIR CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS TO PERCEIVED SUCCESS AND FAILURE

BIÇAK, Sevinç
M.S., Department of Educational Sciences
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin Demir
April 2019, 170 pages

This study investigates the causal dimensionality patterns and causal attributions of repeat level students at a preparatory school of a state university to their perceived success or failure. The study employed a mixed methods sequential explanatory design, and was conducted in two phases: a quantitative phase, followed by a qualitative phase. The quantitative data regarding the students' causal dimensionality and specific causal attributions to success or failure were collected through CDS II and LAAS from 254 students, respectively. The detailed and in-depth qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured interviews with 24 students and 8 teachers. The quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS (20.0) while the qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis by using ATLAS.ti 7 software. The findings revealed that a big majority of the students considered themselves unsuccessful both in English Proficiency Exam (EPE) and in learning English, irrespective of gender or type of high school they graduated from, and that they tended to attribute their success or failure mostly to external and personally-uncontrollable causes, indicating a maladaptive attributional style. Both maladaptive and adaptive students ascribed their failure to school-related causes most, followed by exam-specific causes, task difficulty, and family and social life-

related causes in the external category, while they referred to psychological and mental causes, lack of effort and strategy, little motivation or interest, lack of knowledge, attendance and health problems, age factor and lack of ability in the internal group. Teachers came up with similar causes to those from their students. Implications and suggestions were provided for the given results.

Keywords: Causal Attributions, Perceived Success or Failure, Causal Dimensionality, Repeat Students

ÖZ

SENE TEKRARI YAPAN HAZIRLIK OKULU ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN NEDENSEL BOYUTLARI VE BAŞARI VEYA BAŞARISIZLIKLARINA YÜKLEDİKLERİ NEDENSEL ATIFLAR

BIÇAK, Sevinç
Yüksek Lisans, Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin Demir
Nisan 2019, 170 sayfa

Bu çalışma bir devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce hazırlık okulunda sene tekrarı yapan öğrencilerin nedensel boyutlarını, ve başarı veya başarısızlığa yaptıkları nedensel atıfları incelemektedir. Çalışmada karma yöntemli sıralı açıklayıcı desen kullanılmış ve veri, önce nicel sonra nitel olmak üzere, iki aşama halinde toplanmıştır. 254 öğrencinin nedensel boyutlarını ve başarı veya başarısızlığa yaptıkları nedensel atıflarını içeren nicel veri CDS II ve LAAS aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Ayrıca 24 öğrenci ve 8 öğretmenden yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme aracılığıyla detaylı ve derinlemesine nitel veri toplanmıştır. Nicel veri analizi için SPSS (20.0) programı, ve nitel veri için Atlas.ti programı kullanılarak içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Bulgular öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun hem İngilizce Yeterlilik Sınavı'nda (İYS) hem de genel olarak İngilizce öğrenmede, cinsiyet ve mezun olunan lise türü fark etmeksizin, kendilerini başarısız bulduklarını, ve başarı veya başarısızlıklarını uyumsuz bir yükleme tarzını işaret eden dışsal ve kişisel olarak kontrol edilemeyen sebeplere atfetme eğiliminde olduklarını ortaya koymuştur. Hem uyumlu hem uyumsuz yükleme tarzına sahip olan öğrenciler dışsal kategoride başarısızlıklarını en çok okulla ilgili olmak üzere sınavla, aile ve sosyal hayatla ilgili sebeplere atfederken, içşel kategoride psikolojik ve mental sebeplere, çaba, strateji,

motivasyon, ilgi ve bilgi eksikliğine, devamsızlık, sağlık problemleri, yaş faktörü ve yeteneksizliğe atfetmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerden elde edilen veri de öğrenci verisine benzerlik göstermektedir. Bulgulara dair çıkarımlar ve öneriler çalışmada sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nedensel Atıflar, Algılanan Başarı veya Başarısızlık, Nedensel Boyutlar, Sene tekrarı Yapan Öğrenciler

To everyone who has contributed to this study

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin Demir for her guidance, patience, constant support and feedback throughout the years I have been dealing with my master's degree. She was there for me in times when I felt lost or hopeless, with her encouragement and positive attitude. I am also indepted to the other jury members in my committee, Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Erten and Assist. Prof. Nur Akkuş Çakır, for their contributions to my study by sparing their valuable time and providing me with their invaluable feedback.

I would also like to thank all the students and teachers who took part in this study for sparing time during the data collection process and for their sincere efforts to help me improve the study. Without their contribution, this study would not have been possible.

I also feel indepted to my friends who have always supported me in this journey and motivated me whenever I felt discouraged or helpless. I especially would like to express my heartful gratitude to Sibel Çağatay, both a friend and a colleague with field knowledge regarding my study, for her invaluable support and constructive feedback from the very beginning of this thesis to the end. I couldn't have completed this thesis without her constant motivation and encouragement.

Last but not least, my deepest gratitude goes to my parents and brother, who have had to tolerate my hard times, complaints and pain while I was writing this thesis. And special thanks to my husband, who has suffered with me in this process and experienced the stress that I felt, for his unconditional love and support, sincere efforts to help me out in difficult situations, and patience in times I stole from him.

Thank you all!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Attribution Retraining
AT	Atribution Theory
CDS-II	Causal Dimensions Scale II
DBE	Department of Basic English
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EPE	English Proficiency Exam
ESL	English as a Second Language
FLL	Foreign Language Learning
LAAS	Language Achievement Attribution Scale
LYS	Undergraduate Placement Exam / University Entrance Exam
METU	Middle East Technical University

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, the research questions undertaken by the researcher, as well as the assumptions and limitations.

1.2 Background of the Study

Human beings have a natural tendency to explore the causes of their and others' actions and behaviors so as to be able to understand and make sense of events in their life. This helps them perceive what happens more clearly and gain predictability and control in their own world (Barker & Hunter, 1987). In other words, when people are aware of the underlying causes of events, actions or behaviors whether related to themselves or others, they can interpret them more accurately within their context, control them better, predict similar future outcomes and make decisions accordingly. To this end, people act as "naive scientists" as Heider (1958) suggested in his famous book *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relationships* and ask "why" questions to seek answers. The answers that they come up with are usually in the form of causal explanations, or in more specific terms, causal attributions. In general sense, an attribution is the process of assigning a cause to a specific event. Causal attributions are "the attempts to identify what factors gave rise to what outcomes and central to explaining events and to social cognition in general" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 22). Weiner (1986) defined attributions in a simpler way as the interpretations of the causes of outcomes by individuals.

Attributions have become one of the major areas of investigation in social psychological research in an effort to shed light on the causes of human behavior in general and how human perception is related to those causes in different contexts (Bar-tal, 2016). For this purpose, a group of theories has been developed to understand how people explain things, but Psychologist Fritz Heider (1958) was the first to collect them all under a common model, Attribution Theory (AT). In his model, he established two sets of conditions for causes: factors within the person and factors within the environment (Weiner, 1985), which set the basis for further studies and inspired many other researchers to build up on his work. The theory was later expanded by Rotter, (1966) as he added the "locus" dimension, which tries to explain if a cause is perceived as internal (within the person) or external (outside the person). However, it was Bernard Weiner (1972, 1974, 1979) who actually developed the theory further and his work has been considered as a guideline in the field (Rogers, 1987). He expanded on Heider and Rotter's work and added locus of control, stability and controllability dimensions to the theory. Weiner's attribution theory is basically concerned with how individuals perceive the causes of events and behaviors and how these perceptions interact with their thinking and behavior (Weiner, 1986). His work not only set the basic principles , or the framework, for the theory, but also contributed greatly to motivation and achievement studies in the field of education (Maehr & Meyer, 1997).

As mentioned above, since AT originated in the field of psychology and is grounded in social-cognitive theory, it has been commonly used in many different fields such as sports, economy, medicine and psychology in explaining human psychology in relation to the causes of events and actions (Güleç, 2013). It became very popular in the area of education especially with the help of Weiner's role in the application of this theory in the achievement domain. Weiner's theory, also known as Attribution Theory of Motivation, deals with how individuals explain their success and failure (Weiner, 1985) and how these explanations, or causal attributions, determine their current and future strivings, whether they are accurate or not (Weiner, 1974; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Weiner, 2000). This theory suggests that no matter what the cause is, it has an effect on learners' affective and emotional reactions, subsequent motivation and future performance. In addition to motivation, which is the driving

force in any kind of learning, students' feelings, expectancy, perspectives and beliefs related to proficiency are also affected by their self-perceptions regarding the causes of success or failure (Weiner, 1979). It is this intricate relationship between perceived causal attributions and academic performance that has led to a growing interest in the theory and the resulting accumulation of literature trying to explain the link among causal attributions, motivation and performance. In the educational setting, it is only natural that learners constantly observe and evaluate their learning process, and make an infinite number of attributions with regards to their performance, or more specifically their success or failure. They ask themselves questions like "Why did I succeed or fail?" to reflect on their learning and make sense of their own actions and behaviors. Graham (1994) states that students make attributions for success and failure so as to discover themselves and impose order on their uncertain environment. Among many other attributions that learners generate, effort, ability, luck and task difficulty seem to be the most commonly cited ones in the literature (Weiner, 1979, 1985 & 1986). However, Weiner again proposes that it is not the specific content of the causal attribution that has a significant effect on the individual's performance or academic achievement; it is rather the dimension, or position, of the cause that accounts for the possible consequences of attributional processes (1985, 1986). Similarly, Martinko (1995) suggests that the cognitive dimension which represents the perceptions and beliefs of the individual in relation to the nature of the attribution is the key to the motivating aspect of the attributions. This means that learners' perception of the underlying dimension has a bigger predictive role concerning motivation and future performance than the cause itself. In Weiner's categorization of dimensions, locus refers to the degree to which causes are perceived to be dependent on conditions within the individual (personal characteristics) or within the environment. For example, ability and effort are considered to be internal attributions, while task difficulty and luck are usually perceived as external in terms of dimensionality. Stability dimension is concerned with the degree to which causes are considered to change or remain constant. To illustrate, effort and mood are perceived as unstable, or changeable, attributions, whereas ability is mostly considered to be stable. The last dimension, controllability, deals with how much control the individual exerts on a perceived cause. In this respect, effort is considered to be controllable, while

ability and luck are generally perceived as uncontrollable (Stipek, 1988). These dimensions have a significant role in the learning process as there is a well-established relationship between an individual's attributional style and goal expectancy, motivation, self-perceptions, learning behaviors, persistence, task-avoidance &effort, and thus academic achievement (Weiner, 1979). These dimensions are also related to learners' feelings. Specifically, locus dimension is closely related to pride and self-esteem while stability dimension is linked with feelings of hopefulness and hopelessness. Similarly, controllability dimension is associated with emotions such as anger, guilt or shame (Weiner, 1985). In the literature, it is highly emphasized that the degree to which learners ascribe the causes of their success or failure to be internal, stable and controllable factors ascertains their level of control in achievement contexts (Perry, 2003). When a student attributes success or failure to external, stable and uncontrollable factors, s/he is considered to have a destructive or maladaptive attributional style, and can easily give up. For instance, if a learner ascribes his failure in a given task or exam to lack of ability or task difficulty, s/he may not try hard the next time believing that the outcome is out of his/her control no matter what s/he does. In contrast, when a learner attributes his or her performance to internal, unstable and controllable factors, s/he can try harder and persist longer as a result of this adaptive attributional style. To illustrate, a student who explains his/her failure through lack of effort or use of wrong strategies may study harder in the future knowing that success is something s/he can control (Weiner, 1979).

According to Weiner (1985), these dimensions are stable, but where an individual positions a causal attribution may change. This is because causal attributions are based on human perception and individual beliefs, and they can vary depending on variables such as culture, social group, gender or person (Graham, 1991). That is, attributions of causality are context-specific and hard to generalize.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Decades of research on AT has shown that learners attribute their academic performance to an infinite number of causes related to effort, ability, luck, task-

difficulty, teacher, mood and so on in an attempt to justify their present or past success and failure, and to gain control over their learning process (Weiner, 1986). This search for understanding and control is a significant determinant of success because attributions are highly related to learners' motivation, learning behavior and achievement (Schunk, 1991; Weiner, 1985). In other words, future behavior is partly dependent on the perceived causes of past events (Weiner, 1986). In recent years, this very fact has placed attributions, together with other significant factors such as motivation, self-efficacy and attitudes, at the core of literature regarding foreign language learning (FLL) as in many other achievement-related fields (Gobel & Mori, 2007; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Bain et al, 2010; Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Peacock, 2010; Mori et al, 2011; McClure et al, 2011; Zohri, 2011; Dong et al, 2013). However, there is a call for further research in this area, especially in real educational contexts as opposed to experimental conditions created in artificial settings in the past, because foreign language learning is gaining popularity in most parts of the world, failure is quite common in this field, language students produce negative perceptions very easily and there is no consensus in this field regarding attribution theory (Hsieh, 2004; Peacock, 2010; Semiz, 2011; Hashemi & Zahibi, 2011; Chodkiewicz &Boyle, 2014) Also, most of the studies mentioned above have been carried out in countries where English is spoken either as the mother tongue or a second language, so there is limited research in countries like Turkey, where English is learned only as a foreign language mostly for academic and career-related purposes. As attributions are regarded as a bridge between learners' past experiences and future performance, and they directly influence their motivation, performance and achievement, there is a growing interest in AT among FLL researchers in Turkey, but there is still a need in this area, especially at universities where English is the medium of instruction, for more studies that explain how Turkish students explain their success or failure and what kind of attributional style they have (Taşkıran, 2010; Koçyiğit, 2011; Özkardeş, 2011; Semiz, 2011; Tekir, 2012; Güleç, 2013; Gümüş, 2014; Erten, 2015; Çağatay, 2018). This need for research is especially important for schools of foreign languages at English-medium universities which offer the most intensive English instruction in Turkey. It is surely beyond doubt that success is very important for these departments as students' future achievement in their major programs mostly depends on their English proficiency

level at the end of their preparatory year, which is again highly related to how hard they try and how much persistence in learning they demonstrate during this year. Middle East Technical University (METU) is one of the biggest English-medium universities in Turkey, and its preparatory school, or Department of Basic English (DBE), provides one-year intensive English instruction for more than 3000 students each year. Although they are placed at this university with quite high YGS and LYS (examinations for the transition to higher education) scores, most of these students show low motivation and persistence during their language learning process in their preparatory year, or can't reach an adequate level of competence in English even if they try hard in their own way and dedicate time for their studies. Some of these students (approximately 400 each year) fail the English Proficiency Exam (EPE) at the end of the year and the summer school program, and in September, and they have to repeat the preparatory year as repeat students. These students receive education at the DBE for two years, which means that extra time, money and human resources are allocated for this group. This is a burden for both students who go through the same process again and the university, which tries to run on limited resources. To be able to reduce the number of these failing students, their reasons for failure should be discovered first and analyzed in detail. It is known from the literature that students are likely to demonstrate low motivation, self-efficacy and self-esteem in cases of repeated failure (Lebedina-Manzoni, 2004). In this regard, learning their attributions to success and failure is the best way to shed light on their learning process, low performance and lack of achievement.

Another concern is that attributions are affected by many factors such as culture, social dynamics, gender and even personality, and they are context-specific, which means individuals in different settings may demonstrate different attributional styles (Hashemi & Zahibi, 2011). This suggests that even individuals in different contexts in the same country and culture may show variety in terms of causality and dimensionality regarding AT. This means that there exists a need for research at METU context as there is no prior study dealing with preparatory students', repeat students in specific, causal attributions to success and failure.

With all the aforementioned points in mind, this study aims at exploring the causal attributions of repeat students at DBE, METU to their success and failure and discovering their attributional styles.

1.4 Significance of the Study

As stated in the literature repeatedly, failure is very common in the field of foreign language learning since language students tend to produce negative perceptions very easily, which goes hand in hand with low motivation and lack of persistence (Hsieh, 2004; Peacock, 2010; Semiz, 2011; Hashemi & Zahibi, 2011; Chodkiewicz &Boyle, 2014). Therefore, there is an increasing concern over how to cope with these negative feelings and attitudes, motivate students to take control over their own learning process and make them believe that they are actually capable of learning English and that occasional failures may result from controllable and unstable factors such as lack of effort or appropriate strategies. This same concern is present at DBE, METU, where an average of 400 students (almost 15 %) fails in the EPE each year and has to repeat their preparatory program all over. This fact makes it obligatory to reveal why this failure occurs each year, or more specifically, what reasons lead so many students to fail in their language learning process. This study will, before all, disclose the reasons behind these students' failure, which will establish the basis to remedy the problem by discovering their causal dimensionality patterns together with their attributions to success and failure.

Language learning process is surely very complex and involves a combination of intricate relationships among many different variables ranging from motivation to self-esteem, aptitude to attributions (Özkardeş, 2011; Gümüş, 2014). Although factors related to school environment and teachers are also influential in this process, student-related variables have a vital role in the success of this difficult process. Among these variables, attributions are of great importance as they shed light on learners' beliefs and perceptions regarding their own learning and performance, and these ascriptions are highly related to their motivation, self-efficacy, persistence, expectancy behavior, beliefs about competence and achievement (Graham, 1994; Weiner, 2000). Because of these well-established relationships in the literature, AT

has received a great deal of empirical support in the educational setting, and has been extensively used as a theoretical framework to guide research (Gümüş, 2014). The significance of AT has been well secured and documented through numerous research studies in the FLL literature. This significance stems from the fact that knowing why language learners succeed or fail in the FLL process may increase future chances of success by taking instrumental action appropriately and timely (Betancourt & Weiner, 1982). That is why this study focuses on discovering repeat students' causal ascriptions with the aim of providing further support to the AT literature in a relatively unexplored area in Turkey and the world. In the literature, repeat students are categorized among at-risk students as they may easily demonstrate low motivation, self-efficacy and self-esteem owing to their past record of repeated failure (Lebedina-Manzoni, 2004; Taşkıran, 2010). It is also known that students make more attributions following negative outcomes and that less proficient students tend to attribute their performance to external factors (a sign of maladaptive attributional style), which is again more likely for repeat students within the context of this study. Awareness of their attributions may help to prevent any future failure and change their fixed mind set (maladaptive attributional style), if any, to growth mind set (adaptive attributional style) (Erten, 2015). Only in this way, can these students be encouraged to make the most of their capacity and the learning process. Thus, this study will provide new and original insights into AT by way of learning the attributions of a group of students who are formally considered as "unsuccessful" as repeat students.

Another significance of the study is that it will be based on the notion of perception as highly emphasized in AT (Williams, Burden, Paulet, & Maun, 2004). Instead of using some outside sources such as grades, school records or teacher's feedback, students' perceived success or failure will be used as a reference point. Also, their perceived causal attributions will be accepted as they are whether they are accurate or not according to the researcher or the teachers to be consulted to crosscheck the student data. In addition, thanks to the qualitative part of the study, students will have a chance to report all their attributions freely without a pre-determined set of causes, which is usually the case in most studies employing only questionnaires and which greatly limits the mention of any possible causes not cited in the literature.

As attributions are context-specific and show variety depending on the culture, social group, gender, proficiency level and even academic discipline (Peacock, 2010), there is a need to reinforce this knowledge in every educational context with different characteristics. This study is expected to fill this gap by looking into relationships between repeat students' attributions and their gender, proficiency level and academic achievement from a fresh new perspective. How "relatively" successful students explain their failure in FLL may provide interesting results.

As stated by Weiner (2000), performance of other parties including teachers, peers and parents easily influences the social context in which success and failure occur. In the light of this information, the study will also provide a comparison between the attributions of repeat students and those of their instructors to bring out any similarities or differences between the two groups. Seeing the problem from two different perspectives is quite important because years of research has put forward that there are differences between students and teachers in terms of causal attributions and their dimensions, and there is often a mismatch between these two parties. These studies have further claimed that teacher and student attributions mostly clash and that teachers are generally not aware of their students' causal ascriptions to success and failure (Peacock, 2010; Sekar, 2013) Therefore, it is necessary that English instructors be informed about their students' opinions and feelings regarding their attributions to be able to realize their facilitator role properly. Knowledge about student perceptions has significant pedagogical implications for language classrooms (Tse, 2000). If teachers are aware of their students' reasons for success or failure, they can easily design their lessons accordingly, alter the way they teach English, interact with their learners, assign learning tasks and give feedback, or simply, take the necessary measures regarding the factors that hinder learning. This is called "teacher's power" or "causal power" in the literature (Dörnyei, 2001). Knowing about how failure-oriented students, repeat students in our case, perceive their language learning performance could enable teachers to reshape their students' unhealthy attributional thinking from a destructive style to a healthy and functional one.

All in all, awareness of learner attributions is of great value to both teachers and learners for the success of the language learning process. This awareness could make it possible to increase students' motivation, persistence and goal expectancy levels, which will hopefully result in higher academic achievement. With this purpose in mind, this study seeks to answer the research questions below:

1) How do the repeat students perceive their performance in learning English as determined by the EPE results?

a. Is there a significant difference in perceived success / failure among students who come from different types of high schools?

b. Is there a significant difference between students who perceive themselves successful and unsuccessful in terms of their attributional dimensions as determined by their CDS-II scores?

c. Is there a significant difference between students who perceive themselves successful and unsuccessful in terms of their attributional causes as determined by their LAAS scores?

d. Is there a significant difference between students who perceive themselves successful and unsuccessful in terms of their total average in the previous year and their last EPE score?

e. Is there a significant difference between male and female students in terms of their self-evaluation of perceived success or failure?

f. How do the students perceive their performance in learning English? What are the origins of their perceptions in success or failure cases?

2) What are the repeat students' causal dimensionality tendencies regarding their perceived success or failure as determined by their CDS-II scores?

a. Is there a significant difference among the students who come from a different type of high school and their causal dimensionality tendencies?

b. Is there a significant difference between male and female students in terms of their causal dimensionality tendencies?

3) What are the repeat students' causal attributions to their perceived success or failure as determined by LAAS and the interview data?

a. Is there a significant difference between male and female students in terms of their causal attributions as determined by LAAS?

b. What are the differences between the causal attributions of students with an adaptive attributional style and those with a maladaptive one?

4) What are the teachers' causal attributions to their students' success or failure in the EPE? Are they different from the students' causal attributions?
5) How do the students' outcomes affect their learning and performance?
6) What can be done to minimize the negative effects mentioned in question 5? How can the program be improved to remedy this situation?

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

The present study has some assumptions to be considered. First of all, it is assumed that all the participants took part in the study willingly, and that they rated all the items in the scale and the questionnaire, and answered all the questions in the interview honestly and frankly. Also, data collection instruments in the study, i.e. CDS-II scale, LAAS and semi-structured interview protocol, were checked for face and content validity by field experts and assessment and evaluation experts. Therefore, the instruments are considered to be appropriate for the study and the data gathered through these instruments are assumed to be valid in this respect.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this study. To begin with, this study is a case study and it is limited to the repeat students in the Department of Basic English, at METU during the 2015-2016 academic year. For this reason, the results cannot be generalized to other preparatory school settings in Turkey. Also, the study employs a mixed-methods approach with the qualitative part being more central to the research problem. Therefore, the researcher had to use an interpretative approach in the qualitative part, which means that data presented and the results discussed in this part originated from the researcher's own interpretations. Thus, they may be subjective and peculiar to this particular case only.

Another limitation is that I work at DBE, METU, which is the study setting, as an instructor. Although I didn't teach any classes at this level and do not know the students, this fact may raise some questions about researcher bias. For this reason, multiple data sources were used in the data collection part to validate the results, and the findings of the qualitative part were crosschecked by a colleague who is doing a doctorate in the field of ELT.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of literature on attribution and attribution theory, main attributions in the related literature, causal dimensionality of attributions, adaptive and maladaptive attributions and attribution retraining as well as individual differences in attribution research. The last section gives information about attribution research in foreign EFL and ESL contexts, and in Turkey.

2.2 Attribution and Attribution Theory

Human beings are naturally inclined to explore the causes of actions, behaviors or events related to themselves and others in order to be able to understand and make sense of them in their life. This, in a way, enables them to perceive what happens more clearly and gain predictability and control in their own world (Barker & Hunter, 1987). More specifically, when they have a better command of the underlying causes of events, actions or behaviors whether related to themselves or others, they can interpret and evaluate them more accurately within their context, control them more easily, predict similar future outcomes and make more informed decisions. Because of this approach, called "common sense psychology" (Kelly, 1992), people are considered "naive scientists" who constantly ask "why" questions to seek answers through which they make sense of the reality around them and achieve harmony and balance inside (Heider, 1958). The answers that they reach are called causal explanations, or in more specific terms, causal attributions within the context of Attribution Theory (AT). Since the term attribution was coined by Heider

(1958), it has become one of the most active areas of social psychology and has been defined by a great many researchers who believe that the underlying process of attempting to understand the world around us is universal, pervasive, and predictable (Kelley & Michela, 1980). Ickes & Laydon (1976) define attribution as "the way in which individuals explain the causes of positive and negative events in their lives" (p. 2). According to Royer and Feldman (1984), attributions are conclusions regarding the reasons of people's own behaviors and the incidents happening around them. Weiner (1986) and Ellis (1985) defined attributions in a similar way as the interpretations of the causes of outcomes by individuals, or statements that answer why something happened. Similarly, Fisk and Taylor explain causal attributions as "the attempts to identify what factors gave rise to what outcomes and central to explaining events and to social cognition in general" (1991, p. 22). Schunk (1992) defined them as individuals' perceived causes of events. In a different study, Manusov & Spitzberg (2008) brought a fresh angle to the definition of attribution as "the internal (thinking) and external (talking) process of interpreting and understanding what is behind our own and others' behaviors" (p. 2). In short, definitions of attributions vary greatly in the literature, but in a broad sense, an attribution is the process of assigning a cause to a specific event, or "the process in which people attempt to explain the causes of their and others' behaviors" (Satıcılar, 2006, p. 44).

In the context of education, similarly, attributions refer to causes that students assign to their success or failure in a given task, or exam, and these causes help to account for why they succeeded or failed and indicate their perception of achievement. In the related literature, Weiner (1974) and Eggen & Kauchak (1994) simply define attributions as students' explanations of their success or failure while other researchers such as Fairbarin, Moore, & Chan (1994) add the "perception" component and consider attributions as perceived causes of success or failure. In the educational setting, this causal search is usually triggered by an event such as failure in an important exam, which is perceived as a negative or unexpected outcome, leading the student to question the underlying reasons behind it. In the literature, these events are referred to as preconditions for attributional search (Wong and Weiner, 1981), causal antecedents (Graham, 1997; Hareli and Weiner, 2002;

Kanazawa, 1992), or precursors to causal search (Stupnisky, 2005). According to Weiner (2000), any event that the student deems significant could be a precondition for causal search, but it is more likely that a negative, unexpected and / or important outcome will provoke attributional processes than a positive one. To exemplify, a student might attribute his or her failure in a reading exam to the ineffectiveness of the reading instruction or mere luck. That same student may explain his or her failure in a speaking task through lack of ability in speaking skills or the difficulty of the task. In both cases, the attributions that the student makes are based on his or her own perceptions, and they may not reflect the actual causes. However, these perceived causes are the ones that lead to a psychological (shame and disappointment) and a behavioral consequence (less future effort or striving) regardless of the actual causes of the outcome (e.g. lack of regular study habits or ineffective use of reading strategies). Attribution Theory places emphasis on perceived causes rather than actual ones, and it is not concerned with the accuracy of the attribution at hand. In other words, what an individual's perception of his or her success or failure is the main concern of this theory (Försterling, 2001; Stipek, 1988; Weiner, 2000). In this respect, an individual's construction of reality is more important than the reality itself, which gains this theory a phenomenological perspective (Nispett & Wilson, 1977).

2.3 The History of Attribution Theory

The origins of attributions can be traced back to philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant and Mill in history, but it was Psychologist Fritz Heider (1958) who first collected them all under a common model and proposed a psychological theory of attribution in his groundbreaking book *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (Özkardeş, 2011). As the founder of the theory, he played a major role in setting the foundation for further research in AT, paving the way for other researchers in the field of social psychology to discover the ways human beings try to make sense of the events in their lives, which he called "naive psychology" (Jones et al, 1972). In his model of attribution, Heider (1958) argues that all people are "naive psychologists" in the sense that they all have a natural tendency to try to understand and explain the causes

of behavior by assigning causality to the outcomes of events in order to make sense of their world and thus see it as much predictable, stable and controllable as possible (Sweeton & Deerrose, 2010). Heider's AT is based upon the following assumptions: 1) People believe that there are causes behind behaviors; 2) People believe that it is important to understand why others behave as they do; 3) The cause of behavior is within a person, a situation, or both (Sweeton & Deerrose, 2010). In this way, he established two sets of conditions for causes: factors within the person (e.g. ability and effort) and factors within the environment (e.g. task difficulty), which set the basis for further studies and inspired many other researchers including Jones and Davis (1965), Rotter (1966), Kelly (1967), and Weiner (1971) to build up on his work. Initial work in this field primarily focused on how individuals made attributions about the causes of other people's behaviors (Jones & Davis, 1965) and it was theorized that people make inferences about others by using data which are often limited, thus requiring further cues from the environment. Another researcher expanding on Heider's ideas was Julian Rotter (1966), who made the first clear distinction between internal and external causes and introduced the "locus of control" dimension to AT. Rotter (1966) stated that individuals varied in the way they perceive the events in their lives as being under their own control or under the control of external forces, thus breaking down the structure of causality to an internal-external dimension for the first time. Depending on Heider's initial studies and Rotter's work, Kelly (1967, 1980) advanced the theory and investigated the mechanism that helped people decide whether to make internal or external attributions. According to Kelly, people use three types of information – consistency, distinctiveness and consensus information – in their efforts to assign causality to other people's behaviors. Consistency information refers to whether the target person always responds in the same way to the stimulus across time and circumstances. Distinctiveness information refers to whether the target person responds in the same way to other stimuli as well. Consensus information refers to whether all or only a few people behave towards the same stimulus in the same way as the target person (Kelly & Michela, 1980). His ANOVA model showed that a clear and specific attribution can be made only by utilizing these three sources of information easily (Can, 2005).

However, it was Bernard Weiner (1972, 1974, 1979) who actually developed the theory further and his work has been considered as a guideline in the field since then (Rogers, 1987). He elaborated on the previous work regarding AT and focused on its implications in academic and achievement contexts. In their theory, Weiner and his colleagues (1971) argued that people's beliefs regarding the causes of success and failure may have a vital role in understanding achievement-related behavior in educational contexts. In their model, which tries to explain this achievement-related behavior, they assume that these beliefs have a mediating function between the individual's perceptions about the achievement task and his / her ultimate performance. To put it simply, Weiner asserts that an individual's perceptions regarding the causes of events shape his / her thoughts, psychological stance and future actions (1974). Weiner built upon Rotter's locus of control dimension, but furthered the model by adding another dimension, stability, based on the fact that some of the internal or external causes remain relatively constant whereas some others change over time (Weiner et al, 1971). Concerning the internal attributions for example, ability is considered a relatively constant capacity while effort is perceived to change over time. For the external part, difficulty of a task can be seen as a stable factor whereas luck is a more changeable concept. Thus, Weiner et al identified four main attributions that are often made by learners to explain their success or failure in most achievement contexts: ability, effort, task difficulty and luck, and they came up with a 2×2 taxonomy as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 2.1
Weiner's original attribution model

		Locus of Control	
		Internal	External
Stability	Stable	Ability	Task Difficulty
	Unstable	Effort	Luck

However, later Weiner (1983) concluded that these categories were somewhat vague as the causes in the related cells did not fully represent the classification system, and he suggested less ambiguous entries such as aptitude, temporary exertion, objective task characteristics and chance. The identification of the third dimension came with the studies of Rosembaum (1972), whose work was later expanded by Weiner

(1979), and he revealed that attributional causes can be categorized in more detail as some of them are subject to control. For example, a person can control whether s/he can increase or decrease his / her effort. Rosembaum initially called this dimension "intentionality", but Weiner (1979) named it "controllability" and added it as the third dimension to the taxonomy. In order to avoid confusion, he also changed the name of the first dimension, i.e. locus of control, and labelled it "locus of causality". Thus, Weiner came up with a three-dimensional taxonomy of attributions: locus of causality, stability, and controllability. In his terms, the new classification was more reliable, meaningful and general across situations. Another dimension called "globality" was suggested by Abramson et al. (1978) which distinguished attributions as being general (e.g. I failed because I am stupid.) or specific (e.g. I failed because of my low math aptitude.), but it is not included in Weiner's model of AT.

Weiner's attribution theory is basically concerned with how individuals perceive the causes of events and behaviors and how these perceptions interact with their thinking and behavior (Weiner, 1986). His work not only set the basic principles, or the framework, for the theory, but also contributed greatly to motivation and achievement studies in the field of education (Maehr & Meyer, 1997). His model of AT is explained in more detail in the next section.

2.4 Weiner's Model of Attribution Theory

As mentioned above, although AT originated in the field of psychology and was commonly used in many different fields such as sports, economy, and medicine in explaining human psychology in relation to the causes of events and actions (Güleç, 2013), it became very popular in the area of education especially with the help of Weiner's role in the implementation of this theory in the achievement domain. According to Försterling (2001), Weiner's attributional analysis of achievement behavior is the most comprehensive theoretical model related to the effect of attribution on cognitive processes, affect and behavior. Weiner's theory, also known as Attribution Theory of Motivation, deals with how individuals explain their success and failure (Weiner, 1985) and how these explanations, or causal

attributions, determine their current and future strivings whether they are accurate or not (Weiner, 1974; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Weiner, 2000). In other words, the theory suggests that the perceived cause of the event is important regardless of its accuracy and that no matter what the cause is, it has an effect on learners' affective and emotional reactions, subsequent motivation and future performance. In addition to motivation, which is the driving force in any kind of learning, students' feelings, expectancy, perspectives and beliefs related to proficiency are also affected by their self-perceptrions regarding the causes of success or failure (Weiner, 1979). Also, this theory assumes that the types of attributions that individuals tend to make are influenced by both personal and environmental factors which, in turn, affect learners. In the educational setting, it is only natural that learners constantly observe and evaluate their learning process, and make an infinite number of attributions with regards to their performance, or more specifically their success or failure. They ask themselves questions such as "Why did I succeed or fail?" to reflect on their learning and make sense of their own actions and behaviors. Graham (1994) states that students make attributions for success and failure so as to discover themselves and impose order on their uncertain environment. Weiner (2000) further notes that this causal search is often undertaken after an event which is especially perceived as unexpected, negative or important by the learner because of cognitive limits. Thus, in the case of failure, learners tend to ask more "why" questions in an attempt to discover the causes of the negative outcome and control them better in the future. On the other hand, in the case of success, having control over the situation is not so necessary because in this case, what is desired is not a change in the situation but rather a maintenance.

According to the earliest version of Weiner's theory, learners attribute their success or failure to four basic causes: effort, ability, task difficulty and luck, which are the most commonly-cited ones in the literature (Weiner, 1979, 1985 & 1986). These were also the most widely-cited causes by teachers in explaining their students' success or failure in educational contexts. However, it was acknowledged by Weiner (1986) himself that individuals can possibly make countless attributions that can vary considerably as the potential causes of an achievement-related outcome are infinite. As such, further research in the area has added other attributions to the list

such as strategy, interest, family and teacher influence (Vispoel & Austin, 1995); mood, other person, condition in the home, past experience, habits, attitudes, self-perception and maturity from language learning contexts (Tse, 2000; Graham, 2004; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004).

However, Weiner again proposes that it is not the specific content of the causal attribution that has a significant effect on the individual's performance or academic achievement; it is rather the dimension, or position, of the cause that accounts for the possible consequences of attributional processes (1985, 1986). Similarly, Martinko (1995) suggests that the cognitive dimension which represents the perceptions and beliefs of the individual in relation to the nature of the attribution is the key to the motivating aspect of the attributions. This means that learners' perception of the underlying dimension has a bigger predictive role concerning motivation and future performance than the cause itself. In Weiner's categorization of dimensions, 'locus of causality' refers to the degree to which causes are perceived to be dependent on conditions within the individual (personal characteristics) or within the environment. For example, ability and effort are considered to be internal attributions, while task difficulty and luck are usually perceived as external in terms of dimensionality. 'Stability' dimension is concerned with the degree to which causes are considered to change or remain constant. To illustrate, effort and mood are perceived as unstable, or changeable, attributions, whereas ability is mostly considered to be stable. The last dimension, 'controllability', deals with how much control the individual exerts on a perceived cause. In this respect, effort is considered to be controllable, while ability and luck are generally perceived as uncontrollable (Stipek, 1988). These dimensions have a significant role in the learning process as there is a well-established relationship between an individual's attributional style and goal expectancy, motivation, self-perceptions, learning behaviors, persistence, task-avoidance & effort, and thus academic achievement (Weiner, 1979). These dimensions are also related to learners' feelings. Specifically, locus dimension is closely related to pride and self-esteem while stability dimension is linked with feelings of hopefulness and hopelessness. Similarly, controllability dimension is associated with emotions such as anger, guilt or shame (Weiner, 1985). In the literature, it is highly emphasized that the degree to which learners ascribe the

causes of their success or failure to be internal, stable and controllable ascertains their level of control in achievement contexts (Perry, 2003). When a student attributes success or failure to external, stable and uncontrollable factors, s/he is considered to have a destructive or maladaptive attributional style, and can easily give up. For instance, if a learner ascribes his failure in a given task or exam to lack of ability or task difficulty, s/he may not try hard the next time believing that the outcome is out of his/her control no matter what s/he does. In contrast, when a learner attributes his or her performance to internal, unstable and controllable factors, s/he can try harder and persist longer as a result of this adaptive attributional style. To illustrate, a student who explains his/her failure through lack of effort or use of wrong strategies may study harder in the future knowing that success is something s/he can control (Weiner, 1979).

According to Weiner (1985), these dimensions are stable, but where an individual positions a causal attribution may change. This is because causal attributions are based on human perception and individual beliefs, and they can vary depending on variables such as culture, social group, gender or person (Graham, 1991). That is, attributions of causality are context-specific and hard to generalize.

Table 2.2
The relationships between attributions and dimensions (Eggen & Kauchak, 1994)

	Locus of Causality	**Stability**	**Controllability**
Effort	internal	Unstable	Controllable
Ability	internal	Stable	Uncontrollable
Task Difficulty	external	Stable	Uncontrollable
Luck	external	Unstable	Uncontrollable

2.5 Main Attributions in Attribution Theory

Potentially, individuals can make an infinite number of causal attributions to explain the outcomes of events in their life, but in the achievement domain a relatively smaller list is present and four of these attributions are most prevalent in the related literature: effort, ability, task difficulty and luck. It is highly important to understand these four main causal attributions in educational contexts as these attributions for success or failure, whether actual or perceived, can be used to interpret learners'

previous academic performance, more specifically their success and failure experiences, to explain their present performance and to predict their future performance. (Weiner, 1986; Graham, 1994). In the coming part, the main causal attributions and their importance in AT are explained in more detail.

2.5.1 Ability

Ability is one of the most commonly-cited causal attributions that learners make to explain their performance and it mostly shows up in situations where learners compare their performance with that of others. In the literature, it is mostly regarded as an internal, stable and uncontrollable attribution over which an individual does not have much control. If a learner has failed in a task repeatedly in spite of his / her efforts, that learner could easily assume that s/he does not have the required ability to perform that task successfully and therefore ascribe his / her failure to lack of ability (Weiner, 1986). This obviously suggests that ability is directly related to learners' past experiences of success and failure.

A thorough understanding of ability attributions is important in that these attributions have a vital role in shaping the motivational dispositions of learners (Weiner, 1992). To illustrate, if a learner attributes his / her failure in a specific task to low ability, s/he will most probably lose his / her hope and expectations for future success, which in turn, will make the learner believe that s/he does not have any control over the outcome no matter how much effort s/he puts forward. This leads to lack of motivation to try harder in the future and results in learned helplessness, which is considered a maladaptive behavior in AT (Keblawi, 2009). Weiner (1994) suggests that these learners feel shame as a result of this maladaptive perspective. In contrast, when learners attribute their success to high ability, they are more likely to feel pride and happiness, which in turn, boosts their self-esteem and self-efficacy. High self-esteem is linked to high expectations from future tasks, and necessary to maintain achievement motivation and persistence (Özkardeş, 2011).

Therefore, ability attributions need to be dealt with seriously within the context of AT as they play an important role in learners' affective and motivational reactions and greatly affect their future expectations of success.

2.5.2 Effort

Effort is another attributional cause that is often cited by learners in their attempts to explain their success or failure. It is an internal, unstable and controllable cause and it usually represents an adaptive attributional style. For example, if a learner succeeds in a given task or exam and attributes this success to hard work, or effort, s/he feels a sense of self-satisfaction and pride (Weiner, 2010) and most probably continues to study hard to maintain this high performance. If, however, the learner experiences failure and ascribes it to lack of effort, probably because earlier s/he became successful in tasks or situations for which s/he spent effort and did or could not study for this one, that learner feels regretful and guilty knowing that s/he is responsible for the outcome and could have succeeded with sufficient effort. According to Burden (2003), this attributional style is still healthy because the learner believes that the outcome is under his / her control and may strive harder in the future for better results. Thus, effort attributions are desirable even in the case of failure as they enable learners to sustain their hope and persistence for possible future success.

According to the relevant literature on AT, ability and effort are the most commonly-cited attributions to success or failure in achievement contexts (Weiner, 1992; Graham, 1994). This means that learners often attribute their success to high ability and effort, and they explain their failure through lack of ability and insufficient effort, which is mostly applicable to most of the cultures studied within the context of the theory (Weiner, 1985).

2.5.3 Task Difficulty

Another common attribution referred to by learners to explain their success or failure is task difficulty, which is external, stable and uncontrollable in nature. When learners fail in a task or exam, they are likely to think that it was too difficult to accomplish, so they account for their failure using this difficulty. On the other hand, when they become successful at a given task, they may attribute their performance to the ease of the task and feel that they gained success very easily. Moreover, Fösterling (2001) asserts that when learners succeed at a difficult task, they tend to attribute their success to good luck, and if they fail at an easy task, they may ascribe their failure to bad luck. This is why Bar-tal (1978) suggests that tasks be of intermediate difficulty so that learners can explain their performance by using internal causes such as ability and effort instead of referring to luck attributions.

Learners' attributions to task difficulty are highly influenced by how others perform in the same task. To illustrate, the greater the number of individuals who perform well at a task, the more likely learners will attribute their success to the ease of the task believing that their success did not come as a result of personal causes. Likewise, when the number of individuals who fail in a task is high, learners tend to attribute their own failure to task difficulty (Weiner & Kukla, 1970). In this way, they feel less responsible for the outcome whether it is positive or negative and experience less pride in the case of success and decreased shame in the case of failure (Satıcılar, 2006).

In short, attributions to task difficulty are not desirable in achievement contexts as they cause learners to take less responsibility for their learning and possible outcomes, and prevent them from relating success or failure to more internal factors such as effort.

2.5.4 Luck

It is also likely for learners to attribute their success or failure to pure luck, which is regarded as an external, unstable and uncontrollable factor. In this case, learners explain their performance by referring to good or bad luck, believe that they have no or little control over the outcome of a task or exam, and therefore do not do much to change their future strivings and subsequent achievement. More specifically, when learners attribute success to good luck, this means that they may expect failure in the future because luck is out of their control and may fluctuate over time. Similarly, when they account for failure using bad luck, they may expect higher performance and better outcomes in the future, but without relating it to themselves (Weiner, 1974).

Similar to task difficulty, causal attributions to luck are not considered very healthy for learners because when learners habitually attribute their performance to luck, they develop the belief that they do not have the ability to accomplish a task and cannot control the outcome even if they try hard. This also prevents them from experiencing pride when they become successful and leads them to feel less responsible and guilty following failure, which results in less effort and persistence in the future (Weiner, 1979).

2.6 Causal Dimensionality

As mentioned above, ability, effort, task difficulty and luck are the most commonly-cited causal attributions in the achievement domain, but according to Weiner (1985, 1986), the dimension, or position, of the cause has a more significant role in learners' performance or academic achievement than the cause itself. That is, it is these dimensions that account for the possible psychological and behavioral consequences of attributional processes, and they represent the perceptions and beliefs of individuals in relation to the nature of the attribution. This suggests that learners' perception of the underlying dimension has a greater predictive role regarding motivation and future performance than the cause itself (Martinko, 1995).

The first systematic analysis of causal dimensionality was conducted by Heider (1958), who divided casual attributions into two as personal and environmental. This was expanded by Rotter (1966) later, and the categories were renamed as internal and external, which is referred to as locus of causality in the attribution domain. Weiner et al (1971) added a second dimension, stability, to the taxonomy, claiming that the first dimension was not enough to explain the nature of all attributions as some causes remain stable over time while others do not. The third dimension, intentionality, was proposed by Rosenbaum (1972), who suggested that some causes such as mood, fatigue or effort were all internal and unstable in nature, but that they varied in terms of the volitional control an individual has on each. To exemplify, an individual can increase or decrease the amount of effort she or he spends, which is not very likely in the case of mood or fatigue. This dimension was later named as controllability by Weiner (1979). To sum up, according to the resulting taxonomy, attributional causes that an individual explains his or her success or failure with fall into three major categories, or dimensions: locus of control (internal or external), stability (stable or unstable) and controllability (controllable or uncontrollable). Attributions of causality may vary depending on the context, culture, and individual; however, they can be quantitatively compared in terms of these causal dimensions (Gobel & Mori, 2007).

2.6.1 Locus of Causality

In simple terms, locus of causality refers to the location of a cause as internal or external to an individual. According to this dimension, people believe that outcomes in their lives result from either their own personal characteristics such as effort, skills or other internal factors or external factors such as other people or environmental circumstances (Rotter, 1966). In this respect, ability, aptitude and effort are regarded as internal attributions while luck and task difficulty are considered to be external in nature. To illustrate, if a learner explains his or her success through hard work or personal ability, that learner is making an internal causal attribution. On the other hand, if he or she attributes his or her success to the ease of the task or mere luck, he or she is making an external causal attribution. Weiner, Russell and Lerman

(1979) assert that this dimension is closely linked to affective states such as gratitude, surprise, pride, confidence, and satisfaction on one hand; guilt, regret, aimlessness, anger, and hostility on the other. For example, learners who ascribe their success to internal causes as in the case of hard work often report feelings of pride, confidence, and satisfaction whereas those who attribute their success to external causes such as ease of a task report gratitude, surprise, thankfulness. On the other hand, learners who explain their failure through internal factors such as lack of ability or insufficient work report guilt, regret, and aimlessness while those who attribute their failure to external factors such as task difficulty or bad luck report anger, surprise, and hostility. It is therefore suggested in the literature that low self-esteem is experienced as a result of attributing negative outcomes to the self and high self-esteem and pride are experienced when positive outcomes are attributed to the self (Weiner et al., 1978, 1979; Stipek, 1983). The same studies show that locus of causality dimension is also highly related to learners' future strivings together with their feelings of pride and shame. When learners have a sense of internal locus of control, their previous experiences of success influence their expectations of future success positively while their past failures affect their expectations of future success negatively. In contrast, learners who have a sense of external locus of control are much less inclined to connect their previous success or failure to their future expectancies of outcomes. This is well supported by other attribution studies conducted in achievement contexts that relate internal attributions with higher achievement and claim that they have a higher predictive role than the external ones (Stevenson & Lee, 1990; O'sallivan & Howe, 1996). In short, it can be inferred that successful language learners tend to attribute their success to internal factors such as ability and effort while those who are unsuccessful are likely to attribute their failure to external factors such as luck and task difficulty.

2.6.2 Stability

The second dimension, stability, refers to the extent causal attributions are considered stable or unstable over time. In Williams and Burden's terms, it is the potential of a cause to change over time (1999). In this classification, ability and

task difficulty are regarded as stable attributions while effort and luck are seen as unstable ones as they are more likely to fluctuate depending on the situation. In Weiner's theory, stability dimension is highly related to learners' expectations regarding future outcomes as it is closely linked to psychological reactions such as hopelessness (Weiner, 1985). More specifically, when performance outcomes are considered to be a result of stable causes such as ability, a similar performance is expected in the future believing that the same cause will result in the same outcome; however, if a performance is attributed to unstable causes as in the case of effort, different future outcomes may be expected easily. Surely, cases of success or failure have contrasting implications here. If a student attributes his or her high performance in an exam to his or her ability, that student may easily expect to be successful in the coming exams as he or she bases the outcome on a stable cause, which is quite good because this hopeful attitude is likely to affect his or her motivation and persistence positively. If, on the other hand, a learner explains his or her low performance in a task by lack of ability, that student may easily lose his or her hope for a better future performance, and thus give up studying at all, believing that any effort shown for the future is futile and that failure is likely to reoccur, which might cause learned helplessness in time. As for unstable attributions (effort and luck), they usually do not lead to a sense of hopelessness since in both success and failure situations, learners tend to believe that their future performance may change for the better or worse as these causes may vary over time.

Thus, this dimension is of great importance as it directly affects learners' expectancy behaviors, thus persistence and willingness for new tasks, by way of their feelings of hopefulness and hopelessness (Semiz, 2011).

2.6.3 Controllability

In Weiner's categorization, controllability is the last main dimension and it refers to the extent that a causal attribution is under the control of an individual. Similar to locus of causality and stability, this dimension has important implications on the learning process because when a learner considers an outcome to have resulted from an uncontrollable cause, he or she may not persist or strive for the future tasks. For

instance, if a student attributes his or her failure to lack of ability - an internal, stable and uncontrollable cause-, he or she may give up studying easily believing that the outcome is out of his or her control and any effort shown to improve the situation is worthless. However, if a learner explains a high performance or success at a given task by lack of effort, which is an internal, unstable and controllable cause, he or she may still expect future success as this time, the outcome is under the control of the individual.

Controllability dimension is closely linked to some affective states, or feelings, such as anger, guilt, gratitude, shame or pity (Weiner, 2000). When, for example, failure is ascribed to insufficient effort, feelings of guilt are usually aroused in a learner because this means that success would have been possible if more effort, or any effort, had been spent. If, on the other hand, failure is explained through lack of aptitude or ability, which is uncontrollable in nature, then feelings of shame and embarrassment are aroused because the learner feels he or she has no control over the outcome. In the case of success, when a high performance is attributed to a controllable cause such as effort, the learner feels pride since the outcome resulted from hard work, but if a successful outcome is attributed to an uncontrollable cause such as good luck or ease of a task, then the learner most probably feels lucky or grateful to the teacher.

All in all, this dimension is highly related to learners' future expectancy of success in the form of persistence and future striving, and it gains more importance especially in failure situations. It is theorized that attributing educational outcomes to uncontrollable causes may lead to loss of motivation and thus hinder achievement in educational contexts (Dörnyei, 2001).

Apart from the main attributional dimensions discussed above, there are two more possible dimensions mentioned in the literature. The first one is intentionality and it refers to the distinction between intentional causes that a learner exerts more control on, such as showing little or no effort before an exam, and the unintentional ones, such as use of bad strategy. The second dimension is globality, which deals with the causes being general or specific. For example, a learner may attribute his or her

failure in English to low intelligence, which is a global cause, or low language aptitude, which is more specific (Weiner, 1985). However, these two dimensions are beyond the scope of this study as more empirical support is needed to secure their places in the attribution literature.

2.7 Adaptive – Maladaptive Attributions and Attribution Retraining

The importance of Attribution Theory arises from the fact that attributions have a significant role in learners' academic achievement as they shape the learners' affective states and behaviors following success or failure, their future-related expectations and strivings (Weiner, 2000). In this respect, there is no doubt that a healthy and functional attributional style will benefit learners more in achievement contexts by way of influencing the educational activities undertaken, the intensity of effort shown and the level of persistence in case of a failure. In a broad sense, a functional, or adaptive, attributional style has positive effects on a learner's academic performance whereas a maladaptive one has negative consequences on the learning process. Weiner (1985) states that making internal, unstable and controllable attributions in the case of failure is more functional than making internal, stable and uncontrollable attributions. In more specific terms, motivation, effort and persistence are greater when individuals ascribe their failure to personal, unstable and controllable causes such as lack of effort, insufficient exam preparation or use of wrong strategies because in these cases they believe that it is possible to improve their performance in the future (Dörnyei, 1994). In contrast, attributing failure to stable and uncontrollable causes such as lack of ability reflects a maladaptive style as it is likely to discourage students from investing time and effort in their subsequent learning, which in turn results in learned helplessness and poor performance (Stipek, 1988). This is because these individuals do not believe that they can change the outcome no matter how hard they try. Making external attributions, such as blaming the teacher or the school system for failure, is maladaptive in nature, too, since this type of approach means not taking responsibility for the failure situation and not exerting enough effort to change for the better.

In success situations, on the other hand, internal, stable/unstable and controllable attributions such as ability and effort are desirable as they give individuals the message that they can succeed in similar tasks too because success has come as a result of something that is unlikely to change (ability) or something that is under their own control (effort). This is regarded as an adaptive attributional style because in the literature an attribution of success to ability is linked to higher self-efficacy while attributing success to effort is connected to positive feelings such as pride and confidence. However, explaining success through the easiness of a task or mere luck can be labelled as maladaptive as these are not under the control of the individual and suggest that the learner does not internalize his or her achievement (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995).

In the light of the information above, it can be said that learners' attributional style plays a key role within the context of motivational processes in the field of education. As proposed in Weiner's attributional model (1985, 2000), ascriptions of failure to internal, stable and uncontrollable factors, and success to unstable, external causes have proved to be detrimental to students' learning and future performance because such causes negatively affect motivation and persistence behavior. This is especially true for students who have a history of academic failure as they may easily develop an unhealthy, or maladaptive, attributional style, which in turn leads to a vicious circle involving learned helplessness and other negative affective states such as embarrassment, lowered self-esteem and guilt (Semiz, 2011). As a solution to this problem, researchers have developed attribution retraining (AR) programs that aim at transforming learner's maladaptive attributions into adaptive ones. More specifically, AR programs are intervention designs that try to help learners reconstruct a frame about their attitudes or perceptions regarding success or failure in achievement contexts (Haynes, Perry, Stupnisky &Daniels, 2009). Perry (2003) asserts that attribution retraining is an effective way to encourage learners to take responsibility for their learning and realize the relationship between effort and success, especially following a negative outcome. This motivates the students and convinces them that achievement is possible in future tasks.

In practice, these programs encourage learners to connect their academic success to unstable and controllable causes such as effort and good strategy use, and failure to lack of effort or wrong use of strategy (Fösterling, 2001). This is especially important in foreign language learning, a field in which effort and strategy are related to high achievement. According to Williams and Burden (1997), the degree to which learners can control their language learning deeply affects their motivation and involvement in learning that language.

Most of the AR studies in the literature have proved to be effective in changing learners' maladaptive, or dysfunctional, attributions to adaptive ones, thereby increasing their expectations for future success, subsequent persistence and academic performance (Fösterling, 2001; Erten, 2015; Çağatay, 2018). These studies have successfully turned failing students' ability-related attributions to effort-based ones, and they have revealed, one more time, that self-doubt (attributing failure to the self and success to outside factors) and stable beliefs about the causes of failure are a big obstacle to motivation, so unstable attributions for failure should be encouraged in learners (Weiner, 2010). For this purpose, learners need to be trained to perceive their failure not as a natural result of their low ability, but an outcome of unstable, controllable factors like insufficient effort and bad strategy use. Also, ability should be presented as knowledge or skills that can be acquired in time. In this way, it will be easier for learners to preserve hope, which facilitates motivation and learning. As repeatedly emphasized in the literature, it is the instability of a cause that matters, not the cause per se, so any self-attribution that a learner regards as unstable is likely to have similar positive effects (Graham, 1991).

2.8 Individual Differences in Attributions and Attribution Research

Within the context of attribution research, it is common knowledge that learners tend to attribute success to internal causes (e.g. effort or ability) while they are likely to explain failure through external causes (e.g. luck or task difficulty), which is referred to as self-enhancement pattern (denial of responsibility for failure outcomes) or self-serving bias (trying to maintain your self-esteem or protect your ego) in the related literature (Dong et al., 2013). This is a common human tendency

that serves as a protection mechanism for the ego. However, there are many other factors such as gender, age, cultural context, proficiency level, motivation and self-efficacy that help to explain why people have a specific attributional style. Gender and level of proficiency are discussed in more detail below as they are within the scope of this study.

2.8.1 Gender

Gender, along with many other variables that influence individuals' attributional styles, has long been related to the way learners attribute their success or failure to. Therefore, a lot of studies have been carried out in a variety of fields in order to investigate the relationship between gender and attributions, and they have yielded many results, some of which verify the earlier findings while the rest contradicts with them.

In one of the earliest studies, Nicholls (1975) discovered that boys mostly tended to attribute their success to ability and their failure to lack of effort. In another study, it was revealed that female students often attributed their success to luck (Reis, 1987) or to effort (Rimm, 1991) and their failure to lack of ability (Nicholls, 1975; Reis, 1987). Stipek and Gralinski (1991) also concluded that females were less likely than boys to attribute their success to high ability and failure to luck, and were more likely to attribute failure to low ability.

In one study that addressed college students' attributions to academic performance, Beyer (1998/1999) concluded that males were more ego-protective, making internal, stable attributions for success, while females engaged in more self-defeating internal, stable attributions for failure. In the field of foreign language education (FLE), where gender has long played an important role in terms of motivation, self-efficacy and expectancy, researchers have found significant links between attributions and gender as a factor. To illustrate, Hsieh (2004) found that unsuccessful male students tended to attribute their failure to lack of effort more than unsuccessful female students, who tended to explain their failure through task difficulty. In the case of success, male students tended to attribute successful

outcomes to high ability, while females tended to attribute success to effort. The results also revealed that males had higher self-efficacy beliefs in learning a foreign language as they tended to attribute success to ability.

Peacock (2010) conducted a study with 505 university students in Hong Kong and investigated the relationship between their causal attributions and their gender, along with their proficiency level and academic discipline. The participants of the study were asked to provide the causes they attributed their EFL (English as a Foreign Language) success or failure to, and the origins of these attributions. The results revealed significant differences between male and female students in that girls were significantly more likely to attribute success to their own efforts than were male students. Also, most of the attributions made for success by female students were internal, unstable, and controllable in nature, which represents an adaptive style.

More recent studies have produced somewhat contradictory results in terms of gender and attributions. For example, in a study carried out with 133 students from different levels at the Department of English Literature, Zohri (2011) investigated Moroccan university students' perceptions of failure and he found that female students mostly explained their failure through external factors such as teacher attitudes, unfair grading or difficulty of tests while males tended to attribute unsuccessful performance to more internal factors such as lack of effort or interest in the subject. However, in a study that examined the relationship between attributions to school achievement and possible cultural differences in this relationship, McClure and his colleagues (2011) worked with 5333 students from Europe, Asia, Maori and Pacific region and as a result, they concluded that girls attributed success to effort, and failure to lack of ability or task difficulty whereas boys ascribed failure to bad luck.

In another study from Turkey, Yılmaz (2012) investigated Turkish EFL students' attributions in reading and whether they differed by gender and proficiency level, and found a significant gender difference in attributions in that females more often attributed success to intellectual ability and having a better cultural background

while males attributed failure to insufficient teacher feedback and poor teaching more compared to girls.

As Williams and Burden have repeatedly underlined, there is still a need for further research into the relationship between gender and attributions in the field of EFL (Özkardeş, 2011).

2.8.2 Level of Proficiency

Level of proficiency is another variable that has an influence on individuals' attributional styles, and has also been related to the way learners ascribe their success or failure to. As a result, quite a few studies have been conducted in order to investigate the relationship between attributions and proficiency level in the target language, and they have yielded many results. For example, in a study carried out with 2152 Malaysian university students, Mori and his colleagues (2011) investigated the perceived reasons for success and failure on actual learning tasks and explored whether attribution tendencies vary depending on actual and perceived proficiency. They discovered that the higher the proficiency level is, the more internal and controllable attributions students make. They also found that students with a high proficiency level attributed their failure to classroom conditions and lack of interest while those with a low proficiency level explained their failure through lack of ability and effort. As for success, similar to most studies conducted in the western countries, this study showed that students high in proficiency level attributed their performance to internal factors, which is referred to as self-enhancement bias in the literature. In Turkey, there is not enough research investigating the relationship between attributional style and level of proficiency, but in one study carried out with undergraduate Turkish EFL students, Yılmaz (2012) studied attributions in reading and whether they differed by gender and proficiency level, and could not find a statistically significant relationship between students' attributions and their proficiency level. Further research is needed to understand the relationship, if any, between these two variables.

2.9 Attribution Studies in EFL and ESL Contexts Abroad

Attribution theory has gained noticeable interest for its potential implications in language learning, especially in terms of motivation. As such, the role of attributions in foreign or second language learning has been extensively studied in recent years, and although not yet sufficient, research has provided valuable insights into the attributions for success and failure and the role of attributions in the area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL).

Williams and Burden (1999), who came up with a constructive framework for investigating attributions, were among the first researchers to study learners' attributions for success and failure in learning a foreign language. They investigated how learners in different age groups constructed causal ascriptions for success and failure in foreign language learning, what the underlying factors were for their attributions and whether learners at different proficiency levels displayed different patterns of attributions or not. They conducted interviews with students aged between 10 and 15 and learning a foreign language, and discovered that age groups differed both in the way they constructed attributions and in the range of attributions they provided for success and failure. Most of the learners tended to explain their success through external factors such as approval of the teacher or grading. Another interesting finding was that the range of attributions increased with age with older students making more attributions such as personal ability, level of effort, circumstances, and the influence of others. Williams and Burden (1999) concluded that there are developmental and maturational differences among the age groups and that attributions are socially constructed.

Many other studies followed that of William and Burden to shed light on the nature of attributions in the field of language learning. For example, Tse (2000), who emphasized the importance of investigating the perceptions of foreign language learners in their attributions for success and failure, conducted a study that aimed at discovering the perceptions of students regarding language learning in an expressive manner by using autobiographies. This qualitative study provided the students with an opportunity to express their attributions freely and thus presented a more

comprehensive look at their beliefs about language learning. The study showed that students were mostly critical about classroom activities, yet quite positive about interactions with the teacher. They reported that a strong student-teacher interaction facilitated their learning. Another noteworthy finding was that success was explained differently by each student. Overall, they attributed their success to three different sources: teacher or classroom environment, family or community support, and a personal drive to learn, and they ascribed their failure to themselves for not showing enough effort or having sufficient motivation, the teacher or the teaching methods, and the student profile of the courses. Very few students attributed their failure to lack of inborn ability, which was pleasing. Such studies are highly valuable as understanding the perceptions of students in terms of their attributions has important pedagogical implications for teaching. With the help of information about students' beliefs, perceptions and attitudes in relation to language learning and related activities, it is easier to become aware of their affective states and thus to best design teaching methods and certain classroom activities accordingly.

Following Tse's (2000) study, McQuillan (2000) conducted a quantitative study that investigated 81 American students' attributions of success and failure in FLL. The study revealed similar results to that of Tse. The most commonly reported causal attributions for success were motivation, a comfortable pace, a good teacher, ability, time and effort, level, and atmosphere whereas failure was mostly explained via lack of time and effort, poor study strategies, and atmosphere.

Some studies investigated students' attributional styles in general rather than their specific causal attributions. To illustrate, in her qualitative research, Ushoida (2001) studied the attributional patterns of 14 Irish university students and she asked them why they succeeded in learning French. The study results revealed four main attributional patterns among the participants: attributing success to ability, effort or love of French; attributing negative outcomes to temporary shortcomings that are likely to change; attributing negative affective states to the learning context; and attributing future success or behavioral changes to personal resources. These attributions, Ushoida concluded, mostly served to preserve a positive self-concept.

In another study, Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna (2001) intended to investigate the attributions of 25 Bahraini EFL students in Bahrain for their success and failure in learning English, asking them to explain why they succeeded or failed in English. 11 positive and 18 negative attributions were made among these students. The most widely cited reasons for success were practice, support from family and teachers, exposure to the language, and a positive attitude whereas inadequate teaching methods, lack of support from family and teachers, poor comprehension, and a negative attitude were the most frequently cited attributions for failure.

In an effort to overcome the limitations of quantitative approaches to data collection, Graham (2004) employed sentence completion items together with interviews in a study trying to explain the relationship between attributions and achievement level. The findings showed that the English students who attributed their success to a high level of ability and effective learning strategies displayed higher levels of achievement and persistence while learning the target language. In addition, those who made more internal attributions had higher levels of achievement. Therefore, it was concluded that learners with a more adaptive /functional attributional style tend to attribute success to ability and perceive it as a fairly stable and internal factor.

Increasingly, studies related attributions to other variables or constructs in the achievement domain. Hsieh (2004), for instance, examined the relationship between foreign language learners' attributions, their achievement and self-efficacy beliefs. This quantitative research study was conducted with the participation of 500 students in Spanish, German and French classes and the results indicated that learners who made more internal, stable, and personal attributions received higher grades in foreign language classes when compared to those who made more external, unstable, and non-personal attributions. Also, it was discovered that learners' self-efficacy beliefs positively correlated with internal, personal, and stable attributions while they were negatively correlated with external attributions.

Williams, Burden, Poulet and Maun (2004) conducted a study with a focus on students' attributions to success in language learning. They asked open-ended questions to 285 secondary school students, aged between 11 and 16 in the UK, to

learn about their perceptions of learning specific languages and their attributions to success and failure in language learning. The students' responses were grouped into 21 categories of attribution to success and 16 categories of attribution to failure. The results showed that there were significant differences across gender, age, and the language studied. Overall, students attributed their success to effort, ability, interest and strategy use while they disregarded luck and reward. Among all the attributions mentioned, effort was the most commonly mentioned one for both success and failure. In addition, when compared to failure oriented-students, those who were success-oriented attributed their success to effort more. It was also observed that older students tended to attribute their success and failure to strategy use more often than younger ones. All age groups, however, explained their success through effort, but did not mention it while explaining their failure.

Some researchers limited their research to specific skills in English. For example, Gobel and Mori (2007) investigated how first-year students in a Japanese university perceived their success and failure in English speaking and reading classes, including the reasons behind their performance. Results revealed that students with a reportedly poor performance attributed it to lack of ability and effort, while those who reported performing well ascribed their high performance to teachers and classroom atmosphere. In other words, they made internal attributions in failure situations, and external attributions in the case of success, which is self-defeating in nature and common in Asian cultures. To further analyze this phenomenon, Gobel, Mori, Thang, Kan and Lee (2011) investigated in what way successful and unsuccessful students in foreign and second language classes differed in terms of their attributions and whether this was related to cultural norms or not. They comparatively analyzed the causal attributions of Thai, Japanese and Malaysian learners to success and failure in learning English as a first or second language. The three groups displayed noticeable similarities in the way they explained their success and failure. Learners in all groups tended to make more and stronger attributions for success than for failure. More specifically, they focused more on external factors, such as teacher when they explained their success. In times when they failed, on the other hand, they all referred to more internal causes such as lack of ability,

insufficient preparation and effort, and wrong use of strategy, which mostly supported the findings of the first study.

As mentioned above, attributions were related to many other constructs in the literature. Kun and Liming (2007), for instance, explored the relationship between achievement attributions and self-regulated language learning behaviors. They discovered that achievement attributions are related to self-regulated learning behaviors and that there is a relationship between a learner's attributional style and his or her self-regulated language learning beliefs. To illustrate, the study showed that adaptive attributions, such as attribution of success to effort or ability are positively correlated with self-regulated language learning behaviors, while maladaptive attributions, such as attribution of failure to lack of ability, are negatively correlated with self-regulated language learning behaviors.

Lim (2007) studied learners' perceptions and beliefs regarding their learning in language classrooms and how it was related to the anxiety levels of these learners. It was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between students' attributional styles and their anxiety levels and that students with a higher internal locus of control would experience a lower level of anxiety. As expected, the results revealed that learners' attributions for success and failure in FLL were directly related to their language learning anxiety. The direction of the relationship was not as expected, though. Interestingly, the findings showed that learners who attributed their success in FLL to external causes, on which they believed they had no or little control, had lower anxiety regarding language learning compared to those who ascribed their success to internal causes that they had more control over.

Self-efficacy is another construct that is commonly studied in the attribution literature. Hsieh and Schallert (2008), for example, combined two motivational constructs, self-efficacy and attribution to explore the motivation of 500 undergraduate foreign language learners in the US. The participants were asked to consider their exam results on the basis of these two constructs and provide their actual reasons for the outcome. The findings suggested that self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of achievement in terms of ability attributions.

Another attribution study conducted in Asian context was by Rui and Liang (2008), who wanted to emphasize the role of adaptive attributions by studying causal dimensionality and its behavioral effects on learners. In their study carried out with Chinese adult language learners, they discovered that effort and persistence were greater when they attributed their performance to internal and controllable causes than to external or uncontrollable causes. This study supported the previous findings in the literature which suggest that attributing success in learning language to internal, stable and controllable causes helps learners feel confident that they will be able to carry on with success in similar future tasks, while attribution of success to more external, unstable and uncontrollable reasons is likely to result in less confidence regarding future performance.

Yet another study in Chinese context was carried out by Lei & Qin (2009) with the aim of investigating the relationship between university-level EFL learners' attributions and their achievement in learning English. The results showed that there was a strong relationship between teacher and effort attributions and success in learning English. On the other hand, lack of confidence, lack of practical use and test-oriented learning were strongly related to attributions for failure.

Pishghadam and Zabihi (2011) conducted a similar study with 209 EFL learners and examined the relationship between EFL learners' attributions for success and failure in language learning and their achievement in foreign language classes. They implemented the Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II) and the Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS), which were also used in this present study. Specific causal attributions such as ability, effort, task difficulty and their dimensions were compared with learners' language achievement levels. They discovered statistically significant correlations between the results of LAAS and CDS-II subscales and learners' final scores. Their study revealed that learners who attributed their exam results to effort got higher grades on the final exam.

In another noteworthy study from China, Lu, Woodcock and Jiang (2014) examined 347 Chinese EFL learners' attributions for success and failure in relation to learner autonomy and whether those who learnt through a student-centered approach made

different attributions from those who learnt through a teacher-centered approach. Data gathered by using a mixed-methods design showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of their causal attributions. However, it was observed that the students made more effort attributions in relation to success, which shows an adaptive style, while they referred to effort, task difficulty and luck when explaining failure, which was not very favorable in Weiner's theory.

In a more recent study from a different cultural context, Mohammadi and Sharififar (2016) investigated Iranian EFL students' attributions for success and failure and whether their attributions were related to gender or proficiency level. The data collected from 200 English language students revealed that the participants attributed their success and failure to a variety of causes, with external ones standing out more. In terms of gender differences, it was observed that male students tended to explain their success through ability while females mostly referred to luck regarding their success. Also, it was discovered that more proficient students ascribed their failure to low ability, lack of effort and task difficulty more often than those with a lower proficiency level. The results were mostly in line with those of other studies in the literature.

As for teachers' attributions in the EFL and ESL contexts, few studies conducted have shed light on how teachers tend to explain their students' success and failure, and how these attributions are related to their classroom teaching and decisions. Related research suggests that teachers' causal attributions regarding their students' performance affect their instructional choices, apparent mostly in their pedagogical decisions and feedback, which directly influence learners' achievement striving (Weiner, 1972; Graham & Weiner, 1986; Weiner, 1996). According to these studies, teachers who blame their learners for failure believing that they have not studied hard enough are more likely to punish them and less likely to offer help while those who attribute their students' failure to uncontrollable causes such as lack of ability may show more sympathy and offer more support. In turn, these reactions or feedback from teachers shape students' attributions and motivation. For instance, a teacher showing sympathy may be regarded by a student as a sign of low ability

whereas a teacher displaying anger could be interpreted as a message that the student only needs to study harder next time, which fosters his or her motivation. In short, there is an intricate relationship between teachers' and students' causal attributions in educational contexts.

The related literature also suggests that there are two basic patterns in teachers' attributions while explaining their students' academic performance: the ego-enhancing attributions and counter-defensive attributions (Peterson and Barger, 1985). In the former, teachers take responsibility for their students' success while they ascribe their students' failure to causes inherent in the learners, such as low ability or lack of effort. In the latter, teachers put the blame on themselves for their students' failure and give credit to students for their success. These patterns have important implications for classroom interaction in that teachers may arrange their classroom teaching, materials and feedback depending on the level of responsibility they take in relation to their students' performance.

In a recent study that investigated the patterns above, Zohri and Zerhouni (2013) studied the effect of self-serving bias on 40 Moroccan EFL teachers' attributions of their students' success and failure by using a causal attribution scale for teachers (CAST) at four different universities in Morocco. The results showed that Moroccan EFL teachers do not display self-serving bias when their students perform well. In other words, they do not take much credit for their students' success, which is in line with research suggesting that eastern cultures are more likely to show modesty in the case of success compared to western cultures. The findings also revealed that the teachers attributed their students' failure mostly to learner-induced factors such as lack of effort and low ability, which is a sign of self-protection strategy on the part of the teachers. Although it sounds favorable to attribute any outcome to learners themselves, it may be risky in the case of failure because that might mean that the teacher is not taking responsibility for the negative outcome and thus he or she may not be willing to change his or her instructional choices.

More empirical evidence is necessary to understand the relationship between teachers' and students' causal attributions. This present study will shed more light on this relationship by presenting comparative data on the issue.

2.10 Attribution Studies in Turkey

As in other educational contexts in the world, AT has gained considerable attention in Turkish context for its potential to explain and influence individuals' language learning process in many ways, especially in terms of motivational patterns. As such, many attribution studies have been conducted in different EFL contexts in Turkey although a great number of them have been carried out with students in primary or secondary education (e.g. Özduygu, 1995; Satıcılar, 2006; Kapıkıran, 2008; Şahinkarakaş, 2011), which lies outside the scope of this study, or have investigated only one aspect of attributions, such as locus of control, instead of dealing with the theory in a more holistic approach.

Kayaoğlu (1997) conducted one of the earliest attribution studies in Turkish EFL context with the aim of the exploring adult learners' language learning strategies, their past and present experiences and the reasons behind their success and failure in the language learning process. The results revealed that the participants attributed their success and failure to a variety of internal and external causes and these causes were highly related to their approaches to language learning. They mostly tended to explain their success and failure through teacher-related causes and attitudinal factors. The results also indicated that stable factors such as ability or having a good memory directly influenced their strategy choices in learning the language.

In their comparative attribution study on cultural differences, Brown, Gray, & Ferrara (2005) investigated the attributional patterns of 61Turkish, 94 Japanese and 71 Chinese university students from three different universities in Chigasaki (Japan), Beijing (China), and Ankara (Turkey) and found out that all the groups came up with more internal causes for both success and failure situations than external causes. The results showed that Turkish and Chinese students made more internal attributions for success than they did for failure contrary to Japanese

students who tended to attribute their success to external causes and failure to internal ones. In addition, Turkish and Chinese students endorsed ability and effort as causes of success and disregarded luck and task-difficulty, whereas Japanese students referred to effort, ability and luck while explaining success, leaving out task-difficulty. Overall, effort was considered as the main cause of success while failure was explained through lack of effort. All three groups were also similar in terms of rejecting task-related causes in explaining success or failure.

Some other attribution studies explored the relationship between attributions and other related constructs. To illustrate, Büyükselçuk (2006) carried out a study to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and causal attributions of 342 undergraduate senior and graduate students at Boğaziçi University. The results revealed that students were more likely to attribute their failure to either lack of effort or external causes, regardless of their self-efficacy levels. It was also observed that students with high self-efficacy levels ascribed their success mostly to ability, while low self-efficacious students mostly referred to external attributions for their success and lack of ability for their failure. To guide further research, Büyükselçuk (2006) suggested attribution retraining to increase the self-efficacy levels of the students and to transform the dysfunctional attributional styles of the students into more functional ones.

In another study conducted at Anadolu University, Taşkıran (2010) explored 158 preparatory school students' causal attributions of perceived success and failure in language learning, including all three dimensions (locus of causality, stability, and controllability) and tried to find out whether causal dimensionality of the students was adaptive or maladaptive in nature. Students' causes for perceived success and failure were determined with the help of an open-ended questionnaire and the participants were grouped as success-oriented or failure-oriented based on their responses. The results revealed that the number of students who perceived themselves as unsuccessful was higher than the number of those who regarded themselves as successful. In connection with this, the students made more causal attributions for failure than they did for success. Another major finding was that the students who regarded themselves as successful tended to make more internal,

controllable and relatively stable attributions compared to those who perceived themselves as unsuccessful.

Koçyiğit (2011) carried out a similar study on causal attributions with 300 junior and senior university students attending three different faculties of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Education, and Engineering in 2010-2011 academic year. With this study, he aimed at discovering these students' learning styles, their causal attributions to success and failure and dimensions of these attributions by using CDS-II and Kolb Learning Style Inventory. The results suggested that the participants made more stable, external, and externally more controllable yet personally less controllable attributions to failure while they attributed their success to more stable, internal, and personally more controllable yet externally less controllable causes. In terms of their learning styles, the students displayed significant differences, too.

As the number of studies that detected a maladaptive attributional style among language learners increased, researchers started conducting studies that try to train students to adopt a more adaptive and healthy attributional style. One noteworthy study in this respect was carried out by Semiz (2011), who aimed at learning the effects of a training program on students' attributional patterns, self-efficacy levels, language learning beliefs, achievement and effort, with the participation of 36 motivationally at risk EFL students in the School of Foreign Languages at Karadeniz Technical University during the 2010-2011 academic year. She first collected data to elicit their explanations for success and failure by using CDS II and LAAS, which formed the basis for the following attribution retraining. With this training program, she aimed to increase their self-efficacy levels, success and effort by transforming their dysfunctional attributional patterns into functional ones. As a result of the analysis, significant differences were found between successful and unsuccessful students in terms of their attributions. It was discovered that successful students made more internal attributions (e.g. effort) compared to unsuccessful students. No gender differences were observed in terms of causal attributions. In addition, significant correlations were found among attributions, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs.

In a similar study, Özkardeş (2011) investigated the achievement attributions of preparatory class students in the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale University for their success or failure in learning English. She explored the learners' perceived success or failure through a self-developed scale titled as 'Achievement Attribution Questionnaire' and interview. Interestingly, the results revealed that successful students mainly attributed their success to an external and uncontrollable attribution 'having a successful teacher', followed by other three most commonly-cited causes 'having self-confidence', 'enjoying learning English' and 'being interested in English', which were all internal and controllable in nature. Another important finding was that unsuccessful learners tended to attribute their failure mainly to an internal and controllable cause 'lack of enough vocabulary', followed by external, stable, and uncontrollable causes such as 'difficulty of exams, education term being too short to learn English, and lack of background education'. The study revealed noteworthy results in terms of gender and proficiency level, too. For example, it was observed that the female students were more likely to explain their success via internal, unstable and controllable attributions more often than male ones. As for the proficiency level, the findings showed that more proficient learners tended to attribute their success to external factors such as 'having background education and the easiness of learning English' while less proficient ones mostly attributed their failure to external, stable, and uncontrollable causes such as 'lack of background education in English and short education term to learn English'.

Some other studies focused on the differences between successful and unsuccessful students. For example, in a study conducted with 150 preparatory class students at Mersin University, Duran (2015) collected data via CDS-II, LAAS and a self-efficacy questionnaire to explore the learners' causal attributions for success and failure, the differences between success-oriented and failure-oriented learners in terms of their attributional styles, and the relationship between causal attributions and self-efficacy beliefs. The results demostrated that 75,3% of the students considered themselves unsuccessful and that the participants mostly attributed their achievement outcomes to external causes such as task difficulty. As for the differences between success-oriented and failure-oriented students, the former group was more likely to make ability attributions whereas the latter tended to make

task difficulty attributions. It was also concluded that success-oriented learners' attributions were more internal, stable, and personally controllable compared to the failure-oriented group.

In a more recent study, Höl (2016) explored EFL learners' attributions with respect to their success or failure in learning English and their relationship with different variables such as gender, academic level and socio-economic status. In this study, he implemented an attribution retraining program to 20 students in the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale University during 2013-2014 academic year with the purpose of improving the participants' internal locus of control, and finding out whether this attribution retraining program had an effect on their academic achievement or not. The findings of the study revealed that learners attributed their success to internal attributions more than external ones, while they tended to attribute their failure to both internal and external causes. No significant differences were observed between two genders in terms of their attributions.

Recent studies in the field tend to employ mixed-methods designs to enrich the possible results. As such, Yördem (2016) carried out a mixed-methods embedded research design with preparatory school students, and the results of this study revealed that learners attributed their EFL learning outcomes to a wide range of causes. The findings also showed that successful students explained their high proficiency through mostly internal, controllable and unstable factors whereas unsuccessful students made attributions to mostly external, uncontrollable and stable factors, which are maladaptive in nature. It was also concluded that students, especially low-achievers, need attribution retraining to transform their unhealthy attributions to functional ones for future success.

In a fresh new study conducted with preparatory school students at a state university, Çağatay (2018) employed a two-phase embedded mixed-methods design to investigate learners' attributions of success or failure and the relationship between perceived success, ideal L2 selves and ought-to selves, and implemented Attribution Retraining (AR) for a selected group of students to transform their maladaptive attributions into adaptive ones. The results revealed that health and teacher were the

main causal attributions for the learners. Also, effort was the biggest predictor for future performance. According to the results, AR led to an increase in learners' locus of control and personal control scores while it caused a decrease in stability dimension. This training also improved students' attributions to effort and strategy.

All the aforementioned studies emphasize the importance of learning students' causal attributions to success or failure in EFL contexts and helping them improve their attributional styles for a more successful language learning process. However, there is a very limited number of studies on teachers' causal attributions to their students' EFL success or failure in achievement contexts, especially at university level, even though the importance of teachers' attributions has been repeatedly expressed in the related literature.

In one of those few studies, Gümüş (2014) investigated English language instructors' causal attributions for their students' success and failure in English exams, and in what way instructors' perceptions regarding their students' success or failure and their classroom practices were related. She collected qualitative data from 17 EFL instructors working at Adıyaman University through a questionnaire, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that the instructors attributed their students' success and failure in English exams to a variety of causes. They mostly attributed their students' success to effort, success in other disciplines, background level, interest/personal traits, target setting, and others' influence and circumstances. As for failure, they mainly attributed their students' failure to causes such as not giving adequate importance to English, not believing in success and lack of interest. In addition, it was observed that their classroom practices were mostly consistent with their causal attributions.

In short, all of the aforementioned studies emphasize the fact that attributional processes play a vital role in the language learning process. Further awareness of students' attributions to success and failure may help to uncover the underlying reasons of language learners' relatively low performance in learning English in EFL contexts such as Turkey, and may help teachers increase their students' motivation and persistence in learning English. Despite the abounding number of studies in

other EFL or ESL contexts, there is still a big gap in this area in Turkey. As such, it is hoped that the present study will help to minimize this present gap in Turkish EFL context specifically and contribute to attribution research in general.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents information about the research design, setting, participants and data collection and analysis procedures.

3.2 The Rationale for the Research Design

This study is descriptive in nature and employs mixed methods design. Dörnyei (2007) defines mixed methods study as one that "involves the collection or analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stages of the research process" (p.163). Similarly, Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) state that mixed methods research refers to research that involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon. According to them, using varied data collection methods enables triangulation of findings, making it possible for researchers to check the validity of one source with another and corroborate findings. There are different types of mixed methods designs (Creswell & Clark, 2007). This study employs mixed methods sequential explanatory design, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. This design consists of two different phases: a quantitative phase, followed by a qualitative phase. In this type of design, the researcher first collects and analyzes the quantitative data, and based on the results obtained in the first stage, follows up with the qualitative phase mainly to explain the initial results in depth. The quantitative phase may also serve to guide the participant selection for the

second phase or to design and detail the qualitative data collection procedures. Following the qualitative data collection and analysis, the results of this phase are also interpreted and usually merged with those of the first phase so as to reach an overall discussion regarding the research questions (Creswell et al, 2003). Accordingly, this study was conducted in a two-phase fashion. The quantitative data were collected first through a scale and a questionnaire with the purpose of identifying the students' attributions to success or failure in general, their attributional styles and relationships among these attributions and gender, proficiency level and high school background. Data from this phase were also used to select the participants for the interviews in the qualitative part and specify the data collection procedures which were roughly designed at the beginning of the study. In the second stage, the qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured interviews from the participants selected through purposeful sampling by using the results of the first phase, and these data mainly served to elaborate on the findings of the quantitative part, which needed further explanation. Although the methods regarding the study were determined and planned on the onset, most of the procedures in the qualitative phase were dependent on and shaped by the data obtained in the first stage, which means the study embraces both fixed and emergent characteristics as suggested by Creswell and Clark (2007). When discussing the principles of using mixed methods design, Creswell and Clark (2007) put forward that this design type should match the research problems and the purpose of the study. This study called for mixed methods because one data source was not sufficient to answer the research questions and the study needed to be enhanced via a second method so that the initial exploratory results could be explained in more detail. In their work, they also state that designing a mixed methods study is challenging and a researcher needs to have at least one good reason to undertake one. Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) lists five broad reasons for combining methods, which are triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion. This study addressed three of these reasons: triangulation to corroborate the results from different methods and increase validity, complementarity to enhance and clarify the results of one method with those from the other, and development to use the results of one method to develop or inform the other method for sampling and implementation decisions. In another study, Bryman (2006)

presents a more detailed list and introduces sixteen distinct reasons for combining methods. Based on his typology, this study addresses six of the reasons provided: triangulation or greater validity, offset (compensating the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of the other), explanation (helping to explain the findings generated by the other method), sampling (using one approach to facilitate the sampling of respondents or cases), credibility (employing two approaches to enhance the integrity of findings) and illustration (using qualitative data to clarify quantitative findings, mentioned in the literature as "putting meat on the bones of dry quantitative findings" (pp. 105-107). Apart from the reasons for combining methods, according to Creswell and Clark (2007), there are four key decisions involved in mixing methods which are related to the level of interaction between the two strands, priority and timing of these and deciding where and how to mix the two strands. As far as the level of interaction is concerned, this study is interactive in nature as the conduct of the qualitative strand depended on the results from the other strand and the data from both strands were interpreted in a comparative and complementary fashion. Although this design type puts more emphasis on the quantitative phase, this study attached more priority to the qualitative phase as this phase provided meatier data regarding the research questions and shed more light on the students' attributions. As for timing, it followed sequential timing since the two strands were carried out in two distinct phases, following each other. And finally, for the point of interface, or the stage of integrating the two methods, data collection period was the mixing point as the quantitative results were used to make decisions about the qualitative data collection procedures and participant selection, which is referred to as "connecting" in the literature (Creswell and Clark, 2007).

In the literature, it is observed that attribution studies relied on both quantitative (Hsieh, 2004; Gobel & Mori, 2007; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Bain et al, 2010; Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Hashemi & Zabihi, 2011; Koçyiğit, 2011; McClure et al, 2011; Mori, 2011; Zohri, 2011; Tekir, 2012; Sekar, 2013) and qualitative methods (Williams & Burden, 1999; Tse, 2000; Ushoida, 2001; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004; Şahinkarakaş, 2011; Taşkıran, 2010; Gümüş, 2014) depending on the research problems and the aim of the study. In quantitative studies, the data were mostly collected through instruments ranging

from scales to questionnaires which made generalization possible while in qualitative studies, open-ended questionnaires, interviews, observations and document analysis were commonly used claiming that these data collection methods allowed more freedom of expression for the participants and gave more priority to their perceptions. As both methods have their own advantages and drawbacks, recently an approach to combining these two different methods has been adopted as an effective way to utilize the strengths of both and reach more informative and enlightening results regarding student attributions, and thus mixed methods designs have become common practice (Suarez & Sandiford, 2008; Özdiyar, 2008; Peacock, 2010; Özkardeş, 2011; Semiz, 2011; Yılmaz, 2012; Dong et al, 2013; Güleç, 2013; Höl, 2016). Patton (2002) argues that mixed methods enable researchers to check the validity of their findings across data sources and that such a triangulation is useful for both showing consistency across findings as well as differences. Creswell (2005) and Dörnyei (2007) also support the use of mixed methods, noting that this type of research allows researchers to choose from the full repertoire of methodological options, thus generating many different kinds of creative mixes. Nunan and Bailey (2009) conclude that the general trend in the field of language learning has been a broadened acceptance of varied research approaches. As in the studies mentioned above that aimed at revealing student and / or teacher attributions in the best way possible, this study utilized mixed methods sequential explanatory design, which addressed the research questions best and every possible effort was made to meet its requirements.

3.3 Setting

This study was conducted at the Department of Basic English (DBE), School of Foreign Languages, METU during the 2015-2016 academic year. As METU is an English-medium university, DBE offers one-year English preparatory program that forms the basis for the students' departmental needs. In this program, the students who cannot pass the English Proficiency Exam (EPE) given at the beginning of the academic year are placed in different levels, i.e., beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate, according to their English

proficiency level as determined by the Placement Exam. These students receive one-year instruction at DBE in which they are exposed to an intensive English program targeting reading, writing, listening and speaking skills as much as language and functions, and the overall aim of the program is to bring all the students to a level, at the end of the year, at which they are proficient enough in English to be able to follow their academic studies in their departments. In June, the students eligible for the exam (those with a yearly achievement grade of 65) take the EPE and proceed to their departments if they receive 60 or above. If they fail, however, they attend the summer school, which is optional. At the end of the summer school program, all the students take the EPE again. Those who fail have another chance in the September EPE, which is normally meant for the newly-registered students, and if they fail again in this exam, they have to continue with the repeat program in their second year. They need to successfully complete this program before they go to their departments. In the repeat program, the students are provided with 15 hours of English a week for a one-year period, and they follow an independent program from the other levels. In other words, they do not use the same materials from the previous year or from other levels. Their performance is assessed through writing portfolios, regular quizzes and three separate midterms every term, and they have to reach a yearly achievement grade of 65 to be able to sit the EPE exam. They need to be successful in one of the EPE exams given in June, August or September. Otherwise, at the end of the second year, they are dismissed or transferred to another university that offers Turkish-medium instruction.

3.4 The First Phase of the Study (The Quantitative Part)

In the first phase of the study, quantitative data were collected from students through a scale, CDS II, and a questionnaire, LAAS. Detailed information regarding this phase is provided below.

3.4.1 Participants

In this study, the first group of participants was the repeat level students who failed to pass to the English proficiency exam in their first year and had to repeat the program in their second year. Although there were officially 356 students registered in this level and all the repeat classes were included in the study, 254 students took part in the main study as some of the students chose not to attend school and prepare for the EPE on their own out of school or preferred to receive instruction in one of the other levels that fit their proficiency level (a legal right provided to repeat students only). 2 classes, composed of approximately 30 students, were used for the pilot study and 3 students for the think-aloud protocol before the pilot study. With the exclusion of these students and those who were absent during data collection, the final number of participants came down to 254. Among the participants, 140 were female and 114 were male, and they came from different educational and social backgrounds, and were registered in different departments. Majority of the students (N: 144) came from Anatolian High Schools while the rest came from General High Schools (N: 39), Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools (N: 38), Vocational High Schools (N: 23) and Science High Schools (N: 7). Most of the students regarded themselves unsuccessful considering their EPE result (N: 146) while 40 students perceived themselves successful although they failed in the proficiency exam. As for their placement level from the previous year, a great majority of the students in the sample (N: 170) were placed in the beginner level in the previous year while the others were placed either in the elementary level (N: 80) or the intermediate level (N: 4). Their level for the repeat year is not given here as the repeat group consists of students with different proficiency levels. Detailed descriptive statistics regarding the participants' demographic information are provided in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1
The distribution of participants in the first phase by gender, high school type, perceived success rating and placement in the first year

		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	140	55,1
	Male	114	44,9
	Total	254	100,0

Table 3.1 (cont'd)
The distribution of participants in the first phase by gender, high school type, perceived success rating and placement in the first year

		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
High School Type	General High School	39	15,5
	Anatolian High School	144	57,4
	Vocational High School	23	9,2
	Anatolian Teacher Training High School	38	15,1
	Science High School	7	2,8
	Total	251	100,0
Perceive Success Rating	Successful	40	21,5
	Unsuccessful	146	78,5
	Total	186	100,0
Placement level in their 1st year	Beginner to Pre-Intermediate	170	66,9
	Elementary to Intermediate	80	31,5
	Intermediate to Upper-Intermediate	4	1,6
	Total	254	100,0

Repeat students were chosen for this study for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, almost all the attribution studies conducted in the field of foreign language education abroad and in Turkey targeted students studying at a proficiency level ranging from beginner to advanced, but there is little mention of repeat students in the literature. This is probably because "repeat level" is not an internationally-recognized proficiency level in the world, and in Turkey, only English-medium universities such as METU offer this level to their students by separating these failure-prone, motivationally at-risk students from the other levels believing that they have different needs. Secondly, within METU context, these students were of interest because they come to this university with exceptionally high scores from university entrance exam (LYS) similar to their counterparts in other levels, but they fail in learning English and passing EPE at the end of the year. Understanding what makes these learners different from those who succeed in passing to their departments, revealing their causal attributions regarding failure and determining whether they have maladaptive attributional styles and why would be a great contribution both to these students, the department and the related literature.

3.4.2 Instrumentation and Data Collection

In this phase of the study, two different data collection instruments, Causal Dimensions Scale II (CDS II) and Language Achievement Attribution Scale

(LAAS), were used to reveal the general tendency among the repeat students regarding their causal attributions and attributional styles. Together with these scales, information regarding the students' achievement scores from last year and previous term, their last proficiency score, perceived success rating and demographics was also collected.

Students' ***academic achievement*** was measured by their final proficiency grade (EPE), their first-year GPA, which is the average of the grades the students received in the midterms, quizzes, writing portfolios and speaking exams throughout the academic year.

Before measuring students' causal dimensions related to their perceived success or failure in EPE, their ***perceptions of success or failure*** were assessed using a 10-point Likert scale (1=very unsuccessful, 10= very successful) (see Appendix D). This part helped to understand how successful the participants found themselves considering their EPE score and thus interpret the results based on their own perceptions of success, as highly suggested in the literature, rather than using their achievement scores only.

Causal Dimensions Scale (CDS II), which was based on Weiner's Attribution Theory and developed by McAuley, Duncan, and Russell (1992), was used to measure the participants' causal dimensions regarding their attributions to perceived success or failure. It contains 12 items including four subscales: locus of causality (items 1, 6, and 9), stability (items 3, 7, and 11), personal control (items 2, 4, and 10), and external control (items 5, 8, and 12) that are each scored on a 5- point scale (see Appendix B for Turkish, Appendix D for English). Likert scale, the most common type used in survey research, was preferred as it enables measuring the participants' opinions, perceptions or beliefs quite accurately by determining their level of agreement to a statement by choosing one of the stems (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993; Oppenheim, 1992). Scores for the subscales range from 3 to 15, with higher values representing attributions that are more internal, stable, personally controllable, and externally controllable. Based on the data from four studies, McAuley, Duncan, and Russell (1992) have reported internal consistency values for

the four subscales as follows: locus of causality, *r* = .60 to .71; stability, *r* = .65 to .68; personal control, *r* = .71 to .90; external control, *r* = .71 to .92.

As the scale was available in Turkish version and it was used and validated in a similar context before (Semiz, 2011), necessary permissions were taken and it was adapted by the researcher. The scale was checked first by two English instructors for its comprehensibility and clarity in Turkish, and later by two field experts and two assessment and evaluation experts for face validity. After the necessary changes and adaptations, the items were tested for clarity with 3 repeat students through a think-aloud protocol and the final version was piloted by the researcher herself in two repeat classes (n: 30) to see whether there was any part or item still not understood clearly. The pilot study was used to improve both the data gathered from the participants and the data collection procedures to be followed with necessary changes as suggested by Yin (2003). Following the final changes made to the scale, it was implemented in all of the repeat classes (N: 254) in the first week of April, 2016 and analyzed in the next two weeks.

The reliabilities for the four subscales obtained in this study were as follows: locus of causality, *r* = .41; stability, *r* = .71; personal control, *r* = .65; external control, *r* = .64. The reliability of locus dimension was found to be lower than expected, which showed a similarity to the results of the original study by McAuley, Duncan, and Russell (1992) and also the study by Can (2005) in which the Turkish version was used for the first time. In that study, the reliability of the locus dimension was reported as .58. In more recent studies, researchers reported relatively higher reliability such as .66 and .62 (Koçyiğit, 2011; Semiz, 2011) for this dimension, but it remained lower compared to other dimensions. This could be because of item 1 in that subscale "This score reflects an aspect of myself", which seemed problematic in the piloting stage and was revised several times until it was clear enough for the participants. In the main study, this item was presented with some prompts in parenthesis as in "This score reflects an aspect of me (effort, ability etc.)", but it seems that the students still had difficulty in understanding this statement accurately, a problem that existed in the previous studies which employed this scale.

As for construct validity, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS to test whether the data fit the measurement model. When the criteria for goodness of fit were analyzed, X^2/Sd was found to be 1.635, which indicates a good fit with the model. When this value is 5 or below, it is accepted that the data fit the model well. GFI was found to be 0.953. When GFI is >.90, it indicates a good model fit. AGFI was found to be 0.924, which again shows an acceptable value. RMR was found to be 0.048. A RMR value < 0.050 indicates an acceptable goodness of fit. RMSEA was found to be 0.050. RMSEA values < 0.050 indicate a good model fit (Sümer, 2000). All in all, results of the CFA reveal that the data obtained through this scale indicates a good model fit.

Participants' specific reasons for their perceived success and failure in the proficiency exam were measured through ***Language Achivement Attribution Scale*** **(**LAAS), which was developed by Hsieh and Schallert (2008). In the original form, it contained eight questions in which the participants were asked to report the score they had received on their mid-term exams and how satisfied they were with the result. According to their level of satisfaction with the result, the students' perceived success and failure were determined. The participants were then asked to rate the degree to which they believed their exam result was due to their ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, teachers' grading system and strategy. As the Turkish version of the scale was available and validated in a similar context before (Semiz, 2011), necessary permissions were taken and it was used to determine the repeat students' causal attributions for success or failure. These attributions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. However, after the feedback from two field experts in Attribution Theory, it was concluded that these six attributions in the scale did not cover the theory completely and seven more items were added to the scale from the literature, and the final version included thirteen items, each of which indicated a different causal attribution to success or failure (see Appendix C for Turkish, Appendix E for English). This scale was piloted and implemented simultaneously with CDS II. The reliability of this scale was found to be .60, which is a moderate but acceptable value in the literature. The results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) conducted to reveal any subscales in LAAS revealed that the thirteen items that loaded on five different factors were not grouped

very meaningfully according to the literature. Therefore, depending on expert opinion, it was not treated like a scale as it was composed of items each measuring a different causal attribution. Instead, it was treated like a questionnaire and each item was analyzed and interpreted descriptively. Previous forms of LAAS in the literature, including the original version, were also treated as a questionnaire although it was called it a scale.

To sum up, the two scales with the demographic part were administered to a total of 254 repeat students, and it took them 15-20 minutes to complete them. Classroom instructors, who were informed about the study before and gave consent to it, implemented the scales to their students in their teaching hours. No problems were mentioned or observed during the data collection procedure. The students were asked to provide their contact information if they were willing to participate in the interviews in the following phase of the study. The sample for the interviews in the qualitative part was drawn from this group of students.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

The data from the two different phases of the study were analyzed separately in a sequential fashion. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (20.0). For descriptive statistics, numbers, percentages, averages and standard deviations were used while for inferential statistics, t-test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation analysis were used. The data obtained were interpreted at the 95 % confidence interval, and the significance level was set as 5 %. For the 1st research question, students' perceptions of success or failure were analyzed through a separate item in CDS II in the form of a continuum from 1 to 10, with the help of which participants were categorized into two as unsuccessful (1-5) and successful (6-10). This information was also used for t-test analyses, which displayed any differences and similarities between the two groups in terms of their perceptions, causal dimensions and attributions as well as their proficiency and achievement scores. For the 2nd question regarding students' causal dimensionality, after negative items were reverse-coded, students' CDS II scores, separately for each sub-scale, were calculated and presented in the form of mean scores and standard deviations. And

for the 3rd question on students' specific causal attributions, data from LAAS were analyzed and presented as mean scores and standard deviations item-wise. For all the questions above, differences between two genders were analyzed via t-test while differences among students who come from different high schools were analyzed through ANOVA.

3.5 Sample Selection for the Qualitative Part

In this study, data from the quantitative phase, i.e., CDS II and LAAS, were also used to select participants for the interviews in the qualitative phase. Barbour (2008) states that researchers sometimes use quantitative methods to furnish a sampling pool for more in-depth qualitative work. More specifically, they utilize the detailed information from records, questionnaire or survey data to obtain a sampling frame for qualitative work. This also overcomes the problems associated with convenience sampling. For this research, interview participants were selected through purposive sampling, a sample selection technique that seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in depth and in which elements are chosen based on the purpose of the study (Maxwell, 1996). This type of sampling is commonly used in qualitative studies as the purpose of such studies is to discover, understand, and gain insight rather than generalize the results to other populations, and therefore the researcher must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 2009). In this study, to purposefully select the interview participants, Patton's (2002) 'maximum variation sampling' was utilized to ensure a wide variety of participants, or to make the sample as representative as possible with different groups and extremes. Accordingly, students were selected using a set of different criteria.

Based on the research questions, interview participants were selected from among the repeat students using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. By using the data on their attributional styles, specific attributions to success and failure ad their self-evaluation (perceived success rating), the students who perceived themselves unsuccessful and who had a maladaptive attributional style, i.e. those who attribute their success or failure mostly to external, stable and uncontrollable causes, were determined. In the literature, these are considered as motivationally at-

risk students who are at a disadvantage because of their unhealthy attributional style ((Lebedina-Manzoni, 2004; Taşkıran, 2010)). Therefore, they comprised the most important part of the sample in terms of answering the research questions. In the literature, studies with an intervention program or an experiment such as attribution retraining (AR) mostly target such students out of similar concerns (Semiz, 2011; Tekir, 2012; Erten, 2015; Höl, 2016). The second group of students selected for the interview was those with an adaptive attributional style, i.e., students who perceived themselves relatively more successful and who tended to attribute their success or failure to internal, unstable and controllable causes. Students in both groups, who met the criteria for sample selection and voluntarily gave their contact information in the first phase, were invited for the interview. The number of students who volunteered for the interviews was unexpectedly high probably because they saw it as an opportunity to express their problems and find solutions before the next proficiency exam to be held in June. Only one student rejected being interviewed due to personal reasons.

3.6 The Second Phase of the Study (The Qualitative Part)

In the second phase of the study, qualiitative data were collected from students and teachers through interview and focus group. Detailed information is provided below.

3.6.1 Participants

3.6.1.1 Students

In this phase of the study, there were two groups of participants: the students selected purposively using the results of the first part and instructors teaching in the repeat classes. As mentioned above, students with a variety of characteristics were selected so as to reach multifaceted and rich information that answers the relevant research question in every aspect. To that end, students were categorized in two main groups according to their responses in CDS II and LAAS: adaptive and maladaptive. Within these categories too, some had a low perceived success rating

(1-5 in the continuum) while the others had higher scores (6-10 in the continuum). As can be seen in Table 3.2 below, there were 13 male and 11 female students in the sample, and they were registered in different departments. Of these 24 students, 15 had a maladaptive attributional style whereas 9 students had an adaptive one. In the maladaptive group, 7 of the students had an Anatolian High School background while the remaining 8 students came from Anatolian Teacher Training High School (n:5), General High School (n: 1), Technical High School (n: 1) and Open High School (n: 1). Only 2 students in this group perceived themselves successful in learning English, thus scoring over 5 in the related continuum, and 12 of them started off as beginner students in their first year while the rest were placed in the elementary level. In the adaptive group, 7 of the students had an Anatolian High School background while the remaining 2 students came from General High School (n: 1) and Vocational High School (n: 1). In this group, 3 students rated themselves successful in learning English while 6 students scored 5 or below. Although they were in the adaptive category, they mostly perceived themselves as unsuccessful. They were all placed in the beginner level in the previous year. The number of participants was not determined in advance as the interviews continued until data saturation was reached. In other words, the researcher conducted interviews with the students who met the sampling criteria till a point where the data started repeating itself and no new information was obtained. According to the literature regarding qualitative research, data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012), when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained (Guest et al., 2006), and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006). Fusch and Ness (2015) state that it is up to the researcher to decide if the data is saturated and that failure to reach it negatively affects the validity of the research. They suggest data triangulation (multiple sources of data) to enhance the validity and attainment of saturation. Bearing this in mind and based on the literature that reveals differences as much as similarities between the attributions of students and teachers to success or failure (Peacock, 2010; Yılmaz, 2012; Sekar, 2013; Erten, 2015), data were gathered from the instructors teaching these students, both to reveal their attributions in relation to their students' success or failure and triangulate the findings.

Table 3.2
The distribution of participants in the second phase by gender, high school type, attributional style, perceived success rating and placement in the first year

		Frequency (n)
Gender	Female	11
	Male	13
	Total	24
High School Type	General High School	2
	Anatolian High School	14
	Vocational High School	1
	Anatolian Teacher Training High School	5
	Anatolian Technical High School	1
	Open High School	1
	Total	24
Attributional Style	Maladaptive	15
	Adaptive	9
	Total	24
Perceived Success Rating	Successful	4
	Unsuccessful	16
	No Answer	4
	Total	24
Placement level in their 1st year	Beginner to Pre-Intermediate	21
	Elementary to Intermediate	3
	Total	24

3.6.1.2 Instructors

There were totally 18 instructors teaching in this level, and interviews were conducted with 8 of them on a voluntary basis. To select participants in this step, snowball sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, was used. In this type of sampling, a few key participants who meet the criteria are located and interviewed. Then, these initial subjects nominate other people with potentially rich and relevant data, and thus it functions like a referral chain. This technique allows the researcher to reach participants who are likely to possess valuable information regarding the research subject, who would be otherwise difficult to locate (Patton, 2002). There were 7 female and 1 male instructors in the sample, and they had work experience ranging from 25 to 37 years. These relatively high numbers are because of the fact that the most experienced teachers at DBE are assigned in the repeat group every year. Therefore, they know the repeat students and the relevant program very well, which was an advantage for the study at hand.

3.6.2 Instrumentation and Data Collection

Interview is a very common data collection technique in qualitative studies. It refers to a two-way encounter between the interviewer and the interviewee, and is often regarded as the "gold standard" of qualitative research as it involves in-depth exchange between researcher and researched (Barbour, 2008). Interview was preferred in this study because it allows the researcher to understand how the participants interpret what they experience and what meaning they attribute to these experiences, which is the core of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). There are basically three types of interview utilized by qualitative researchers: unstructured, semi-structured and structured depending on the formality. In an unstructured interview, the content and the direction of the interview are shaped by the interviewee and the interviewer has little control over the interview process. It is mostly based on the responses of the interviewee. By contrast, in a structured interview, the content and the direction of the interview are shaped beforehand by the researcher and the interview is carried out in a rather formal or rigid format with a pre-determined set of questions. It is the most formal type of interview (Merriam, 2009).

In a semi-structured interview, the one preferred in this study, there is no strictly pre-determined questions, but rather a series of headings, a few open-ended questions to allow respondents to elaborate on the subject or some simple prompts which help to elicit in-depth accounts from respondents in a way that helps them to emphasize some aspects more than others. This type of interview is highly popular with qualitative researchers as it provides flexibility regarding the interview process and enables them to elicit relevant, valuable and analytically rich data (Barbour, 2008). Semi-structured interviews both prevent the researcher from dictating the direction of the interview and the respondent from leading the interview completely and getting carried away with irrelevant data. While allowing the researcher to understand full range and depth of people's impressions, experiences and perceptions, it also enables the opportunity to learn about their responses to the questionnaire (Mertens, 2005).

Accordingly, in this study, to gain a rich and in-depth understanding of repeat students' attributional styles and specific causal attributions to success and failure, 24 students, referred to as 'key informants' in the literature, were interviewed through a ***semi-structured interview*** protocol and they were asked to elaborate on their responses in CDS II and LAAS from the first phase of the study and provide a more detailed picture of their causes for success or failure. The questions used in the interview were prepared by the researcher based on the literature and expert opinion. After checked for relevance and clarity by the supervisor of the study, they were piloted with 2 repeat students and revisions were made accordingly. The resulting 6 questions (see Appendix F for Turkish, Appendix G for English) were used in the main interviews. The interviews were all conducted in Turkish and each took about 25-30 minutes. They were conducted either in the researcher's office or in an available classroom, and they were all recorded with the permission of the respondents. The questions in the interview were shaped and phrased in a flexible, general and open-ended format so as to allow respondents to express themselves as freely, naturally and comfortably as possible and they were encouraged to talk about their thoughts, feelings and experiences without being led or influenced by the researcher. Leading questions or judgmental remarks were especially avoided, and they were given the opportunity to leave the interview if anything disturbed them or made them sad. This was important because it might not be easy for someone who is considered "unsuccessful" within the school system and the social environment to talk about reasons for failure, and some of the students had to disclose their problems or personal matters while providing their responses.

Following the student interviews, the instructors teaching repeat classes were invited for an interview in order to find out what the teachers of repeat classes attribute their students' success or failure to and whether there is a parallelism between the two parties, support the data obtained from the students and triangulate the findings. Eight instructors out of 18 took part in the interviews, which were conducted by the researcher in the first two weeks of June 2016. Similar to the student interviews, ***semi-structured interview*** was employed here and the interviews were carried out in Turkish. They were recorded with the consent of the participants, transcribed and translated into English later. Four of the instructors were interviewed individually,

but the rest was interviewed as a ***focus group*** due to the time concerns of teachers and their heavy workload at the end of the academic year. As a data collection method in qualitative research, a focus group is an interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the topic, and the aim is "to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others" (Patton, 2002, pg. 77). As in the case of students, teacher interviews continued until data were saturated. The interview questions used for the students were modified for the teachers so that it would be easier to see any existing similarities or differences between the two groups and match the two sets of data while analyzing (see Appendix H for Turkish, Appendix I for English).

3.6.3 Data Analysis

There are two main methods suggested for data analysis in qualitative research: descriptive analysis and content analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Descriptive analysis refers to "the process of identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns in the data based upon the pre-determined thematic units." Content analysis involves analyzing the meanings in addition to the relationships of words and concepts, and making inferences out of these. Descriptive analysis is deductive in nature, with a target of checking the pre-existing knowledge and theoretical concepts in a theory. Content analysis, however, is inductive in nature as it is based on generating meaning from the collected data. This study employed both deductive and inductive approaches by coding the data in line with the present literature when possible, such as naming the codes and themes using very common attributions in the existent literature (e.g. effort, ability, task difficulty) and by generating meaning from the data through emerging codes and themes that do not exist in the literature, such as mental and psychological causes, age-related problems and mismatch between the program and the exam. Also, different codes suggested by the second coder were added to the analysis.

The phases suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed during the analysis process: 1. Familiarize yourself with your data, 2. Generate initial codes, 3. Search

for the themes, 4 .Review themes, 5. Define and name the themes and 6. Produce the report (p.20-22).

Qualitative data for this study were collected through interviews and focus group, which were all recorded and transcribed. Then the data were transferred to the software called *Atlas.ti Qualitative Data Analysis 7* and all the relevant sections that answered the research questions were highlighted for coding. As Lodico et. al. (2006) put it, coding is the process of identifying different segments of the data that describe related phenomena and labeling these parts using broad category names. As such, during the content analysis, the data were coded based on the tendency of the respondents using the literature as a framework. After this initial coding, the whole data were checked again for any new codes that were skipped or went unnoticed during the first coding, and necessary additions or changes were made. Based on the literature and the researcher's own knowledge and insights, related codes were combined and reduced to sub-themes by using units with similar meanings and connotations. Meanwhile, 10 % of the data were coded by a second coder, and the data from the two coders were compared on the website http://cat.texifter.com/ to ensure maximum consistency across the data. After discussions and negotiations with the second coder on the meaning and name of the codes and themes, a Kappa value of .91 was reached, which indicates an almost perfect level of consistency between the inter-coders (Stemler, 2001). Upon reaching an agreement with the second coder, the codes and the sub-themes were finalized and reduced to broader themes, or categories, which also facilitated reporting and comprehending the data. The data were presented in the form of themes and sub-themes and supported by direct quotations of the participants (who were all given pseudo names by the researcher), which were selected from the text and translated into English by the researcher since the interviews were conducted in Turkish.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Design

Similar to quantitative studies, qualitative studies need to be discussed in terms of their validity and reliability regarding the collection, analysis and interpretation of

the data as well as the presentation of the findings, and this mostly depends on the rigor in conducting the study (Merriam, 2009). Different from quantitative research in which the terminology of internal validity, reliability, external validity, and objectivity is used, credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability are discussed in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.7.1 Credibility (Internal Validity)

In qualitative research, credibility refers to "whether the participants' perceptions of the setting or events match up with the researcher's portrayal of them in the research report" (Lodico et. al., 2006, p. 273). To deal with probable problems in credibility, Merriam (2009) offers five strategies: triangulation, member checks, adequate engagement in data collection, researcher's position, and peer examination. In this study, triangulation, adequate engagement in data collection, researcher's position, and peer examination were used to increase credibility. Triangulation is the most-commonly used strategy to increase credibility in qualitative studies and it refers to using multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, or multiple theories to cross-check and confirm findings (Denzin, 1978). For this research, interview data collected from the students and the teachers were compared, and the data were analyzed and interpreted independently by two different investigators. The second strategy, adequate engagement in data collection, means spending enough time and effort to discover the participants' understanding of the phenomenon in question, which is possible through data saturation and seeking variation in the data (Merriam, 2009). In this study, interview data were collected until data saturation level was reached, and student data were collected through maximum variation sampling so as to support alternative explanations related to attributions. Another strategy used was the researcher's position. As the researcher is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data in qualitative research, the observations and analyses in the study are determined and influenced by the researcher's worldviews, values, and perspectives (Merriam, 1998). Despite all the efforts spent throughout the study, a researcher may overlook some information, reach wrong interpretations, or have biases. According to Merriam (2009), instead

of eliminating these biases or subjectivities, a researcher needs to explain them and how they affect the research study undertaken. To this end, the methodology and the findings of the study were presented in detail, and the researcher's perspective, biases, and assumptions were mentioned while portraying the results. The final strategy used for credibility was peer examination, which refers to critically discussing research findings with colleagues (Merriam, 1998). In this research, the findings were thoroughly examined and discussed with another researcher familiar to the topic and the thesis supervisor to crosscheck the data.

3.7.2 Consistency / Dependability (Reliability)

Dependability, or consistency, in qualitative research refers to the degree the results are consistent with the data gathered (Lincon & Guba, 1985). Merriam (2009) offers some strategies that can be used in qualitative research to ensure dependability: triangulation, peer examination, investigator' s position, and the audit trail, the first three oh which are also used for credibility. As explained in detail in the previous section, collected data were triangulated through multiple sources of information, i.e. students and teachers, the researcher's perspective, biases, and assumptions were included in the portrayal of the results, and the data were crosschecked by an independent outsider for the consistency of the findings. 10% of the data were separately coded by a peer, with knowledge in the field, and the emerging codes and themes were compared and discussed until a high level of concurrence agreement (.91) was reached. As for audit trail, which refers to a detailed description of the research process often in the form of a journal or record (Lincon & Guba, 1985), all the important details as to how data were gathered, how codes and themes were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the research were written down in a journal to be able to construct a trail for the researcher.

3.7.3 Transferability (External Validity)

Although generalizability is not a concern in qualitative research, as the main focus is on understanding a particular phenomenon in depth through a small, and

purposeful sampling, some degree of transferability is still favorable so that the findings can be applicable or useful in similar settings (Merriam, 2009). For this, a rich and thick description of the whole process and maximum variation in the sample are needed. For the former in this study, rich and detailed description of the research setting, participants, methods and findings with sufficient evidence, i.e. quotes from the interviews, were presented in this study. As for the latter, students showing both adaptive and maladaptive styles with a variety of characteristics, and teachers varying by age, experience and perspectives were chosen for the interviews to ensure maximum variation.

3.8 Ethics and Limitations of the Study

There are three basic ethical concerns that need to be considered in every research study: protection of the participants from harm, confidentiality of the data and deception of the subjects (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Merriam (2009) also adds the right to privacy and the notion of informed consent to this list. In this study, the participants were protected from harm as the study did not include sensitive issues and everything was conducted in a voluntary fashion. Their written consent was taken prior to data collection and they were informed about the purpose and the data collection methods, and they knew that they could leave the study any moment they wanted, especially during the interviews where they needed to disclose their experiences and feelings. As for the confidentiality of the data, the participants were informed that the data collected from them would be used only for research purposes by the researcher and no one else had access to the data. Also, pseudo names were used for the participants and their identities were kept confidential. Their privacy was respected, too. Finally, regarding the deception of the subjects, it was not an issue in this study since the research questions did not require any kind of deception on the part of the participants.

Other than the ethical issues that need addressing, every study could be discussed based on the strengths and weakness, or limitations. Although qualitative research methods enable the researcher to gather rich and in-depth data in a holistic way, they come with their limitations (Merriam, 1998). The first limitation is that it is the

researcher who decides on the amount of analysis, description and summary of the data. Despite every effort, the data may not be as detailed as intended due to lack of time, knowledge or experience. In this study, the data were presented through rich, detailed and thick descriptions as much as possible. The second limitation is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. This suggests that there are no certain guidelines to gather and analyze data, which means the researcher has to rely on his or her own skills and experience throughout the research process. This may cause biases in the final product. Therefore, in this study, data collection instruments and procedures were all piloted and the data were analyzed by second coders and the supervisor to reduce any researcher's biases. Another limitation is linked with the generalizability of the results to other settings. Unlike quantitative studies where the representativeness of the sample is ensured via random sampling and makes generalization possible, in qualitative research the purpose is not to generalize the results, but rather to explain a phenomenon in detail and understand it fully (Merriam, 2009). Accordingly, the interview participants in this study may not fully represent the repeat students in other universities, but as generalizability is not intended here, it is not a relevant concern in this study. The final limitation is related to the participants' honesty. In this research, it was assumed that all the participants responded to the questions sincerely and frankly.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings regarding the research questions. Results from the quantitative data are supported with those from the qualitative data.

4.2 Perceived Success or Failure (Quantitative Findings)

Students' perceptions regarding their performance in the proficiency exam, learning English and repeating the program were explored in addition to the differences between males and females, and among students from different high school backgrounds.

4.2.1 Perception of Students on Their Performance in Learning English

The first research question asked "*How do the repeat students perceive their performance in learning English as determined by the EPE results?".* The participants self-evaluated themselves on a continuum from 1 to 10 in the first part of CDS-II scale, and rating between 1-5 was considered "unsuccessful" while 6-10 was regarded as "successful". Among 254 students, 186 of them rated themselves in this part (M:3,97; SD 1,76) and as shown in Table 4.1 below, 146 of them perceived themselves unsuccessful, and 40 of them considered themselves successful.

Table 4.1
Self-evaluation of students regarding their perceived success and failure

Self-evaluation	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Perceived success	40	21,5
Perceived failure	146	78,5
Total	186	100

As can be seen in the table above, a big majority of the repeat level students (78,5 %) see themselves unsuccessful in learning English, but there is also a group of students (21,5 %) who still consider themselves to be successful learners although they failed in the proficiency exam and had to repeat the whole year.

4.2.2 Perceived Success / Failure and Type of High School

To further analyze the students' perception of their success or failure, one-way ANOVA was conducted to see whether the type of high school that the participants graduated from created a significant difference in their self-evaluation, and as can be seen in Table 4.2 below, the results show that there is no statistically significant difference among the groups in terms of their self-evaluation scores ($p>0.05$).

Table 4.2
Students' self-evaluation of perceived success / failure by high school type

High School Type	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.(2-tailed)
General High School	27	3,55	1,45		
Anatolian High School	105	3,84	1,66		
Vocational High School	16	4,56	1,99	1,68	0,15
Anatolian Teacher Training High School	30	4,26	2,16		
Science High School	6	5,00	1,78		

It can be suggested that although the students come from different types of high schools that offer a variety of programs in English language teaching, they show a similar trend in their perception of success or failure in learning English, mostly oriented towards perceived failure.

4.2.3 Perceived Success / Failure and Attributional Dimensions

The second sub-question in this part concerned whether there was a significant difference between the participants who rated themselves 1-5 in the self-evaluation continuum and those who rated themselves 6-10 in terms of their attributional dimensions. As shown in Table 4.3 below, the t-test results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding their CDS-II scores.

Table 4.3
Students' self-evaluation of perceived success / failure by CDS-II scores

Attributional Dimension	Perceived success / failure	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Locus Of Causality	Unsuccessful	146	11,21	1,71	-0,68	0,49
	Successful	40	11,42	1,58		
Personal Control	Unsuccessful	146	11,24	2,15	0,17	0,86
	Successful	40	11,17	1,96		
Stability	Unsuccessful	146	4,98	1,91	-0,97	0,33
	Successful	40	5,32	2,03		
External Control	Unsuccessful	146	9,05	1,71	-0,55	0,57
	Successful	40	9,22	1,67		

(p>0,05)

As can be understood from the table above, the participants'perception of success or failure did not play a significant role in their attributional dimensions, more specifically in terms of locus of causality, stability and controllability of their causes regarding their EPE performance.

4.2.4 Perceived Success / Failure and Attributional Causes

The third sub-question concerned if there was a significant difference between the students who perceived themselves successful and unsuccessful in terms of their causal attributions to EPE performance, and as seen below, the t-test results show that the two groups displayed statistically significant differences only in three of the items in the questionnaire (p>0,05). According to the results, the mean scores of students in the unsuccessful group were significantly higher in items that attributed

failure to lack of ability (M:2,78, SD:1,10), lack of effort (M:3,95, SD:1,05) and lack of interest in learning English (M:2,78, SD:1,17) than the mean scores of those in the successful group (M:2,30, SD:1,09; M:3,27, SD:1,26; M:2,25, SD:1,05, respectively).

Table 4.4
Students' Self-evaluation of perceived success / failure by LAAS scores

Items	Perceived success / failure	N	Mean	SD	t	p
I don't have ability in learning English.	Unsuccessful	146	2,78	1,10	2,48	0,01
	Successful	40	2,30	1,09		
I didn't put enough effort into studying.	Unsuccessful	146	3,95	1,05	3,44	0,00
	Successful	40	3,27	1,26		
Learning English is difficult.	Unsuccessful	146	3,25	1,05	0,54	0,58
	Successful	40	3,15	1,05		
I had bad luck in the exam.	Unsuccessful	146	2,75	1,09	-1,57	0,16
	Successful	40	3,07	1,32		
Teachers' grading was unfair.	Unsuccessful	146	2,43	1,05	-0,73	0,46
	Successful	40	2,57	0,98		
I didn't use the right strategies.	Unsuccessful	146	4,06	0,84	1,68	0,09
	Successful	40	3,80	0,96		
I'm not interested in learning English.	Unsuccessful	146	2,78	1,17	2,59	0,01
	Successful	40	2,25	1,05		
Teachers' instructional methods were ineffective.	Unsuccessful	146	2,82	1,12	1,41	0,15
	Successful	40	2,55	0,87		
My family didn't support me sufficiently.	Unsuccessful	146	1,74	0,92	-0,06	0,94
	Successful	40	1,75	0,77		
Classroom environment wasn't suitable for learning.	Unsuccessful	146	2,52	1,05	-0,66	0,51
	Successful	40	2,65	1,00		
Health problems affected me negatively.	Unsuccessful	146	2,15	1,16	-0,31	0,77
	Successful	40	2,22	1,38		
My mood on the exam day wasn't good.	Unsuccessful	146	2,95	1,20	-0,53	0,59
	Successful	40	3,07	1,26		
Education system at school didn't match EPE.	Unsuccessful	146	3,22	1,21	1,69	0,09
	Successful	40	2,85	1,33		

As given in the table above, the students who perceived themselves unsuccessful regarding their EPE performance attributed their failure more to lack of ability, lack of effort and lack of interest in learning English, which are all internal causes, compared to those who considered themselves successful.

4.2.5 Perceived Success / Failure and Total Yearly Average and EPE Scores

In an attempt to understand whether the participants' total average from the previous year differed significantly according to their perception of success or failure, t-test analysis was conducted and according to Table 4.5 below, the results show that there was a statistically significant difference between the students who regarded themselves successful (M:68,97; SD:9,51) and those who considered themselves unsuccessful (M:65,18; SD:9,58) in terms of their end-of-year averages in their first year of the preparatory school. Similarly, a statistically significant difference was found between the successful (M:53,28; SD:4,81) and the unsuccessful group (M:45,75; SD:7,97) regarding their last proficiency exam score (p>0,05).

Table 4.5
Students' self-evaluation of perceived success / failure by yearly average and EPE score

	Perceived success / failure	N	M	SD	t	p
Students' average from the previous year	Unsuccessful	135	65,18	9,58	-2,154	0,033
	Successful	38	68,97	9,51		
Students' last EPE score	Unsuccessful	144	45,75	7,97	-5,619	0,000
	Successful	39	53,28	4,81		

By looking at the results above, it can be seen that the students who considered themselves successful both reached a higher average in their first year in the program and scored significantly higher in the last proficiency exam that they sat, which suggests that there is a positive relationship between perception of success and achievement in learning English.

4.2.6 Perceived Success / Failure and Gender

As shown in Table 4.6 below, no statistically siginificant difference was detected between the mean scores of male and female students in terms of their self-evaluation scores (p>0,05).

Table 4.6
Students' self-evaluation of perceived success / failure by gender

	Gender	N	M	SD	t	p
Self- evaluation	Female	96	4,083	1,745	0,879	0,381
	Male	90	3,856	1,790		

The information in the table above suggests that gender does not make an important difference in the way students perceive themselves successful or unsuccessful regarding their proficiency scores.

4.3 Perceived Success or Failure (Qualitative Findings)

Here the perceptions of repeat students in the quantitative part are described in more detail depending on the in-depth qualitative data.

4.3.1 Perception of Students on Their Performance in Learning English

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 24 students for an in-depth analysis of their perception of success or failure in English. The data from the quantitative part concern only their perception regarding their last proficiency score, which is considered the cumulative result of their background knowledge and learning in the preparatory year. Thus, their proficieny-specific perceptions may be extensions of their perceptions related to learning English in general. In order to understand whether they regard themselves successful or unsuccessful in learning English and what the origins of this success or failure are, these students were asked to elaborate on how they evaluate their performance in learning English, and why they consider it as success or failure.

Table 4.7
Students' perceived success or failure in learning English

Student Perception	f	%
Successful	10	41,66
Unsuccessful	13	54,16
Neither successful nor unsuccessful	1	4,16
Total	24	100

As shown in Table 4.7 above, more than half of the students interviewed (54,16 %) regard themselves as unsuccessful learners. Interestingly, there are only four students in this group who rated their EPE performance as a success (higher than 5) in the quantitative part (See Table 3.2), and three of these students considered their overall performance in learning English to be unsuccessful. There is only one student who regarded himself as a successful student regarding both the proficiency score and learning English in general.

> I don't consider myself successful. I simply can't learn English. Looking at other students' performance and exam grades, I am a real failure! (M3)
>
> I am not successful in English; I mean I can't learn it! Normally, I am a successful student in other courses, but learning English is a process that requires constant hard work and patience, and this is a problem for me. (A21)
>
> Yes, I think I am successful. I mean I have an ability for English. I can speak well; I even have some foreign friends. Yes, I failed in the exam, but I had different reasons for that. (M6)

4.3.2 Origins of Students' Perceptions in Success / Failure Cases

When these students were asked about the origins of their perceived success or failure, i.e, how they decided if they were successful or unsuccessful, they came up with a variety of criteria that they based their perceptions on. According to Table 4.8 below, for the group who considered themselves unsuccessful, among a total of 10 stated origins, the most commonly-reported criteria for failure were their grades (26,31 %) and proficiency score (15,78 %), which means that the students tend to explain their failure by using their achievement scores. Another important criterion for them was comparison with others (15,78 %), suggesting that while deciding whether they consider themselves successful or unsuccessful, they compare their performance to that of other students. They also expressed other criteria varying from failure history in language learning to lack of aptitude in learning English (5,26 % each).

Table 4.8
Origins of students' perceived failure in learning English

Origins of failure	f	%
Averages / grades (midterms & quizzes)	5	26,31
EPE score	3	15,78
Comparison with others	3	15,78
Comparion to other subjects	2	10,52
Being in a repeat class despite hard work	1	5,26
Failure history in languages	1	5,26
Lack of aptitude in foreign langauges	1	5,26
Lack of aptitude in learning English	1	5,26
Low grammar points in exams	1	5,26
Rote memorization / no real learning	1	5,26
Total	19	100

> I am really unsucessful! My midterm results are a proof for this. I study hard, in my own way, but I can't even understand the questions in the reading part of the exam. So yes, my grades show that I am not successful! (M1)
>
> I am unsuccesssful because my aptitude for learning languages is definitely lower compared to other people. (A20)

The students interviewed about the origins of their perceived success came up with 11 different criteria to explain their performance.

Table 4.9
Origins of students' perceived success in learning English

Origins of Success	**f**	**%**
Ability to communicate with people	4	19,04
Ability to understand English	4	19,04
Sense of achievement (starting with almost zero English and showing progress)	4	19,04
Ability to participate in the lesson and express ideas in class discussions	2	9,52
Ability to follow lessons	1	4,76
Ability to write easily in English	1	4,76
Ability to gain a place in social environments (esp. with foreigners)	1	4,76
General ability	1	4,76
Grades	1	4,76
Improvement in writing and listening skills	1	4,76
Liking for and interest in English	1	4,76
Total	21	100

As can be seen from the table above, the most-commonly stated criteria were the ability to communicate with people and to understand English, both in written and spoken form, in addition to the sense of achievement resulting from the progress shown during the preparatory school year (19,04 % each). They also based their success on factors ranging from the ability to follow and participate in lessons (9,52

%) to more speicific ones such as improvement in writing skills (4,76 %). Interestingly, though, the most-frequently stated origins of success were more personal or internal unlike the case with the origins of failure, in which the participants referred to external criteria more often.

> Yes, I find myself successful in general, although I failed in the exam (laughing). I can easily communicate with people in English. I can make foreign friends. I can actively take part in discussion in the class. So yes, I am successful. (M2)
>
> I am successful because I can follow the lessons, and I can understand everything. When I miss a lesson, I can study it from the coursebook and I can understand it without my teacher. (A16)

4.3.3 Students' Perception of Repeating the Program

As the sample consisted of students who all failed in the proficiency exam and had to repeat their preparatory year, they were also asked about their perception of repeating the program and whether or not it was an indication of failure in their eyes.

Table 4.10
Students' perception of repeating the preparatory program

Perception of Repeating	f	%
Failure	6	25
Not Failure	18	75
Total	24	100

As the Table 4.10 shows, a majority of the students interviewed (75 %) did not consider repeating the program as a sign of failure, which suggests that their perceptions regarding their specific proficiency score, their performance in learning English and their repeating the program were not necessarily the same or similar.

> Yes, repeating the program is a failure, especially for me! I came to METU through the Vertical Treansfer Exam, and I am already older than the other students. Apart from this, I studied hard last year. I shouldn't have failed. (M5)
>
> Repeating the program is definitely not a failure in my opininon. It all depends on the exam day! If you have personal problems or an illness that day, or something bad happens before the exam, you may fail despite your effort and knowledge. It is a matter of luck, I think. (M11)
>
> No, it isn't. Actually, I am happy I failed because I really improved my English. I corrected my mistakes and learned more vocabulary and grammar. Now, I will go to my department with more confidence. So no, repeating the program is not a failure for me. (A17)

4.4 Students' Causal Dimensionality Tendencies

In the first phase of the study, data regarding all the repeat students' causal dimensionality were collected through CDS-II, which included four sub-scales, i.e. locus of causality, personal control, stability and external control. While the results from this scale were mainly used for determining the sample for the qualitative part, they also shed light on the participants' perceptions of their proficiency scores, or exam performance, in relation to their attributional dimension.

As can be seen from the table below, students' scores in the locus of control (M:11,26; SD: 1,78) and personal control (M:11,37; SD: 2,00) sub-scales are quite high, which suggests that they mostly attribute their perceived success or failure in the EPE exam to internal and personally-controllable causes, indicating an adaptive and healthy attributional style. Their scores in the stability (M:5,02; SD:1,91) and external control (M: 9,19; SD: 1,72) sub-scales, however, are relatively lower, which shows that they do not ascribe their outcome to stable, or fixed, causes or externally-controlled factors, again representing a healthily-functioning, or adaptive, attributional style. In short, the results, despite giving a rather general picture, suggest that the students tend to take responsibility for the outcome whether they perceive it as success or failure, and do not resort to causes out of their control much to explain their performance.

Table 4.11
Students' tendencies regarding the causal dimensions

Causal Dimension	N	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Locus Of Causality	254	11,25	1,78	3,00	15,00
Personal Control	254	11,36	2,00	3,00	15,00
Stability	254	5,02	1,91	3,00	15,00
External Control	254	9,19	1,72	3,00	15,00

4.4.1 Students' Causal Dimensionality and Type of High School

In order to analyze the relationship between the high school type and causal dimensions, one-way ANOVA was conducted to see whether the type of high school

that the participants graduated from made a significant difference in their causal dimensionality tendencies, and as can be seen in Table 4.12 below, the results show that there is no statistically significant difference among the groups in terms of their causal dimensionality patterns ($p>0.05$).

Table 4.12
Students' causal dimensionality tendencies by high school type

Causal Dimension	High School Type	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.(2-tailed)
Locus Of Causality	General High School	39	11,79	1,93	1,98	0,09
	Anatolian High School	144	10,99	1,72		
	Vocational High School	23	11,34	1,72		
	Anatolian Teacher Training High School	38	11,50	1,98		
	Science High School	7	11,71	0,75		
Personal Control	General High School	39	11,84	2,15	2,03	0,09
	Anatolian High School	144	11,24	1,93		
	Vocational High School	23	11,34	2,44		
	Anatolian Teacher Training High School	38	11,60	1,73		
	Science High School	7	9,71	2,05		
Stability	General High School	39	5,33	2,18	2,07	0,08
	Anatolian High School	144	4,81	1,79		
	Vocational High School	23	4,69	1,52		
	Anatolian Teacher Training High School	38	5,71	2,19		
	Science High School	7	5,14	2,11		
External Control	General High School	39	9,12	1,673	0,55	0,69
	Anatolian High School	144	9,22	1,81		
	Vocational High School	23	8,82	1,80		
	Anatolian Teacher Training High School	38	9,44	1,35		
	Science High School	7	8,85	1,95		

It can be observed that although the students come from different types of high schools, they display a similar trend in their causal dimensionality patterns, which suggests that high school type does not play an important role in the way students assign causes to their educational outcomes.

4.4.2 Students' Causal Dimensionality and Gender

As a result of t-test analyses conducted to determine whether or not the students' causal dimensionality scores differed significantly by gender, it was observed that gender made a statistically significant difference only in one of the four sub-scales, which was external control (t=2.290; p=0.023<0,05). External control scores of female students (M=9,414) were significantly higher than those of male students (M=8,921). No statistical difference was found between the two groups in the other three sub-scales, as can be seen in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13
Students' causal dimensionality tendencies by gender

Causal Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Locus Of Causality	Female	140	11,321	1,756	0,647	0,518
	Male	114	11,175	1,825		
Personal Control	Female	140	11,464	1,864	0,866	0,387
	Male	114	11,246	2,160		
Stability	Female	140	4,943	1,970	-0,779	0,437
	Male	114	5,132	1,855		
External Control	Female	140	9,414	1,591	2,290	0,023
	Male	114	8,921	1,839		

The findings above suggest that female students tend to explain their EPE performance by using external causes more than boys, which is a sign of maladaptive attributional style on the part of the girls.

4.5 Causal Attributions to Perceived Success or Failure

Although causal dimensionality information gives an overall picture related to students' attributional thinking, it only helps to understand their general tendency while interpreting and explaining their performance. Thus, further data are needed to understand what specific causes the repeat students ascribe their success or failure to, and if any of the causes are referred to more commonly or emphasized more compared to others. For this purpose, a 13-item questionnaire, with an open-ended

item at the end, was implemented to the students to reveal how they accounted for their outcome in specific terms.

Table 4.14
Students' causal attributions to their perceived success or failure as determined by laas (questionnaire)

Items	N	M	SD	Min.	Max.
1. I don't have ability in learning English.	254	2,63	1,11	1,00	5,00
2. I didn't put enough effort into studying.	254	3,79	1,12	1,00	5,00
3. Learning English is difficult.	254	3,16	1,07	1,00	5,00
4. I had bad luck in the exam.	254	2,80	1,16	1,00	5,00
5. Teachers' grading was unfair.	254	2,47	1,08	1,00	5,00
6. I didn't use the right strategies.	254	3,92	0,96	1,00	5,00
7. I'm not interested in learning English.	254	2,64	1,19	1,00	5,00
8. Teachers' instructional methods were ineffective.	254	2,73	1,12	1,00	5,00
9. My family didn't support me sufficiently.	254	1,74	0,93	1,00	5,00
10. Classroom environment wasn't suitable for learning.	254	2,55	1,08	1,00	5,00
11. Health problems affected me negatively.	254	2,16	1,19	1,00	5,00
12. My mood on the exam day wasn't good.	254	2,94	1,24	1,00	5,00
13. Education system at school didn't match EPE.	254	3,11	1,27	1,00	5,00

As Table 4.14 above demostrates, the two highest scores belong to item 6, use of wrong strategy (M:3,92; SD: 0,96), and item 2, lack of effort (M:3,79; SD: 1,12), which are both internal, unstable and controllable causes according to the literature. This finding is parallel with the aforementioaned results of CDS-II, which suggest that the repeat students tend to attribute their outcome more to personal and controllable factors. Other two items that were commonly-referred to with relatively high scores are 3 and 13, which are related to task difficulty (M:3,16; SD:1,07) and the mismatch between the school system and EPE (M:3,11; SD:1,27), respectively, both of which are external, stable and uncontrollable causes. While the students referred to lack of ability (M:2,63; SD:1,11), bad luck (M:2,80; SD:1,16), lack of interest (M:2,64; SD:1,19), ineffective instructional methods (M:2,73; SD:1,12), unsuitable classroom environment (M:2,55; SD:1,08) and mood on the exam day (M:2,94; SD:1,24) as their causes for the outcome at a mediocre level, they attributed their performance less to teachers' unfair grading (M:2,47; SD:1,08), lack of family support (M:1,74; SD:0,93) and health problems (M:2,16; SD:1,19), which are all uncontrollable in nature according to Attribution Theory.

In order to elicit any other possible causes that were not included in the items given above, an open-ended item was added to the questionnaire so that the students would be able to express their opinions more freely and elaborate on their prior responses without the limitation of pre-set statements. This part was content-analyzed and coded manually, and the students' responses were categorized into two, as the causes for success and failure, which were again sorted as internal and external, to facilitate interpretation and understanding.

Table 4.15
Internal causes for perceived failure

Themes	f	%
1. Anxiety & stress	11	29.72
2. Health problems	6	16.21
3. Motivational / psychological factors	5	13.51
4. Personal Problems	4	10.81
5. Adaptation problems	2	5.40
6. Lack of background knowledge	2	5.40
7. Lack of effort	2	5.40
8. Lack of learning strategies	2	5.40
9. Lack of study habits	1	2.70
10. Mood	1	2.70
11. Miscellanous	1	2.70
Total	37	100

As the Table 4.15 above shows, out of 11 categories elicited, the most commonly-reported causes in the open-ended part were anxiety&stress (29,72 %), health problems (16,21 %), motivational / psychological factors (13,51 %) and personal problems 10,81 %). Other causes that the students attributed their performance to were adaptation problems, lack of background knowledge, lack of effort, and lack of learning strategies (5,40 % each). The least commonly-referred causes were lack of study habits, mood and other (2,70 % each).

> I was extremely stressed in the reading and writing parts of the exam, and that affected my outcome. If I had had more guidance about the exam, I probably wouldn't have been so nervous, or stressed.
>
> I had an injury and couldn't attend classes for a month. As a result, I missed a big part of the program and couldn't make up for it.
>
> I experienced some personal problems last year, and they were really upsetting. I couldn't concentrate on my studies, and I failed. I don't even want to remember those memories.

Table 4.16
External causes for perceived failure

Themes	f	%
1. Education system at DBE	12	26.08
2. Teacher-related problems	12	26.08
3. Mismatch between the program and EPE	7	15.21
4. Exam-specific problems	5	10.86
5. Fairness issues related to the exam	4	8.69
6. Lack of guidance for EPE	2	4.34
7. Poor / insufficient study areas for students	2	4.34
8. Lack of EPE practice in the program	1	2.17
9. Miscellanous	1	2.17
Total	46	100

According to the table above, students came up with a total of nine different categories regarding the external causes of their perceieved failure. Among these emerging themes, they referred to the education system at DBE and teacher-related problems (26,08 % each) more compared to other causes such as the mismatch between the program and EPE (15, 21 %), exam-specific problems (10,86 %), fairness issues related to the exam (8,69 %). The least commonly-reported causes in this group were lack of guidance for EPE and poor / insufficient study environment for students (4,34 % each) in addition to lack of EPE practice in the program and other factors (2,17 % each).

> There was a mismatch between the yearly program and the exam. I definitely didn't know the exam format and thus studied in the wrong way. We should have been informed better regarding the exam content, difficulty level and item types.
>
> There wasn't enough EPE practice in the second term. We simply weren't ready.
>
> Five-hour teaching in the beginner and pre-intermediate levels was very ineffective and tiring. That affected my performance a lot.

Table 4.17
External causes for perceived success

Themes	f	%
1. Encouragement of the company where the student works to use English	1	100
Total	1	100

As shown in Table 4.17 above, only one student referred to a cause regarding success, which was the encouragement of the company where the student worked

part-time to use English at work. No internal causes for success were elicited in this open-ended part.

With an effort to analyze the students' causal attributions in depth, further data were collected from 24 repeat students through semi-structured interviews, which enabled them to expand on their answers in the quantitative part and explain their causes for failure in detail. The data from this part were analyzed through Atlas.ti 7 software, which made it possible to code a large amount of qualitative data in a more efficient way, reduce the codes into themes by using the network analysis in the program and check the inter-coder reliability of the data more easily. After the transcribed data were imported to the program, the parts in the students' responses that answered the research questions were selected in the text, marked as quotations to be used later and coded. During the coding, both theory-driven (i.e. deductive) and data-driven (i.e. inductive) approaches were used; in other words, data were coded and named in accordance with the existing literature where possible, and if not, they were coded as new categories, emerging from the data. In this way, the advantages of both approaches were used since theory-driven coding is considered to be more structured, consistent with the literature and thus more reliable while data-driven coding is regarded as more valid and likely to produce new themes based on the emerging categories (Dörnyei, 2007). After coding the whole data in relation to the research questions, the codes were crosschecked by an intercoder for reliability, and necessary changes, such as creating new codes or renaming the existing ones, were made until an acceptable level of reliability (kappa value: .92) was reached. Then the resulting codes were reduced to themes by the researcher by placing similar ones under the same category to make the findings more manageable and meaningful.

In order to make the findings in this part more understandable and compare the two groups of students for any similarities and differences, the data were presented separately for maladaptive and adaptive students.

Table 4.18
Maladaptive students' perceived causes of failure in EPE

Themes	Sub-themes	f	%
External causes			
School-related causes	Teacher effect	25	11.01
	Education system in DBE	17	7.48
	Classroom environment	13	5.72
	Instructional problems	5	2.20
	English-medium instruction	3	1.32
	Lack of tutoring, guidance and counselling	2	0.88
Exam-specific causes	Exam-specific problems	16	7.04
	Unluckiness	7	3.08
	Unfair EPE grading	2	0.88
Task difficulty	Task difficulty	12	5.28
Family&social life related causes	Family-related issues	5	2.20
	Negative impact od social life on school	4	1.76
Internal causes			
Psychological & mental causes	Psychological reasons	23	10.13
	Exam anxiety & stress	7	3.08
	Adaptation problems	3	1.32
	Attention & concentration problems	2	0.88
Causes related to effort and strategy	Lack of effort	13	5.72
	Lack of learning skills and strategies	7	3.08
	Wrong approach to learning English	5	2.20
Causes related to motivation&interest	Motivational factors	7	3.08
	Lack of interest	6	2.64
Causes related to lack of knowledge	Lack of background knowledge	5	2.20
	Lack of knowledge in English?	3	1.32
	Lack of knowledge and guidance on EPE	3	1.32
Absenteeism and health problems	Attendance-related problems	5	2.20
	Health issues	5	2.20
Age factor	Age factor	6	2.64
Lack of ability	Lack of ability	4	1.76
Miscellenous	Miscellanous	12	5.28
Total	29	227	100

As seen in Table 4.18 above, a total of 227 codes were elicited from the interview data regarding the causal attributions of repeat students who had a ***maladaptive*** attributional style, which were then reduced to 29 sub-themes and 12 themes, with one category belonging to miscellanous codes that did not fit into any of the themes. These themes were presented in two different groups, as external (111 codes) and internal ones (104 codes), so as to see the students' attributional tendencies more clearly.

As the table shows, the most commonly reported causes of failure in the ***external group*** belonged to *school-related causes*. The participants especially focused on teacher effect (11.01%), education system in DBE (7.48%), and classroom

environment (5.72%) to explain their failure in the proficiency exam. While talking about teacher effect, they mostly reported problems such as the teachers' biases against the pre-intermediate level, i.e. their low expectations for success, their instructional methods, demotivating approach and negative comments, unfair grading or their lack of guidance and motivation related to the proficiency exam, which shows that the students blamed the teachers and their teaching most among all the external causes.

> For me, the reason was the teacher and the class, I mean in the second term. Yes, my English wasn't good maybe, but the teacher's discriminating attitude affected me badly. The teacher was demotivating me and two of my friends, saying that it was impossile for us to pass the exam and that we shouldn't bother to sit the exam. Things like that. After some time, me classmates sided with the teacher, and started treating us in the same way. It was really bad. (M3)

> I think the teacher's way of teaching was a big reason. You know the course books we use.the teacher made us write down everything in the book and the workbook in our notebooks! I didn't like it, but I had to do it. It was a waste of time, and it was very tiring. We could have used the lesson time more effectively. (M5)

While referring to the education system in DBE, they mentioned a variety of causes like the level-setting problem in the Beginner level, the mismatch between the program and EPE, sharp transitions between skills in the program that leads to ineffective learning, too fast and loaded program that does not allow much internalization or production on the part of the students, too much focus on grammar in the program and transfer through the vertical transfer system.

> We had lots of grammar handouts in the program, following one another. We started one handout before really learning the previous one. It was too fast! We were expected to learn and internalize grammar points in a very short time. It was wrong. I couldn't learn in that program and I failed. (M9)

> I was misplaced at the very beninning, I think. I belonged to neither beginner nor elementary group. Beginner level was too easy for me; I didn't learn much. And the elementary level was above my English. So, there should have been another level between these two! I failed because of wrong placement. (M14)

As for the classroom environment, the students complained about many factors such as demotivating classroom environment, too much intimacy and fun in the classroom that prevents discipline and learning, lack of communication between the students and the teacher, small and crowded classes, peer effect as in the form of pessimistic classmates demotivating others or seeing others fail and losing motivation, and poor interaction during group work in class.

> I was trying hard to reach a yearly average of 75 in the pre-intermediate level. I wanted to sit EPE, you know. But the classroom environment affected me badly. Most of the students were misbehaving or not listening. Knowing that they wouldn't be able to take the exam, they were distrupting the lesson, maybe on purpose. (M7)
>
> I had a friend, and he was really pessimistic about the exam. He was always talking about failure and demotivating me. I slipped into a mood of pessimisim, too. It was a leading factor for my failure. (M5)

In the category of *school-related causes*, the interviewees also mentioned instructional problems (2.20%), English-medium instruction (EMI) (1.32%), and lack of tutoring, guidance and counselling (0.88%) to account for their failure. The students reflected on instructional problems in the form of ineffective grammar teaching, such as unproductive handouts, ineffective and old-fashioned instructional methods, such as writing down everything in the books or rote-learning, and superficial teaching with no real purpose. English-medium instruction was another cause elicited from the participants, which apparently made it difficult for some students to follow the lessons and learn the content. Some students also referred to their lack of awareness as to difficulty of EMI while explaining their failure in the exam.

> There was no clear distinction between the skills in the lesson. I mean, for example, we were jumping from a reading lesson to a listening lesson with no connection at all. The transition was too sharp because of the loaded program. The teacher was rushing to finish the program all the time. I couldn't learn in that system, I lost my concentration. (M2)
>
> I didn't know a word of English, and the teacher was teaching the lesson in English...If I had had little knowledge, I could have followed the lesson maybe, but I couldn't even catch a word. It was really hard for me, and I gave up studying. I lost my hope for the exam. (M1)

School-related causes were followed by *exam-specific causes* that included exam-specific problems (7.04%), unluckiness (3.08%) and unfair EPE grading (0.88%). In relation to the exam-speific problems, the participants mentioned causes such as adaptation and concentration problems in the exam, some of which are caused by hot weather or noise, difficulty in understanding accents in the listening part, speed of the speaker, health problems on the exam day or bad mood, technical problems like poor sound quality, difficulty of the exam, and time limitation especially in the reading part.

> I really had great difficulty in the reading and listening part of the exam, especially in the listening. I couldn't hear the listening. The sound was going up and down, and I was sitting

> away from the tape. I even thought about carrying my desk closer to the tape. I got really stressed and angry. (M7)
>
> Teachers cannot be fully objective while grading the writing papers during the year. I think the same thing may have happened in the exam grading. I don't think my paper was graded fairly. (M6)

The students also made attributions to bad luck or unluckiness in the exam within the context of *exam-specific causes*. They stated that factors like coughing of other students, helicopter noise during the listening, hot weather, unfamiliar topic in the reading or writing, and stress contributed to their low performance in the exam.

Although mentioned only twice, unfair exam grading was also reported as a cause for failure in EPE. The students claimed that their failure resulted from the subjective and unfair grading in the writing part of the exam.

The third category among the external themes was task-difficulty (5.28%), which was used to refer to the difficulty in learning English or the specific skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking, rather than the difficulty of the exam itself, which was placed under the theme of exam-specific problems above. While talking about task difficulty in relation to their failure, the students mentioned difficulty both in learning English and in more specific areas such as grammar and vocabulary. They also related their failure to the difficulty of reading and listening in general, which they believed prevented them from passing the proficiency exam.

> The exam was very difficult. I think I failed because of that. Especially the reading and listening parts were really hard. (M7)

As the last external category in this part, the maladaptive group ascribed their failure to *family and social life related causes*, which included family-related issues (2.20%) and negative impact of social life on school (1.76%). They reported that criticism from from the family, family pressure, family problems, and lack of family support were the contributing factors to their failure. One student even mentioned giving up studying at all as a reaction to the family, which led to his failure.

> I had some family problems, and as I have a sensitive personality, they affected me negatively, and I couldn't concentrate on my lessons for a long time. When combined with stress, they brought failure to me. (M11)

As expected from the maladaptive group, the students tended to ascribe their low performance mostly to external and uncontrollable causes, rather than taking responsibility for it, which was perhaps why they failed in the exam in the first place.

The students reported a total of 104 causes in the ***internal group*** to explain their failure, which were then reduced to seven themes by the researcher. The first category in this group was related to *psychological and mental causes*, which made up the biggest proportion in the internal group. Here, the students came up with psychological reasons (10.13%), exam anxiety and stress (3.08%), adaptation problems (1.32%), and attention and concentration problems (0.88%) in an effort to account for their failure. As can be seen in Table 4.18, the students attributed their failure to psychological and mental factors most. Within this respect, they referred to many attributional causes such as personal problems, fear of failure, frustration towards the teacher, school, system and EPE, too high expectations from self, lack of self-confidence, learned helplessness, negative attitude towards English, overconfidence and procrastination. Another sub-theme in this category was exam anxiety and stress. Some students explained their failure through factors such as chronic exam anxiety, lack of control and lowered perception in the exam, not being able to concentrate on questions, and unproductive use of time, all resulting from stress and anxiety. They also mentioned some bigger-scale causes such as adaptation problems here. It seems that factors like difficulty in adapting to university life, language-learning process in general or teacher's instructional methods negatively affected their performance. As for the last sub-theme here, the participants referred to lack of attention and concentration in the exam while accounting for their failure.

> I studied hard, but it wasn't effective, or productive because I experienced stress every single day. Before the exam, I was having stomach aches due to stress, and I couldn't sleep. Stress messed me up in the exam. (M15)
>
> I had constant stress and fear related to the exam. I was so nervous in the exam that I couldn't concentrate on the questions. I heard the listening part, but I literally couldn't mark the answers on the paper. And in the reading section, I was stressed about the time limitation. That fear devastated me. (M6)

The second category among the internal causes includes *attributions related to effort, strategy use and approach to learning English*, which are all regarded as the healthiest attributional causes in the literature. The participants who ascribed their

failure to lack of effort (5.72%) referred to causes such as lack of EPE practice, especially in reading and listening, lack of regular study and daily revision, insufficient exam preparation, not doing homework or extra work outside class and not doing the writing assignments. In this category, they also mentioned lack of learning skills and strategies (3.08%) to explain their low performance. In this respect, they considered their failure to be an outcome of factors including ineffective vocabulary learning, not knowing how to study English, lack of learning skills and strategies especially in reading and listening, poor reading performance in the exam resulting from not knowing how to deal with the questions and lack of verbal skills in general. As a final sub-theme in this category, the students attributed their exam performance to wrong approach to learning English (2.20%), which they specified as being too much exam-oriented, lack of cultural aspect of English, mismatch between English and Turkish, student's approach to school and learning and seeing English as a lesson rather than a language.

> I don't have a habit of studying. I only study for exams, that's it. This was the leading cause. In fact, this was the only cause. Normally, you go home after class, revise the day and study some vocabulary, right? I didn't do any of these things. (M4)
>
> Mathematics, for example. You first study the subject, and then you solve some some questions related to it, but in English, I don't know what to do or how to study! Especially in reading and listening. (M1)

While reflecting on their failure and its perceived causes, the repeat students also talked about *causes related to motivation and interest.* They mentioned two sub-themes here: motivational factors (3.08%) and lack of interest (2.64%). Regarding the former, they attributed their outcome to dislike for English, the teacher and school, lack of motivation in general, lowered motivation in the spring term especially in the afternoon classes, lack of persistence and loss of motivation due to lack of communication in class. As for lack of interest, they reported that factors such as monotonous and boring lessons, lack of interest in learning English, lack of interest in general English, lack of interest in topics in the lessons, and loss of interest due to the teacher led them to faiure in EPE.

> In the middle of the second term, the teacher told me and two other students that we were trying in vain and that we wouldn't be able to pass the proficiency exam no matter what. That really demotivated me and I lost confidence in myself. (M3)

> I have never liked English. I was always bad in English classes, terrible actually! I don't remember getting an English score higher than 60. I mean it. I don't like English! (M12)

Yet another category here reflects *causes related to lack of knowledge* on the part of the students. The most commonly reported sub-theme in this category was lack of background knowledge in English (2.20%). The students referred to their lack of background from high school, ineffective or insufficient English instruction in high school, and starting from the beginner level with little background knowledge as causes to account for their negative outcome. Apart from their lack of background knowledge, the participants also mentioned lack of knowledge in different areas of English (1.32%) such as insufficient grammar knowledge and poor vocabulary as the reasons for their failure. As a final sub-theme here, they reported that their lack of knowledge and guidance regarding EPE (1.32%) brought about their failure in the exam. They claimed that there was a lack of guidance in the classroom and outside, especially on the listening section of the exam, exam format and items types until the last week of the school, which was too late.

> I took English courses in high school, but we studied mathematics and physics in these hours. And I came here with almost no English, and started from the beginner level. That was the reason for me. (M13)

> I didn't even know the exam format or question types. You know, the school is biased against pre-intermediate students, assuming that they will fail anyway in the exam, so we aren't informed about the exam sufficiently. I wasn't ready for the exam although I studied hard in my own way. (M7)

Although reported less frequently, the students made attributions to *absenteeism and health problems, age factor and lack of ability* while explaining their failure. They stated that attendance-related problems (2.20%) such as absenteeism due to health issues and transport, and health problems (2.20) including chronic allergy, operation, migrain, hyperactivity (lack of control in the exam), and sleepiness in class due to medication all had a negative influence on their learning and preparation for the exam, which led to failure. Some students ascribed their failure to age factor (2.64%), claiming that age difference with the peers, biases, stress and communication problems with the other students due to age, and feeling bad due to older age compared to peers prevented them from learning and passing the exam. These were the students who came to METU through the Vertical Transfer Exam, and who had graduated from two-year programs in other Turkish-medium

universities, which explains why they attributed their failure to the age factor. Last but not least, they tended to account for their negative outcome by referring to lack of ability (1.76%), which is one of the most common achievemt attributions in the related literature. They considered their outcome to be a result of their lack of ability, and lack of aptitude in English or in languages in general. Some students stated that they could not succeed in foreign language classes, other than English, before university, and that they did not have aptitude in their native language, too.

> I had an allergy problem last year. I was on medication all the time, but the allergy medicine made me sleepy in class. I couldn't follow the lessons. It was like a nightmare for me! It cost me one year. (M14)
>
> I had too much absenteeism last year, and I missed lots of classes and quizzes. I couldn't learn some important topics or grammar points because of this. I naturally failed. (M8)
>
> I lack ability in learning English, I think. In fact, I don't have an aptitude for learning languages in general, not only English. Failure was no surprise for me. (M4)

There were some other causes that did not belong to any sub-theme or category, so the researcher compiled them under a theme named miscellanous (5.28%). Within this category, the participants made a variety of attributions such as desire to change department (wrong choice), disappointment with METU, no holiday or relaxation before EPE, which made it diffucult to prepare for the exam, personal preference (not feeling ready to go to the department), overrelience on summer school and responsibilities at home.

It can be observed that the most functional, or healthy, attributions to failure, which are lack of effort and lack of learning skills and strategies were referred to only at 5.72 and 3.08 %, respectively, which is again a common characteristic of maladaptive students.

Table 4.19
Adaptive students' perceived causes of failure in EPE

Themes	Sub-themes	f	%
External causes			
School-related causes	Education system in DBE	17	21.51
	Teacher effect	7	8.86
	Instructional problems	6	7.59
	Lack of tutoring, guidance and counselling	3	3.79
	Classroom environment	1	1.26

Table 4.19 (cont'd)
Adaptive students' perceived causes of failure in EPE

Themes	Sub-themes	f	%
External causes			
Exam-specific causes	Exam-specific problems	5	6.32
	Unluckiness	4	5.06
Task difficulty	Task difficulty	5	6.32
Family&social life related causes	Negative impact of social life on school	2	2.53
	Family-related issues	1	1.26
Internal causes			
Psychological & mental causes	Psychological reasons	5	6.32
	Attention & concentration problems	2	2.53
	Exam anxiety & stress	2	2.53
Causes related to effort and strategy	Lack of effort	5	6.32
	Lack of learning skills and strategies	3	3.79
	Wrong approach to learning English	3	3.79
Causes related to motivation&interest	Lack of interest	2	2.53
	Motivational factors	1	1.26
Absenteeism and health problems	Attendance-related problems	1	1.26
	Health issues	1	1.26
Lack of ability	Lack of ability	1	1.26
Miscellenous	Miscellanous	2	2.53
Total	22	79	100

As shown in the table above, the students in the ***adaptive*** group came up with a total number of 79 causal attributions regarding their failure in the proficiency exam, and these were reduced to 22 sub-themes and 10 categories, or themes, by the researcher. Again, these themes were presented in two different groups, as external (51 codes) and internal ones (28 codes).

The findings reveal that the most commonly reported causes of failure in the ***external group*** belonged to *school-related causes*, similar to the tendency in the maladaptive group. Within this category, the students made attributions to the education system in DBE most (21.51%). They considered their failure a result of big-scale issues such as placement in the wrong level, level-setting problem between the beginner and pre-intermediate level, too sharp transitions between the levels, too fast and loaded program, mismatch between the coursebooks and EPE, pressure of the system to pass the exam only, insufficiency of one-year instruction for beginner students, and transfer through the vertical transfer system. They also mentioned some small-scale issues including too much focus on grammar in the program, too many handouts, lack of practice especially in listening and reading, and little

production in the program, and unfair exam system. This category made up over 20% of the causes explaining their perceived failure.

> What we do in the class and what we see in the exam are very different. The content, weighing of the skills, question types, and even grading. They are all different. So, how am I supposed to pass this exam? There is a mismatch between the program and the exam. This is why I failed! (A20)
>
> We focus too much on grammar in the first year. We literally spend the beginner level dealing with grammar, and we don't spend enough time for vocabulary, reading and listening, I think. We naturally fail in the proficiency exam as it is based on reading and listening. (A19)
>
> I think it was because of the sharp transition between the beginner and pre-intermediate levels. In the beginner level, I could get high grades when I studied hard, but in the second term the program suddenly got very difficult, and we weren't ready. I lost my motivation and belief in success. (A23)

The participants also put emphasis on the causes related to teacher effect (8.86%), another significant sub-theme in this category. They stated that teacher's instructional method (memorization), targeting only high-achievers in class, rushing to finish the program without giving time to digest or reinforce the content, demotivating approach, too much use of Turkish in class, and ineffective teaching in general brought about their failure in the exam.

> My success is highly related to my class and my teacher. Especially, my teacher, and last year my teacher's teaching style didn't really suit me. The lessons weren't effective or productive for me. I didn't feel I was learning, so I gave up. (A21)

The third sub-theme in this category, instructonal problems (7.59), is highly related to the themes mentioned above. The repeat students reported that factors such as ineffective grammar teaching with little practice or production, ineffective summer school, passive and unproductive lessons in the pre-intermediate level, and exam-oriented teaching rather than learning-orientation caused their failure in EPE. The students also referred to other causes like lack of tutoring, guidance and counselling in the program (3.79%) and classroom environment (1.26%) to explain their outcome. For the former, they put forward that lack of knowledge about tutoring, and thus not asking for help or guidance negatively affected their learning and preparation for the exam. As for the latter, they pointed out that the misplaced students in the classroom demotivated them and played an important role in their performance during the term and the exam.

> You know vocabulary is very important for the exam, but my teacher's vocabulary teaching was based on memorization. She would give us pages of words and ask us to memorize them. I didn't know how to use these words, and I forgot them easily. (A18)
>
> Last year, I definitely needed someone to ask my questions or get some help. You can't always ask your teachers, you know. You need someone different, but I didn't even know there were tutors for the beginner level. (A22)

School-related causes were followed by *exam-specific causes.* In this category, the students mentioned exam-specific problems (6.32%) and unluckiness (5.06%). Regarding the exam-speific problems, the participants reported causes such as lack of concentration in the exam, bad mood in on the exam day, distractions in the exam, and being off-topic in the writing section of the exam. As for unluckiness, they referred to similar causes like bad luck on the exam day, misunderstanding the task in the writing part of the exam, illness and technical problems during the EPE listening.

> I was off-topic in the writing part of the exam. I was so nervous that I couldn't even understand the instruction. My brain stopped, and I couldn't do anything for 20 minutes. I got only 2 in this part. If I had got something higher in this part, I would have passed. (A16)
>
> We had a window problem in the exam. The student sitting in front of me was disturbed by the noise outside, and he wanted to close the window in the middle of the listening section. This really distracted me a lot, I missed some of the questions because of him, and I lost my concentration! (A21)

Apart from *school-related causes* and *exam-specific causes*, the students also mentioned *task difficulty* and *family and social life-related causes* during the interviews. Some students explained their failure through task difficulty (6.32%), which they exemplified as difficulty in reading and writing, in understanding English or understanding the logic of English, and in multiple choice items in the exam. For the second theme above, they touched upon the negative impact of social life on school (2.53%) and family-related issues (1.26%). As elicited from the students, lack of friends and the resulting loneliness and sadness in the first year, and the negative influence of their peers in upper classes affected their performance badly. Regarding the family issues, there was a reference to loss of family members as a causal attribution to their failure.

> I think it was because of the difficult vocabulary in the exam. Or maybe it's me having difficulty in learning vocabulary. I study words all the time, but I can't remember them! I simply cannot learn vocabulary, and have difficulty in all skills because of that. (A16)

> I lost both of my grandparents last year, and it was very hard for my family. I was very close to them, you know, and I couldn't get over it for a long time. I missed lots of classes because of the funerals and my sadness. I couldn't concentrate on my studies. (A20)

Similar to the maladaptive group, the students in the adaptiv***e*** group ascribed their failure to *psychological and mental causes* most in the ***internal group.*** Within this category, they referred to some psychological reasons (6.32%) such as relationship problems (break-up), feeling bad due to failure despite effort, overconfidence due to too simple content in the beginner level, personal reasons, and sense of wasting time in the beginner level, thus lowered motivation. They also mentioned attention and concentration problems (2.53%) such as lack of concentration in the exam, and exam anxiety and stress (2.53%), including being off-topic in writing due to exam anxiety, and concerns and uncertainities regarding EPE.

> My grades were really high in the beginner and pre-intermediate levels, and I was really confident that I would pass. Overconfidence, you know, and I didn't study hard enough. I didn't know that my knowledge was so far form the level of the exam. (A18)

> I feel extremely stressed in exams. Even the slightest noise or movement disturbs me and contributes to my stress level. I cannot concentrate on the questions, or forget everything I know. I had the same problem in that exam. I literally failed due to stress! (A17)

The second theme among the internal causes regards *causes related to effort and strategy use*, which are considered to be healthier and functional attributions in the literature. The students who ascribed their failure to lack of effort (6.32%) mentioned causes such as lack of grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening practice for EPE, and insufficient effort in weak areas. In this category, they also referred to lack of learning skills and strategies (3.79%) to account for their low performance. More specifically, they regarded their failure as a direct consequence of factors such as lack of learning strategies and not knowing how to study, lack of reading skills, and using wrong strategies e.g. too much focus on grammar. Another sub-theme in this category was related to their wrong approach to learning English (3.79%), which the students specified as aiming to pass the exam only without trying to learn English, not being able to adapt to the different study system required in language learning, and focusing on exam strategies rather than learning.

> Lack of background knowledge and most importantly, not studying hard enough. I didn't have a regular study system. I was just doing homework, that's it! I wasn't doing anything extra. With some extra effort, I'm sure I could have passed. (A24)

> The first reason is definitely studying wrongly. I mean my focusing on grammar too much and dealing with reading in a wrong way. I was just checking the answers without reflecting on my mistakes or trying to learn the vocabulary in the text. (A19)

In an effort to elaborate on their perceived causes of failure, the students also reported *causes regarding motivation and interest.* Their causes were grouped under two sub-themes here: lack of interest (2.53%) and motivational factors (1.26%). For the former, they mentioned boredom in the lessons as they had English classes every day, and lack of interest in learning languages. For the latter, they related their outcome to lack of motivation due to dislike for the teacher and peers.

> Everything aside, I have never had an interest in English. In high school, for instance, we didn't do anything in English lessons but I didn't mind it! When I learned that I got a place at METU, I felt really sad. Can you imagine it? You can't learn English wihout having some kind of ineterst in it! (A20)

> I had problems in the second term. The classroom environment was so negative; nobody was expecting to pass the exam. Even the teacher was hopeless about us. Everyone stopped studying, and that affected me badly. I lost my motivation for the exam. (A23)

Although mentioned only once, the students made attributions to *absenteeism and health problems* and *lack of ability* while reflecting on causes of their failure. They expressed that absenteeism due to sleep problems (1.26%) and health problems (1.26) contributed to their low performance in the exam. They also ascribed their failure to lack of ability in English as in all verbal courses (1.26%) here.

> I was ill on the exam day, and I simply could perform well. Unluckiness, I think. (A18)

> I accept it, I don't have an ability for learning English! I can't do it no matter how hard I try. It's definitely a matter of ability, and I don't have it! (A22)

There were two codes in this part that did not belong to any theme above, and thus were categorized under *miscellanous* causes. These codes were limited study environment at home and long break between high school and university, resulting from work life.

4.5.1 Causal Attributions and Gender

T-test analyses were conducted in order to determine whether gender made a significant difference in students' causal attributions to failure, and the results show that there was a statistically significant difference only in the 12th item in LAAS,

which referred to mood as an explanation to low performance. As shown in Table 4.20 below, female students (M:3,09; SD:1,17) scored significantly higher than male students (M:2,76; SD:1,29) in this item, suggesting that girls tend to ascribe their failure to bad mood during the exam more, which is similar to the findings in other studies in the literature (Hashem, & Zabihi, 2011).

Table 4.20
Students's causal attributions by gender

Items in LAAS	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	P
1. I don't have ability in learning English.	Female	140	2,53	1,04	1,62	0,106
	Male	114	2,76	1,18		
2. I didn't put enough effort into studying.	Female	140	3,79	1,11	0,09	0,921
	Male	114	3,80	1,15		
3. Learning English is difficult.	Female	140	3,25	1,09	1,32	0,18
	Male	114	3,07	1,05		
4. I had bad luck in the exam.	Female	140	2,84	1,15	0,60	0,546
	Male	114	2,75	1,16		
5. Teachers' grading was unfair.	Female	140	2,38	1,00	1,47	0,148
	Male	114	2,58	1,17		
6. I didn't use the right strategies.	Female	140	4,00	0,90	1,44	0,154
	Male	114	3,82	1,02		
7. I'm not interested in learning English.	Female	140	2,57	1,17	1,10	0,271
	Male	114	2,73	1,21		
8. Teachers' instructional methods were ineffective.	Female	140	2,78	1,09	0,84	0,401
	Male	114	2,66	1,15		
9. My family didn't support me sufficiently.	Female	140	1,67	0,93	1,31	0,191
	Male	114	1,83	0,93		
10. Classroom environment wasn't suitable for learning.	Female	140	2,42	0,96	2,00	0,051
	Male	114	2,70	1,20		
11. Health problems affected me negatively.	Female	140	2,15	1,16	0,17	0,858
	Male	114	2,18	1,24		
12. My mood on the exam day wasn't good.	Female	140	3,09	1,17	2,12	0,035*
	Male	114	2,76	1,29		
13. Education system at school didn't match EPE.	Female	140	3,22	1,26	1,53	0,126
	Male	114	2,98	1,27		

*(p>0,05)

4.5.2 Differences Between Maladaptive and Adaptive Students' Causal Attributions

As explained in detail in the methodology section, the 24 students interviewed in the qualitative part were selected purposefully based on a meticulous analysis of their scores in CDS-II and LAAS, which shed light on both their general attributional styles and their specific causal attributions in the case of failure. Students from both maladaptive and adaptive attributional styles were interviewed for deeper understanding of how they explained their failure in the proficiency

exam, and whether or not there was a difference in the way these two groups of students attributed their outcome.

According to the results presented in the previous section, the students in the maladaptive group produced more attributions with 227 codes, 29 sub-themes and 12 categories compared to the adaptive group, which came up with 79 codes, 22 sub-themes and 10 categories. The number of students interviewed in the maladaptive group was higher, which explains why they made more attributions to some extent, but it can be seen that they also produced a higher variety of causal attributions, which the adaptive group did not even mention. For example, only the maladaptive students reported causes regarding adaptation problems, age factor, the negative effect of English-medium instruction, lack of background knowledge from high school, lack of knowledge in different areas of English, lack of knowledge and guidance on EPE, and unfair grading in the exam, most of which are uncontrollable for them.

When the other themes elicited from both groups considered, it can be observed that there are differences in the number of references made to each cause although the students mentioned the same attributions. For example, among the first seven themes that were most frequently reported in both groups, six themes are common, but their weighing is different. For example, the maladaptive students tended to attribute their failure to *psychological reasons* at a noticeably higher level (10.13%) than the adaptive ones did (6.25%). It seems that maladaptive students are affected by psychological factors more in the case of exams or exam preparation compared to the adaptive group. *Teacher effect* and *education system in DBE* appear as the two common factors that the students in both groups kept responsible for their failure, but the adaptive group ascribed their failure to the education system at an unexpectedly higher level (21.25%) than the maladaptive group (7.48%). Based on the literature, adaptive students would be expected to report more internal, unstable and controllable causal attributions to failure, such as lack of effort, but their top three causes of failure were related to the education system, teachers and instructional problems, all external and uncontrollable on the part of the students. On the other hand, maladaptive students would be normally expected to explain their

failure through external, stable and uncontrollable causes, but the second most-commonly reported cause in this group, psychological reasons, was internal and mostly unstable in nature. As for lack of effort and lack of strategy, the healthiest causal attributions in the related literature, they only made up 13.09% and 11% of the causes in the adaptive and maladaptive groups, respectively, which shows that the participants in both groups did not relate their failure to studying hard or using the right language learning strategies, a sign of malfunctioning attributional tendency in achievement contexts. All this information above may suggest that adaptive and maladaptive students may display similar attributional tendencies in the case of failure in big tasks, a proficiency exam in our case, or within the context of long-term failure.

4.6 Teachers' Causal Attibutions to Their Students' Success / Failure

Table 4.21
Teachers' causes regarding their studens' failure in EPE

Themes	Sub-themes	f	%
External causes			
School-related causes	Education system in DBE	20	28.98
	Instructional problems	6	8.69
	Teacher effect	4	5.79
Family&social life related causes	Family-related issues	4	5.79
	Negative impact od social life on school	2	2.89
Task difficulty	Task difficulty	2	2.89
Internal causes			
Causes related to effort and strategy	Lack of effort	5	7.24
	Lack of learning skills and strategies	4	5.79
	Wrong approach to learning English	2	2.89
Internal causes			
Causes related to lack of knowledge	Lack of background knowledge	4	5.79
	Lack of cultural knowledge	1	1.44
Psychological & mental causes	Psychological reasons	2	2.89
	Attention & concentration problems	2	2.89
health problems	Health issues	3	4.34
Financial problems	Financial problems	2	2.89
Lack of awareness	Lack of awareness about the program and learning English	2	2.89
Dislike for English	Dislike for English	1	1.44
Lack of ability	Lack of aptitude	1	1.44
Miscellenous	Miscellanous	2	2.89
Total	19	69	100

The fourth research question in this study aimed at finding out what the teachers in the repeat level attributed their students' failure in the proficiency exam to, and whether or not their attributions were similar to those of their students. Data were collected from eight instructors through semi-structured interviews and a focus group, and they were also used for triangulation purposes.

As shown in Table 4.21 above, a total of 69 codes were elicited from the teacher interviews regarding their causal attributions to their students' failure, which were later reduced to 19 sub-themes and 12 themes, with one category belonging to miscellanous codes that did not fit into any of the themes. These themes were presented in two different groups, as external (38 codes) and internal ones (31 codes), in order to see their attributional tendencies more clearly and compare it to those of the students.

As seen in the table, the themes in the ***external category*** that were elicited from the teacher data show great similarities to those of the students in that both groups explained poor proficiency performance by referring to causes related to school, family, social life and task difficulty. According to the teachers, the biggest cause of failure for students was *school-related causes*. Within this category, they mentioned education system in DBE (28.98%), instructional problems (8.69%), and teacher effect (5.79%) to explain their students' failure. While referring to the education system in DBE, which made up almost 30% of the total causes, the teachers mentioned a variety of factors such as ineffective curriculum, not informing the students about the (exit level) goals and objectives of the program, insufficient teaching hours for beginner and pre-intermediate levels, too many and long teaching hours in a day, wasting too much time with testing i.e. quizzes and midterms, mismatch between the objectives and coursebooks, too fast and loaded program in the 2nd term with no time to practice, unfair system, wrong placement of students, transfer-caused problems, ineffective beginner program that lacks practice and production, and deep level learning, lack of prompt and guided writing in the program, too much focus on EPE in the program, too challenging handouts in the pre-intermedaite level, and lack of reading and listening practice. As seen above, the

teachers blamed the different aspects of the education system for their students' failure.

> The coursebooks that we use here are not suitable for our context; they are more suited to long-term language teaching and thus cannot fully realize our objectives. This affects the students' learning negatively. (T3)
>
> It is the system. We promise to bring students to a certain level at the end of the year, regardless of their background, but we cannot keep our promise. We deceive some of them. The message is that students with no English shouldn't come to METU. (T8)
>
> I think it's the problem in cut-off points while placing the students. We place some of the students wrongly and thus the materials and the level are not suitable for them. They naturall fail at the end. (T6)

The teachers reflected on instructional problems in the form of lack of meaningful grammar practice, introduction of some necessary grammarpoints, e.g. relative clauses, too late in the program, limited time to analyze reading texts in class, and not teaching the language, just talking about it.

> Our students know the names of the grammar points, but they cannot use them in practice. I think we cannot teach them grammar effectively and meaningfully. That's a big reason. (T1)

As for teacher effect, they mostly reported problems such as inexperienced teachers, teachers' demotivating and negative remarks in class, and some teachers' unprofessional approach.

> Teachers have a part in this failure, too. For example, some teachers demotivate their students by saying "You can't learn, or pass the exam. You are trying in vain."in class. How can a student hear this and find the motivation to study hard for the exam? (T5)

Another external theme in this part was related to *family and social life related causes*. Within this context, the teachers ascribed their students' failure to family-related issues (5.79%) and negative impact of social life on school (2.89%). They reported that unemployed or divorced parents, or loss of a parent were some causes that played a role in the students' poor exam performance. For the teachers, lack of balance between school life and social life, e.g. joining student clubs, was another contributing factor to their failure.

> I know lots of students who failed in the exam due to health problems. Some students are on medication constantly, and it affects their performance. It's unfair, I think. (T7)

The third category among the external themes was task-difficulty (2.89%), in which the instructors referred to the difficulty of the cloze test section in the exam, and the difficulty the students had in producing language, even at sentence level, in the classroom.

> The cloze test section in the exam was unnecessarily difficult. It was too much for the students. (T4)

The instructors reported a total of 29 causes in the ***internal category*** to explain their students' failure, which were then reduced to eight themes by the researcher. The first theme in this group included *causes related to effort and strategy*. The teachers who ascribed their students' failure to lack of effort (7.24%) referred to causes such as lack of daily revision and regular study, lack of effort and discipline, and not spending enough effort to learn. In this category, they also mentioned lack of learning skills and strategies (5.79%) to explain their students' low performance. In this respect, they considered the resulting failure to be an outcome of factors including their students' not knowing how to study, their lack of reading skills, and wrong approach to dealing with reading with little or no motivation to write answers or analyze a text. As a final sub-theme in this category, the teachers attributed the students' exam performance to wrong approach to learning English (2.89%), which they specified as superficial grammar learning.

> As far as I can see, they mostly failed because they don't have a regular study system. They don't understand that language learning is a process and requires hard work, patience and persistence. (T2)
>
> Their failure is mostly related to their lack of skills, especially in reading. They know the names of the skills, but cannot use them. They don't know how to analyze a text with its grammatical structures and vocabulary, so they don't really understand what they read. (T5)

Another category here regards *causes related to lack of knowledge*. The teachers reported that the students' lack of background knowledge in English as a language (5.79%) and as a culture (1.44%) were contributing factors to their failure. Lack of background knowledge from high school, which brings about inequality in educational opportunities, starting from the beginner level, and lack of cultural background were some of the causes the teachers expressed regarding this theme.

> Some students start the preparatory year with no background English, and start in the beginner level. This is enough for failure. It's not possible for these students to reach the proficiency level in one year. (T8)

> Learning English requires some cultural background, too, and some students lack this. They don't have a connection with songs or films in English. I remember a sentence like "Antony Hopkins are…", which means the student didn't even know he was talking about a famous actor. (T4)

Psychological and mental causes and *health problems* were other major themes elicited from the teachers. For the former, they mentioned psychological reasons (2.89%) and attention and concentration problems (2.89%). They expressed that they knew students who failed due to fear, anxiety, and even schizophrenia or hallucinations. They also reported lack of concentration in the lessons and attention problems, sometimes in the form of Attention Deficit Disorder, as causes of their students' failure. *Health problems* made up another theme in this category, and according to the teachers, health issues such as sleep problems in the lesson, sometimes caused by medication, or drug abuse contributed to their low performance in the lessons, and thus in the exam, too.

> Some students have far more serious health problems than we can imagine, even drug abuse. They don't usually reveal their conditions, and when they do, it is too late for them. Failure is inevitable for such students (T1)

Different from the students, the teachers mentioned *financial problems (2.89%), lack of awareness (2.89%) and dislike for English (1.44)* as other causes that explain students' failure in the exam. They expressed that some students had money problems and had to work in part-time jobs, which affected their school and exam performance negatively. Another cause for concern was the students' lack of awareness about the program and learning English in general. They also referred to students' dislike towards English, which brought about low motivation and little effort, making failure inevitable.

> Some students come to METU without knowing what is expecting them. They cannot imagine the challenges involved in English-medium instruction, and when they understand it, it is too late. (T3)

> I know students who had to earn money to meet their school expenses, and work life and school together are too much for them. They miss lots of classes and don't have much time or energy to study. (T7)

As a final category here, the teachers reported *lack of ability* in the form of lack of aptitude in learning English (1.44%).

> I believe it's a matter of ability, and some students simply don't have it! (T2)

There were two other causes that did not belong to any sub-theme or category, so the researcher compiled them under a theme named miscellanous (2.89%). Within this category, the teachers made attributions to students' limited study environment in dorms i.e. physical limitations or other students, and accumulated tiredness before university.

Considering all the findings above, it can be said that the teachers and the students explained the failure in the exam by referring to similar causes except for a few ones, and interestingly, similar to the students, the teachers attributed failure to mostly external causes such as the school system and instructional problems rather than lack of effort or wrong strategy use, which normally would be expected from them.

4.7 Effects of Students' Outcomes on Their Feelings and Behaviours

The literature on Attribution Theory asserts that attributions shed light on learners' beliefs and perceptions related to their own learning and performance, and they greatly influence their motivation, self-efficacy, persistence, expectancy behavior, competence and achievement (Graham, 1994; Weiner, 2000). These attributions, more precisely their attributional styles, also affect learners' feelings. To exemplify, locus dimension is highly related to pride and self-esteem whereas stability dimension is connected to feelings of hopefulness and hopelessness. In the same way, controllability dimension is linked with emotions such as anger, guilt or shame (Weiner, 1985). And these feelings, in turn, affect the way they perceive their outcome and explain their performance, in an adaptive or maladaptive manner.

With this information in mind, the students interviewed in this study were asked what their outcome made them feel, and how they affected their learning and performance.

Table 4.22
The effects of maladaptive students' outcomes on their feelings and behaviours

Themes	
Negative effects	Positive effects
acceptance of failure	increased awareness
depression	
difficulty in concentration in the exam	
feeling bad	
feeling bad due to failure despite effort	
feeling like a loser	
getting disconnected with school	
giving up studying	
hopelessness	
lack of concentration	
learned helplessness	
losing interest in school	
loss of concentration	
loss of motivation	
loss of persistence	
loss of self-confidence	
obligation to take other exams e.g. IELTS, TOEFL.	
procrastination	
sense of guilt	
stomach ache and insomnia due to stress	

As seen in Table 4.22 above, maladaptive students reported 21 different effects of their attributions and attributional styles on their feelings and behaviours. Accept for *increased awareness*, all the effects they mentioned were negative, ranging from depression, giving up, hopelessness to learned helplessness, loss of persistence, sense of guilt. It seems that maladaptive attributional style, as suggested in the related literature, works as a vicious circle for learners in that negative and wrong perceptions lead to failure, which causes negative feelings and behaviours, in turn.

> I cannot study. Even if I do, I feel I am going to fail again. I cannot get rid of that psychology. (M1)
>
> I don't know, something happened. I lost my motivation, and persistence. (M10)
>
> It's not jealousy, but when I see other people pass, I feel sort of angry. Frustration towards the school, you know. I lost my motivation. (M11)

Table 4.23
The effects of adaptive students' outcomes on their feelings and behaviours

Themes
Negative effects
lack of self-efficacy
disappointment
exhaustion

As for the adaptive students, they mentioned only three effects, which were all negative in nature: lack of self-efficacy, disappointment and exhaustion. As shown in the table above, they reported fewer effects compared to the maladaptive group. Interestingly, they did not mention any positive feelings such as pride, hopefulness or self-esteem, which is maybe because they all experienced failure and became repeat students despite their relatively more functional attributional tendencies.

> I felt really disappointed, I still do. Now, I'm trying to study, but I am still in a kind of pessimism. (A20)
>
> It still affects my performance. I am still upset and have little motivation. Maybe I don't believe I can pass the exam. (A16)

4.8 Suggestions to Decrease the Level of Failure

Apart from their causal attributions to failure, and the effects of these attributions on their learning and performance, the students were also interviewed about their possible solutions to decrease the level of failure, or to prevent other students from failing in the proficiency exam. As expectedly, most of the suggestions they mentioned were related to external factors that were likely to change in the future. The findings are presented separately for adaptive and maladaptive students, and teachers to see any differences between the groups more clearly.

Table 4.24
Maladaptive students' suggestions to decrease the level of failure in DBE

Themes	f	%
Suggestions related to:		
1. Education system at DBE	29	54.71
2. Teachers	9	16.98
3. Classroom instruction	5	9.43
4. Extra-curricular activities	2	3.77
5. EPE	2	3.77
6. Knowledge and guidance on EPE	2	3.77
7. Peers	1	1.88
8. Tutoring, guidance and counselling	1	1.88
9. Miscellanous	2	3.77
Total	53	100

As shown in Table 4.24 above, more than half of the suggestions elicited from the maladaptive students regard the *education system in DBE* (54.71%). Within this

respect, the students made suggestions such as a new level between beginner and elementary levels, conditional pass at the end of the academic year instead of EPE, course system with short breaks instead of two long terms, flexibility in using Turkish in class, less grammar teaching, more EPE practice, more focus on vocabulary, more listening, reading and speaking practice in the program, more teaching hours for the beginner level, program tailored to classroom needs, separation of skills in the program, two-year instruction for beginner students, two different groups in beginner level that separates zero-beginners from false-beginners, two teachers for a class, and use of midterms for pass or fail instead of EPE.

> We should do more practice for the proficiency exam. What we do in the lessons does not really prepare us for the exam. (M9)
>
> I think midterms should also have a role in the pass / fail system. Having only one big exam to determine the students' performance is unfair. Yearly exams could have a percentage, too. (M10)

Suggestions related to *teachers* (16.98%) were also elicited from the students. They proposed educating teachers on communication and attitude, more experienced teachers for beginner level, more attentive, interested, talkative and interactive teacher, more motivating attitude towards students, teacher evaluation during the term, and teachers being more active in socializing a class, to name a few.

> I think teachers should see this as a team work, and support students more in the first year. They should motivate each and every student in the class, believing that everyone can succeed in the exam. (M11)

As another suggestion related to school, the participants mentioned *classroom instruction* (9.43%) to decrease the level of failure. For example, they suggested more effective use of teaching hours, more reading analysis in class, use of English in class consistently, but use of Turkish in grammar lessons.

> There is a problem in the timing of skills in the program. For example, teachers tend to do writing in the last hour, and we are exhausted by then. We cannot produce anything, and it affects our performance negatively. These things should bu planned better in the classroom. (M1)

The students also made suggestions regarding extra-curricular activitites (3.77%) such as compulsory extra-curricular activities in the program, and *EPE* (3.77%) such

as fewer listening items in the exam and more time for the reading section. In addition, they asked for *more knowledge and guidance on EPE* (3.77%) especially for the beginner and pre-intermediate levels, *more peer support* (1.88%) and *more tutoring, guidance and counselling* (1.88%) as in the form of psychological counselling for stress.

> We need some extra activities to increase our motivation and interest. For instance, students can be asked to read books and discuss them in or out of class. Or the school can invite some native speakers to classes so that we can increase our confidence. (M15)

Table 4.25
Adaptive students' suggestions to decrease the level of failure in DBE

Themes	f	%
Suggestions related to:		
1. Education system at DBE	14	70
2. Classroom instruction	2	10
3. Tutoring / guidance and counselling	2	10
4. Extra-curricular activities	1	5
5. Teachers	1	5
Total	20	100

As seen in Table 4.25 above, adaptive students came up with relatively fewer suggestions to remedy the present problems and decrease the failure. Similar to the maladaptive students, adaptive students proposed suggestions related to the *education system in DBE* most (70%). Their suggestions ranged from allocating specific hours in the program only for practice, conditional pass to the departments with a certain yearly average, distributing foreign students into classes if any, EPE exam between the two terms, more grammar and listening practice in EPE context, to more grammar teaching and more homework in the first term, more revision and less teaching of new points, separation of grammar points into manageable units, and smaller class size. The participants also made suggestions in relation to *classroom instruction* (10%) and *tutoring / guidance and counselling* (10%). As for classroom instruction, they proposed ideas such as opportunities for students to interact with foreigners and using class time more productively in the beginner level. For the latter, they expressed that surveying students for possible ADD, concentration or anxiety problems at the beginning of the term, and organizing tutors for low-achievers could be some possible solutions to remedy the situation.

> Five-hour teaching is too much; I mean too tiring for us. It isn't effective. We cannot concentrate after the 4th lesson. There should be a break maybe, or two different slots in the beginner level. (A20)
>
> There should be a kind of conditional pass. I mean students who reach a certain yearly average should be able to start their departments even if they they cannot pass the proficiency exam. They should be able to take the exam again in their departments. This would really take the unnecessary stress from our shoulders. (A21)
>
> Learning English requires constant concentration and attention both in lessons and while studying outside. Some students like me have serious problems with that, but we cannot solve them alone. All students should be surveyed at the beginning of the academic year for any attention and concentration problems. (A22)

The participants also mentioned *extra-curricular activities* (5%) and teachers (5%) while making suggestions. Within this respect, they suggested networking with foreigners to increase their motivation and interest in general. They also stated that all teachers should be observed regularly to determine and fix teacher-related problems in the classroom.

> The school could establish an interaction system between students and foreigners, such as students in English-speaking countries. We can have online discussions, or exchange information. It could even be part of the program. (A18)

Table 4.26
Teachers' suggestions to decrease the level of failure in DBE

Themes	f	%
Suggestions related to:		
1. Education system at DBE	13	59.09
2. Materials	2	9.09
3. Teachers	2	9.09
4. Tutoring / guidance and counselling	2	9.09
5. Classroom instruction	1	4.54
6. Miscellanous	2	9.09
Total	22	100

To be able to look at the issue from a different perspective and also to validate student data, teachers were also interviewed about the possible solutions for the causes that brought the students failure in the exam. Table 4.26 shows that, like the students in both groups, the teachers made the highest number of suggestions related to the education system in DBE (59.09%). Their suggestions included separation of skills in the program, fewer midterms and quizzes, two different groups in the beginner level (course system, maybe), exit-level exam instead of EPE, more frequent but shorter exams with specific content instead of midterms, more focus on

reading, six hour teaching and two slots for the beginner level, reorganizing the cut-off points in the placement exam to better place the students, more focus on basic English, department-related vocabulary teaching for higher levels (at simple level, at the end of the year), starting EPE practice earlier in the program, more meaningful context to test grammar in exams, and more opportunities to write in the beginner level. As can be seen, the students and the teachers made very similar suggestions regarding the system.

> The students placed in the beginner group are different in terms of their level. Some students start with almost zero English while others can express themselves, and this demotivates the low-achievers and cause the high-achievers to be over-confident. These students could be grouped in two different levels. (T4)
>
> Reaching the level of proficiency that our exam requires is literally not possible for beginner students. One year is simply not enough. There could be an exit exam instead of EPE. We should only teach them English that they need for the first year. (T2)
>
> We have too many quizzes and midterms here, and they take up too much time in the program. We should definitely decrease the number of exams so that we can use more time for teaching. (T5)

The teachers also mentioned *materials* (9.09%), *teachers* (9.09%) and *tutoring, guidance and counselling* (9.09%) in their suggestions. Regarding the materials, the only different suggestion from the students, they suggested writing our own course book parallel to our own objectives and setting up a separate materials unit in DBE. For teachers, they stated that putting experienced and inexperienced teachers in the same staffroom in order for them to share knowledge and experience, and placing more experienced teachers in the beginner level could solve some of the issues that cause students to fail. *Classroom instruction* (4.54%) was another theme elicited from the teachers. Here, they asked for more focus on goals and objectives in class. Finally, they mentioned accomodating preparatory school students in the same rooms in dorms, and more interaction and communication with Modern Languages Department (MLD), both of which were placed under the theme *miscellanous*, as they did not fit into any other theme in the table.

> The coursebooks that we use do not really match our objectives here. They are never fully suited to our program, and this directly affects our teaching. We should create our own materials instead of trying to be aligned with those books in the global market. (T6)
>
> We should share the goals and objectives of the program with the students. We should tell them what level they will reach at the end of the year, so that they can picture the process

better. Also, we should make our lesson objectives more clear everyday because sometimes they are not even aware of what they learn. (T8)

4.9 Summary of the Findings

This chapter examined the quantitative and the qualitative data collected from the repeat level students and their teachers through a scale, a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. Overall, the results revealed that the majority of the students considered themselves unsuccessful both in the EPE and in learning English, and this perception, positive or negative, was not linked to gender or type of high school they graduated from. Their perception of success or failure was not related to their attributional dimension, either. However, there was a relationship between their perceptions and their causal attributions in that students who perceived themselves to be unsuccessful attributed their failure more to lack of ability, lack of effort, and lack of interest compared to the other group. This group also displayed a lower yearly average and EPE score than the group who considered themselves successful. As for the origins of their perceptions, the most commonly-reported criteria for failure were their grades and proficiency score, while the most-commonly-stated criterion for success was the ability to communicate with people and to understand English, both in written and spoken form. The majority of the students interviewed did not consider repeating the program as a sign of failure. The results also indicated that the students mostly attributed their success or failure in the exam to internal and personally-controllable causes, suggesting an adaptive attributional style. As for their specific causes, both maladaptive and adaptive students attributed their failure to school-related causes most, followed by exam-specific causes, task difficulty, and family and social life-related causes in the external category, whereas they mentioend psychological and mental causes, followed by lack of effort and strategy, little motivation or interest, lack of knowledge, attendance and health problems, age factor and lack of ability in the internal group, irrespective of gender. Teachers came up with similar causes to those from their students. The findings also shed light on the effects of student outcomes on their feelings and actions, revealing effects ranging from depression, giving up, hopelessness, learned helplessness, loss of persistence, sense of guilt to lack of self-

efficacy, disappointment and exhaustion. As for the suggestions to decrease the level of failure, both students and teachers came up with ideas parallel to the causes they mentioned before, including improvements in the education system in DBE, teachers, classroom instruction, extra-curriular activities, EPE, knowledge and guidance on EPE, materials, and tutoring, guidance and counselling.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter reviews and discusses the findings derived from the data, and presents them in relation to the literature on Attribution Theory (AT) and previous research. In addition, pedagogical implications and suggestions for further studies are provided based on the study results.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This study was designed to investigate the repeat level preparatory school students' causal dimensionality patterns and specific attributions to success or failure, effects of their outcomes on their behaviours and feelings, and their suggestions to decrease the level of failure. Teachers' attribuitons to their students' success or failure were also explored both to shed light on teachers' perceptions of their students' performance and to validate the student data. The study employed mixed methods design, which enabled collecting comprehensive, rich and detailed data in relation to the research questions. The data were collected in two phases. In the first phase, which relied on quantitative methods, data regarding the learners' perceptions of success or failure and causal dimensions, i.e. locus of causality, stability, personal control and external control, were gathered through CDS II while their specific attributions were discovered via LAAS, which was adapted for this study and used as a questionnaire. Both of these instruments were implemented to all the students in the repeat level at DBE. Based on the findings of the first phase, qualitative data were collected in the second phase with the help of semi-structured interview and

focus group interview, both with the students and their instructors. The second phase helped to explore the research questions more deeply and elaborate on the findings from the quantitative part. The results regarding each research question are discussed in more detail below.

5.3 Perceived Success or Failure

The first research question in this study concerned repeat students' perceptions of their performance in learning English based on their EPE score. According to the quantitative results, the majority of the students (78,5 %) considered themselves unsuccessful while the rest (21,5%) put themselves in the successful category, irrespective of their gender and the type of high school they graduated from. This is an expected result considering the fact that these students failed at least two proficiency exams in the same year and had to repeat the whole program again while their counterparts started their departments. This finding is parallel with those of others which report negative perceptions upon failure (Duran, 2015; Taşkıran, 2010). When it comes to the differences between these two groups of students, they did not display any significant differences in terms of their causal dimensions, although normally students with positive perceptions would be expected to have a more internal, unstable and controllable attributional dimension based on the literature (Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Williams, Burden, Poulet and Maun, 2004, Taşkıran, 2010). As for their specific attributions, on the other hand, these students ascribed their failure more to lack of ability, lack of effort and lack of interest in learning English, which are all internal in nature, compared to those who considered themselves successful as in other studies which report that failing students may refer to especially effort attributions to maintain their self-efficacy beliefs and motivation (Gobel and Mori, 2007; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Suarez & Sandiford, 2008). This also suggests that negative perceptions of outcomes do not necessarily coexist with a maladaptive attributional style. However, there are studies with contradictory results revealing that failing students attribute performance mostly to external factors (Suarez & Sandiford, 2008; William et al, 2004). Another important finding here was that the students who considered themselves successful both had a higher

average in their first year in the prep school and scored significantly higher in the last proficiency exam that they took, which is also supported by other studies indicating a positive relationship between perception of success and achievement in learning English (Graham, 2004; Pishghadam and Zabihi, 2011). Different from other studies, this study expanded on the concept of perception and also asked the students whether they regarded themselves successful or unsuccessful in learning English, not only in the exam, and what the origins of this success or failure were. Interview data revealed that 13 out of 24 partcipants considered themselves unsuccessful learners, which is in line with the quantitative findings. They came up with a variety of criteria to base their perceptions on and the most commonly-stated criteria for failure were grades, proficiency score and comparison with others, suggesting that the students with negative perceptions decided that they were unsuccessful mostly by using their achievement scores or comparing their performance to that of other students. For those with a relatively positive perception, the ability to communicate with people and to understand English, and the sense of achievement out of showing progress were the most-commonly reported criteria while determining their satisfaction with their overall performance. It seems that failure-oriented students focus on exam scores and others' performance while evaluating themselves whereas success-oriented ones refer to more personal and meaningful criteria while reflecting on their performance. This finding is a substantial contribution to the related literature because very few studies (Peacock, 2010) have explored the origins of students' perceptions or attributions. The final sub-question here concerned the students' perception of repeating the program, and interestingly, 16 of the students interviewed (75 %) did not consider repeating the program as a sign of failure, which shows that their perceptions of the proficiency score, learning English in general and repeating the program were not necessarily the same. Although they found themselves unsuccessful in general, they stated that one-year English instruction was not sufficient for beginner students, and it was only normal that such students failed to reach the proficiency level within the expected time.

5.4 Students' Causal Dimensionality Tendencies

The second research question was mainly concerned with the students' causal dimensionality tendencies and whether gender and high school type made a difference in their dimensions. According to the results, students scored significantly higher in the locus of control and personal control sub-scales of CDS II, which means that they tended to account for their perceived success or failure in the exam through internal and personally-controllable causes, indicating an adaptive, or functional, attributional style, also reported by other researchers in relation to a positive self-concept (Ushoida, 2001). They scored lowest in the stability sub-scale, which again represents a healthy attributional style as they do not attribute their outcome to stable, or fixed, causes, which is closely associated with higher expectations, persistence and striving for the future (Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Weiner, 1986). This also means that the repeat level students display dimensional similarities with other students as put forward in the literature (Dong et all, 2013). Overall, the results are quite promising in that the students tend to take responsibility for the outcome in both success or failure cases, and do not blame external or uncontrollable factors much for their performance, a familiar case in Eastern countries which is related to cultural norms in the literature (Gobel & Mori, 2007; Gobel et al, 2011). In such cases, students can still maintain their self-confidence and motivation, and try harder believing that they can attain success by doing things differently in the future. This finding is also poles apart with studies claiming that a lower proficiency level is often linked with a maladaptive attributional pattern (Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016; Mori et al, 2011) as in this study the students displayed a relatively adaptive style despite their low competence in English.

When it comes to the relationship between the high school type and causal dimensionality, the results display that the students' high school background did not make a difference in their causal dimensionality patterns. This could be because all these students were probably the high-achievers in their high schools and they show similar mindsets in terms of attributional thinking irrespective of the school type.

Unlike high school type, gender made a significant difference in the students' causal dimensionality tendencies in the external control sub-scale of CDS II. Similar to the findings of other studies (Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016; Zohri, 2011), female students had significantly higher external control scores than male students, which indicates that girls tended to ascribe their exam performance to external causes more than boys, which is quite unfavorable as it is a sign of maladaptive attributional style. This result contradicts the findings of other studies reporting that girls tend to make more internal attributions than boys (McClure et al, 2011; Özkardeş, 2011; Yılmaz, 2012).

5.5 Causal Attributions to Perceived Success or Failure

Students' causal attributions to success or failure were explored through LAAS, a 13-item questionnaire, and interview with the students. The results from the questionnaire shed light on the overall causes that students ascribed to their outcomes, and among these causes, use of wrong strategy and lack of effort showed up with the highest means, which supports the findings from CDS II as these two internal and controllable causes both signal an adaptive attributional style, or growth mindset. Task difficulty, mismatch between the school system and the exam, lack of ability, luck, lack of interest, ineffective instructional methods, unsuitable classroom environment and mood on the exam day followed effort and strategy attributions. The students attributed their outcome least to teachers' unfair grading, lack of family support and health problems. In terms of gender, there was a difference only in one item, in which girls scored higher than boys, suggesting that female students tend more to explain their failure through bad mood as in other studies in the literature (Hashem, & Zabihi, 2011). They mentioned other causes such as anxiety, stress, adaptation problems, lack of guidance and exam practice in the open-ended item of the questionnaire, which also proved the necessity of the qualitative part to yield more detailed and in-depth data as to the underlying factors regarding their attributions. As expected, the interview data presented a rich variety of causes attributed to perceived success or failure, which were more context specific and meaningful within this research. It is reported in the literature that

learners make multiple causal attributions to their outcomes and combine all dimensions when presenting these multiple causes, which explains student performance better (Dong et al, 2013). This is also prevalent in Turkish context, where students tend to ascribe their outcomes in EFL to a wide range of causes (Duran, 2015; Çağatay, 2018; Özkardeş, 2011; Semiz, 2011; Yördem, 2016). The causes elicited in this study are discussed for maladaptive and adaptive students in a comparative fashion. To begin with, it was observed that maladaptive students made a higher number of attributions compared to adaptive students, which may be a natural result of interviewing a higher number of maladaptive students, but they also produced a higher range of attributions, and reported causes such as adaptation problems, age factor, the effect of English-medium instruction, and unfair exam grading, which adaptive students did not even mention. This verifies the findings in the literature that students with negative perceptions or dysfunctional attributional styles tend to make more attributions to their outcomes (Weiner, 2000), which is explicable as these students probably question their performance more and come up with more reasons or excuses to explain their performance unlike adaptive students who have a healthier and more realistic perspective while accounting for their outcomes. In terms of locus of causality, they reported more external causes, which is in line with the literature (Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016; Taşkıran, 2010; Zohri, 2011), and interestingly maladaptive students produced similar numbers of external and internal attributions whereas adaptive students came up with more external causes than internal ones. This could be explained through these students' self-enhancement patterns, or self-serving bias, which suggest that learners tend to attribute failure to external factors to protect their egos, or maintain their self-esteem (Dong et al, 2013).

As for their specific causal attributions, repeat students, having reflected on their learning and performance a lot, reported a large array of causes, most of which comply with the existing literature (Çağatay, 2018; Duran, 2015; Gobel & Mori, 2007; Graham, 2004; Lu, Woodcock & Jiang, 2014; Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016; Özkardeş, 2011; Pishghadam and Zabihi, 2011; Taşkıran, 2010; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004; Yördem, 2016). In the external category, both maladaptive and adaptive students reported similar causes regarding the school

system, the exam, difficulty of the task, and family and social life with exception of two codes, English-medium instruction and unfair exam grading, that were mentioned only by the maladaptive group. Despite their differences in the attributional styles, both groups of students put the blame mostly on the school, more specifically on the education system in DBE, teachers, classroom instruction and environment instead of relating the outcomes to more personal and controllable factors, which would be more favorable. They also considered exam-related problems, task difficulty and issues caused by family and friends responsible for their failure. Whether this reflects the reality or not, these results should be taken with caution since the literature states that causal attributions are based on human perception and personal beliefs (Weiner, 1985) and that these perceptions have a bigger predictive role regarding motivation, persistence and future striving than the causes per se (Martinko, 1995; Weiner, 2000). While trying to promote students' adaptive attributional thinking and gaining them a growth mindset through attribution retraining (AT) programs, which have yielded many promising results (Çağatay, 2018; Erten, 2015; Höl, 2016; Semiz, 2011;), schools and teachers should also reflect on negative outcomes more and take responsibility for their part. Another important point here is that adaptive students, who were meticulously selected based on the quantitative data, reported similar attributions to those of maladaptive students, with an even higher number of external causes. This, in a way, indicates the insufficiency of quantitative methods (on which sample selection was based) regarding student attributions, which are very complicated in nature, if not due to similar perceptions peculiar to repeat students.

As for the internal causes, although adaptive students reported fewer causes, both groups of students came up with similar ascriptions, with the exception of two themes that were only mentioned by the maladaptive learners: causes related to lack of knowledge and age factor. It seems that adaptive students do not relate their background education or age to their performance, which is highly favorable as these two are uncontrollable factors. Overall, the students explained their exam outcome by referring to psychological and mental causes most, followed by lack of effort and wrong strategy use, lack of motivation and interest, absenteeism and health problems, and lack of ability as in many other studies in the field (Gobel,

Mori, Thang, Kan & Lee, 2011; Höl, 2016; Hsieh, 2004; McQuillan, 2000; Semiz, 2011; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001). These results are both worrisome and promising in different aspects. Even though internal attributions are preferable in achievement contexts, the high number of references to psychological and mental causes such as anxiety, stress and attention problems in addition to health issues is worrying as these are still uncontrollable and hard to deal with on the part of the learners (Lim, 2007). References to lack of motivation and interest are also thought-provoking because these students have opted for English-medium instruction and they cannot be successful in English without a desire to learn (Dörnyei, 2001; Weiner, 2010). On the other hand, relatively high numbers of effort and strategy attributions as opposed to very few references to ability are quite pleasing as ascribing outcomes to lack of effort or wrong learning strategies is considered a very healthy perspective within the context of AT while attributions to ability are not desirable in failure cases (Rui and Liang, 2008; Stipek, 1988). These students, it seems, still hold their hopes for the future and believe that success is under their control.

5.6 Teachers' Causal Attibutions to Their Students' Success / Failure

This study also aimed at uncovering teachers' attributions to their students' success or failure and exploring any similarities and differences between instructors and students in terms of their perceptions, which is considered important in the literature as teachers' instructional choices, pedagogical decisions and feedback are directly influenced by their causal attributions to their students' outcomes (Graham & Weiner, 1986; Weiner, 1996), but not sufficiently explored. In this respect, this study yielded valuable insights into the subject. Similar to students, teachers made more attributions to external causes, i.e. school-related reasons, including the education system, instructional problems and teacher effect, reasons regarding family and social life, and task difficulty. Interestingly, both the students and teachers blamed the education system in the department most for failure. Obviously, the teachers were not happy with the program, materials, and instructional methods, which they taught hindered student success. This result, although it validates the

student data, contradicts the general tendency in the literature that teachers dominantly explain student success and failure through internal causes such as effort, interest, anxiety and lack of confidence on the part of the students (Peacock, 2010; Yılmaz, 2012). The teachers and the students also displayed similarities regarding internal causes of failure, among which they referred most to insufficient effort, lack of strategy use and wrong approach to learning English in general, some of the most predominant causes in the field (Gümüş, 2014). In addition to other shared causes including lack of knowledge, psychological and mental causes, health problems and lack of ability, the instructors mentioned financial problems, lack of awareness and dislike for English, which the students did not report. Seemingly, teachers and students also display differences in their perceptions of attributions to outcomes as reported by most studies presenting clashes between teachers and learners (Erten, 2015; Sekar, 2013). However, these conclusions should be evaluated with caution since the teachers who were interviewed were not teaching these students in the previous year, and thus their perceptions, similar or different, could be the result of their observations of or knowledge about their students, or their accumulated experiences and even biases. Another important point here is that the teachers' attributions were both ego-enhancing and counter-defensive (Peterson and Barger, 1985) in nature as they both referred to factors inherent in the learners, including lack of effort and ability, while also blaming outside factors such as the school system and teachers. This supports the research stating that eastern cultures tend to show more modesty regarding student outcomes and take responsibility when needed (Zohri & Zerhouni, 2013). This is pedagogically promising because it means that these teachers would be more willing to arrange their instruction and feedback to better their students' performance.

5.7 Effects of Students' Outcomes on Their Feelings and Behaviours

The 5th question concerned what the students' outcome made them feel, and how these feelings influenced their learning and achievement. It is well documented in the literature that learners' causal attributions and attributional dimensions have an effect on their feelings, which affect their perceptions and mindsets, and thus

learning (Graham, 1994; Weiner, 1985; Weiner, 2000). This intricate relationship makes it necessary to discover their feelings as much as attributions, which has long been neglected in the field. This study revealed that maladaptive and adaptive students also displayed differences in this aspect, too. Maladaptive students reported more effects including depression, hopelessness, loss of motivation and self-confidence, feeling like a loser, procrastination and sense of guilt, which were all negative in nature and reported in the literature (Stipek, 1983; Weiner, 2000; Weiner, Russell and Lerman,1979;) except for one item that reflected increased awareness. It seems that negative outcomes lead to long-term negative feelings that are likely to hinder achievement. These findings are vital considering their pedagogical effects (Semiz, 2011; Stipek, 1988; Weiner, 2000) as they indicate a two-way relationship between maladaptive thinking and negative feelings in that they reciprocally nurture each other and contribute to more failure. Adaptive students, on the other hand, reported very few effects here, namely lack of self-efficacy, disappointment and exhaustion, all negative in nature. This group of students did not mention any positive feelings, which could result from the fact that all these students, adaptive or maladaptive, experienced repeated failure and show noticeable similarities despite their attributional differences.

5.8 Suggestions to Decrease the Level of Failure

The last question in this study was related to students' and teachers' suggestions to deal with the existing failure, and expectedly, most of the suggestions targeted external causes mentioned before, starting with the education system in the department. It is quite plausible that both maldaptive and adaptive students came up with ideas to improve the school system, teaching, curriculum and guidance, which they taught were responsible for their failure in the exam. Different from the adaptive group, maladaptive students also referred to improvements in the exam, and asked for more knowledge and guidance during the academic year. Although teachers made similar suggestions to students, they produced more informed and justified ideas, such as an exit-level exam instead of EPE, rearranging the cut-off points in the placement exam to place the students better, and more writing in the

beginner level. Despite their limited context, these suggestions could be of utmost use to other similar contexts.

5.9 Implications of the Study

There are a number of noteworthy implications that can be derived from this study. Foremost, the significantly higher number of students who considered themselves unsuccessful both in EPE and learning English in general indicates the need to change these learners' negative perceptions as they are commonly associated with lower motivation and self-efficay in addition to a maladaptive attributional style in the literature (Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Williams, Burden, Poulet and Maun, 2004, Taşkıran, 2010). Thus, teachers should do their best to transform their students' negative perceptions by motivating the learners and giving constructive feedback so that they will not internalize these perceptions. This is of paramount importance especially for motivationally at-risk students, the repeat students in our case, who are characterized by repeated failure experience and thus tend to have a maladaptive style even with relatively positive perceptions, as was the case in this study. Another important conclusion drawn from the results was that these students mostly formed their perception of failure by using exam scores or comparing themselves to their peers, suggesting a problem in their belief systems and goal orientation. These students should be trained to set their own goals depending on their needs and motivation, and base their perceptions on these personal criteria instead of some external criteria like grades and others.

As for their causal dimensionality and specific causes to perceived success or failure, the results in the quantitative and qualitative parts yielded somewhat contrasting results in that although the students displayed a healthy picture with relatively higher scores in internal and personally-controllable subscales, they dominantly referred to external and uncontrollable causes in the interviews. Relying on the strengths of the qualitative data, it is crucial that the learners' maladaptive, or disfunctional, attributional style be transformed into an adaptive and healthy one by way of attribution retraining, which should be included in the curriculum or at least provided to students who need it. Teachers should also guide their students in this

respect and try to convince them that success results from high motivation, sustained effort and use of right strategies to name a few and that relating failure to external, stable and uncontrollable causes, such as the school system, teacher or exam-specific problems, lead to a vicious circle on their part and prevent them from persisting and showing more effort for similar future tasks. There is surely food for thought here for the school and teachers as well. Considering the high number of references by both students and teachers to school system, instruction and teachers, whether they are accurate or not, the program, teaching materials, instructional methods and exams should be revised and improvements should be made based on the suggestions from teachers and students.

For the students who made attributions to mental and psychological causes such as stress and anxiety, guidance and counselling should be provided, and these students should be directed towards a growth mindset that can enable them to be more positive and constructive regarding their performance.

5.10 Limitations of the Study

As in most studies, this study has a number of limitations. The main limitation regards the qualitative nature of the data in the second phase. Although the study presents rich results with valuable insights, the researcher had to rely on an interpretative approach in dealing with the qualitative data, suggesting that the data presented and the results discussed were partly based the researcher's own interpretations. As such, they may be subjective and biased although every effort has been made to validate the results and give a detailed picture of the whole process. Another limitation could be the use of only repeat level students in the study. The findings only reflect the perceptions and experiences of students in the repeat level, which is not considered a universally-accepted proficiency level, but rather seen as a special group of students who are not proficient enough to start to study in their departments and have to repeat the preparatory program again. Collecting data from the other proficiency levels could have yielded richer and more comparative data regarding the students' causal attributions. Yet another limitation is related to the questionnaire, LAAS, used in the quantitative part of the study. It includes 13 items

that address the most commonly-reported attributions in the literature, but it could have contained more causal attributions for the purpose of comprehensiveness and representation.

5.11 Suggestions for Further Research

In further studies, a more comprehensive investigation of causal attributions could be undertaken by including students from different proficiency levels to be able to compare and contrast data better.

In addition, data could be collected from the repeat level students in different state and private universities so that a more general picture can be presented regarding the students who have difficulty in learning English and are exposed to repeated failure in Turkish context.

As highlighted in the implications part, further studies can also include an attribution retraining program that target students with a maladaptive attributional pattern so that the students' fixed mindset can be transformed into growth mindset that facilitates learning and enhances performance.

REFERENCES

Abramson, L. Y., Seligman, M. E. P., & Teasdale, J. (1978). Learned helplessness in humans: Critique and reformulation. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 87*, 49-74.

Bain, S.K., McCallum, R.S., Bell, S.M., Cochran, J.L. & Sawyer, S.C. (2010). Foreign language learnng Aptitudes, attitudes, attributions, and achievement of post-secondary students identified as gifted. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, *22*(1), 130-156.

Barbour, R.S. (2008). Mixing methods. In *Introducing qualitative research: A student's guide to the craft of doing qualitative research* (pp.113-131). London: Sage.

Bar-Tal, D. (1978). Attributional analysis of achievement-related behavior. *Review of Educational Research Spring*, *48*(2), 259-271.

Betancourt, H., & Weiner, B. (1982). Attribution for achievement-related events, expectancy and sentiments, Astudy of success and failure in Chile and the United States. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology, 13*, 362-374.

Beyer, S. (1990). Gender differences in the accuracy of self-evaluation of performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *59*, 960–970.

Beyer, S. (1999). Gender differences in causal attributions by college students of performance on course examinations. *Current Psychology: Developmental, Learning, Personality, Social, 17*, 346-358.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Brown, R., Gray, R., & Ferrara, M. (2005). Attributions for personal achievement outcomes among Japanese, Chinese, and Turkish University students. *Information and Communication Studies, 33*, 1-13.

Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? *Qualitative Research, 6*(1), 105–107.

Büyükselçuk, D. (2006). *Self-efficacy in relation to self-construals and causal attributions.* MA thesis submitted to the Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences Boğaziçi University, Turkey.

Çağatay, S. (2018). *The effectiveness of attribution retraining on language learners' attributions, future self-guides and motivated behavior, effort*. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Institute of Educational Sciences Hacettepe University, Turkey.

Can, B. (2005). *An analysis of elementary school teachers' causal attributions related to self-identified success and failure.* MA Thesis submitted to the Institute of Social Sciences Boğaziçi University, Turkey.

Chodkiewicz, A.R., & Boyle, C. (2014). Exploring the contribution of attribution retraining to student perceptions and the learning process. *Educational Psychology in Practice: Theory, Research and Practice in Educational Psychology, 30*(1), 78-87.

Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, California, USA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M., & Hanson, W. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (pp. 209–240). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin , N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). New York : McGraw - Hill.

Dong, Y., Stupnisky, R. H., & Berry, J. C. (2013). Multiple causal attributions: An investigation of college students learning a foreign language. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 28*, 1587-1602.

Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, *78*(3), 273-284.

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation.* New York: Longman.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Duran, Ö. (2015). *Causal attributions and self-efficacy beliefs of EFL learners at Mersin University English Preparatory School*. MA thesis submitted to the Institute of Social Sciences Çukurova University, Turkey.

Eggen, P., & Kauchak, D. (1994). *Educational psychology classroom connections.* New York: McMillan College Publishing Company.

Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding second language acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.Ickes, W., & Layden, M. (1976). Attributional styles. In J. Harvey, *New Directions in attribution research, 2* (pp. 119-152). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Erten, I. H. (2015). Attribution retraining in L2 classes: prospects for exploratory classroom practice. *Teacher-Researchers in Action*, 357-367.

Fairbarin, M., Moore, J., & Chan, K. (1994). Learning, attributional beliefs and strategic learning in specific subject domains: Scale development. *The AARE Annual Conference.* Newcastle: New South Wales.

Fiske, S., & Taylor, S. (1991). *Social cognition (2nd ed.).* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Försterling, F. (2001) A*ttribution: an introduction to theories, research, and applications.* Psychology Press, Hove, ISBN 0-86377-792-9.

Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E (2006). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (6th ed.). New York: Mc-Graw Hill Companies, Inc.

Fusch, P.I., & Ness, L.R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*(9), 1408-1416.

Gobel, P., & Mori, S. (2007). Success and failure in the EFL classroom: Exploring students' attributional beliefs in language learning. *EUROSLA Yearbook, 7,* 149-169.

Gobel, P., Mori, S., Thang, S., Kan, N., & Lee, K. (2011). The impact of culture on student attributions for performance: A comparative study of three groups of EFL/ESL learners. *JIRSEA Journal, 9(1),* 27-43.

Graham, S. (1991). A review of attribution theory in achievement contexts. *Educational Psychology Review, 3*(1), 5-39.

Graham, S. (1994). Classroom motivation from an attributional perspective. In H. F.

Graham, S. (1997). Using attribution theory to understand social and academic motivation in African American youth. *Educational Psychologist, 32*(1), 21-34.

Graham, S. (2004). Giving up on modern foreign languages? Students' perceptions of learning French. *The Modern Language Journal, 88(2),* 171-191.

Graham, S., & Weiner, B. (1986). From attribution theory to developmental psychology: A round-trip ticket? *Social Cognition, 4,* 152-179.

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *11*(3), 255–274.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82.

Güleç, B. A. (2013). *Success and failure attributions of academic staff studying for foreign language achievement tests*. MA Thesis Submitted to the Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences Çağ University, Mersin.

Gümüş, Ö. (2014). *EFL instructors' causal attributions of student success and failure and their relationship to classroom practices*. MA Thesis Submitted to the Institute of Social Sciences Çağ University, Mersin.

Hareli, S., & Weiner, B. (2002). Social emotions and personality inferences: A scaffold for a new direction in the study of achievement motivation. *Educational Psychologist, 37*(3), 183-193.

Hashemi, M.R., & Zahibi, R. (2011). Learners' attributional beliefs in success or failure and their performance on the interchange objective placement test. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 1*(8), 954-960.

Haynes, T.L., Perry, R.P., Stupnisky, R.H., & Daniels, L. M. (2009). *A Review of Attributional Retraining treatments: Fostering engagement and persistence in vulnerable collegestudents,* in J. Smart (Ed.), Higher Education: Handbook of the oryand research, 24, 229-275, The Netherlands: Springer Publishers.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations.* New York: Wiley.

Höl, D. (2016). *Exploring locus of control orientations of turkish efl learners andthe relationship between attributional retraining and academic achievement: an application of an educational training programme*. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Educational Sciences Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey.

Hsieh, P. (2004). *How college students explain their grades in a foreign language course: the interrelationship of attributions, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs and achievement*. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Texas, USA.

Hsieh, P., & Kang, H. (2010). Attribution and self-efficacy and their interrelationship in the Korean EFL context. *Language Learning, 60*(3), 606-627.

Hsieh, P., & Schallert, D.L. (2008). Implications from self-efficacy and attribution theories for an understanding of undergraduates' motivation in a foreign language course. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 33*, 513–532.

Hunter, M., & Barker, G. (1987). "If at first...": Attribution theory in the classroom. *Educational Leadership, 45*(2), 51-54.

Jones, E., & Davis, K. (1965). From acts to dispositions: The attribution process in person perception. In L. Berkowitz, *Advances in experimental social psycgology, (2)* (pp. 219-266). New York: Academic.

Jones, E., Kanouse, E., Kelley, H., Nisbett, E., Valins, S., & Weiner, B. (1972). *Perceiving the causes of success and failure.* Morristown: General Learning Press.

Kanazawa, S. (1992). Outcome or expectancy? Antecedents of spontaneous causal attribution. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 18*(6), 659-668.

Kapıkıran, N. (2008). Başarı sorumluluğunun ve başarı kaygısının psikopatolojik belirtilerle ilişkisinin belirlenmesi. *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 23(1),* 140-149.

Kayaoğlu, M. (1997). *An investigation of the learning strategies of Turkish EFL and ESL adult learners and the relationship between their beliefs about different aspects of language learning and their strategy use.* A doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol, England.

Keblawi, F. (2009). *A critical appraisal of language learning motivation theories the fifth international biennial.* SELF Research Conference in Dubai, UAE.

Kelley, H. (1967). Attribution theory in social psychology. In D. Levine, *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska.

Kelley, H., & Michela, J. (1980). Attribution theory and research. In M. Rosenzweig, & L. Porter, *Annual review of Psychology, 31* (pp. 457-501). Palo Alto, California: Annual Reviews.

Kelley, H.H. (1992). Common sense psychology and scientific psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology, 43,* 1-23.

Koçyiğit, M. (2011). *Üniversite öğrencilerinin nedensel yüklemeleri ve öğrenme stilleri.* MA Thesis Submitted to Institute of Social Sciences Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyon.

Kun, L., & Liming, Y. (2007). The influence of achievement attributions on self-regulated language learning behaviors. *CELEA Journal, 30(1),* 82-89.

Lebedina-Manzoni, M. (2004). To what students attribute their academic successes and unsuccesses. *Education, 124*(4), 699-708.

Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2009). A typology of mixed methods research designs. *Quality&Quantity International Journal of Methodology, 43,* 265-275.

Lei, L., & Qin, X. (2009). An emprical study of success and failure attributions of EFL learners at the tertiary level in China. *Asian EFL Journal, 11*(3), 2009.

Lim, H. (2007). Effects of attributions and task values on foreign language use anxiety. *Journal of Educational and Human Development, 1(2).*

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* California: Sage.

Lodico, M. G., Spaulding, D. T., & Voegtle, K. H. (2006). *Methods in educational research from theory to practice.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.: USA.

Lu, J., Woodcock, S., & Jiang, H. (2014). Investigation of Chinese university students' attributions of English language learning. *SAGE Open*, 1-15.

Maehr, M. L., & Meyer, H. A. (1997). Understanding motivation and schooling: Where we've been, where we are, and where we need to go. *Educational Psychology Review*, *9*(4), 371–409.

Manusov, V., & Spitzberg, B. (2013, April 26). *Attribution theory: Finding good cause in the search for theory.* Retrieved from Sage Publications: http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/21200_Chapter 3.pdf.

Martinko, M. J. (1995). *Atribution theory: An organizational perspective*. St.Lucie Press. Retrieved on 10 June, 2016 from: http://books.google.co.uk/.

Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

McAuley, E., Duncan T. E., & Russell, D. W. (1992). Measuring causal attributions: The revised causal dimension scale (CDSII). *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 18*(5), 566-573.

McClure, J., Meyer, L.H., Garisch, J., Fischer, R., Weir, K.F., & Walkey, F.H. (2011). Students' attributions for their best and worst marks: Do they relate to achievement? *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 36*(2), 71-81.

McMillian, H. J., & Schumacher, S. (1993). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction.* New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.

McQuillan, J. (2000). *Attribution theory and second language acquisition: An empirical analysis.* Paper presented at AAAL Conference, Vancouver.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* Jossey-Bass Publishers: San Francisco.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* Jossey-Bass Publishers: San Francisco.

Mertens, D.M. (2005). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods*. United States of America: SAGE Publications.

Mohammadi, A., & Sharififar, M. (2016). Attributions for success and failure: gender and language proficiency differences among Iranian EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *6*(3), 518-524.

Mori, S., Ming, T., Nor, N., Suppiah, V.L., & Imm, O.S. (2011). Attribution tendency and its relationship with actual and perceived proficiency. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies, 11*(3), 199-218.

Nicholls, J. (1975). Causal attributions and other achievement related cognitions: Effects of task, outcome, attainment value and sex. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *31*, 379-389.

Nispett, R. E., & Wilson, T. D. (1977). Telling more than we can know: verbal reports on mental processes. *Psychological Review, 84*(3), 231-259.

Nunan, D., & Bailey, K.M. (2009). E*xploring second language classroom research: A comprehensive guide.* Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning.

O'Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2012). Unsatisfactory saturation: A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 1-8.

O"Neil, J. & Drillings, M. (Eds.). *Motivation theory and research.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Oppenheim, A. N. (1992). *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement.* London, UK: Pinter Publishers.

O'sallivan, J., & Howe, M. (1996). Causal attributions and reading achievement: individual in low income families. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 21*, 363-387.

Özdiyar, Ö. (2008). *Başarı ve başarısızlığa yüklenen nedenlere ilişkin sınıf öğretmenliği anabilim dalı öğrenci görüşleri*. MA Thesis Submitted to the Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences Hacettepe University, Ankara.

Özduygu, F. (1995). *Başarı korkusunun dağılımı ve yüksek ve düşük başarı korkusuna sahip öğrencilerin başarı ya da başarısızlıklarının yaygın olduğu durumlarda, kendi başarı ya da başarısızlıklarına yaptıkları nedensel yüklemeler.* Unpublished Master Thesis Submitted to the Institute of Social Sciences Hacettepe University, Ankara.

Özkardeş, A. (2011). *Achievement attributions of prepatory class learners at the school of foreign languages at Pamukkale University for their succes or failure in learning English.* MA Thesis Submitted to Institute of Social Sciences Pamukkale University, Denizli.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd edition), Thousand Oaks. C: Sage.

Peacock, M. (2010). Attribution and learning English as a foreign language. *ELT Journal, 64*(2), 184-193.

Perry, R. (2003). Perceived (academic) contol and causal thinking in achievement settings. *Canadian Psychology*, 312+. Retrieved from Questia database.

Peterson, P. L., & Barger, S. A. (1985). Attribution theory and teacher expectancy. In J. B. Dusek, V. C. Hall & W. J. Meyer (Eds.), Teacher Expectancies (pp. 159-184). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pintrich, PR., & Schunk, DH. (1996). *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Pishghadam, R., & Zabihi, R. (2011). Foreign language attributions and achievement in foreign language class. *International Journal of Linguistics, 3(E2).*

Reis, S. M. (1987). We can‘t change what we don‘t recognize: Understanding the special needs of gifted females. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 31*, 83-89.

Rimm, S. (1991). *Why bright kids get poor grades: And what you can do about it*. New York: Crown.

Rogers, C. G. (1987). *New directions in educational psychology 2: Behaviour and motivation in the classroom*. London: Routlegde Falmer.

Rosenbaum, R. (1972). *A dimensional analysis of the perceived causes of success and failure.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of California, Los Angeles.

Rotter, J. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of Reinforcement. *Psychological Monograph, 80,* 1-28.

Royer J.M., & Feldman, R.S. (1984). *Educational psychology applications and theory*. NewYork: Alfred A. Knopf.

Rui, Z., & Liang, F. (2008). Survey of college non-English adult learners' English learning motivation and its implications. *US-China Foreign Language, 6(3),* 47-53.

Şahinkarakaş, Ş. (2011). Young students' success and failure attributions in language learning. *Social Behaviour and Personality, 39(7)*, 879-886.

Satıcılar, U. (2006). *An investigation into the achievement attributions of English language learners in different grades.* MA Thesis Submitted to Institue of Social Sciences Ondokuz Mayıs University, Çanakkale.

Sekar, J.J. (2013). Learner autonomy and attribution: A paradigm shift in ELT in India. *Sino-US English Teaching, 10*(8), 583-592.

Semiz, Ö. (2011). *The effects of a training program on attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement and student effort: A study on motivationally at-risk students*. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Educational Sciences Atatürk University, Erzurum.

Shunk, D. H. (1991). Self-efficacy and academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist, 26,* 207–232.

Stemler, S. (2001). An overview of content analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 7*(17), 137-146.

Stevenson, H., & Lee, S. (1990). Contexts of achievement: A study of American, Chinese, and Japanese children. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 221*, 1-119.

Stipek, D. (1983). A developmental analysis of pride and shame. *Human Development, 26*, 42-54.

Stipek, D. J. and Gralinski, J. H. (1991). Gender differences in children's achievement-related beliefs and emotional responses to success and failure in mathematics. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 83*(3), 361-371.

Stipek, DJ (1988). *Motivation to learn: From theory to practice*. (2nd Ed). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* (2nd Ed.) Sage Publications, Inc; Thousand Oaks, CA: US.

Stupnisky, R.H. (2005). *The effects of causal search and attributional retraining on achievement motivation and performance*. Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, Dissertation Abstracts International, 3, MR08975.

Suarez, C. & Sandiford, G. (2008). Causal attributions for success or failure of students in college algebra. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 32, 325–346.

Sümer, N. (2000). Yapısal eşitlik modelleri: Temel kavramlar ve örnek uygulamalar. *Türk Psikoloji Yazıları*, 3(6), 49-74.

Sweeton, M.A.J. & Deerrose B. A.B. (2010). Causal attributions: A Review of the past and directions for the future. *The New School Psychology Bulletin*, 7, 31-41.

Taşkıran, A. (2010). *Exploring EFL students' causal attributions of perceived success and failure in language learning process.* MA Thesis Submitted to Institute of Educational Sciences Anadolu University, Eskişehir.

Tekir, S. (2012). *An investigation into the relationship between students' attributions, mediated learning experience and motivation in English language learning*. MA Thesis Submitted to Institute of Educational Sciences Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale.

Tremblay, P.F., & Gardner, R.C. (1995). Expanding the motivation construct in language learning. *The Modern Language Journal, 79*(4), 505-518.

Tse, L. (2000). Student perceptions of foreign language study: A qualitative analysis of foreign language autobiographies. *Modern Language Journal, 84,* 69-84.

Ushioda, E. (2001). Language learning at University: Exploring the role of motivational thinking. In R. Dörnyei, & R. Schimidt, *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 93-126). University of Hawai, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center, Honolulu.

Vispoel, W., & Austin, J. (1995). Success and failure in junior high school: A critical incident approach to understanding students' attributional beliefs. *American Educational Research Journal, 32(2),* 377-412.

Walker, J. L. (2012). The use of saturation in qualitative research. *Canadian Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing,* 22(2), 37-46.

Weiner, B. (1972). Attribution theory, achievement motivation, and the educational process. *Review of Educational Research, 42,* 203-215.

Weiner, B. (1972). *Theories of motivation: From mechanism to cognition.* Chicago: Rand McNally.

Weiner, B. (1974). *Achievement motivation and attribution theory.* New Jersey: General Learning Press.

Weiner, B. (1979). A theory of motivation for some classroom practices. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 71(1),* 3-25.

Weiner, B. (1983). Some methodological pitfalls in attributional research. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 75(4),* 530-543.

Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. *Psychological Review, 92*, 548-573.

Weiner, B. (1986). *An attributional theory of motivation and emotion.* New York: Springer Verlag.

Weiner, B. (1992). *Human motivation: Metaphors, theories and research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Weiner, B. (1994). Integrating social and personal theories of achievement striving. *Review of Educational Research, 64*, 557–573.

Weiner, B. (1996). Searching for order in social motivation. *Psychological Inquiry, 7*(3), 199-216.

Weiner, B. (2000). Intrapersonal and interpersonal theories of motivation from an attributional perspective. *Educational Psychology Review, 12*(1), 1-14.

Weiner, B. (2010). The development of an attribution-based theory of motivation: A history of ideas. *Educational Psychologist, 45*(1), 28-36.

Weiner, B., & Kukla, A. (1970). An attributional analysis of achievement motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 15*, 1-20.

Weiner, B., Frieze, I., Kukla, A., Reed, I., Rest, S., & Rosenbaum, R. (1971). *Perceiving the causes of success and failure.* Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.

Weiner, B., Russell, D., & Lerman, D. (1978). Affective consequences of causal ascriptions. In J. Harvey, W. Ickes, & R. Kidd, *New directions in all attribution research (Vol. 2).* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Weiner, B., Russell, D., & Lerman, D. (1979). The cognition-emotion process in achievement related contexts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*, 1221-1230.

Williams, M., & Burden, R. (1999). Students' developing conceptions of themselves as language learners. *The Modern Language Journal, 83*, 19-201.

Williams, M., & Burden, R. L. **(**1997*). Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, M., Burden, R., & Al-Baharna, S. (2001). Making sense of success and failure: The role of the individual in motivation theory. In Z. Dönyei, & R. Schmidt, *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 171-184). Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center.

Williams, M., Burden, R., Poulet, L., & Maun, I. (2004). Learners' perceptions of their successes and failures in foreign language learning. *Language Learning Journal, 30*, 19-29.

Wong, P.T., & Weiner, B. (1981). When people ask ―why‖ questions, and the heuristics of attributional search. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40*(4), 650-663.

Yılmaz, C. (2012). An investigation into Turkish EFL students' attributions in reading comprehension. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 3*(5), 823-828.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research design and methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc: USA.

Yördem, A. (2016). *An investigation into the prep school students' attributions for success and failure in an EFL context: the case of a state university in Turkey*. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Educational Sciences Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey.

Zohri, A. (2011). Causal attributions for failure and the effect of gender among Moroccan EFL university learners. *English Language Teaching, 4*(4), 130-137.

Zohri, A., & Zerhouni, B. (2013). Self-serving bias in Moroccan EFL university teachers' attributions of their students' success and failure. *Arab World English Journal, 4*(1), 256-268.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

ARAŞTIRMAYA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Temel İngilizce Bölümü okutmanlarından Sevinç Bıçak tarafından yürütülen bir yüksek lisans çalışmasıdır. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Araştırmanın amacı, öğrencilerin İngilizce öğrenmedeki başarı ve başarısızlıklarını neye atfettikleriyle ilgili bilgi toplamaktır.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden beklenen, ankette yer alan bir dizi soruyu derecelendirme ölçeği üzerinde yanıtlamanız ve bir açık uçlu soruyu kısaca cevaplandırmanızdır. Bu çalışmaya katılım ortalama olarak 15 dakika sürmektedir.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Ankette, sizden kimlik veya kurum belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak, sadece araştırmacı tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır**.** Sağladığınız veriler gönüllü katılım formlarında toplanan kimlik bilgileri ile eşleştirilmeyecektir.

Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Anket, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda anketi uygulayan kişiye, anketi tamamlamadığınızı söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Anket sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Temel İngilizce Bölümü okutmanlarından Sevinç Bıçak (E-posta: sbicak@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad Tarih İmza

APPENDIX B: CAUSAL DIMENSIONS SCALE II – TURKISH VERSION
NEDENSEL BOYUTLAR ÖLÇEĞİ

1. BÖLÜM (Kişisel Bilgiler)

Sınıf kodunuz : _____

Cinsiyetiniz : kadın ☐ erkek ☐

Bölümünüz : _____

Mezun olduğunuz lise türü: _____ (Fen lisesi, Anadolu Lisesi vb.)

Geçen sene okuduğunuz kurlar:

1.dönem: _____ 2. dönem: _____

Geçtiğimiz **yıl sonunda** İngilizce hazırlıkta aldığınız notların genel ortalamasını yazınız: _____

2. BÖLÜM

Bu bölümde başarı veya başarısızlığınızın nedensel boyutlarına dair görüşleriniz tespit edilmektedir. Lütfen aşağıda verilen ifadeleri dikkatlice okuyup her biri için kendi durumunuzu en iyi tanımlayan seçeneği yuvarlak içine alınız. Her bir maddeyi işaretlediğinizden emin olunuz.

1. En son girdiğiniz İngilizce Yeterlik Sınavı (Proficiency Exam) sonucunu yazınız:_____

2. Aldığınız bu nota dayanarak, aşağıdaki kutuda 10 üzerinden kendinizi değerlendiriniz.

Çok başarısız									Çok başarılı
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Benim bu ölçüde başarılı veya başarısız olmam:	**kesinlikle katılmıyorum**	**katılmıyorum**	**kararsızım**	**katılıyorum**	**kesinlikle katılıyorum**
1. Benim bir özelliğimi yansıtmaktadır (çaba, yetenek, ilgi vb.)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Benim elimdedir.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Kalıcı bir durumdur.	1	2	3	4	5
4.Kontrolüm altındadır.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Başkalarına bağlıdır (hocalar, arkadaşlar, aile, vb.)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Benden kaynaklanmaktadır.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Zaman içinde değişmez.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Başkalarının denetimindedir (hocalar, arkadaşlar, aile, vb.)	1	2	3	4	5
9.Kendimle ilgilidir.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Benim denetimim altındadır.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Hep böyle kalacaktır.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Diğer insanlar tarafından kontrol edilebilir.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C: LAAS – TURKISH VERSION

DİL BAŞARISINI YÜKLEME ANKETİ

Bu bölümde başarı veya başarısızlığınızın nedenlerine dair görüşleriniz tespit edilmektedir. Lütfen aşağıda verilen ifadeleri dikkatlice okuyup her biri için kendi durumunuzu en iyi tanımlayan seçeneği işaretleyiniz. Her bir maddeyi işaretlediğinizden emin olunuz**.**

Aşağıdaki ifadelerle ilgili seçenekleri en son girdiğiniz İngilizce Yeterlik Sınavı (Proficiency Exam) sonucunuzu düşünerek işaretleyiniz.

Sınavda bu notu aldım çünkü:	**kesinlikle katılmıyorum**	**katılmıyorum**	**kararsızım**	**katılıyorum**	**kesinlikle katılıyorum**
1. yabancı dil öğrenmeye yeteneğim yok.	1	2	3	4	5
2. yeterince çaba göstermedim.	1	2	3	4	5
3. İngilizce öğrenmek zor.	1	2	3	4	5
4. sınavda şansızlık yaşadım.	1	2	3	4	5
5. hocaların notlandırma sistemi adil değildi.	1	2	3		5
6. doğru çalışma yöntemlerini kullanamadım.	1	2	3	4	5
7. İngilizce öğrenmeye ilgi duymuyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
8. hocaların ders anlatma yöntemleri etkili değildi.	1	2	3	4	5
9.ailem yeterince destek ol(a)madı.	1	2	3	4	5
10. okuduğum sınıflardaki sınıf ortamı öğrenmeye uygun değildi.	1	2	3	4	5
11. yaşadığım sağlık sorunları beni olumsuz etkiledi.	1	2	3	4	5
12. sınav günü ruh halim iyi değildi.	1	2	3	4	5
13. okuldaki eğitim sistemi İngilizce Yeterlik Sınavına yönelik değildi.	1	2	3	4	5

Yukarıda verilen sebepler dışında başarınızı veya başarısızlığınızı etkileyen faktörler varsa lütfen yazınız:

_____
_____
_____

Çalışmanın devamında yapılacak mülakatlara gönüllü katılmak isterseniz, lütfen aşağıya isim soyad ve iletişim bilgilerinizi (tel no veya e-posta) yazınız.

İsim soyad: _____ İletişim bilgisi: _____

APPENDIX D: CAUSAL DIMENSIONS SCALE II – ENGLISH VERSION

PART 1 (Personal Information)

Class code : _____

Gender : Female ☐ Male ☐

Department : _____

Type of high school you graduated: _____

(Science High School, Anatolian High School etc.)

Proficiency level you were placed last year:

1st Term: _____ 2nd Term: _____

Write your total yearly average from last year: _____

PART 2

In this part, your opinions / perceptions about your causal dimensionality regarding success and failure are explored. Please read the items below carefully and mark the option that best describes your opinion. Make sure that you have marked all the items.

1. Write your most recent proficiency exam score:_____

2. Based on this score, evaluate yourself out of 10 in the box below:

Very unsuccessful									**Very successful**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**

My performance in the exam:	**totally disagree**	**disagree**	**neither agree nor disagree**	**agree**	**totally agree**
1. reflects an aspect of myself (effort, ability, interest etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
2. is manageable by me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. is permanent.	1	2	3	4	5
4. can be regulated by me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. is something over which others (teachers, friends, family, etc.) have control.	1	2	3	4	5
6. is inside of me.	1	2	3	4	5
7. is stable over time.	1	2	3	4	5
8. is under the power of other people (teachers, friends, family, vb.)	1	2	3	4	5
9. is something about me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. is something over which I have power.	1	2	3	4	5
11. is unchangeable.	1	2	3	4	5
12. is regulated by other people.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E: LAAS – ENGLISH VERSION

LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT ATTRIBUTION SCALE

In this part, your opinions / perceptions about your causal attributions to success and failure are explored. Please read the items below carefully and mark the option that best describes your opinion. Make sure that you have marked all the items.

Mark the option that best describes your opinion for each item below, considering your most recent English Proficiency Exam score.

I took this exam score because:	**totally disagree**	**disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**agree**	**totally agree**
1. I don't have ability in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I didn't put enough effort into studying.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Learning English is difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I had bad luck in the exam.	1	2	3	4	5
5. teachers' grading was unfair.	1	2	3		5
6. I didn't use the right strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am not interested in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
8. teachers' instructional methods were ineffective.	1	2	3	4	5
9. my family didn't support me sufficiently.	1	2	3	4	5
10. classroom environment wasn't suitable for learning.	1	2	3	4	5
11. health problems affected me negatively.	1	2	3	4	5
12. my mood on the exam day wasn't good.	1	2	3	4	5
13. education system at school didn't match EPE.	1	2	3	4	5

If there are any other causes that affected your performance and that are not given above, please write them in the blank provided:

_____

_____

If you want to volunteer to take part in the interviews that will be conducted in the follow-up of this research, please write your name, surname and contact information (e-mail or phone number) below.

Name Surname: _____ Contact Info: _____

APPENDIX F: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR STUDENTS – TURKISH VERSION

1. Kendinizi İngilizce öğrenme konusunda ne kadar başarılı buluyorsunuz?
    - Bu cevabı neye dayanarak verdiniz?
        - Sınav sonucu, başkalarının geri dönütü, başarı hissi, kendini başkalarıyla karşılaştırma, kişisel hedefler, diğer faktörler?
2. Sene tekrarı yapmak sizin açınızdan bir başarısızlık göstergesi midir? Nedenlerini açıklar mısınız?
3. Sizce bu başarının / başarısızlığın / sınav performansınızın nedenleri (çaba, yetenek, şans vs.) neler olabilir?
    - **(Örneğin) yeterince çalışmamak / çaba göstermemek**
        - Sizce bu durum sizden mi yoksa dış etkenlerden mi kaynaklanıyor? Açıklar mısınız?
        - Sizce bu durum kalıcı mı? Açıklar mısınız?
        - Sizce bu durum sizin kontrolünüzde mi? Açıklar mısınız?
4. Sınavda gösterdiğiniz performance (başarı / başarısızlık) sizi ne yönde etkilemektedir?
    - Ne yönde etkiliyor?
        - Motivasyon
        - Çaba
        - Azim
        - Kişisel beklentiler
        - Kendine ve öğrenmeye yönelik inanç ve tutumlar
        - Başarı / başarısızlık / genel performans
        - Duygular (gurur, öz saygı, ümitsizlik, utanç, suçluluk, öfke, öğrenilmiş çaresizlik vb.)
5. Bahsi geçen başarısızlığı azaltmak için neler yapılabilir? Zorluk yaşayan diğer arkadaşlarınız için önerileriniz nelerdir?
6. Son olarak eklemek istediğiniz herhangi bir şey var mıdır?

APPENDIX G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR STUDENTS – ENGLISH VERSION

1. How successful do you find yourself in learning English?
    - What is your answer based on?
        - Exam scores, others' feedback, sense of achievement, comparison to others, personal goals, other factors?
2. Do you think repeating the program is an indication of failure? Why? Why not?
3. What could be the causes (effort, ability, luck etc.) of this success / failure / performance?
    - E.g. lack of effort
        - Does this situation result from personal or outside factors? Please explain.
        - Is this situation stable, or permanent? Please explain.
        - Is this situation under your control? Please explain.
4. In what way does your exam performance affect you?
    - In terms of:
        - Motivation
        - Effort
        - Persistence
        - Personal expectations
        - Beliefs and attitudes towards yourself and learning
        - Başarı / başarısızlık / genel performans Success / failure / general performance
        - Feelings (pride, self-respect, hopelessness, shame, guilt, frustration, learned helplessness etc.)
5. What could / should be done to decrease the level of failure? What are your suggestions for those who experience similar problems?
6. Is there anything alse that you want to add?

APPENDIX H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS – TURKISH VERSION

1. Öğrencilerinizi İngilizce öğrenme konusunda ne kadar başarılı buluyorsunuz?
2. Öğrencilerin sene tekrarı yapması sizin açınızdan bir başarısızlık göstergesi midir? Nedenlerini açıklar mısınız?
3. Sizce öğrencilerinizin bu başarısının / başarısızlığının / sınav performansının nedenleri (çaba, yetenek, şans vs.) neler olabilir?
4. Bahsi geçen başarısızlığı azaltmak için neler yapılabilir? Zorluk yaşayan öğrenciler için önerileriniz nelerdir?
5. Son olarak eklemek istediğiniz herhangi bir şey var mıdır?

APPENDIX I: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS – ENGLISH VERSION

1. How successful do you find your students in learning English?
2. Do you think the students' repeating the program is an indication of failure? Why? Why not?
3. What could be the causes (effort, ability, luck etc.) of the students' success / failure / performance?
4. What could / should be done to decrease the level of failure? What are your suggestions for those who experience problems?
5. Is there anything else that you want to add?

APPENDIX J: HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DUMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY
T: +90 312 210 22 91
F: +90 312 210 79 59
ueam@metu.edu.tr
www.ueam.metu.edu.tr

Sayı: 28620816 /414

22 MART 2016

Gönderilen: Prof.Dr. Cennet Engin DEMİR
Eğitim Bilimler Bölümü

Gönderen: Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER
İnsan Araştırmaları Komisyonu Başkanı

İlgi: Etik Onayı

Sayın Prof.Dr. Cennet Engin DEMİR'in danışmanlığını yaptığı yüksek lisans öğrencisi Sevinç BIÇAK'ın "Causal Attributions of Preparatory Class Repeat Level EFLStudents at Department of Basic Englist at METU for Their Success and Failure in Learning English" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Komisyonu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2016-EGT-037** protokol numarası ile **28.03.2016-30.06.2016** tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER
Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi
İnsan Araştırmaları Komisyonu Başkanı

APPENDIX K: TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

1. Yükleme Teorisi, İlgili Çalışmalar, Bu Çalışmanın Önemi, Amacı ve Araştıma Soruları

Alanyazına göre, bireyler sürekli kendi hayatlarında olup biten olayların ve ortaya çıkan sonuçların nedenlerini anlamaya ve sorgulamaya meyillidir. Bu onların meydana gelen olayları anlamlandırabilmelerine, ve gelecekteki olası sonuçları tahmin edip daha fazla kontrol sahibi olabilmelerine yardım eder (Barker & Hunter, 1987). Bu sorgulama sürecinde ortaya çıkan sebeplere nedensel atıflar denir (Heider, 1958). Nedensel atıflar, genel olarak insan davranışının sebeplerine ve kişinin algısının bu sebeplerle olan ilişkisine ışık tuttuğu için, sosyal psikoloji alanında cok büyük ilgi görmüştür (Bar-tal, 2016). Bu amaçla bireylerin olgu ve olayları nasıl açıkladığını ortaya koymak üzere Yükleme Teorisi geliştirilmiştir. Psikolog Fritz Heider (1958) bu teorinin kurucusu olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Heider (1958) ortaya koyduğu teoriye göre nedensel atıfları kişinin kendisiyle ve çevresiyle ilgili olmak üzere iki gruba ayırmıştır. Rotter (1966) bu teoriyi geliştirmiş ve "denetim odağı" adı altında sebepleri içsel ve dışsal olarak tekrar tanımlamıştır. Fakat teoriyi ileriye taşıyan asıl kişi Weiner (1972, 1974, 1979) olmuştur ve çalışmaları bu alanda bir rehber olarak kullanılmıştır. Heider ve Rotter'ın çalışmalarına dayanarak, Weiner teoriye denetim odağı'nın yanısıra, istikrar ve kontrol edilebilirlik boyutlarını da eklemiş ve üç kategori altında incelemiştir.Weiner'ın nedensellik teorisi temelde bireylerin olayların ve davranışların sebeplerini nasıl algıladıkları ve bu algıların onların düşünce ve davranışlarıyla nasıl etkileşime geçtiğiyle ilgilidir (Weiner, 1986). Bu bağlamda, Weiner sadece teoriyle ilgili temel prensipleri, veya çerçeveyi, belirlemekle kalmayıp aynı zamanda eğitim alanındaki motivasyon ve başarıyla ilgili çalışmalara da büyük katkı sağlamıştır (Maehr & Meyer, 1997).

Her ne kadar kökenleri psikoloji alanına dayansa da, Yükleme Teorisi spordan ekonomiye birçok alanda olayların ve eylemlerin nedenlerine dair bireylerin psikolojisini açıklamada yaygınca kullanılmıştır. Weiner'ın teoriyi başarı alanına uyarlamasıyla beraber, eğitim alanında da çok popüler bir yere sahip olmuştur

(Güleç, 2013). Bu teori öğrencilerin eğitim yaşantılarındaki başarı veya başarısızlıklarını nasıl açıkladıkları ve bu açıklamaların, veya nedensel atıfların, doğru veya yanlış, şu anki ve gelecekteki çabalarını nasıl belirledikleriyle ilgilenmektedir (Weiner, 1985). Teori, sebep ne olursa olsun, bu sebebin öğrencilerin duyuşsal ve duygusal tepkilerini, devamındaki motivasyonlarını ve gelecekteki performanslarını etkilediğini öne sürmektedir. Motivasyonun yanı sıra, öğrencilerin duyguları, beklentileri, bakış açıları ve yeterlikle ilgili inançları da başarı veya başarısızlığın sebeplerine dair oluşturdukları algılarından etkilenmektedir (Weiner, 1979). Nedensel atıflar ve akademik performans arasındaki bu ilişki eğitim ve öğretim alanlarında büyük bir ilgiyle karşılanmış ve motivasyon da dahil olmak üzere bu üç değişken arasındaki bağlantılar yaygın bir şekilde çalışılmıştır. Eğitim ortamında, öğrenciler sürekli olarak gözlem yapmakta ve öğrenme süreçlerini değerlendirmektedir. Bu değerlendirme sırasında performanslarına, daha doğrusu başarı ve başarısızlıklarına, dair sayısız nedensel atıflarda bulunmaktadırlar. Kendilerine " Ben bu derste veya sınavda neden başarılı veya başarısız oldum?" sorusunu yönelterek kendi eylem ve davranışlarını anlamlandırmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Graham'a (1994) göre, öğrenciler bunu kendilerini keşfetmek ve belirsiz olan öğrenme çevrelerine bir düzen getirmek amacıyla yaparlar. Öğrencilerin ortaya koyduğu birçok nedensel atıf arasında, yetenek, çaba, işin zorluğu ve şans literatürde en çok bahsi geçenler olmuştur (Weiner 1979, 1985 & 1986). Yetenek öğrencilerin performanslarını açıklama konusunda en çok başvurdukları nedensel atıflardan biri olmuştur ve genelde öğrencinin kendi performansını başkalarınınkiyle karşılaştırdığı durumlarda ortaya çıkar. Nedensel boyutlara göre değerlenirildiğinde, yetenek genel itibariyle içşel, sabit ve kontrol edilemeyen bir sebep olarak görülür. Eğer bir öğrenci çabasına rağmen defelarca bir iş veya sınavda başarısız olursa, bu öğrenci kolaylıkla o iş veya sınav için gerekli olan yeteneğe sahip olmadığını düşünüp kendini yeteneksiz olarak kabul edebilir (Weiner, 1986). Bu da yeteneğin kişinin geçmiş deneyimleriyle yakından ilgili olduğunu göstermektedir. Yetenekle ilgili atıfları anlamak önemlidir çünkü bu atıflar öğrencinin motivasyonu şekillendirme konusunda büyük bir role sahiptir (Weiner, 1992). Örneğin başarısızlık durumunda öğrenci bu sonucu yeteneksizliğe atfederse büyük ihtimalle bu öğrenci ümidini kaybedecek ve gelecekten beklentisi azalacaktır. Bu da öğrenciyi ne yaparsa yapsın sonucu kontrol

edemeyeceği düşüncesine inandırır ve öğrenilmiş çaresizliğe yol açar, ki bu da literatürde sağlıksız bir bakış açısı olarak kabul edilir. Diğer taraftan, başarı durumunda sonucu yeteneğe atfetmek öğrencide gurur ve mutluluğa yol açacak, bu da öğrencinin kendine olan saygısını ve güvenini artıracak ve dolayısıyla gelecekte de azim ve hevesle çalışmasına yardımcı olacaktır (Özkardeş, 2011). Literatürde sıkça rapor edilmiş bir diğer nedensel atıf da çabadır. Çaba nedensel boyut açışından içşel, değişken ve kontrol edilebilir bir sebeptir. Mesela başarı durumunda, bir öğrenci akademik bir iş veya sınavda gösterdiği performansı çaba ve çalışmaya atfederse, kişisel tatmin yaşayıp kendisiyle gurur duyar ve başarısını devam ettirebilmek için çalışmaya devam eder (Weiner, 2010). Başarısızlık durumunda ise öğrenci yeterince çalışmadığı için başarısız olduğunu düşünüp pişmanlık ve suçluluk duyar, ve sonuçtan ötürü sorumluluk alır. Bu Yükleme Teorisi kapsamında oldukça sağlıklı bir yaklaşımdır çünkü öğrenci sonucun kendi kontrolü altında olduğunu düşünür ve gelecekte daha iyi sonuçlar elde etmek için daha çok uğraşır (Burden, 2003). Dolayısıyla çabayla ilgili atıflar, öğrencinin gelecekle ilgili ümit ve azmini sürdürmesine yardım ettiği için, başarısızlık durumunda bile makbuldür. Yetenek ve çaba dışında, işin zorluğu da öğrenciler tarafından çok başvurulan bir nedensel atıftır. Öğrenciler bazen başarısız olduklarında bu sonucu verilen işin veya sınavın zorluğuyla açıklarlar. Veya başarılı olduklarında bunu o işin veya sınavın kolay olmasına yorarlar. Hatta bir öğrenci zor bir iş veya sınavda iyi performans sergilediğinde bu sonucu iyi şansa, kolay bir sınavda kötü performans sergilediğinde ise kötü şansa yorabilir. Bu öğrenci adına sağlıklı bir bakış açısı değildir. Zaten dışsal, sabit ve kontrol edilemeyen bir sebep olduğu için öğrencilerin bu nedensel atıfa başvurmaları istenen bir durum değildir. Son olarak öğrenciler bazen de performanslarını tamamen şans veya şanssızlığa yorarlar. Öğrenci dışsal, değişken ve kontrol edilemeyen bir sebep olan şansa atıfta bulunduğunda, verilen iş veya sınav üzerinde herhangi bir kontrolü olmadığını düşünüp gelecekteki olası sonuçları değiştirmek için fazla çaba harcamaz. Şans eseri başarılı olduğunu düşündüğünde normalde yaşaması gereken gurur duygusunu yaşayamaz ve gelecekte başarısızlık bekleyebilir, veya tam tersi şanssızlık yüzünden kötü not aldığını düşünürse kendisini suçlu veya sorumlu hissetmez, daha sonraki sınavlarda iyi not almayı bekleyebilir. Her halükarda sonucu kendisiyle ilişkilendirmediği için çok da sağlıklı bir bakış açısı sergilemiş olmaz (Weiner, 1979).

Yukarıda bahsedilen nedensel atıflar öğrencilerin başvurabileceği sayısız sebep arasından sadece dördüdür ve literatürde en çok rapor edilen sebepler olduğu için burada detaylı anlatılmıştır. Fakat Weiner'a (1985, 1986) göre, bir sebebin nedensel boyutu, veya pozisyonu, sebebin kendisinden çok daha önemlidir. Başka bir deyişle, bu süreçte öğrencide ortaya çıkan psikolojik ve davranışşsal sonuçları belirleyen ve açıklayan sebeplerin kendisinden çok boyutlarıdır çünkü bu boyutlar kişinin yükleme sürecindeki algı ve inançlarıyla doğrudan bağlantılıdır.

Yukarıda da değinildiği gibi, Yükleme Teorisi'ne göre nedensel boyutlar üç ana gruba ayrılır: nedensellik odağı, sabitlik ve kontrol edilebilirlik. Nedensellik odağı kişinin ortaya koyduğu sebebin içsel ve dışsal oluşuyla ilgilidir. Bu bağlamda, öğrenciler bazen aldıkları sonuçların çaba, beceri, ve ilgi gibi kendileriyle igili içsel sebeplerden kaynaklandığını düşünürken bazen de çevresel faktörler, sınıf ortamı ve öğretmen gibi dışsal etkenlere atıfta bulunurlar (Rotter, 1996). Yapılan çalışmalarda, bu boyut bir yanda minnettarlık, şaşırma, gurur, özgüven ve tatmin diğer yanda ise suçluluk, pişmanlık, amaçsızlık, öfke ve düşmanlık gibi duygularla ilişkilendirilmiştir. Başarı veya başarısızlık durumunda öğrencinin içsel sebeplerle sonucu açıklaması oldukça sağlıklı, veya uyumlu, bir bakış açısıdır çünkü başarılı bir sonuç elde ettiğinde öğrenci yukarıda bahsi geçen olumlu duyguları hissedecek, özgüveni artacak, ve gelecekte de başarılı olmak adına çaba göstermeye devam edecektir. Başarısızlık durumunda ise, öğrenci sebebi yeterince çalışmama gibi kendisiyle ilgili faktörlerde arayacak, sorumluluk alacak ve hissettiği suçluluk ve pişmanlık duygusuyla gelecekte daha çok çalışacaktır (Weiner, Russell & Lerman, 1979). Diğer taraftan, dışsal sebeplere yapılan atıflar öğrenciyi sorumluluk almaktan alıkoyacak, ne yaparsa yapsın sonuç kendi dışında gelişiyormuş gibi geldiği için öfke duyup amaçsızca hareket edecektir. Yapılan çalışmalar da içsel sebeplere atıfta bulunmakla başarı arasında olumlu ilişkiler saptamıştır (Stevenson & Lee, 1990; O'sallivan & Howe, 1996). Weiner'in teorisindeki ikinci ana boyut sabitliktir ve bir sebebin zaman içinde değişip değişmediğiyle ilgilidir. Bu sınıflandırmaya göre, yetenek ve işin zorluğu gibi sebepler sabit, çaba ve şans gibi nedenler ise değişken olarak nitelendirilir çünkü bunlar zaman içinde duruma göre değişiklik gösterebilir. Yükleme Teorisine göre bu boyut, öğrencinin ümit ve ümitsizlik gibi duygularıyla yakından ilişkili olduğu için gelecekteki performansıyla ilgili beklentilerini doğrudan etkiler (Weiner, 1985). Örneğin başarı durumunda bir

sınav sonucu yetenek gibi sabit bir nedene atfedilirse, bu öğrenci nedenin gelecekte de sabit kalacağını düşündüğünden ümidini koruyacak ve tekrar başarılı olmayı bekleyecektir. Başarısızlık durumunda ise, tam tersi, öğrenci bu sonucun kaynağının değişmeyeceğini düşünüp ümitsizliğe kapılacak ve çalışmayı tamamen bırakacaktır. O yüzden öğrencinin çaba gibi değişken nedenlere atıfta bulunması çok daha sağlıklı bir bakış açısıdır çünkü sonuç ne olursa olsun ilerde değişme ihtimali vardır. Weiner'ın sınıflandırmasındaki son boyut ise kontrol edilebilirliktir. Diğer iki boyut gibi bu boyut da öğrencinin öğrenme sürecine ve başarısına olan etkileri bakımından önem arz etmektedir. Bir öğrenci elde ettiği kötü bir sonucu yeteneksizlik gibi içsel, sabit ve kontrol edemediği bir nedene atfederse, ne yaparsa yapsın sonucu kontrol edemeyeceğini düşündüğü için gösterdiği çabanın boşuna olduğuna inanıp çalışmayı bırakabilir. Fakat tam tersi, aynı durumda öğrenci gösterdiği performansı yeterince çalışmama veya doğru yöntemleri kullanmama gibi kontrol edilebilir sebeplere atfetse, bu defa kontrolün kendinde olduğuna inandığı için gelecekte farklı davranırsa, yani çaba gösterirse, iyi bir sonuç alacağını bilir ve çareşizliğe kapılmaz. Alanyazına göre kontrol edilebilirlik boyutu öğrencilerde öfke, suçluluk, utanma, kendine acıma veya minnettarlık gibi duygulara yol açabilir (Weiner, 2000). Örneğin, yukarıdaki ilk örnekte olduğu gibi sonucun yeteneksizlikle açıklandığı durumlarda öğrenci utanç duyabilir veya kendine acıyabilir. Diğer taraftan sonuç yeterince çalışmamakla ilişkilendirildiğinde öğrenci suçluluk duyacaktır. Başarı durumunda da kontrol edilebilen sebeplere atfedilen sonuç gurur, kontrol edilemeyenlere atfedilen sonuç ise minnettarlık ve şanslı hissetmeyle sonuçlanacaktır.

Yukarıdaki bilgilerden de anlaşılacağı gibi, öğrencinin yükleme sürecinde sağlıklı ve uyumlu bir bakış açısına sahip olması öğrenme süreci ve başarısı için çok öenmlidir. Bu bağlamda literatür nedensel atıfları, daha doğrusu nedensel boyutları, uyumlu ve uyumsuz olmak üzere ikiye ayırmıştır. Weiner'e (1985) göre, başarısızlık durumunda yeterince çalışmama gibi içsel, değişken ve kontrol edilebilir nedenlere atıfta bulunmak uyumlu, veya sağlıklı, bir yükleme tarzına işaret ederken şans veya öğretmen gibi dışsal, sabit ve kontrol edilemeyen sebeplere başvurmak ise uyumsuz ve sağlıksız bir tarza işaret etmektedir. Uyumsuz bir yükleme tarzı öğrencinin kendi öğrenme süreci için zaman ve çaba harcamasını engeller, ve bu da öğrenilmiş çaresizlik ve kötü bir performansla sonuçlanır (Stipek, 1988). Başarı durumunda da

kişinin içsel ve kontrol edilebilir nedenlerle sonuçları açıklaması uyumlu bir bakış açısının sonucudur, fakat burada yetenek gibi sabit nedenlere de atıfta bulunmak sağlıklı değerlendirilir çünkü bu da öğrencide gurur ve özgüven gibi olumlu duyguları tetikleyecektir. Son yıllarda öğrencilerin yükleme tarzları nedensel atıflarının önüne geçmeye başlamıştır, ve öğrencilerin varolan uyumsuz yükleme tarzlarına uyumluya çevirmek için programlar geliştirilmiş ve başarıyla uygulanmıştır (Fösterling, 2001; Semiz, 2011; Höl, 2016; Çağatay, 2018). Bu programlarda farklı yollarla, öğrencilerin fonksiyonel olmayan dışsal, sabit ve kontrol edilemeyen nedenler içeren yükleme tarzlarını içsel, değişken ve kontrol edilebilen sebepleri kapsayan daha fonksiyonel bir tarza dönüştürmelerine yardımcı olunur.

İlgili literatürde, öğrencilerin atıfsal süreçlerini etkileyen birçok faktör ele alınmıştır. Cinsiyet, geçmiş eğitim yaşantıları, yeterlik seviyesi bunlardan sadece üçüdür ve bu çalışmada da yer almıştır. Bu faktörlerle ilgili hala yeterince veri toplanamamıştır, ve yapılan çalışmalar bazen varolan teoriyi destekler niteliktedir, bazen de tam tersi sonuçlar ortaya koymuştur.

Yurtdışında ve Türkiye'de bu konuda yapılan çalışmalarda nicel veya nitel, ve son yıllarda karma yöntemler kullanılarak, farklı seviyelerdeki öğrenci gruplarının İngilizce öğrenme sürecinde performanslarını açıklamak için başvurdukları nedensel atıflar ve genel olarak yükleme tarzları ele alınmıştır, ve bu çalışmalar öğrencilerin sayısız nedensel atıflara başvurabildiğini göstermiştir (Graham, 2004; Hsieh, 2004; BüyükSelçuk, 2006; Gobel & Mori, 2007; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Taşkıran, 2010; Koçyiğit, 2011; Özkardeş, 2011; Semiz, 2011; Lu, Woodcock & Jiang, 2014; Duran, 2015; Höl, 2016; Yördem, 2016; Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016; Çağatay, 2018). Bu çalışmaların bir kısmı sadece öğrencilerin nedensel boyutları ürezinde durmuştur, bazıları da nedensel atıflar ve cinsiyet, öz-yeterlilik, akademik başarı, özgüven ve kaygı gibi değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiye yoğunlaşmıştır. Öğretmenlerin öğrencilerinin performanslarına yaptıkları nedensel atıfları üzreine maalesef çok az sayıda çalışma vardır (Peterson & Barger, 1985; Zohri & Zerhouni, 2013; Gümüş, 2014) ve bu çalışmaların bir kısmı öğretmen ve öğrenci atıflarının çakıştığını gösterse de diğerleri benzerliğe işaret etmektedir.

Nedensel atıflar kültür, ortam, kişisel özellikler gibi birçok etkene göre farklılık gösterdiğinden Yükleme Teorisi kapsamında hala boşluklar vardır, ve bu da yeni

çalışmaların gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışma da, daha önce çalışılmamış bir örneklem grubu olan üniversiteye oldukça yüksek puanlarla yerleştiği halde İngilizce hazırlık okulunda sene tekrarı yapan öğrencileri ele alması, sonuçların tamamen öğrencilerin algılarının üzerine kurulması, öğrenci ve öğretmen atıflarını aynı çalışmada buluşturması ve karma yöntemle hem nicel hem nitel yöntemlerin güçlü yanlarını birleştirmesi açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır ve bu anlamda literatüre çok büyük bir katkı sağlayacaktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı bir devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce hazırlık okulunda sene tekrarı yapan öğrencilerin nedensel boyutlarını, ve başarı veya başarısızlığa yaptıkları nedensel atıfları incelemektedir. Araştırma soruları aşağıdaki gibidir:

1) Sene tekrarı yapan Hazırlık Okulu öğrencileri İngilizce Yeterlik Sınavı (İYS) sonuçlarına dayanarak kendilerini ne denli başarılı bulmaktadırlar?
2) CDS II (Nedensel Boyutlar Ölçeği) ölçeğinin sonuçlarına dayanarak, bu öğrencilerin algıladıkları başarı veya başarısızlıklarına dair nedensel yükleme tarzları nelerdir?
3) LAAS (Dil Başarısını Yükleme Anketi) anketinin sonuçlarına dayanarak, bu öğrencilerin algıladıkları başarı veya başarısızlıklarına dair nedensel atıfları nelerdir?
4) Öğretmenlerin bu öğrencilerin başarı veya başarısızlıklarına dair nedensel atıfları nelerdir? Bunlar öğrencilerin atıflarından farklı mıdır?
5) Öğrencilerin sonuçları onların öğrenmesini ve performansını nasıl etkilemektedir?
6) Öğrencilerin bahsettiği olumsuz etkileri en aza indirgemek için neler yapılabilir? Bu durumu düzeltmek için program ne yönde geliştirilebilir?

2. Çalışmanın Yöntemi

Bu çalışmanın örneklemi ODTÜ Temel İngilizce Bölümü'nde (TİB) sene tekrarı yapan öğrenciler ve bu öğrencilerin hocalarını kapsamaktadır. Bu örneklemin seçilmesinin sebebi bu örneklemin Türkiye şartlarında oldukça yüksek puanlarla üniversiteye gelen fakat İngilizce öğrenme konusunda zorluk yaşayıp ikinci seneye kalmış öğrenciler olmalarıdır. Başka bir deyişle, aslında genelde başarılı olan ama TİB kapsamında başarısız olarak değerlendirilen bir grup olmasıdır. Çalışmada karma yöntemli sıralı açıklayıcı desen kullanılmıştır. Veri önce nicel ve sonra nitel olmak üzere iki aşama halinde toplanmıştır. İlk aşamada CDS II ölçeği ve LAAS

anketi kullanılmıştır. Her ne kadar ikisi de daha önce defalarca kullanılmış ve geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışmalrı yağılmış olsa da, çevirileri tekrar düzenlenmiş, uzman görüşünün alınmasından sonra gerekli değişiklikler yapılmış, 40 öğrenciyle pilot edilmiş, ve son olarak sene tekrarı yapan gruptaki tüm öğrencilere (N:254) uygulanmıştır. Bu bölümün sonuçları SPSS (20.0) programıyla analiz edilmiş, ve bulgular betimsel ve çıkarımsal istatistikler olarak sunulmuştur. Bu bölümün sonuçlarına dayanarak belli kriterler dahilinde çalışmanın ikinci, nitel, kısmı için örneklem seçilmiştir. Amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla seçilen öğrenciler uyumlu ve uyumsuz yükleme tarzına sahip olanlar şeklinde ikiye ayrılmıştır. İkinci aşamada toplam 24 öğrenci ve 8 öğretmenden yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme ve odak grubu aracılığıyla veri doygunluğa ulaşana kadar, yani kendini tekrar etmeye başladığında, nitel veri toplanmış ve bu veri Atlas.ti 7 programıyla analiz edilmiştir. İçerik analizi yönteminin kullanıldığı bu aşamada, veri hem tümdengelim hem tümevarım teknikleriyle kodlanmış, ve tüm verinin % 10'u ikinci bir değerlendirici tarafından değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmanın nitel kısmı hem nicel kısımdaki bulgulara açıklık getirmiş hem de araştırma sorularına dair derinlemesine ve zengin bulgular ortaya koymuştur.

3. Bulgular ve Tartışma

3.1 Algılanan Başarı veya Başarısızlık

CDS II sonuçlarına göre, öğrencilerin büyük bir bölümü (%78,5), cinsiyet ve mezun olunan lise türü fark etmeksizin, kendilerini İYS sonucuna göre başarısız görmektedir ve bu bulgu başarısız deneyimler sonrasında negative algıların rapor edildiği diğer çalışmalar ile paralellik göstermektedir (Taşkıran, 2010; Duran, 2015). Kendilerini başarılı bulan öğrencilerin geçen seneki yıl sonu ortalamasının ve son girdikleri İYS sonucunun kendini başarısız bulanlara göre anlamlı derecede daha yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Bu da alanyazında olumlu algılarla akademik başarı arasında ilişki olduğunu rapor eden çalışmaları doğrular niteliktedir (Graham, 2004; Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2011). İlginç bir şekilde kendini başarısız bulan grubun diğer gruba göre kabiliyet eksikliği, yeterince çalışmama ve ilgi duymama gibi içsel sebeplere daha çok atıfta bulunduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu da olumsuz algılara sahip öğrencilerin daha çok dışsal sebeplere atıfta bulunduğu bulgusuyla çelişmektedir (William et al, 2004; Suarez & Sandiford, 2008). Mülakatta elde edilen veri de yukarıdaki verileri doğrular niteliktedir. Öğrencilere başarılı veya başarısız algısını

neye dayanarak oluşturdukları sorulduğunda, başarısızlık durumunda notlar, İYS skoru, başkalarıyla ve diğer derslerle karşılaştıma gibi kriterler karşımıza çıkarken başarı için derslerde ve ders dışında İngilizce kullanabilme, İngilizceyi anlayabilme, ve gelişme gösterme gibi ölçütler ortaya çıkmıştır. Ve son olarak öğrencilere sene tekrarı yapmakla ilgili algıları sorulduğunda, 24 öğrenciden 16'sı bunu bir başarısızlık olarak görmediklerini ifade etmişlerdir.

3.2 Öğrencilerin Nedensel Boyutları

CDS II sonuçlarına göre, öğrencilerin kontrol odağı ve kişisel kontrol alt ölçeklerinde daha yüksek puanlar aldıkları, yani performanslarını daha çok içsel ve kontrol edilebilen sebeplere atfettikleri ortaya çıkmıştır, ki bu da uyumlu ve sağlıklı bir yükleme tarzına işaret etmektedir. Bu sonuş bize sene tekrarı yapan öğrencilerin alanyazında bahsi geçen öğrenciler ile bu bakımdan benzerlik sergilediğini göstermektedir (Dong et al, 2013). Göreceli olarak başarısız olarak değerlendirilebilecek bu öğrencilerin başarısızlığın sorumluluğunu üzerlerine almaları ümit vericidir ve doğu kültürlerinde sıkça görülen bir durumdur (Gobel & Mori, 2007). Burada mezun olunan lise türünün öğrencilerin nedensel boyutlarına bir etkisi olmadığını fakat cinsiyet değişkenin dışsal kontrol alt ölçeğinde önemli bir farka sebep olduğunu, yani kızların dışsal sebeplere daha çok başvurduğunu görmekteyiz.

3.3 Öğrencilerin Başarı ve Başarısızlıklarına Olan Nedensel Atıfları

LAAS sonuçlarına göre, öğrencilerin nicel kısımda en çok yanlış strateji kullanımı, yeterince çaba göstermeme, işin zorluğu ve okulun sistemiyle sınav arasındaki uyumsuzluğa atıfta bulunduklarını görüyoruz. Burada en yüksek puanlı atıfların içsel, değişken ve kontrol edilebilen nedenler olması sevindirici bir sonuçtur. En az atıfta bulunulan maddeler ise haksız notlandırma, aile desteğinin olmaması ve sağlık problemleri olmuştur. Fakat mülakatlardan elde edilen veri farklılık göstermektedir. Yapılan görüşmelerde hem uyumsuz hem de uyumlu yükleme tarzına sahip olan öğrenciler sınav sonucunun sebebini sorguladıklarında en çok dışsal sebeplere atıfta bulunmuşlardır, ki bu da sağlıksız bir bakış açısıdır ve aslında uyumlu yükleme tarzına sahip olan gruptan beklenen bir şey değildir. Dışsal nedenler kategorisinde, öğrenciler en çok öğretmen etkisi, okuldaki sistem, sınıf ortamı, sınav gününde yaşanan problemler ve işin zorluğuna atıfta bulunmuşlardır. İçsel kategoride ise, psikolojik sebepler, sınav kaygısı ve stres, yeterince çaba harcamama ve gerekli

beceri ve stratejilere sahip olmamaya en çok atıf yapılmıştır. Uyumlu ve uyumsuz öğrenciler arasında çok büyük farklar olmadığı, sadece uyumsuz öğrencilerin daha yüksek sayıda nedensel atıfta bulunduğu, ki bu literatürde de geçmektedir, adaptasyon problemleri, yaş faktörü ve öğretim dilinin İngilizce olması gibi diğer grupta hiç bahsi geçmeyen bazı sebeplere yükleme yaptıkları, ve şaşırtıcı şekilde uyumlu gruptaki öğrencilerden daha fazla oranda içsel sebeplere başvurdukları ortaya çıkmıştır.

3.4 Öğretmenlerin Nedensel Atıfları

Öğretmenlerle yapılan mülakat verisi öğrenci verisiyle benzerlik göstermektedir. Öğretmenler de öğrencilerin İYS performansını açıklarken beklenmedik bir şekilde yüksek oranda okuldaki eğitim sistemi ve öğretim problemlerine atıfta bulunmuşlardır. Çok daha düşük oranda bahsettikleri içsel sebeplerin en başında öğrencilerin yeterince çalışmaması ve gerekli becereilere sahip olmamaları gelmiştir. Alanyazında genelde öğretmen ve öğrenci atıflarının ters yönlerde olduğu dile getirilmektedir (Sekar, 2013; Erten, 2015), fakat bu çalışmada öğrenci ve öğretmen verisi benzerlik taşımaktadır.

3.5 Öğrencilerin Sonuçlarının Duygu ve Davranışlarına Olan Etkileri

Öğrencilere sınavda aldıkları sonucun kendilerini nasıl etkilediği sorulduğunda, uyumsuz yükleme tarzına sahip gruptaki öğrencilerin depresyondan ümitsizliğe, öğrenilmiş çaresizlikten erteleme davranışına kadar çok farklı olumsuz duygu ve davranışlardan bahsettiği görülmüştür. Bu gruptaki tek olumlu etki bilincin artması olmuştur. Uyumlu bir yükleme tarzına sahip öğrenciler bu soruya cevaben öz yeterliklerinin azalması, hayal kırıklığı ve tükenmişlikten bahsetmişlerdir.

3.6 Başarısızlığı Azaltmak İçin Öneriler

Bu soru için öğrenci ve öğretmenler yine benzer önerilerle gelmiş, ve en çok sınav sonucunun sorumlusu olarak gördükleri okuldaki eğitim sistemi, öğretim programı ve materyaller ve öğretmenler ile ilgili tavsiyelerde bulunmuşlardır. Bu önerilerden bazıları yıl içinde sınavla ilgili daha fazla bilgi verilmesi ve hazırlık yapılması, programla sınav arasındaki paralelliğin artırılması, İYS sınavı yerine sorumlulukla bölüme geçme ve sınavı daha sonra verebilme ihtimali olmuştur.

3.7 Çalışmanın Pedagojik Çıkarımları

Çalışma sonuçlarına göre, sene tekrarı yapan bütün öğrencilere uyumsuz yükleme tarzlarını değiştirebilmeleri için eğitim verilmelidir. Ayrıca öğretmenler de nedensel boyutlar ve atıflar konusunda bilgilendirilmeli ve sınıfta öğrenciyi sağlıklı bir bakış açısına yönlendirmelidirler. Okul yönetimi de eğitim sistemini, programı ve materyalleri gözden geçirip öğrencileri başarısızlığ itebilecek faktörleri değiştirmeli ve özellikle sınav kaygısı ve stres yaşayan büyük sayıdaki öğrenci grubu için bir çözüm geliştirmelidir.

APPENDIX L: TEZ İZİN FORMU/THESIS PERMISSION FORM

ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences ■

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences ☐

YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Bıçak
Adı / Name : Sevinç
Bölümü / Department : Eğitim Bilimleri

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (**İngilizce** / English) : Repeat Level Preparatory School Students' Causal Dimensionality And Their Causal Attributions To Perceieved Success And Failure

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE**:** **Yüksek Lisans** /master ■ **Doktora/PhD** ☐

1. **Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. /** Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide. ■
2. **Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of **two years. *** ☐
3. **Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for period of **six months**. ***** ☐

***** *Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir.*
A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.

Yazarın imzası / Signature ..... Ta**rih** / Date