

**THE EFFECTS OF A TRAINING PROGRAM ON  
ATTRIBUTIONAL BELIEFS, SELF-EFFICACY,  
LANGUAGE LEARNING BELIEFS, ACHIEVEMENT  
AND STUDENT EFFORT: A STUDY ON  
MOTIVATIONALLY AT-RISK EFL STUDENTS**

**ÖZNUR SEMİZ**

**Doctoral Dissertation (Ph.D.)**

**Department of Foreign Language Teaching  
Prof. Dr. Mehmet TAKKAÇ**

**2011**

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T.C.  
ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION  
**DIVISION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

THE EFFECTS OF A TRAINING PROGRAM ON ATTRIBUTIONAL  
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ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT EFFORT: A STUDY ON  
MOTIVATIONALLY AT-RISK EFL STUDENTS

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Altındaki Yabancı Dil Öğrencileri Üzerine Bir Çalışma)

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

**Öznur SEMİZ**

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Mehmet TAKKAÇ

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## ACCEPTANCE AND CONFIRMATION PAGE

Prof.Dr.Mehmet TAKKAÇ danışmanlığında, Öznur SEMİZ tarafından hazırlanan “The Effects of a Training Program on Attributional Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Language Learning Beliefs, Achievement and Student Effort: A Study on Motivationally At-Risk EFL Students.” başlıklı çalışma 10/ 06/ 2011 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı’nda Doktora Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylım.

... / ... / .....

Prof. Dr. H.Ahmet KIRKKILIÇ  
Enstitü Müdürü

## DISSERTATION ETHICS AND DECLARATION PAGE

Doktora Tezi olarak sunduđum “The Effects of a Training Program on Attributional Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Language Learning Beliefs, Achievement and Student Effort: A Study on Motivationally At-risk EFL Students” bařlıklı alıřmanın, tarafımdan, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı dűşecek bir yardıma bařvurmaksızın yazıldıđını ve yararlandıđım eserlerin kaynakada gűsterilenlerden olduđunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmıř olduđunu belirtir ve onurumla dođrularım.

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10/06/2011

Őznur SEMİZ

## ÖZET

DOKTORA TEZİ

### BİR EĞİTİM PROGRAMININ YÜKLEME İNANÇLARI, ÖZYETERLİK, DİL ÖĞRENME İNANIŞLARI, BAŞARI VE ÖĞRENCİ ÇABASI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ: MOTİVASYON YÖNÜNDEN RISK ALTINDAKİ YABANCI DİL ÖĞRENCİLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu araştırma, yükleme eğitimi içeren bir eğitim programının İngilizce öğrencilerinin İngilizce öğrenmeye yönelik yüklemeleri, özyeterlik algıları, dil öğrenme inançları, akademik başarıları ve çabaları üzerindeki etkilerinin ortaya konması amacı ile yapılmıştır. Eğitim programının amacı öğrencilerin uyumsuz başarısızlık inançlarının değiştirilmesi ve böylece özyeterlik inançlarının, motivasyonlarının ve başarılarının yükseltilmesidir. Bu amaçla, yabancı dil öğrencilerinin başarı ve başarısızlık yüklemeleri incelenmiş, yüklemelerdeki cinsiyet faktörü de ele alınmıştır. Çalışmanın diğer bir amacı da yüklemeler, özyeterlik ve dil öğrenme inanışları arasındaki ilişkilerin belirlenmesidir.

Araştırma 2010–2011 öğretim yılında Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda öğrenim gören 602 öğrenci üzerinde yürütülmüştür. Araştırmada öntest-sontest kontrol gruplu deney deseni kullanılmıştır. Yükleme eğitimi içeren 5 haftalık bir eğitim programı örneklem yoluyla belirlenmiş bir deney grubuna (N=17) uygulanmıştır. Kontrol grubuna (N=23) ise herhangi bir eğitim programı uygulanmamıştır. 8 öğrenci ile yapılan yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmelerle de nitel veri toplanmıştır. Çalışmadan elde edilen nicel bulgular SPSS 13.00 veri analiz programıyla, nitel veriler ise içerik analizi ile değerlendirilmiş ve yorumlanmıştır.

Analizler başarılı ve başarısız öğrenciler arasında yüklemeler açısından önemli farklar ortaya koymuş, başarılı öğrencilerin, başarısız öğrencilere kıyasla daha çok içsel ve kişisel yüklemelerde (çaba ve strateji) buldukları görülmüştür. Cinsiyete göre yüklemeler açısından bir farklılık ortaya çıkmamıştır. Ayrıca yükleme inançları, özyeterlik ve dil öğrenme inanışları arasında önemli korelasyonlar da bulunmuştur. Müdahale öncesi ve sonrası uygulanan ön-test ve son- testler başarısızlık yüklemeleri, öğrenme kontrolü inançları ve derse katılımında önemli değişiklikler ortaya koymuş, özyeterlik, dil öğrenme inanışları ve başarıda değişiklikler görülmemiştir. Araştırmada, nicel verilerin analizi ile elde edilen bulgular, öğrencilerle yapılan görüşmelerden elde edilen nitel bulgularla desteklenmiştir.

Elde edilen tüm veriler ilgili literatür ışığında tartışılmış ve bazı öneriler ileri sürülmüştür.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Yüklemeler, Yükleme eğitimi, Akademik Başarı, Dil Öğrenme, Özyeterlik Algısı, Dil öğrenme inanışları.

## ABSTRACT

### DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

#### **THE EFFECTS OF A TRAINING PROGRAM ON ATTRIBUTIONAL BELIEFS, SELF-EFFICACY, LANGUAGE LEARNING BELIEFS, ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT EFFORT: A STUDY ON MOTIVATIONALLY AT- RISK EFL STUDENTS**

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The major purpose of this study was to determine the effects of a training program on EFL students' attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement and effort. The training program was designed to change learners' maladaptive attributions for failure and thus enhance their self-efficacy, success and effort. A further concern was to investigate the explanations of EFL students of success and failure. Gender difference in attributions was also explored. Another concern was examining the nature of relationship between attributions, self-efficacy, and language learning beliefs.

An initial investigation was carried out with an overall sample of 602. The experimental part of the study was designed based on a pretest-posttest model and was conducted with 36 students from School of Foreign Languages at Karadeniz Technical University during 2010-2011 academic year. A five-week training program that included attributional training was administered to an experimental group of 17 students who were purposively selected. No treatment was given to the control group (N=19). Semi-structured pre-and post-interviews were also conducted with 8 key informants. The findings from the questionnaires were analyzed through the SPSS and the interviews were analyzed through qualitative content analyses.

Significant differences were found between successful and unsuccessful students in terms of their attributions. Successful students endorsed more internal and personal attributions (effort and strategy) compared to unsuccessful students. No gender differences were observed. Important correlations were found between attributions, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs. Pre-and post-test comparisons revealed significant changes in attributional beliefs, control of learning beliefs and class attendance. No significant results were found on pre and post test comparisons of self-efficacy, language learning beliefs and achievement. These findings from the analyses of the qualitative data, to a very great extent, were found to be consistent with the findings from quantitative data.

Findings of the research were discussed in the light of the relevant literature and some suggestions were made.

**Key Words:** Attribution, Attributional retraining, Academic Achievement, Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Language Learning Beliefs.

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**Erzurum-2011**

**Öznur SEMİZ**



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- AMTB: Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
- AR : Attributional Retraining
- BALLI: Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory
- CBT : Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- CPG : Class Participation Grade
- CDS : Causal Dimension Scale
- EFL : English as a Foreign Language
- GMAT: Graduate Management Admission Test
- GPA : Grade Point Average
- LAAS: Language Achievement Attribution Scale
- L2 : Second Language
- REBT : Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy
- MSLQ: Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire
- SLA : Second Language Acquisition
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

# CHAPTER I

## 1. INTRODUCTION

“If you think you are beaten, you are.  
If you think you dare not, you don’t.  
Success begins with your own will,  
Its all in your state of mind.

Life’s battles are not always won by those who are stronger and faster.  
But sooner or later, the person who wins is the person who THINKs he can.

Walter D. Wintle

We all remember the popular children’s fable, the Grasshopper and the Ant, a story that teaches the virtues of effort and persistence in overcoming life’s challenges. Aesop’s ant works diligently gathering food during summer and survives winter, while the grasshopper sings and dances all summer. Also, in “tortoise and the hare”, the slow-moving tortoise, crawling slowly but steadily, betters the boastful hare through his persistence of effort.

These are perfect metaphors that portrait the instrumental value of effort and persistence in attaining life’s goals. Nothing is different in our classrooms. Many times we find our students being as the grasshopper rather than the ant or as the tortoise rather than the hare. Indeed, there are individual differences between learners and the degree of effort that they want to put into learning. Some students are motivated and do well in foreign language class while others do not put in effort into their language class and are not successful at foreign language learning.

This study addresses these motivational issues in the context of a theory-based treatment designed to assist motivationally at-risk, failure-prone students in higher education settings. Attributional Retraining (AR) refers to a motivational treatment that helps students reframe the way they think about success and failure by encouraging them to take responsibility for academic outcomes and adopt a “can-do” attitude (Haynes, Perry, Stupnisky and Daniels, 2009). It is based on Weiner’s attribution theory of achievement motivation and emotion (1979, 1985) and designed to assist students at-risk of academic failure by encouraging controllable and unstable



perceptions of academic failure (Forsterling, 1985). The intervention is intended to increase students' perceptions of control over their academic outcome by changing stable and uncontrollable attributions for failure, such as lack of ability, to unstable and controllable ones, such as lack of effort and strategy (Perry, 2003). Although it sounds simplistic, this technique has consistently produced significant increases in academic performance, expectancies for future success and subsequent persistence (Försterling, 1985; Hayes, 2009).

### **1.1. Background and Statement of the Problem**

Motivation is an important quality that affects all aspects of teaching and learning. Motivation can influence what, when and how we learn (Schunk, 1991). Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008) noted that the term motivation is derived from the Latin verb '*movere*'(to move) suggesting that motivation is something that gets us going, keeps us working, and helps us. Hence, motivation is strongly connected with effort and actions. Motivated students display interest in activities, work diligently, feel self-efficacious, expend effort to succeed, persist at tasks and perform well.

Research clearly shows a positive correlation between motivation and achievement (Gardner, 1985; Wang, Haertel and Walberg, 1993; Schunk, 1991). Motivation is a factor that causes some individuals to be more willing to learn and achieve. Such an understanding requires the knowledge of the factors that facilitate motivation to learn and to achieve. Thus, it has led many researchers and educators to explore why some people are more motivated than others to learn and how they develop motivation. Research attempts to address this issue resulted in finding many factors such as certain beliefs, values, expectations and attributions that affect motivation. It has become more evident that students simultaneously form certain beliefs about learning and their capabilities. Among these beliefs, attributions have opened new paths to the understanding of learners' beliefs.

Attributions are causal explanations given by learners for achievement outcomes (Weiner, 1985). Past research on this issue has been grounded in social-cognitive theory. Attribution theory was the dominant paradigm in social psychology in the 1970s and was originally developed by Heider (1958). In his seminal book "*The Psychology of*

*Interpersonal Relationships*”, he explains his ideas of “lay”, “naive”, or “commonsense” psychology. According to Heider (1958), people act like naive psychologists or scientists who explain the events and the behaviors of people around them. He described attributions as the process of drawing inferences and how this process works when ordinary people, or men on the street, make inferences based on their observations to predict their environment in order that they can control it. He argued that an attribution always “serves to build up and support the constancy of our picture of the world” (Heider, 1958, p.92).

The relevance of attribution theory to the study of motivation, and therefore to language learning, stems from Weiner’s attribution theory of motivation and emotion (2000). To date, the most well developed line of research concerning student attributions has been carried out by Weiner (1979, 1985, and 1986). Haynes et al. (2009) states that Weiner’s theory provides a perspective on how students react to unexpected, negative, and important academic outcomes that are common in the first year of university. Further support is provided by Graham (1991) who claims that “this theory is more complete than other attributional conceptions, and remains the framework of choice for educational psychology researchers” (p.6).

Attribution theory attempts to identify how students explain the reasons for their success or failure in academic settings. While students tend to give several reasons for success or failure, these six are focused on in this study: ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, teacher and strategy. These reasons may be categorized based on their underlying characteristics, or dimensions. Weiner (1979, 1985) suggested that there are three dimensions on which students assess their success and failure: locus of causality, stability, and controllability. Locus of causality refers to whether the outcome is caused by something internal (within the person) or something external (outside a person). Stability refers to whether the outcome is perceived to be temporary or permanent. Controllability refers to whether the outcome is subject to personal influence or not. Thus, the degree to which students believe the cause of past performance to be internal, stable and controllable determines their orientation of control in achievement settings (Perry, 2003; Perry et al., 2005).

A number of studies have linked causal attributions about success and failure to future motivation and action (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale, 1978; Weiner, 1972, 1985; Weiner and Kukla, 1970). Attribution theory contends that when a student attributes success and failure to unstable and internal factors that the student can control such as effort, he or she is more likely to try harder, try more times and give more focus to similar tasks next time. Students will be more likely to give sufficient effort if they believe that they can control their own successes and failures. On the other hand, if a student attributes success and failure to external and stable factors such as luck or ability that the student cannot control, he or she is unlikely to try harder and be persistent. Thus, effort is seen as useless and for this reason learners refuse to exert more effort. Students with a tendency to attribute success or failure to internal, stable and uncontrollable causes (i.e. lack of ability) are thought to have ‘maladaptive’ attributional style.

There have been several studies that have reported “maladaptive” attributional styles evident in low achievers and students with learning disabilities (Baird, Scott, Dearing and Hamill, 2009; Fulk and Mastropieri, 1990; Graham, 2004; Licht, Kistner, Ozkaragoz, Shapiro, and Clausen, 1985; Nunez et al., 2005; Pearl, 1982; Ring and Reetz, 2000). A maladaptive style is characterized by the belief that failure is due to stable, internal causes, such as low ability, and that success is a result of unstable, external causes such as luck. Students with a maladaptive style believe they possess little control over academic outcomes even if they put a lot of effort into learning so they may conclude that their efforts are unrelated to achievement outcomes, and therefore futile (Fulk and Mastropieri, 1990; Licht et al., 1985).

The central point of the attribution theory that constitutes the background for this research is that attributions are important because they have consequences for the learning process affecting students’ expectancies for future success, their affective states, and their subsequent behavior and performance (Weiner, 1985, 2000). That is, how students explain their success and failure may have an impact on academic performances. Similar ideas dominate also in self-efficacy theory. As defined by Bandura (1986), *self-efficacy* refers to people’s judgment of their capabilities to complete a task successfully. Bandura (1977) proposed that one’s perceived self-

efficacy has a powerful influence over one's choice of an activity, the kind of effort one expends, and how much one is able to maintain that effort in the face of difficulty. Research suggests that self-efficacy is determined by four things: past performances, vicarious experiences, persuasion from others and physiological reactions (Schunk and Meece, 2005; Schunk and Pajares, 2001). Students with more positive past experiences may have higher self-efficacy than those with negative past experiences. Observation of successful performances of others also helps develop self-efficacy. Seeing difficult tasks being accomplished by someone else may encourage students low in self-efficacy to believe that they can also succeed (Margolis, 2005; Schunk, 1991, 1999). If students are led to believe by an authoritative figure that they are capable of learning and being successful, they are more likely to be more self-efficacious. Finally, students acquire self-efficacy information from interpretation of their emotional and physical states during task preparation and performance. Strong emotional reaction to a task may be a sign of anticipated success or failure. For instance, perceiving the anxieties and fears about capabilities as indicators of a lack of ability to succeed will lead to lower confidence or self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

These two kinds of beliefs, attributions and self-efficacy, both help us understand how important students' appraisal of themselves can be for the formation of their motivation. There is research that suggests that these two kinds of students' beliefs are related. Bandura (1990) suggested that there is a reciprocal relationship between causal attributions and self-efficacy expectations. Individuals who have high self-efficacy and experience failure tend to attribute it to lack of effort; whereas individuals with low self efficacy who experience failure attribute it to low ability. In turn, success will increase one's self-efficacy if the individual attributes the outcome to an internal attribution such as ability rather than luck. Hsieh and Kang (2010) also found that learners with higher levels of self-efficacy attributed their test results to more internal and personal control factors than those who had lower self-efficacy levels. For learners who were unsuccessful, those with higher self-efficacy made stronger personal control attributions than learners with lower self-efficacy.

Since self-efficacy beliefs grow out of personal performances, verbal encouragement, observation of others, and can be influenced by learners' own

attributions to success and failure, research needs to be done to find ways to help students develop strong feelings of self-efficacy and make appropriate attributions for success and failure. Because one contributing factor to students' lack of performance or motivation may be students' attribution of their success and failure and low-self-efficacy. Students when confronted with failure may develop self-defeating maladaptive attributions (i.e. attributions to external, stable, and uncontrollable causes. In foreign language education we can sometimes encounter students who think that there is a stable cause for failing an exam or for failure in learning English. Very often we hear students saying "No matter how hard I study, I will not be able to learn a foreign language". Or they may believe that foreign language learning is difficult and they do not have the ability to do it. These students may in advance expect to fail on the exams and will not spend much time studying. Thus, many students can develop maladaptive attributions for academic failure (i.e. lack of ability) which leads to less motivation, poor performance and low-self efficacy.

Unfortunately, experiencing failure in learning a foreign language is a common occurrence. The records taken from the School of Foreign Languages, KTU, show that nearly 80 percent of entering students fail the proficiency exam in English. At the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year, for instance, of 988 students who took the placement test 203 scored 70% or above and passed the exam. Thus, in the event of failure, which is common in foreign language learning, motivation can be endangered as students begin to doubt their capacity to succeed academically. Adjusting to the increased demand for foreign language mastery can also be difficult for many language students. When failure occurs, the reasons for the failure are evaluated by the student. In such a situation, students may develop uncontrollable and stable attributions like lack of ability, task difficulty and these beliefs can be detrimental to further motivation and effort.

Such a setting may be particularly applicable for Attributional Retraining (AR). AR is a psychotherapeutic treatment designed to modify students' causal explanations for failure, and thereby bolster perceived control, motivation, and subsequent achievement (Haynes, et al., 2009). Various terms have been used to describe such treatment interventions including Attribution(al) Training, Re- Attribution(al) Training,

Attribution Retraining, Re-attribution Therapy, etc. For the purposes of this dissertation, the term Attributional Retraining (AR) will be used.

AR was originally developed to assist first year university students. The underlying idea for development of the treatment was that the transition from high school to university presents numerous challenges to students since students are faced with a new and unfamiliar academic environment (Perry and Penner, 1990; Perry, Hall and Ruthig, 2005). During the first year of university, students must take greater responsibility for their academic performance, which may cause diminished opportunities to exert control (Schulz and Heckhausen, 1999). Thus, perceived control can be threatened by such factors as an emphasis on success-failure, heightened academic competition, increased pressure to excel, more frequent academic failure, unfamiliar academic tasks (Thompson, Sobolew-Shubin, Galbraith, Schwankovsky and Cruzen, 1993). As a result, students may experience unanticipated failures and engage in dysfunctional explanatory thinking and give up trying. As a classroom instructor for more than ten years, it has always been my wonder why particular students hold strong beliefs about their capabilities in language learning, have low expectations, deny the importance of effort or give up easily in the face of failure. I believe that most students perform poorly in university not because they lack competence but because they feel hopeless, have low expectations, deny the importance of effort, or give up in the face of failure. What if I could convince them they had to put more effort into it? A review of literature on attribution theory and self-efficacy encouraged me to pursue the topic and think about attributional change. Further reading on attributional retraining revealed that such an intervention might be of help. There is evidence that through awareness and training, this kind of thinking can be altered, causing individuals to gain a positive perspective towards their performances and feel more confident and self-efficacious (Försterling, 1985).

These ideas led to this study. Such an intervention may be particularly applicable to foreign language situation because learning a language is different in many ways than learning other school subjects. Language learners are asked to make something foreign part of one's self (Hsieh, 2004). Horwitz (1990) states that no other field of study requires an individual to take social risks or endure potential public embarrassment in

the way language study do. Therefore language learners are more likely to be engaged in dysfunctional thinking that leads to maladaptive attributions for failure. Given the widely acknowledged importance of motivation in foreign language learning, it is important to determine these maladaptive beliefs for success and failures in language learning and change them into more adaptive ones.

## **1.2. The Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of a training program that included attributional retraining in a foreign language learning environment for undergraduate learners of English as a foreign language. The program was intended to affect students' maladaptive attributional beliefs about the causes of failure in language learning, their low self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement and effort.

Guided by Weiner's attribution theory and Bandura's self-efficacy theory, this study will examine whether these beliefs might be changed and thus students' achievement motivation and success might be higher. It is hypothesized that motivationally at-risk students completing this training program would make more attributions to internal/unstable/controllable factors (i.e. effort), have higher self-efficacy, and improve classroom performance and effort.

A further concern was to investigate the explanations of EFL students of success and failure, assigning them to successful and unsuccessful groups based on their satisfaction ratings for the grades they had received on mid term exams. Gender was also explored to see whether male and female students differed on their attributions for success and failure. Another concern was to examine the nature of the relationship between self-efficacy, attributions for success and failure and language learning beliefs.

### 1.3. Research Questions

The study posed the following research questions:

Major Research Question:

1. What is the effect of a 5-session training program including an attributional retraining on EFL learners' attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement (as measured by GPA) and effort (as measured by class attendance and class participation grade)?

Minor Research Questions:

1. What are the students' attributions for success and failure in language learning?

2. Are there any differences between male and female students and successful and unsuccessful students (as defined by the students themselves) in terms of attributions for success and failure?

3. Do students who are successful and those unsuccessful (as defined by the students themselves) differ on attributions they make on LAAS (Language Achievement Attribution Scale) and CDS II (Causal Dimension Scale)?

4. What is the relationship between attributions, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs?

5. What factors underlie the learners' perceived attributions for failure in learning English? What factors do EFL students identify as attributing their failure in learning English as a foreign language?

To address these research questions, a mixed-methods study was designed and implemented to a group of students attending the English preparatory school of KTU as participants. The quantitative part of this study followed a pre-test/ post-test quasi-experimental design. Two groups (AR & No-AR) were formed in order to investigate the effectiveness of the training program. The qualitative part of the study included pre- and post-study semi-structured interviews with key informants.



#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Attribution theory has been a popular theoretical framework in various areas of psychology including clinical, educational, organizational, and health psychology. However, it is a relatively unexplored area in foreign language learning (Hsieh, 2004). The last decade witnessed a growing interest in studying attributions in language learning motivation (Cochran, McCallum and Bell, 2010; Hassaskhah and Vahabi, 2010; Hsieh and Schallert, 2008; McLoughlin, 2004; Tse, 2000; Williams, Burden and Al-Baharna, 2001; Williams, Burden and Lanvers, 2002; Williams, Burden, Poulet and Maun, 2004). But much research is needed in this area. Dornyei (2001) suggested that because of the generally high frequency of language learning failure worldwide, attributional processes are assumed to play an important role in language studies, but that investigation with much further scope is needed.

This study aims to contribute to this line of research by exploring the attributions of a group of undergraduate EFL students for their successes and failure in learning English and by connecting these beliefs to self-efficacy and language learning beliefs.

The study will go further and test the effectiveness of a training program designed to modify students' explanations about the causes of negative academic outcomes. It aims to replace maladaptive and self-defeating attributions with more adaptive and functional ones encouraging to make internal/stable/controllable attributions for academic failure (i.e. lack of effort, poor strategy use) in place of internal/stable/uncontrollable attributions (i.e. lack of ability). Through these changes, the program is intended to enhance self-efficacy, motivation and subsequent achievement. Although a few studies reported on how students make attributions in language learning, one thing has been surprisingly neglected in this literature: altering causal thinking. While there are numerous examples of attribution retraining that have met with success (Hall, Hladkyj, Perry and Ruthig, 2004; Haynes, Ruthig, Perry, Stupnisky and Hall, 2006; Perry and Penner, 1990; Perry, Stupnisky, Hall, Chipperfield, and Weiner, 2009; Perry, Hechter, Menec and Weinberg, 1993), the researcher could not find a study dealing specifically with attribution retraining in a foreign language setting.

This study is one of the first attempts to understand if students' maladaptive attributional beliefs and self efficacy can be changed through a theory-based treatment. The information obtained from this study will be useful as an intervention method for foreign language instructors to assist students in achieving success in learning a foreign language.

### **1.5. Definitions of Key Terms**

The following list of terms is integral to this study:

*Maladaptive attributional style:* A maladaptive attributional style is characterized by the belief that failure is due to internal, stable and uncontrollable causes such as lack of ability. Students with a maladaptive style may conclude that their efforts are unrelated to achievement outcomes, and therefore futile (Fulk and Mastropieri, 1990). It has been suggested that attributional training would benefit students who had maladaptive attributional styles.

*Motivationally At-risk Students:* Not all students take advantage of learning environments. A pattern of low perceived control, low self- efficacy and poor performance characteristic of failure-prone students does persist despite the presence of high quality teaching (Perry, 1991). There is research to suggest that this pattern is caused by maladaptive attributions to academic failure (i.e.internal, stable and uncontrollable attributions for failure) (Perry, 1991, 2003; Haynes et al., 2009).

*Attributional Retraining:* Attributional Retraining (AR) is a psychotherapeutic intervention to mitigate the deficits in motivation and performance caused by maladaptive attributions for failure and to encourage unstable and controllable attributions for academic failure. Because unsuccessful students are at-risk of academic failure, they may benefit from attributional retraining. Attributional training encourages students to attribute their failure at a task to a controllable cause, such as low effort, or to lack of using efficient strategies rather than to lack of ability so that they are motivated to study and focus on the task rather than are distracted by fears of failure.

## **1.6. Overview of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 states the background and statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the major and minor research questions, the key terms frequently used in the study. What follows in Chapter 2 is a review of the relevant literature and empirical findings and a discussion of their implications for the current study. This chapter begins with the historical development of language learning motivation then goes on to provide a detailed literature on attribution theory, attribution retraining, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs.

Chapter 3 delineates the research design and method. Then the instruments and the procedures of the data collection are presented. The research sample is also described and the chapter continues with the description of a detailed description of the implementation of the training program.

Chapter 4 presents the results from the quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter 5 discusses and interprets the findings from both qualitative and quantitative data in relation to the relevant literature. The conclusions of the present research and recommendations are also included.

## CHAPTER II

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on a) language learning motivation, b) attribution theory, b) attributional retraining d) self-efficacy theory and e) language learning beliefs and, respectively. The first section describes the development and progress of foreign language learning motivation theory. The second section details some of the theoretical frameworks relevant to attribution theory within the context of achievement motivation theory. The next section is devoted to the work on attributional retraining. Finally, the last two sections provide an overview of literature on self-efficacy theory and language learning beliefs.

#### 2.2. Foreign Language Learning Motivation

Past research literature on L2 motivation has consistently shown that motivation is an important individual learner variable in second language acquisition (SLA) (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005, 2006; Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003; Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret, 1997; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand, 2000; Oxford and Shearin, 1994). According to Dörnyei (2005), L2 motivation “provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process” (p. 65).

Motivation is defined, in general, as the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained (Schunk, Pintrich and Meece, 2008). Specifically in L2 area, it is defined as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language” (Gardner, 1985, p. 10). Ellis (1994) described it as “the effort which learners put into learning an L2 as a result of their desire to learn it” (p. 715).

All these definitions suggest that motivation is related to why people decide to do any activity, how long they are willing to sustain it, and how hard they are going to pursue it (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003, p. 614). It plays such an important role in whether

learners learn or not, how much effort they put into learning, how long they persist at learning, and how successfully they learn a language. Thus, most second language (L2) researchers as well as L2 educators generally accept that motivation is important to academic learning, especially regarding the learning of another language (Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005).

Studies on L2 motivation go back to the beginnings of 1970s. The pioneer researchers who studied L2 learning motivation were Gardner and Lambert (1972). Within their socio-educational model, they offered a differentiation between integrative and instrumental motivation for foreign language learning. *Instrumental* motivation refers to motivation to acquire a language as a means for attaining instrumental goals (e.g., finding a good job, passing a course, making money), while *integrative* motivation refers to learning a language with the aim of integrating oneself into the culture of the community in which that language is being spoken, to identify oneself with that community and become a part of it.

Gardner's motivation theory was then challenged by several researchers. Oxford and Shearin (1994), for example, pointed out that the current theory might not cover all possible kinds of foreign language learning motivation. According to Dörnyei (1994), the main problem with Gardner's approach was that it was too influential. Crookes and Schmidt (1991), for example, described it as "so dominant that alternative concepts have not been seriously considered" (p.501). Dörnyei (1994) also noted that Gardner's motivational construct was limited in that it did not include any cognitive aspects of motivation and recommended to add other motivation variables from the field of psychology.

In an effort to address these criticisms, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) expanded their consideration of motivation constructs in language learning by adding motivation variables such as expectancy, self-efficacy, valence, causal attributions, and goal setting derived from the psychological literature. In order to determine how these measures of motivation would fit into the original Gardner model, they investigated the relationships among motivation variables from Gardner's (1985) Socio-educational Model with these new measures of motivation. The results indicated that specific goals lead to an increase in motivational behavior, that language attitudes influence valence, and that the

higher the level of motivational behavior, the more learning is valued. They also found that language attitude influences self-efficacy and in turn influences students' effort, attention, and persistence.

In 2001, Gardner revised the original model and included four categories of factors that might influence language learning: external influences such as history and motivators (family background, value, and need for language learning), individual differences such as one's integrativeness, attitude, aptitude, and motivation (effort, persistence, and enjoyment), language acquisition contexts (formal or informal learning), and outcomes such as aspects of proficiency in the language or the consequences of language learning such as language anxiety. These variables were measured by Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which was originally developed by Gardner and Smythe in 1981 and revised in 1985. The attributes measured by this test battery include: integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, motivation, language anxiety, and instrumental orientation.

The dominance of Gardner's motivation theory lasted until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the limited views of motivation, many researchers in the foreign language field have called for the development of new approaches to understanding language learners' motivation (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1990; Oxford and Shearin, 1994). Some alternative L2 motivation models such as expectancy-value theory, self-efficacy theory, self determination theory, attribution theory, and goal theories appeared to redefine L2 motivation (Carreira, 2005; Dörnyei, 2001, 2003; Noels, 2001). Although these motivation models have different approaches to motivation, they all aim to get a better understanding of foreign language motivation and find ways to enhance motivation in L2 learning settings.

Thus, within the past two decades, there has been a reconceptualization of L2 motivation what Gardner and Tremblay (1994) called a 'motivational renaissance' with new concepts from educational psychology being integrated in an effort to fully explain students' foreign language learning. Many new themes and approaches have since been proposed in the literature (Dörnyei, 2001). One of these areas of research focuses on how learners' explanations of their academic outcomes effect their future motivation.

This research area was conceptualized by Weiner (1972, 1985) and has provided a fruitful area for future research in foreign language field.

### **2.3. Attribution Theory**

Since Heider's (1944, 1958) naive analysis of action, the term *attribution* has been a key theme in social psychology that has stimulated intensive research in several directions (Kelley and Michela, 1980). Attributions are defined as the explanations that a person makes about events in order to better control and predict future similar events (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1979). Attribution theorists investigate the perception of causality, or the judgment of why a particular incident occurred (Weiner, 1972) and how individuals select, process, store, recall, and evaluate (causally relevant) information and how this information is then used to draw causal inferences (Försterling, 2001).

Attribution theory is based on a naive analysis of human behavior. It is sometimes called as "common sense" psychology (Kelly, 1992). Weiner (1991) states that people are "judges" who try to find reasons for causes of events they experience. As Heider (1958) also pointed out, "the ordinary person has a great and profound understanding of himself and of other people which, though unformulated or only vaguely conceived, enables him to interact with others in more or less adaptive ways" (p.2).

Ellis et al. (1995) define attributions as "causal statements that answer 'why' something happened." Heider (1958) pointed out that "this understanding is gained by way of a causal analysis that is in a way analogous to experimental methods" (p.297). If humans are conceived of "naive scientists" it follows that the scientific study of "common sense psychology" or attribution theory must focus on how naive individuals describe and explain behaviours and experiences. Attributions help individuals to attain a cognitive mastery of the world and to control events (Forsyth, 1980).

Kelley (1992) explicitly mentions a cause-effect relation when he describes the subject matter of "common sense psychology" as including "common people's ideas about their own and other persons' behavior and about the antecedents and consequences of that behavior (p.4).

As Kelley (1992) has also argued:

We are all members of the common culture and users of the common language long before we become scientific psychologists. Insofar as we address our scientific efforts to the behavioural phenomena encompassed by common terms and beliefs, they inevitably influence the concepts and theories we develop for our scientific purposes (p. 4).

Heider (1944) was the first to describe the causal attribution process that people go through to explain events. Drawing on Heider's work, Weiner (1979) related attribution theory to achievement motivation and formulated an attributional model applicable to achievement contexts. Weiner's theory of achievement motivation (1979, 1985) posits that learners try to understand the reasons of their successful and unsuccessful outcomes. They often ask the attributional question "Why did I succeed or fail?" (Weiner, 1979, p.3) This causal search is activated by an event, such as failing an exam, which is perceived as unexpected, negative or important by the learner. Such events are called with different names in the literature: 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). Many factors may influence when people engage in causal search, but as Weiner (2000) notes:

Because of cognitive limits, search is not undertaken following all events, and is particularly likely when an outcome is negative, unexpected, and/or important. Thus if one expects to succeed and does, *why* questions are not likely to follow. But unexpected failure at an important exam surely will evoke attributional processes (p.2).

The earliest version of Weiner's attribution theory suggested that in achievement situations students often attribute success and failure to four basic causes: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck. These causes were suggested as being the most general and salient of the causes of achievement outcomes (Weiner, 1974). Further research proved Weiner's conclusion that these four factors were the most salient in identifying causes of success and failure by both teachers and students (Anderson, 1983; Bar-Tal,



Goldberg and Knaani, 1984; Burger, Cooper, and Good, 1982; Cooper and Burger 1980; Elig and Frieze, 1979; Frieze, 1976; Frieze and Snyder, 1980; Wilson and Palmer, 1983). Furthermore, Elig and Frieze (1979) proposed ability and effort are conceived of as the main determinants of achievement by most individuals in most cultures. Graham (2004) also points out that “effort, together with ability, is one of the attributions for success most commonly identified in western cultures and is generally held to have a positive influence on motivation”.

Research has also demonstrated that students point out other attributions for their perceived successes or failures such as: the teacher, being in a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ mood or feeling sick. Moreover, Weiner himself acknowledged that “the potential causes of an achievement-related outcome are infinite” (Weiner, 1986). There is an infinite number of possible causes exist such as mood, fatigue, teacher variables, but ability, effort, task difficulty and luck are among the most common explanations given by university students for their academic achievement (Van Overwalle, 1989; Weiner, 1979). Graham (2004) adds to this discussion that these causes are also subordinate to the context in which the attributions are made.

Weiner’s (1986) formulation of attribution theory posits that causal attributions that students make in the face of success and failure can be categorized along three dimensions: locus of control (internal or external), stability (stable or unstable), and controllability (controllable or uncontrollable) of those attributions. These dimensions are the underlying properties of causal explanations. Table 2.1 presents attributions together with their underlying dimensions.

Table 2.1.

*Weiner’s original Model of Attributions*

| Dimensions | Locus of causality |                 |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|            | Internal           | External        |
| Stable     | Ability            | Task Difficulty |
| Unstable   | Effort             | Luck            |

Locus dimension refers to whether a cause is perceived as being internal or external to the individuals. Ability and effort attributions are classified as internal, whereas task difficulty and luck are classified as external. The internal and external dimensions of attributions have been identified by several other theorists, as well (Deci, 1975; de Charms 1968; Heider, 1958; Rotter, 1966). In 1966, Rotter proposed the “locus of control” construct which is concerned with whether one believes that events in people's lives result from their own efforts, skills, and internal dispositions or stem from external factors such as luck, chance, fate or powerful others. Thus, people could be categorized as having an internal locus of control or an external locus of control. Rotter (1966) also developed the Locus of Control Scale to measure an individual's locus of control beliefs.

In 1979, Weiner redefined the Locus of Control construct in an effort to keep it as a separate construct. Weiner (1985) stated that “locus *and* control, not locus *of* control, describe causal perceptions....To avoid confusion, the locus dimension should be labeled *locus of causality*” (p.552). Locus of causality refers to whether a cause is seen as being internal or external with regard to the individual. Any cause associated with the individual will fall under the internal classification of locus of causality. Thus, ability and effort are considered internal because they originate within the person, whereas task difficulty and luck originate outside the person and are therefore considered as external.

Studies suggest that both internal and external loci of control are important predictors of academic achievement (Crandall, Katkovsky and Crandall, 1965; Hjelle, 1970; Messer, 1972). A literature review by Findley and Cooper (1983) on the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement revealed that more internal beliefs are associated with greater academic achievement. Kaiser (1975) also found that individuals with an internal locus of control attributed their grades on a test to internal reasons (i.e. study habits, effort, knowledge of subject matter) while externals' attributions were related to external factors (i.e., difficulty of the test/subject matter, ability to guess, poor instructor).

In 1971, Weiner argued that a second dimension was required. His reasoning was that among internal and external causes, some fluctuate, whereas others remain relatively constant. For example ability, an internal cause, is perceived as a constant capacity while effort and mood change from moment to moment. Weiner (1971) called this dimension as stability. The stability dimension of attributions refers to whether the cause is constant or varying over time or whether it is variable and unstable across situation and over time. Effort is a common attribution, which would be classified as unstable in that effort can vary. Thus, ability and task difficulty are considered stable because they do not vary if the same task is performed again, but effort and luck are considered unstable because they fluctuate over time.

A third dimension of causality, controllability, was added to the original model (Weiner, 1972) in order to better explain the underlying features of attributions. The controllability refers to whether a cause is subject to volitional control. The inclusion of this dimension allows for a greater precision in the classification of causal attributions because Rotter's model implies that internal events are primarily controllable, whereas according to Weiner's model attributions such as ability which is internal are more clearly described as uncontrollable. Table 2.2. presents the achievement attributions classified by locus, stability and controllability dimensions. In the original model both ability and effort were internal differing only on stability dimension. In the expanded model, ability is not only internal and stable, it is also considered uncontrollable. Moreover, there is a distinction between two kinds of effort along the stability dimension. For example, effort for an exam or a class project is internal and controllable, but also unstable because it varies according to the particular exam or task. In contrast to situational effort, long-term effort is internal, stable and controllable.

Table 2.2.

*Achievement attributions classified by locus, stability, and controllability dimensions. From Weiner (1986) Adapted from Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008, p. 101).*

| Stability | Internal   |                                      | External                       |   |
|-----------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
|           | Controllable   | Uncontrollable                       | Controllable                   | Uncontrollable  |
| Stable    | Long-term effort   | Aptitude                             | Instructor Bias/<br>favoritism | Ease/ Difficulty<br>school or<br>course<br>requirements |
| Unstable  | Skills/knowledge<br>Temporary or<br>situational<br>effort for exam | Health on the<br>day of exam<br>Mood | Help from<br>friends/teacher   | Chance  |

In addition, Rosenbaum (1972) has proposed adding intentionality as a third causal dimension. Rosenbaum (1972) postulated that causes, though internal-stable, external-stable, internal-unstable or external-unstable, could be further classified as being either subject to or independent of volitional control. Effort can be guided and controlled by the individual. This means it can be influenced by intention, whereas sickness (to a large extent) is beyond conscious control by the individual. Weiner (1979) incorporated this dimension into his theory under the label controllability, noting that “a cause is not intentional-intent describes an action, or a motivational state of an organism. One might refer to aptitude as internal, or stable, but can it be described as unintentional? It seems not; intent does not appear to be a characteristic of a cause” (p. 554).

Another possible dimension of causality is globality as proposed by Abramson et al. (1978). Globality refers to the extent to which an attribution is seen as a trait, which affects everything an individual might attempt to do. “I failed because I am stupid” would be an example of a global assessment of an attribution, whereas “I failed the test because I am not so good at maths” would be a more task-specific assessment of ability. There is research to suggest that attributing negative outcomes to global factors result in learned helplessness (Alloy, Abramson, Peterson, and Seligman, 1984). The central idea

in learned helplessness theory is that a person who has an attributional style involving internal, stable, and global causes for negative events tends to become depressed in the face of negative events. Learned helplessness is a psychological trait which results from repeated exposure to uncontrollable and aversive events (Seligman 1975). For example, a student may believe that he does not have the ability to change when facing difficult challenges. He tends to be no more willing to invest effort and experience no enjoyment from the challenge and can be rather depressed. Seligman (1975) stated in his original learned helplessness theory that such a passivity and feeling of uncontrollability of a negative outcome is acquired through a long history of failure experiences. Continual exposure to academic failure has been shown to contribute to learned helplessness, withdrawal, unwillingness to approach new tasks, and a lack of persistence (Au, Watkins, Hattie and Alexander, 2009; Butkowsky and Willows, 1980; Diener and Dweck, 1978; Firmin, Hwang, Copella and Clark, 2004; Klein, Fencil-Morse, and Seligman, 1975).

According to Weiner (1985), dimensions are important in that they have cognitive, behavioral and affective consequences. Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008) claim that these dimensions have implications for students' expectancy beliefs, emotions, and motivated behaviors. Weiner (1985) specifically proposed that stability dimension is related to expectations of future outcomes. If individuals perceive the cause of an outcome to be stable, it is more likely that the same event will be expected in the future. If, for instance, failure at an achievement task is believed to be caused by a stable factor such as lack of ability or task difficulty, failure is expected to occur in the future. If failure is attributed to a variable factor such as effort, expectancy of success is likely to remain constant or to increase.

Graham and Brown (1988) stated that differences between ability and effort determine expectancy increments or decrements. Guided by this idea, some attributional training studies attempted to change students' attributions for failure from low ability to lack of effort. A detailed literature on attributional retraining studies will be given in the next section. In these studies, students who had maladaptive attributions (i.e. attributing failure to lack of ability) were taught to attribute their failure to insufficient effort. First studies were conducted in laboratory settings where an experimenter gave attributional

feedback after an induced failure on a task. However, more recent studies have been conducted in real school settings with children (Dweck, 1975; Horner and Gaither, 2006) and university students (Perry et al., 2009; Perry and Penner, 1990; Struthers and Perry 1996).

According to Skehan (1989), what is relevant in attribution theory to language learning are the causal factors to which success is attributed. If the stable factors of ability (such as intelligence and language aptitude) are deemed important, persistence will be lower. If unstable factors (such as effort and luck) are prominent, motivation will be enhanced because the learner will “see himself as having a potential impact on learning progress” (Skehan, 1989). Dörnyei (1990) identified an attribution about past failures component to L2 motivation and argued that these attributions are particularly important in foreign language learning contexts where L2 learning failure is a very frequent occurrence.

Thus, some research has been directed at determining whether certain causal attributions are more favorable than others. In educational settings, the use of internal, controllable, and unstable attributions in failure situations have been found to increase the students’ expectancy of success whereas attributing failure to internal, stable, uncontrollable causes has been associated with increased anxiety (Dweck and Legget, 1988; Heyman and Dweck, 1998; Smiley and Dweck, 1994). Moreover, attributions of this kind can lead to loss of motivation and increased feelings of depression (Abramson, Metalsky and Alloy, 1989) as well as learned-helplessness (Abramson et al., 1978). A student is helpless when he or she does not see a connection between his or her effort and success. Learned helplessness is also characterized by consistent identification of ability as causal attribution for failure (Dweck, 1975). When attributions for failures are internal, unstable, and controllable (e.g. effort), greater motivation and achievement is possible (Janoff-Bulman, 1979). Conversely, according to Skinner, Wellborn, and Connell (1990), ability attributions (internal, stable, and uncontrollable) to failure are particularly damaging to student motivation.

Weiner (1976) investigated specifically the influence of causal attributions on learners’ behaviors. Weiner (1970, 2000) suggested that it is important to understand students’ attributions in achievement settings because these are likely to influence the

likelihood of undertaking achievement activities, the intensity of work at these activities, and the degree of persistence in the face of failure. Attributions are also expected to have influences on students' expectancy, values, emotions, and beliefs about their competence, and, in turn, influence motivational variables (Weiner, 2000).

In sum, achievement outcomes, expectancy beliefs and subsequent behavior are closely related to attributional beliefs. Motivation is affected by cognitions about causation. Willingness to expend time to achieve goals depends at least partly on these beliefs. The reason one succeeded or failed in the past can be highly relevant to what one will do in the future affecting achievement striving. Students who believe that success is based on luck will have little incentive to persist at a challenging task. Similarly, students who believe that success is based on ability may feel that effort is either unnecessary or inefficacious. However, students who believe that success is the result of effort will have every reason to make the effort that is required to achieve the success that they desire. *Effort*, in other words, is both volitional and intentional. Figure 2.1 presents the final model of Weiner's (2010) achievement motivation.

As shown in Figure 2.1, attributions are also linked to different emotions such as pride, shame, and guilt. Weiner (1986) claims that "how we think influences how we feel" (p.119). Locus particularly influences feelings of pride in success and self-esteem. A student might be happy, for example, after getting a good grade on a difficult exam, but he or she will not feel pride if she or he believes that the teacher gives high grades. As Weiner (2000) humorously puts it "all at the table can enjoy a great meal, but only the cook can experience pride". Controllability dimension influences whether guilt or shame is experienced following a failure. Attribution of failure to lack of effort often causes guilt, whereas lack of ability attributions elicits feelings of shame and embarrassment. Stability dimension is more linked to expectancy of success.

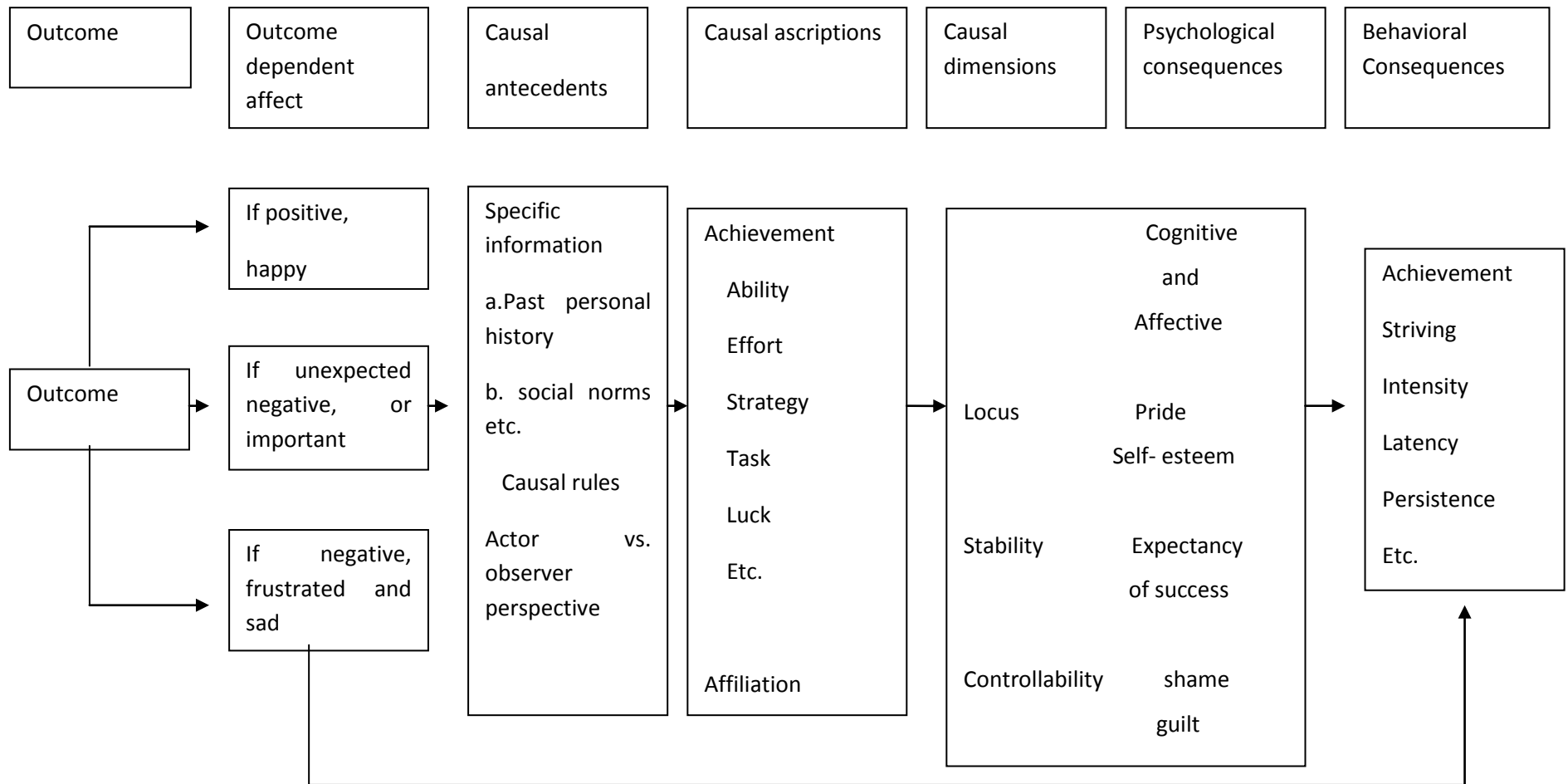


Figure 2.1. Final Attribution-based model of motivation (Adapted from Weiner, 2010)



### 2.3.1 Attributions and gender

How individuals make attributions has been found to differ according to gender. In an early study, Nicholls (1975) found that boys more often attribute their successes to ability and their failures to lack of effort. Girls often attribute their successes to luck (Reis, 1987) or to effort (Rimm, 1991) and their failures to lack of ability (Nicholls, 1975; Reis, 1987). Stipek and Gralinski (1991) also found that girls were less likely than boys to attribute success to high ability and failure to luck, and were more likely to attribute failure to low ability.

Campbell and Henry (1999) found no difference in general attributional style by gender but the results showed that there were gender differences in specific explanations for performance in a course. Although effort was the most stated reason for course performance, women mentioned effort significantly more often than men. Women were less likely to attribute their performance in the course to ability than were men.

Assouline et al. (2006) reported similar results. They found gifted boys were more likely to make the attributional choice of ability for success than gifted girls in general, mathematics, and science. The two groups were similar in language arts. Bornholt and Moller (2003) found that both adolescent males and females reported lack of effort for not doing well in mathematics and English. They did find gender differences for doing well. Effort was a more important reason for girls than boys for success in mathematics while ability was a more important reason for boys than girls for success in mathematics.

Siegle, Rubenstein, Pollard, and Romey (2010) measured 163 college honors freshmen's perceptions of their skills in 15 talent areas and explored the relationship of ability and effort attributions with self-efficacy and investigated gender differences in these perceptions. Males placed stronger attributions than females on the role that natural ability played, while for other talents, females indicated more than males that personal effort contributed to high levels of performance.

The results of these studies indicate that perceptions of success and failure are context-specific (Williams, Burden and Al-Baharna, 2001). In foreign language learning field, gender differences in attributional beliefs have been also explored. Hsieh (2004)

found that unsuccessful men tended to attribute failure to lack of effort more than the unsuccessful women, who tended to ascribe failure to the difficulty of the task. In success situations, men tended to attribute successful outcomes to having high ability, whereas women tended to attribute success to effort. Hsieh (2004) pointed out that both ability and effort are internal and positive attributions for success and therefore do not indicate a strong difference between men and women. However, because men tended to attribute success to ability, results also indicated that they had higher self-efficacy beliefs for foreign language learning than females.

Peacock (2010) found statistically significant differences between attribution and gender. Students' interviews revealed seven statistically significant differences. Females were found to be more likely to attribute success to the following factors:

- My teacher praised/encouraged me.
- I paid attention in class.
- I loved/was interested in English.
- I competed with myself/my previous results.
- I revised a lot for tests/studied hard in class.
- I competed hard with my classmates.
- Outside class, I looked up words I did not know in a dictionary/studied vocabulary.

As the above list of factors indicates, most of these attributions are internal, unstable, and controllable. Female students were significantly more likely to attribute success to their own efforts than were male students.

### **2.3.2. Attributions for success and failure in foreign language learning**

Attribution theory has gained much interest for its potential implications in foreign language motivation. If, for example, stable and uncontrollable factors like ability or task difficulty are thought to be important, motivation to learn a foreign language will be lower. If stable and controllable factors like effort or strategy are predominant in explanations of success and failure, motivation will be higher, because the learner will see "himself as having a potential impact on learning progress (Skehan, 1989).

One of the first noteworthy studies into learners' attributions for success and failure in learning a foreign language was done by Williams and Burden (1999), who suggested a constructive framework in the investigation of attributions. They investigated how learners of different ages constructed different types of attributions for success and failure in learning a foreign language, what factors underlie their attributions and whether different proficiency learners have different patterns of attributions. They conducted interviews with students from 10 to 15 years of age who were learning French and found that age groups differed in terms of their constructions of success and in the range of attributions they provided for success and failure. Most of the learners tended to see their success as a result of external factors such as teacher approval, marks or grades. Another finding was that the range of attributions increased with age with older students expressing more attributions such as ability, level of work, circumstances, and the influence of others. William and Burden (1999) concluded that there are developmental and maturational differences between the age groups and the attributions are socially constructed. Table 2.3 and Table 2.4 summarize the reasons listed by Williams and Burden (1999) for success and failure in language learning.

Table 2.3.

*Perceived Reasons for Doing Well*

| YEAR 6                        | YEAR 7                        | YEARS 9 and 10      |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| **Listening and Concentrating | **listening and concentrating | ** trying hard      |
| * learning and remembering    | ** trying hard                | ** help from others |
| * practising                  | * interest and enjoyment      | * ability           |
|                               | *ease of work                 | * ease of work      |
|                               | * teacher                     | * circumstances     |
|                               |                               | teacher             |
|                               |                               | materials           |
|                               |                               | mood                |
|                               |                               | liking              |
|                               |                               | experience          |
|                               |                               | strategies          |

Note. \*\* response from > 50% of respondents. \* response from > 25% of respondents.

Adopted from Williams and Burden (1999)

Table 2.4.

*Perceived Reasons for Not Doing Well*

| YEAR 6                         | YEAR 7                          | YEARS 9 and 10                   |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ** not listening/concentrating | **not listening / concentrating | ** not listening / concentrating |
| work too hard                  | *distraction by others          | ** distraction by others         |
| not remembering/understanding  | not working hard enough         | * work too hard                  |
| not practising                 | bad mood                        | * lack of revision               |
|                                | dislike of subject              | *lack of effort                  |
|                                |                                 | * lack of ability                |
|                                |                                 | * poor teaching                  |
|                                |                                 | * lessons missed                 |

Note. \*\* response from > 50% of respondents. \* response from > 25% of respondents.  
Adopted from Williams and Burden (1999)

Kun and Liming (2007) explored the effects of achievement attributions on self-regulated language learning behaviors. They found that achievement attributions is one important factor influencing self-regulated learning behaviors and that different patterns of attributional beliefs have different impacts on self-regulated language learning beliefs to different extents. Adaptive attributions, such as attribution of success to effort or ability, have positive effects on self-regulated language learning behaviors, whereas maladaptive attributions, such as attribution of failure to ability, are negatively correlated with self-regulated language learning behaviors.

Gobel and Mori (2007), using a questionnaire, investigated perceived reasons for successes and failure in English speaking and reading classes, looking at how first-year Japanese university students judge their successes and failures. Findings revealed that students who reported performing poorly attributed poor performance to a lack of ability and lack of effort. On the other hand, students who reported performing well attributed their performance to teachers and the classroom atmosphere. In another study, Gobel, Mori, Thang, Kan and Lee (2011) investigated how successful and unsuccessful students in foreign and second language classes make attributions differently and how different attributions may relate to cultural norms. They compared the attributions of Thai, Japanese and Malaysian learners' attributions for success and failure in learning English as a first or second language. All three groups showed some striking similarities in the manner in which they attributed their successes and failures. Students in all three

groups tended to have stronger attribution ratings for successes than for failures. In particular, they seemed to focus more on external factors, especially teacher influence when they succeeded. On the other hand, when they failed, they all seemed to focus more on internal causes, namely lack of ability, preparation and effort, and inappropriate use of strategy.

Hsieh and Schallert (2008) attempted to combine two motivational constructs, self-efficacy and attribution to explore the motivation of 500 undergraduate foreign language learners in the US. The students were asked to consider their test scores in light of these two constructs and give actual reasons for the outcome. Analysis suggested that self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of achievement supplement by ability attributions.

Pishghadam and Zabihi (2011) examined the relationship between EFL learners' attributions for success and failure in language learning and their achievement in foreign language classes. They administered the Causal dimension scale (CDS-II) and the Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS), which were used also in this study, to 209 EFL learners. Specific causal attributions (ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, and teacher) and their dimensions were compared with learners' language achievement. They found significant correlations between LAAS as well as CDS-II subscales and learners' final scores. Their results indicated that learners who attributed their test results to effort received higher grades on the final exam.

### **2.3.3. Attribution studies in Turkey**

A review of research showed that most research on attributions in Turkey so far has concentrated on learned helplessness, most of them having been done in primary and high school contexts (Akça, 2011; Aydın, 2006; Cantekinler, 1997; Düzgün and Hayalioğlu, 2006; Gündoğdu, 1996; Oluklu, 1997).

In an early study, Özduygu (1995) examined the achievement attributions of elementary school students who had high or low fear of success and found no significant differences between these two groups of students in terms of their attributions. However, the results indicated that successful students tended to endorse

more personal reasons compared to unsuccessful students who stated more external reasons for their failure.

Kayaoğlu (1997), in his study of the learning strategies of Turkish EFL and ESL adult learners, explored language learners' past and present experiences and identified the reasons which learners attributed to success and failure in language learning using an open-ended questionnaire. The major finding was that learners attributed success and failure to different internal and external factors which seemed to affect their approaches to language learning and language behavior. Teacher-related factors and attitudinal factors were found to be the most stated reasons for success and failure. Another major result was that stable factors such as ability, a good ear and a good memory affected their strategy choice.

Can (2005) analyzed elementary school teachers' attributions for their perceived success and failure in their professions in terms of their causal dimensions. The results revealed that participants made more internal, stable and controllable attributions for success than they did for failure. Gender difference was also apparent as female teachers made more internal attributions for success than male teachers. Besides, male teachers tended to believe that they were more in control of their failures.

In a comparison study, Brown, Gray and Ferrara (2005) investigated the attributional patterns of Turkish, Japanese and Chinese university students. They found that all three samples endorsed internal causes for both success and failure more than external causes. The Japanese students were found to attribute their success and failure equally to internal causes while the Turkish and Chinese students made more internal attributions for success than for failure. They also concluded that attribution factors are changeable from culture to culture. They reported that their samples demonstrated a different sort of bias than students in western cultures who often take credit for their success and blame others for their failures (Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde, and Hankin, 2004). However, the students in Brown et al.'s sample (2005) equally accepted both credit for their success and blame for their failures.

Satıcılar (2006) investigated the achievement attributions of English language learners at sixth and ninth grades. The results revealed that students tended to attribute their success and failure in learning English to internal factors. Effort was found to be the most important cause for success and failure. As for the gender difference, female learners attributed their success to effort more frequently than male learners did. Male learners tended to attribute their success more to ability compared to female learners.

Büyükselçuk (2006) examined the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and causal attributions of 342 undergraduate senior and graduate students at Boğaziçi University. Findings of the study showed that students made more external and effort attributions in failure situations regardless of the level of their self-efficacy. High self-efficacious students, on the other hand, made mostly ability attributions for their successes. Low self-efficacious students compared to high self-efficacious students attributed their successes mostly to external factors and their failure mostly to lack of ability. These results led her to conclude that it might be of help to use attributional retraining to change the attributional styles of low self-efficacious students in order to increase their self-efficacy.

In a recent study, Taşkiran (2010) explored a group of 158 EFL students' causal attributions of perceived success and failure in language learning process. After responding to a self-administered questionnaire assessing perceived success and failure and perceived causes of their outcomes, students were grouped according to their responses as success-oriented and failure-oriented. The results showed that the number of students who perceived themselves as unsuccessful was higher than those who perceived themselves as successful. Students reported more causal attributions for failure than they did for success. The results also indicated that success-oriented students demonstrated significantly more internal, controllable and relatively more stable attributional patterns than failure-oriented students.

Even though there has been an increase in the number of studies in different EFL contexts, most appear to be descriptive in nature. Studying attributions will help language teachers develop ways to encourage persistence at learning English. This study has potential to bring new dimensions to the accumulated studies with a new focus on changing attributions rather than simply identifying them.

## 2.4. Attributional Retraining

As mentioned above, the attributional model suggested by Weiner (1972, 1985, 2000) suggests that attributions of failure to internal, stable causes (e.g. to lack of or low ability) are detrimental for subsequent achievement behavior like persistence and performance. Thus, if certain attributions are more adaptive and healthier, encouraging more positive attributional styles in students may be a good way to motivate students.

The causal attributions students make for their success and failure differ with respect to their locus (internal or external), stability (stable or unstable), and controllability (controllable or uncontrollable) dimension of those attributions. Students with a history of academic failure may develop patterns of attributions that are maladaptive, that is, attributions to external, stable and uncontrollable factors. Perry (1991) suggests that attributional retraining is a good way to train students to accept the responsibility of their learning and realize the connection between their effort and success. Forsyth and McMillan (1991) also suggest encouraging attributions to controllable causes to motivate students and make them believe that achievement is possible.

In a frequently cited review, Försterling (1985) states that “theoretical and empirical advancements in the area of attribution theories have been followed by attempts to use attributional principles to initiate behavioral change”. He categorizes these attempts into two: misattribution training and reattribution training. Misattribution and reattribution training are conceptually different from each other. Misattribution training attempts to alter a person’s causal attributions about his or her own internal physiological states. It is suggested that an individual’s appraisal of a situation may lead to physiological arousal (e.g. increased heart rate, dry mouth) and this arousal is thought to be responsible for the nature and the quality of the emotion that is experienced (e.g. fear or anxiety) . In misattribution studies, such negative emotional states are altered by giving people appropriate cognitive explanations for their arousal. Storms and Nisbett's (1970), in their original study of therapeutic misattributions, gave insomniacs a placebo "arousal" pill telling them that it produces the arousal they often experience before sleeping. They found that these people went to sleep faster, whereas control group given a placebo "relaxer" pill took longer than usual to fall asleep.



Reattribution training or attributional retraining, on the other hand, is more related to changing a person's causal attributions about environmental outcomes. It is a remedial intervention based on Weiner's theory of achievement motivation which attempts to change students' maladaptive attributions for failure. Weiner's (1972, 1985) attribution theory of achievement motivation asserts that the ways in which students explain their success and failure can influence subsequent learning related-effect and achievement striving. More positive motivational consequences will result when students endorse internal, unstable and controllable causes such as lack of effort to explain failure (Weiner, 1985, 1992). Försterling (1985) states that "most of the attributional change studies have focused on teaching subjects to attribute outcomes in achievement situations to effort" (p. 496). Such attributions for failure are beneficial because they increase persistence and thereby performance (Rudisill, 1989a, 1989b; Rudisill and Singer, 1988). However, attributions for failure that are stable and uncontrollable are especially detrimental to student motivation. Attributing failure, for example, to lack of ability will likely result in decreases in motivation, persistence, academic performance and class attendance (Weiner, 1985, 1995). That is, these attributions are "dysfunctional" or "maladaptive" because they undermine persistence behavior and result in the withdrawing of effort, although some studies found that external attributions for failure may also protect self worth (Covington, 1984, 1992).

Assumptions underlying attribution retraining derive from these premises. Weiner (1992) states that "if causal attributions do influence achievement strivings, then a change in attributions should produce a change in behavior" (p.264). According to Hall et al. (2007), "attributional retraining (AR) is a motivational intervention that consistently produces improved performance by encouraging controllable failure attributions" (p. 280). In an AR program, the purpose is to change individual's perceptions about why failure occurs. When attributions are retrained, they provide greater motivation to succeed because students can try harder or use a better strategy, resulting in increased effort and improved performance (Schunk, 1998).

After reviewing 15 attributional training studies, Försterling (1985) concluded that these techniques provide modest yet consistent improvements in motivation and performance in achievement settings, particularly for at-risk college students (Perry et

al., 1993). A recent review by Haynes et al. (2009) also confirmed the effectiveness of AR treatments to foster adaptive explanatory thinking and improve performance outcomes especially in higher education settings.

Attributional retraining (AR) programs have been tried out successfully in various contexts: sports (Le Foll, Rascle, and Higgins, 2006, 2008; Miserandino, 1998; Rudisill, 1989a, 1989b; Sinnott and Biddle, 1998); physical activity (Sarkisian, Prohaska, Davis and Weiner, 2007); academic performance (Perry and Penner, 1990; Van overwalle and De Metsenaere, 1990; Wilson and Linville, 1982, 1985); reading and literacy (Carr and Borkowski, 1989; Chan, 1996); depression (Dieser and Ruddell, 2002; Green-Emrich and Altmaier, 1991); learned helplessness (Aydin, 1988; Fowler and Peterson, 1981) and loneliness and shyness (Anderson, 1983; Struthers and Perry, 1996). The vast majority of these attribution training programs have been conducted with children. Robertson's (2000) reviewed 20 attribution training studies of school-aged children who had learning difficulties and concluded that "attribution training can be applied to classroom settings to assist 'at risk' children with poor attributional style" (p.132). She found that although mixed results were found in the studies reviewed the majority of the studies demonstrated success. She also suggested combining attribution training with strategy training to obtain better results.

The first major study of AR in higher education settings was conducted by Wilson and Linville (1982). Wilson and Linville's treatment was designed to help college freshmen students who were concerned about their academic performance. They selected 40 undergraduate students whose first semester GPA was less than 3.50, who were worried about their past academic performance and indicated they could have performed better. Students were randomly assigned to either an AR-treatment or a no-AR control group. The treatment included a booklet and a videotaped message that students viewed individually. The booklet contained a survey of senior students indicating that many students struggle in the first year and get lower grades than expected but that performance improves as students move on through higher education. The booklet session was followed by videotaped interviews of senior students describing how their GPAs improved over time.

Wilson and Linville's AR treatment attempted to change attributions from stable to unstable causes, thereby emphasizing the stability dimension of causal attributions (Weiner, 1985). Weiner (1988) also notes that encouraging students to adopt unstable attributions for poor performance should result in increases in expectancies of future success. The subjects, when contrasted with subjects who did not experience this intervention, as reported by Wilson and Linville, (a) were significantly less apt to leave college by the end of their sophomore year and (b) showed significantly greater increase in their GPA one year after the study. Wilson and Linville (1982) concluded that a simple, one-time exposure to the AR treatment could achieve dramatic and long-term results in students' actual academic performance.

Wilson and Linville's work (1982), however, was not without criticism regarding certain features of data and analyses. Block and Lanning (1984) questioned the weakness of dropout rates and GPA increases. They argued that the reasons why the students left college could be multiple and that the authors ignored the preexisting differences in GPAs. In response to criticism, Wilson and Linville (1985) conducted two replication studies that reinforced the findings in the original study. Based on their original study and two replications, they concluded that a single-exposure to a videotape-based AR improved the performance of college freshmen on both short-term and long-term performance measures. Wilson and Linville's (1982, 1985) original studies set the stage for subsequent AR studies in higher education settings (Haynes et al, 2009).

Most attributional retraining studies have adopted a procedure similar to that of Wilson and Linville (1982, 1985) in which a videotape shows two senior students discussing the difficulties they encountered during their first year of university and describing how changing the way they interpreted these difficulties played a large role in their current success. That is, negative academic performances are presented as being unstable and controllable through effort. Since Wilson and Linville's (1982, 1985) study, videotape interventions have been elaborated further by a number of different researchers. Table 2.5. summarizes the results of some of the studies that used attribution training methods. Jesse and Gregory (1986-1987), for example, added a written handout to the process and found the method to be most effective when paired

with a GPA-information videotape indicating failure as an unstable phenomenon. Their results showed that students who did not receive the intervention, but instead were exposed to a video of an irrelevant lecture, experienced a significant decline in their second term GPA. Noel, Forsyth and Kelley (1987) also found the videotape plus written handout to be effective. In this study, an attributional retraining videotape in which students discussed how failure is unstable was shown then subjects were given a handout summarizing the main points in the videotape. Subsequently, both test and final grades improved after the intervention.

Other early studies showed that teaching students to attribute failures to low effort increased effort attributions, expectancies for success, and achievement behaviors (Andrews and Debus, 1978; Chapin and Dyck, 1976). In a 2-phase study with a total of 159 6th graders, Andrews and Debus (1978), investigated the relation of persistence behavior to the causal perception of failure and found increase in effort attributions and persistence. They accomplished this by encouraging students to make attributions after unsolvable perceptual reasoning tasks and reinforcing their attributions to effort.

In another study with children with reading difficulties, Chapin and Dyck (1976) assessed differences between attribution training and partial reinforcement in terms of their relative effectiveness in developing reading persistence. The results of post-tests revealed that the number of difficult sentences attempted by the students was increased jointly by both independent variables. However, students receiving success-only training or partial reinforcement without the benefit of attribution retraining did not show improvements. VanOverwalle et al. (1989, 1990) used a technique similar to Wilson and Linville's (1982) videotape intervention to represent academic success as the product of controllable achievement striving behaviors and gave support to their findings.

When attributional retraining studies that included only one session ("one-shot AR") resulted in success, some researchers became interested in what more sessions might accomplish. For example, Menec, Perry, Struthers and Schonwetter (1994) examined the effect of administering multiple attributional retraining treatments.

Table 2.5

*Summary of Attributional Retraining Studies*

| Study                           | AR Format  | Results   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Wilson and Linville (1982,1985) | Written report & Videotaped interviews with upper class students | GPA increase, trend toward increased likelihood of staying in college.              |
| Andrews and Debus (1978)        | Change to effort attributions for success and failure.           | Increase of effort attributions, increased persistence.                             |
| Chapin and Dyck (1976)          | Change to effort attributions for success and failure.           | Increased persistence.  |
| Dweck (1975)                    | Persuasion of attributing failure to lack of effort.             | Increased effort attributions.  |
| Noel, Forsyth and Kelly (1987)  | Videotaped interviews of upper class students                    | Better performance on tests   |
| Fowler and Peterson (1981)      | Change to effort for success and failure in reading performance. | Increased persistence.  |
| VanOverwalle et al.(1989, 1990) | Videotaped interviews of upper class students                    | Better performance on next exam and higher GPA at the end of the year.              |
| Perry and Penner (1990)         | Videotaped interview of a professor                              | Better performance on multiple choice tests.  |
| Menec et al. (1994)             | Videotaped interview of upper class students                     | Better performance on multiple choice tests   |
| Struthers and Perry (1996)      | AR videotape   | Increase in motivation  |
| Hall et al. (2004)              | AR videotape   | Higher levels of perceived control in AR group.                                     |
| Hall et al. (2007)              | AR handout   | Lower levels of uncontrollable attributions and higher levels of motivation         |
| Haynes et al. (2006)            | AR handout   | Increases in controllable attributions and perceived control                        |
| Haynes et al. (2008)            | AR handout/ videotape  | Increase in mastery motivation.   |
| Haynes and Perry (2008)         | AR handout/ videotape  | Increases in perceived control.   |
| Perry et al. (2009)             | AR handout/ videotape/aptitude test                              | More adaptive attributional profiles(more strategy and effort attributions)         |
| Perry et al. (2010)             | AR handout/ videotape/aptitude test                              | Improvement in subsequent in-class tests, final course grades, and first-year GPAs. |

Although attributional retraining had significant effects on an achievement test performance when compared to a control group receiving no AR, interestingly there was not a notable increase in performance with multiple treatments. In an attempt to find the most effective training method, Perry and Struthers (1994) compared several AR procedures (i.e. written handout, videotape, videotape plus discussion) in a longitudinal field study. Their results showed that only in the videotape-plus-group-discussion condition students who were low in perceived success reported improvements on subsequent course exams and end-of-year grades. With a similar aim, Van Overwalle (1990) and Van Overwalle and Demetsenaere (1989) asked students to write what they thought to be the most salient aspects of the retraining session and found this to be most effective in improving performance on in-class examinations. Their reasoning was that comprehension is improved through listening to other students discuss the concept. Similarly, in the latter study, writing down the AR information may help to interpret the material better.

In another longitudinal field study, Ruthig, Perry, Hall, and Hladkyj (2004) also assessed the effectiveness of AR techniques. In contrast to Perry and Struthers (1994), they found all AR procedures to be equally beneficial for overly optimistic students. Their findings indicated that these AR treatments resulted in higher cumulative GPAs, lower test anxiety, and decreased course attrition for highly optimistic first year college students.

There is also research to suggest that attributional retraining involving only the videotape can be sufficient (Jesse and Gregory, 1986-1987; Menec et al., 1994; Van Overwalle, Segebarth, and Goldchstein, 1989; Wilson and Linville, 1982, 1985). In another study, Hunter (1997) assessed the effectiveness of attributional retraining with at-risk students who report a low - high school average with four different intervention methods: (a) no treatment, (b) aptitude type test, (c) achievement lecture test, or (d) discussion. These conditions were compared to a control condition in which the subjects watched a neutral-topic videotape. When compared to a control group, the condition producing the most significant results was the videotape followed by the aptitude test, indicating that this condition, according to Hunter (1997), produced the most active form of cognitive engagement. It is evident that the effectiveness of AR is affected by

both student characteristics and the way in which AR is administered (Perry et al., 1993, Hall et al., 2004).

Perry et al. (1993, 2001) note that first-year university students disappointed with their first evaluation in unfamiliar learning conditions are more likely to search for explanations and hence are more amenable to AR treatments. Recent research on AR has focused on finding appropriate interventions for specific at-risk groups. Research so far has shown that students experiencing poor performance, or having low perceptions of success, an external locus of control, performance orientation, overly optimistic beliefs, students high in primary control and low in secondary control (Hall, Perry, Ruthig, Hladkyj and Chipperfield, 2006) are more likely to benefit from an AR treatment than those who have been successful, perceive themselves as successful, or have an internal locus of control, mastery orientation, or realistic academic expectations (Menec et al., 1994; Pelletier, Hladkyj, Moszynski and Perry, 1999; Perry and Penner, 1990; Perry and Struthers, 1994; Ruthig et al., 2004). Benefits have been exhibited both immediately following the intervention (Perry & Penner, 1990) and in longitudinal studies conducted outside laboratory conditions (Peny & Struthers, 1994).

In sum, attributional retraining has been shown to be a successful technique for improving the performance of at-risk students (Perry et al., 1993) in several fields. This study contributes to this line of research by examining the effect of a training program which includes an attributional retraining in an EFL setting, an area of research which has been neglected until recently.

## **2.5. Self-Efficacy Theory**

Attributions, as mentioned before, are the beliefs about what learners feel to be the causes of their failure or success. The construction and development of these beliefs are therefore closely related to self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is grounded in social cognitive theory, which posits that individuals have a self system which provides them a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, motivation, and actions. Pajares (1997) states that “this self system provides reference mechanisms and a set of subfunctions for perceiving, regulating, and evaluating behavior, which results from the interplay between the system and environmental sources of influence” (p.2).

Self-efficacy is defined by Bandura (1986) as

“people’s judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required attaining designated types of performance. It is concerned not with the skills one has but with the judgements of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses” (p.361).

Self-efficacy, therefore, refers to the judgements of what one can do whatever skills one has rather than the judgements of the skills themselves (Bandura, 1997). Bandura's (1986) definition of self-efficacy indicates that self-efficacy is a situation specific rather than global construct. That is, self-efficacy beliefs are both more task- and situation-specific in that individuals make use of these judgments in reference to some type of goal (Pajares, 1997). Bandura (1983) points out that there is a salient between possessing a skill and being able to use it well in different circumstances. Zimmerman (2000) also states that self-efficacy beliefs are not a single disposition but rather are multidimensional in form and differ on the basis of the domain of functioning. For example, efficacy beliefs about performing on a history test may differ from beliefs about a biology examination. Therefore, research on self-efficacy beliefs developed in several directions in the past two decades.

Bandura (2001) states that people are self-examiners of their own thoughts and actions. Such a self-examination helps people evaluate their motivation, values, and the meaning of their life pursuits. He expresses the influential role of efficacy beliefs in human functioning as follows:

Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central or pervasive than people's beliefs in their capability to exercise some measure of control over their own functioning and over environmental events. Efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency. Unless people believe they can produce desired results and forestall detrimental ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Whatever other factors may operate as guides and motivators, they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce effects by one's actions (2001, p.10)



Learners acquire information about their self-efficacy level through four sources: their actual performances, their vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion from others, and their physiological reactions (Schunk and Pajares, 2001). This information, however, does not directly influence one's self-efficacy. For such an effect to occur, the outcome should be cognitively appraised. After such an evaluation process and feedback about how well they are learning, students will decide whether or not to proceed in a task. Motivation is greater when students feel they are making progress in learning. In turn, as students become more skillful, they develop a sense of self-efficacy for performing well (Schunk, 1991). Therefore, self-efficacy is one of the key factors in determining students' motivation. Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003) also note that highly motivated, successful learners possess self-efficacy and have an internal locus of control (fate, the teacher, or other factors).

According to Bandura (1997), the most effective way of creating a strong self-efficacy is through mastery experiences. Such experiences provide the most solid evidence source for assessing whether one has the sufficient skills to succeed. Self-efficacy beliefs develop out of self-appraisals of previous performances. Positive interpretations of previous performance strengthen one's sense of self-efficacy while negative interpretations lower it. When self-efficacy is high, it leads to positive expectations of success in similar tasks. Mastery experiences, thus, form the basis of one's self-efficacy appraisal and expectation of future success.

Vicarious experiences are situations in which people estimate their capabilities in comparison to others (Palmer, 2006). This source of self-efficacy information is not as strong as the interpretation of previous experiences; however, they are important in areas in which students may have limited mastery experiences upon which to base their efficacy judgments (Bandura, 1997). Vicarious experiences may be fostered by exposing students to peers with similar capabilities who have successfully performed task given. Such observations enhance students' expectation of success. Thus, vicarious experiences are considered to be a powerful tool because observing similar others serves both informational and motivational functions (Bandura, 1997; Schunk and Zimmerman, 2007).

Social persuasion is another source of information in the construction of a sense of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) points out that “social persuasion serves as one, though far from the best, means of raising people’s beliefs concerning their operative capabilities. As he noted, although social persuasion itself alone may not create enduring increases in efficacy beliefs, “it is easier to sustain a sense of efficacy, especially when struggling with difficulties, if significant others express faith in one’s capabilities than if they convey doubts” (p.101). Although social persuasion alone may be limited in creating increases in self-efficacy, it can contribute to successful performance if the heightened appraisal is within realistic bounds (Bandura, 1982). Negative feedback, on the other hand, can lower one’s perception of confidence and prohibit the development of efficacy beliefs. As Bandura (1986) noted, it is easier to discourage someone through negative persuasion than encourage them through positive feedback.

Conger (1989) states that words of encouragement, verbal feedback, and other forms of social persuasion are often used by leaders, managers, group members to empower subordinates. People often rely on epistemic authorities in their knowledge formation. The term “epistemic authority” was introduced by Kruglanski (1989), developed by Bar-Tal and Raviv (Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, and Brosch, 1991; Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, and Houminer, 1990). Epistemic authority may be defined as a source that exerts a determinative influence on the formation of knowledge (Kruglanski, 1989). As Bar-tal (1998) notes, people ascribe high confidence to information provided by epistemic authority, consider it often as truth, assimilate it into their own repertoire, and rely on it. Examples of an epistemic authority may be a religious leader, a doctor, a politician or even an ideological leader who, for certain people, serves as a source of valid and truthful knowledge in certain areas of life and are selected by people as a result of such factors as his or her age, culture, knowledge domain, or personality etc. Adults may have their own list of epistemic authorities which may include a political leader, a hodja, a scientist or even a television anchorman. Within past years, bird-flu crisis in Turkey resulted in a swift end after Ugur Dundar, a well-known anchorman, took part in an advertisement about the health worthy of chicken and gave his support to the campaigns (<http://www.ipra.org/archivefrontlinedetail.asp?articleid=233>). He was the good choice to construct the trust of individuals again. Thus, it is human and

universal to rely on epistemic authorities in knowledge formation. Children, as well as adults, often rely on epistemic authorities in their knowledge formation. Obviously, an adult, a parent or a teacher, frequently serves as epistemic authority for children.

Finally, people make use of their physiological and emotional states in judging their capabilities. High emotional arousal (e.g. while presenting a speech to a group) usually debilitates performance and causes the individual to feel vulnerable to failure (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, people are more likely to expect success when they are not confronted with adverse feelings.

While forming self-efficacy beliefs, people select and interpret information that influences their judgements of competence. Self-efficacy beliefs are formed through cognitive evaluation of efficacy relevant information which then influences subsequent performance. Self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to influence academic motivation with respect to the choice of activities, level of effort, and persistence. Bandura (1977) suggested that one's perceived self-efficacy has a powerful influence over one's choice of an activity, the kind of effort one expends, and how much one is able to maintain that effort in the face of difficulty. It has been found that measures of self-efficacy correlate significantly with students' perseverance and success in course work (Hackett and Betz, 1989; Lent, Brown, and Larkin, 1984). Zimmerman and Kitsantas (1999) also found self-efficacy to be highly correlated with students' rated intrinsic interest in a writing revision task. According to Bandura (1982), given adequate skill, positive outcome expectations, and personally valued outcomes, self-efficacy is hypothesized to influence the choice and direction of student behavior.

### **2.5.1. Self-efficacy and achievement**

Research so far has supported the positive and significant relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and student achievement (Bong, 2001; Chemers, Hu, and Garcia, 2001; Griffin and Griffin, 1998; Lane and Lane, 2001; Lane, Lane and Kyprianou, 2004; Pajares and Miller, 1994; Schunk, 1984, 1987; Wood and Locke, 1987). Multon, Brown and Lent (1991), in their meta-analyses of the relations of self-efficacy beliefs to academic performance and persistence, found positive and statistically significant relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance and persistence

outcomes across a wide variety of subjects, experimental designs, and assessment methods. They reported that self-efficacy beliefs accounted for approximately 14% of the variance in students' academic performance and that the relation of self-efficacy to performance differed according to students' achievement level. Stronger relations were found among low achieving students, which led the researchers to conclude that self-efficacy effects may be particularly facilitative for low-achieving students.

Other studies also suggested that self-efficacy beliefs strongly predicts motivation and performance (Graham and Weiner, 1996; Schunk and Pajares, 2002). In Graham and Weiner (1996)'s study, self-efficacy beliefs predicted academic performance more than the other motivational constructs investigated. Lane and Lane (2001) also found that self-efficacy scores significantly predicted academic performance among a group of postgraduate students. Results of the study indicated that as self-efficacy scores increased, academic performance also improved.

### **2.5.2. The relationship between self-efficacy and attribution**

Bond, Biddle and Ntoumanis. (2001) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and causal attributions in the area of sports and found that golfers whose efficacy increased from pre-to post-competition made more internal and stable attributions for their performance than those whose efficacy level decreased. Lyden, Chaney, Danehower, and Houston (2002) tried to relate self-efficacy, anchoring, and attribution theory by looking at students' GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) scores. Results indicated that self-efficacy is formed through one's attributional analysis of one's past performance. Therefore, Lyden et al. (2002) concluded that attributions have a mediating influence on one's performance and self-efficacy. Stajkovic and Sommer (2000) also looked at the relationship between self-efficacy and causal attributions. They asked participants to rate their ability to give as many uses for an object as they could in one minute. Later on in the study, they used the Causal Dimension Scale, created by Russell (1982) to measure participants' attributions. At the end of the study, individuals high in self-efficacy attributed success to internal factors and failures to external factors. Results also indicated that self-efficacy and causal attributions are directly and reciprocally related, and both attributions and self-efficacy were found to be significantly predictive of performance.

In another study, Ying, Huamao, Ronghuai, Yanhua and Jingjing (2008) examined the relationships between learning motivation, learning strategies, self-efficacy, attribution and learning results of 135 distance learners. They found that there is a relationship between self-efficacy, internal attribution, learning motivation and learning results. Self-efficacy and internal attribution have indirectly positive predictable effects on learning results. Another study by Lyden et al. (2002) provides evidence for reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy, and attributions. Lyden et al. (2002) gave an attributional feedback after an initial performance episode and examined its influence on self-efficacy beliefs. Findings indicated that carefully structured feedback is crucial when discussing an individual's performance, as this feedback may influence the causal attributions that are made.

Results of a study by Sherman (2002) supported the theory that individuals with higher self-efficacy believe their failures are due to lack of effort and that those with lower self-efficacy believe failure is due to lack of ability. Attributions that students make for their failure are important to future self-efficacy and motivation because if students believe they cannot change their ability, then they probably will not want to continue trying to improve.

Bandura (1990) also suggested that there is a reciprocal relationship between causal attributions and self-efficacy expectations. Individuals who have high self-efficacy and experience failure tend to attribute it to lack of effort; whereas individuals with low self efficacy who experience failure attribute it to low ability. In turn, success will increase one's self-efficacy if the individual attributes the outcome to an internal attribution such as ability rather than luck. Failure can decrease one's self-efficacy if the individual attributes the outcome to an internal, stable, uncontrollable factor, such as lack of ability (Chase, 2001).

## **2.6. Language Learning Beliefs**

Foreign language learners hold different beliefs or notions about language learning (Horwitz, 1987). Wenden (1986) stated that learners have metacognitive knowledge or beliefs about foreign language learning and that these beliefs will have influence on how learners approach the task. Language learning beliefs refer to learners'

notions, perceived ideas insights, perspectives, philosophies, opinions, assumptions of the nature of language learning (Horwitz, 1987; Omaggio, 1978; Wenden, 1987). Victori and Lockhart (1995) define these beliefs as "general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing learning and about the nature of language learning".

Research shows that language learning beliefs play a decisive role in language learners' success, failure and experiences (Cotterall, 1999). White (2008) also states that 'beliefs are important because learners hold beliefs to be true and these beliefs then guide how they interpret their experiences and how they behave'. Learners' belief systems "help them to adapt to new environments, to define what is expected of them and to act in accordance with those understandings" (White 1999).

Horwitz (1987, 1988) argued that it is important to understand learner beliefs about language learning in order to understand learner approaches to and satisfaction with language instruction. From research findings, Horwitz (1988) proposed that learners have preconceived notions of who is more likely to succeed in learning a foreign language and how a foreign language should be learned. Some of the most common beliefs are that children are better learners than adults, only a few people are born with the aptitude for learning foreign languages, second language learning is mainly a matter of learning new vocabulary words and translation, or that it takes little effort to learn a foreign language. Based on recall tasks and focus group discussions with both foreign language and ESL teachers and students, she developed these beliefs into a 34 Likert-scale questionnaire, called the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) to identify student beliefs. The BALLI assesses students' beliefs in five major areas: (1) foreign language aptitude; (2) the difficulty of language leaning; (3) the nature of language learning; (4) learning and communication strategies; and (5) motivations and expectations (Horwitz, 1987).

Language learner beliefs have been widely studied in the area of second language acquisition. Mantle-Bromley (1995) examined 208 middle school students' attitudes and beliefs and found that students showed misconceptions regarding learning a second language. One misconception was that students believed that learning a second language was easy. The authors noted that this belief placed them at a

disadvantage in that students who believe that language is easy to learn may become frustrated afterwards with the class or themselves. Another misconception was that students believed that the time needed to acquire a second language was two years. This belief would impact their attitudes about learning a second language and consequently hinder their progress and persistence in language learning. Horwitz (1988) suggests that when beliefs are inaccurate or unrealistic, teachers should help students to get rid themselves of preconceived notions and prejudices that would likely interfere with their language learning.

Mori (1999) explored the structure of language learners' beliefs and the relationship between learner beliefs and achievement. The author found that if students believed their ability was controllable, they had an increased chance of obtaining higher proficiency. Gardner, Masgoret, and Tremblay (1999) conducted a study that looked into language learner's beliefs among other variables. The author viewed how early experiences in second language learning might be related to attitudes and beliefs about language learning.

Park (1995) investigated 332 Korean university EFL students' beliefs about language learning, their language learning strategies, and the relationships among their beliefs, strategy use, and L2 proficiency. Park (1995) found that three variables predicted students TOEFL scores to some extent. One was a belief variable (i.e. beliefs about self-efficacy and social interaction) and two were strategy variables (i.e. independent/interactive strategies and metacognitive strategies). Learners who reported having confidence in learning English and the intention of speaking to others in English tended to use English actively, especially outside the classroom, and to monitor their progress in English carefully. These behaviors were also found to be related to improvement in L2 proficiency.

Some research differs across language learners, particularly in terms of individual differences such as gender, age, nationality, learning style, and personality type (Bernat and Gvozdenko, 2005; Wenden, 1999; Horwitz, 1999; Rifkin, 2000). Bacon and Finneman (1992) found that language learning beliefs can be predicted by gender. Their findings showed that female students reported a higher level of motivation and strategy use in language learning than male students. Siebert (2003) conducted a

study of 64 female and 91 male language learners of mixed ethnic backgrounds and found that male students were more likely than female students to rate their abilities highly. Similarly, male students were more likely to respond that they have a special ability for learning. In another gender study, Tercanlioğlu (2005) found no gender-related differences between male and female pre-service EFL teachers.

Although a wealth of research has been conducted to relate language learning beliefs to different variables, the relationship between language learning beliefs and causal attributions has been rarely, if ever, investigated. The researcher found only one study (Hsieh, 2004) which focused on this relationship. Hsieh (2004) found that students' beliefs about having the aptitude to learn a foreign language correlated positively with attributing the test results to ability and personal attributions. All other items were not significant. Clearly, more research is needed to understand the nature of the associations between language learning beliefs and attributions learners make for their success and failure in learning English.

Although beliefs about language learning are generally thought to be strongly held and difficult to change (Kern, 1995; Weinstein, 1994; Peacock, 2001), some studies reported evidence of change in these beliefs, especially in ESL contexts. In a study of Turkish EFL and ESL learners, Kayaoğlu (1997) examined the differences between these two groups of learners in their assumptions and beliefs about language learning. Kayaoğlu (1997) reported that in contrast to EFL learners, ESL learners appeared to change their beliefs to some extents due to ESL learners' previous experience and new environment. In another study, Amuzie and Winke (2009) asked 70 language learners to reflect on their beliefs prior to arrival and at the time of the questionnaire administration to investigate what beliefs may change due to study abroad. Comparisons between pre- and during study-abroad beliefs showed that learners experienced changes in their beliefs on learner autonomy and the role of the teacher.

These two studies support the view that beliefs may be socially constructed and responsive to context. However, most EFL learners do not have the advantage that ESL learners have, of being able to practice the language in authentic settings, which provides a strong justification for the use of training program in the current study in an EFL setting.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides information about the design, setting, participants, and procedure of the study. This chapter firstly discusses the justification of the combination of qualitative and quantitative research adopted for the study. The chapter then outlines the research methodology of the study, instrumentation, the pilot study, the selection of the subjects for the training, the setting, data collection procedures and data analysis.

#### **3.2. Overall Research Design**

This study is based on the assumptions derived from two theories presented in Chapter 2: Literature Review: Attribution Theory of Achievement Motivation and Self-efficacy Theory. Attribution theory suggests that if students attribute failure to uncontrollable factors such as ability and task difficulty, there is likely to be little or no improvement on similar tasks in the future because they have no control over these factors. Conversely, if they attribute failure to controllable factors such as lack of effort and improper use of strategies, they will be more likely to be successful on similar tasks in the future because they can control these factors (Weiner, 1979, 1985).

Similar assumptions are present in Self-efficacy theory. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to approach tasks with more positive success expectancy, persist longer in the face of difficulty, and put more effort into tasks than are students with low self-efficacy. Self-efficacy beliefs effect causal attributions just as causal attributions effect self-efficacy and both effect motivation (Bandura, 1997). Because internal, stable and controllable attributions have significant positive correlations with students' self-efficacy (Bond et al., 2001; Hsieh, 2004; Hsieh and Schallert, 2008) , the focus in this study is to examine how self-efficacy and maladaptive attributional beliefs can be changed when attributions are retrained, examining pre and post beliefs for attributions for failure and self-efficacy for learning English. The intervention which is the heart of this study was designed to teach adaptive attributions for failure and

increase self-efficacy. Possible changes were also sought in language learning beliefs which have great influence on achievement and motivation (Horwitz, 1987).

As such, this study examines the effectiveness of a training program that includes attributional retraining designed to assist motivationally at-risk, failure-prone EFL students in a higher education setting. A comparison was done of students who attended a training program which included an attributional retraining and those who did not attend. The study was carried out at the School of Basic English, KTU, Turkey. The current study used a mixed methods approach involving a qualitative semi-structured interview and a quantitative pretest and posttest survey. Dörnyei (2007) defines a 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).

This definition parallels so closely Grotjahn’s (1987) definition of ‘pure’ research design. Grotjahn (1987) argues that the quantitative and qualitative distinction is well related to three different aspects of research: the design (whether the study is based on an experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental design); the form of data collected (whether the study yields quantitative or qualitative data); and the type of analysis (whether the data are analyzed statistically or interpretively). According to Grotjahn (1987), a combination of these elements define the two pure research designs, namely, the psychometric approach (experimental design, quantitative data, statistical analysis) and the naturalistic approach (non-experimental design, qualitative data, interpretive analysis).

According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009), mixed methods research represents 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. Clearly, the use of varied data collection methods provides triangulation of findings, allowing researchers to check the validity of one source with another and corroborating findings. Triangulation, in fact, is a geometric concept that is used in astronomy and navigation. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) state that if people wish to locate their position on a map,

A single landmark can only provide the information that they are situated somewhere along a line in a particular direction from that landmark. With two landmarks, however, their exact position can be pinpointed by taking bearings on both landmarks; they are at the point where the two lines cross (as cited in Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p.211)

Patton (2002) said that mixed methods allow researchers to check the validity of their findings across data sources and analysis. He added that such a triangulation is not only useful when it shows consistency across findings, but also when it shows differences. In his Preface to his book, Patton stated:

The classic qualitative-quantitative debate has been largely resolved with recognition that a variety of methodological are needed and credible, that mixed methods can be especially valuable, and that the challenge is to appropriately match methods to questions rather than adhering to some narrow methodological orthodoxy (xxii).

Creswell (2005) and Dörnyei (2007) also advocate the use of mixed methods. Dörnyei (2007) noted, “mixed methods research offers researchers the advantage of being able to choose from the full repertoire of methodological options, producing as a result many different kinds of creative mixes” (168).

In recent years, researchers in language classroom research similarly have employed a range of different methods and procedures. Taking a historical approach and reviewing some illustrative investigations into language acquisition in classroom settings, Nunan and Bailey (2009) concluded that the general trend in language classroom research has been to a broadened acceptance of varied research approaches. Likewise, I based my methodology on a mixed methods approach believing this to be the most appropriate way to approach my research questions.

### 3.3. Methodology of the Current Study

As already indicated, the data gathering procedures of this study are shaped by the nature of the research questions and aim of the study. The current study used a mixed methods approach in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

Major Research Question:

1. What is the effect of a 5-session training program including an attributional retraining on EFL learners' attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement (as measured by GPA) and effort (as measured by class attendance and class participation grade)?

Minor Research Questions:

1. What are the students' attributions for success and failure in language learning?

2. Are there any differences between male and female students and successful and unsuccessful students (as defined by the students themselves) in terms of attributions for success and failure?

3. Do students who are successful and those unsuccessful (as defined by the students themselves) differ on attributions they make on LAAS (Language Achievement Attribution Scale) and CDS II (Causal Dimension Scale)?

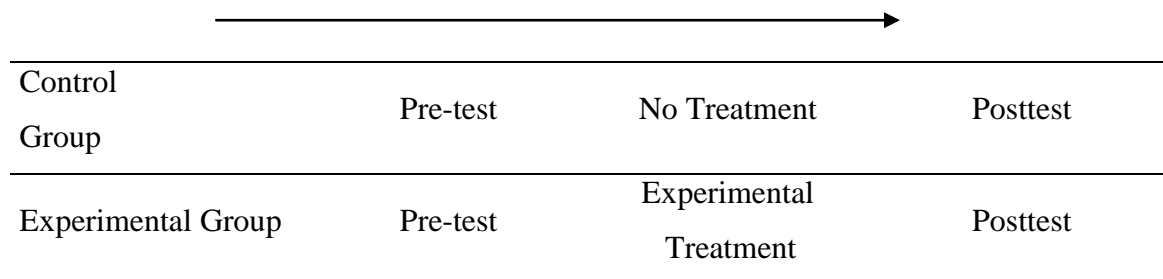
4. What is the relationship between attributions, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs?

5. What factors underlie the learners' perceived attributions for failure in learning English? What factors do EFL students identify as attributing their failure in learning English as a foreign language?

The quantitative side of this study is consisted of a quasi-experimental design (pretest-treatment- posttest). Experimental research provides an answer to the question, "What will happen, if this is done under carefully controlled conditions?" Experiments are used when a cause and effect relationship between independent and dependent

variables are sought. When the independent variable (a treatment) influences the dependent variable, then it may be concluded that the independent variable ‘caused’ the dependent variable. However, to reach such a conclusion requires being aware of the factors that could influence the outcome and removing or controlling them so that a logical cause and effect is accomplished.

Experimental method includes different research designs which are differentiated by several characteristics such as the random assignment of participants to groups, the control of extraneous variables and the number of groups being compared. Of these, true experiments are the strongest designs because of equating the groups through random assignment. Quasi-experimental design provides a less satisfactory degree of control and used when random assignment to experimental and control groups is not feasible. Also the equivalence of the groups is not assured (Best and Kahn, 2006). This study also used a quasi-experimental pre- and post-design due to lack of random assignment of participants to control and experimental groups. Creswell’s (2005) representation could be helpful here to represent the design of the study:



*Figure 3.1.* Pre-and Post-test design

For the qualitative segment of this study, semi-structured interviews and open ended-questions were used. Interviews were conducted with key informants before the treatment and again after the treatment to detect any qualitative changes in beliefs. Table 3.1 contains a timeline of sessions and conditions during pretesting, training and posttesting phases of the study.

Table 3.1.

*Overview of Phases and Measures*

|   | <i>Procedure</i>                         | <i>Participants</i>  | <i>Measures obtained</i>                       |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b><i>Phase I</i></b><br><i>After 1st mid-term exam</i>   | Demographics<br>Questionnaire            | <i>An overall of<br/>602 students</i>                      | <i>Demographics<br/>information</i>            |
|   | Attribution: LAAS                        |  | <i>Attributions to success<br/>and failure</i> |
|   | Attribution: CDS II                      |  |  |
|   | MSLQ                                     |  | <i>Self-Efficacy</i>                           |
|   | Self-Efficacy :<br>Percent<br>Confidence |  | <i>Control for learning<br/>Beliefs</i>        |
|   | BALLI                                    |  | <i>Beliefs about language<br/>learning</i>     |
| <b><i>Phase II</i></b>                                    | <i>Training</i>                          | <i>Experimental<br/>(AR) only</i>                          | <i>Pre-test Interviews</i>                     |
| <b><i>Phase III</i></b><br><i>After 3rd mid-term exam</i> | Attribution: LAAS                        | <i>Control &amp;<br/>Experimental<br/>(No AR &amp; AR)</i> | <i>Attributions to success<br/>and failure</i> |
|   | Attribution: CDS II                      |  |  |
|   | MSLQ                                     |  | <i>Self-Efficacy</i>                           |
|   | Self-Efficacy :<br>Percent<br>Confidence |  | <i>Control for learning<br/>Beliefs</i>        |
|   | BALLI                                    |  | <i>Beliefs about language<br/>learning</i>     |
|   |  |  | <i>Post-Interviews</i>                         |
|   |  |  | <i>Grades, attendance</i>                      |

### **3.4. Setting**

The study was carried out in the department of Basic English, School of Foreign Languages, at Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, Turkey. The department offers a compulsory preparatory program for more than 2000 students from 22 different departments. At the beginning of every academic year, students are required to take a proficiency exam to test whether their English is sufficient enough to begin in their regular courses. According to the results of the proficiency examination, students either pass the test and continue in their own department or are placed as beginners, pre-intermediates or intermediates in the preparatory school. The preparatory program includes a two-year education and covers all language skills: reading and writing, listening and speaking. The objectives of the program, as described in its web site (<http://ydyo.ktu.edu.tr/eng/statutes.php>) are to equip students with the skills of understanding, interpreting, translating texts, and expressing themselves both verbally and non-verbally and to be able to communicate in professional, cultural and social life in the language required by their departments.

### **3.5. The Participants of Phase I**

Participants of Phase I consisted of an overall 602 students from 22 different departments at the department of Basic English, School of Foreign Languages, at Karadeniz Technical University. Detailed descriptive statistics on Phase 1 participants' demographic information is given in Chapter 4: Findings. To summarize shortly here, of the 602 participants, 391 (66, 3%) were male and 199 (33, 7%) were female. 12 participants did not indicate gender. The age range of the participants was from 17 to 31 years of age with a mean age of 19 years ( $SD=1, 32$ ).

The students in the sample consisted primarily of beginner level students. These students were of interest for two reasons: First, it would be likely that many beginner students would receive unsatisfactory grades. So, they are particularly likely to develop maladaptive patterns of causal attributions and suffer motivational and performance deficits. Second, research indicates that AR is especially suitable for first year university students. Thus, participants who failed the proficiency exam at the beginning of the year and were placed as beginners in the preparatory school were included in the study.

### 3.6. Instrumentation

*Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS):* Participants' specific reasons for their success and failure in exams were measured using LAAS developed by Hsieh and Schallert (2008). The LAAS included eight questions in which learners are asked to report the total score they had received on mid-term exams and how satisfied they were with the result. According to whether the students were satisfied with the result, success and failure was determined. Students were then asked to rate the degree to which they believed the result of their test was due to their ability, effort, difficulty of the task, luck, teachers' grading system and strategy (see Appendix 1 for Turkish , Appendix 6 for English). These reasons were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

*Perceived success:* Before measuring students' attributions for perceived success or failure in learning English, their perceptions of success in learning English were assessed using a 10-point Likert scale (1=very unsuccessful, 10= very successful) (see Appendix 2).

*Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II):* Participants' attributions for perceived success or failure in learning English were measured using the CDS-II (McAuley, Duncan, and Russell, 1992). The questionnaire contains 12 items assessing the four subscales of 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 2 for Turkish , Appendix 7 for English). Subscales scores can range from 3 to 15, with higher values representing attributions that are more internal, stable, personally controllable, and externally controllable. After employing 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  $.92$ . The reliabilities for the four subscales obtained in this study were as follows: locus of causality,  $r = .62$  ; stability,  $r = .74$  ; personal control,  $r = .75$  ; external control,  $r = .70$  (see Table 3.2).



***Self-efficacy:*** To measure self-efficacy, *Self-efficacy Scale for Language Learners in Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire* (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, and McKeachie, 1991) was used. This questionnaire measures students' motivational orientations and use of learning strategies by college students. There are 81 items divided into two categories, the motivation and learning strategies. The motivation category is divided again into three subcategories: value, expectancy, and affective component. The 8 items in the expectancy component that target self-efficacy for learning and performance and control of learning beliefs were used in the study (see Appendix 3 for Turkish, Appendix 8 for English). One item that targeted speaking self-efficacy (item 10) was added. Students rated themselves on a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Pintrich et al., reported the Alpha coefficients for subscales in the motivation section, ranging from .62 to .93. The reliability obtained for this study for the subscale of self-efficacy was .87 and for the scale of control for learning beliefs was .71 (see Table 3.2).

***Control of Learning Beliefs:*** Control beliefs for learning are students' beliefs that their efforts will result in positive outcomes and that outcomes depend on the amount of effort they put into studying, in contrast to external factors such as the teacher. If students believe that the effort they put into studying makes a difference in their learning, they should be more likely to study more strategically and effectively (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, and McKeachie, 1993). Control beliefs for learning was measured by using the Control Belief For Learning Subscale of the MSLQ (Pintrich et al., 1993). This subscale consists of 4 items and each item was rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). In the reliability study, the internal consistency alpha coefficient was calculated to be .71 (see Table 3.2).

***Self-efficacy Questionnaire (Percent Confident):*** Another self-efficacy measure was used to assess confidence intervals toward the competences needed to achieve success in the preparatory program (see Appendix 4). Participants were firstly asked to circle either "yes" or "no" according to whether they felt they were able to pass preparatory class. If the answer was "yes", they were asked to rate on a scale from 10% to 100% how certain they were of scoring each given score. If the answer was "no", the students were directed by the instruction to skip to the next page.

*The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)*: Students' beliefs about learning a foreign language were measured using the BALLI. Developed by Horwitz (1987), the 34-item BALLI employs a 5-point Likert-scale format. Learners are asked to read the statements and choose from strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree with statements that fall into five major areas: 1) foreign language aptitude 2) the difficulty of language learning 3) the nature of language learning; 4) learning and communication strategies; and 5) motivations and expectations. The "foreign language aptitude" items (1, 2, 8, 19, and 25) question whether learners believe in the existence of specialized abilities for language learning. The "difficulty of language learning" items (18 and 30) are concerned with learners' beliefs about the general difficulty of learning a foreign language and the specific difficulty of the students' particular target language. The "nature of language learning" items (5, 9, 13, 15, and 27) assess learners' beliefs about how a foreign language is best learned and about the definition of foreign language learning. The "learning and communication strategies" items (3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, and 28) focus on the use of learning and communication strategies and are most directly related learners' actual language learning practices. The "motivations and expectations" items (16, 17, 20, 21, and 24) measure the motivation level of learners in learning a foreign language.

Some items in the BALLI which were very much related to ESL contexts were excluded from the questionnaire. Three more items related to effort were added from a study by Kayaoğlu (1997) since these items were obtained from the fieldwork with a great number of Turkish learners and found to be common among EFL Turkish learners.

The reliability of the BALLI has been tested by previous studies (Kuntz, 1998; Truitt, 1995; Yang, 1992), which reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients, ranging from .61 to .69. The Cronbach alpha coefficients obtained from my study was .66 for 34 items (see Table 3.2). A low internal consistency was expected, as Hsieh (2004) states, because each item in the BALLI measures a discrete dimension of beliefs about language learning. That is, the BALLI does not yield a single composite score.

**Achievement:** Academic achievement was measured by GPA which is the average of the grades the students received in courses grammar, speaking, listening, writing and reading at the end of the academic year.

**Student effort:** Effort was measured by class attendance and class participation grades (CPG) given to students for each course by their instructors.

**Reliability of measures.** Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability tests were conducted for all measures to determine consistency across items for each scale. The results demonstrated that Cronbach's  $\alpha$  score for stability, personal control, external control self efficacy scales are well above the desired minimum of .70, while locus of control scale and BALLI items demonstrated a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  score slightly below .70. Reliability analysis results for the scales are presented in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2.

*Number of Items and reliability of measures*

| Name of measure                    | Number of Items | Coefficient alpha |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Locus of causality                 | 3               | .62               |
| Stability                          | 3               | .74               |
| Personal control                   | 3               | .75               |
| External control                   | 3               | .70               |
| Self-efficacy Items from<br>MSLQ   | 9               | .87               |
| Control of Learning beliefs        | 4               | .71               |
| Beliefs about Language<br>Learning | 34              | .66               |

***Pilot Study of the questionnaires:*** Before administering the questionnaires, a pilot study was done in order to test the reliability, comprehensibility and the general flow of the questionnaires. The participants who took part in the piloting phase were not included in the study.

The respondents of the pilot study were 48 students in two beginner classes who were assumed to possess similar academic background as the intended respondents. Of the 48 students, 38 (79,2 %) were male and 10 (20,8 %) were female. Their age ranged from 17 to 24 years of age with a mean age of 19, 6 years ( $SD=1, 87$ ). Most of the students ( $N=25$ ) were civil engineering students. There were 8 students from Geomatics Engineering, 3 students from Geology Engineering and Geophysics Engineering, 4 students from Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering and Guidance and Psychological Counseling and 1 student from Fisheries Technology Engineering.

The students encountered no difficulty understanding the items on the questionnaire except for the first item in the Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II). The scale had been presented in its original form where responses were made on a 9-point Likert scale; for example, “Is the cause something that reflects an aspect of yourself (9)” or “Is the cause something that reflects an aspect of the situation (1)”. However, the students found this 9-point scale difficult to handle. Most of them were confused and did not understand what was being asked of them. Therefore, the scale was turned to a 5-points scale and applied again.

Next, Cronbach alpha was calculated to assess internal consistency among items. The reliabilities for the four subscales in Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II) obtained in pilot study were as follows: locus of causality,  $r = .44$ ; stability,  $r = .74$ ; personal control,  $r = .71$ ; external control,  $r = .60$ ; self-efficacy=.88 and control for learning beliefs scale=.73. The internal validity of locus scale was found to be low. A “Cronbach’s Alpha if Item deleted” statistics revealed that item 1 detracted from internal consistency. Concluding that the students did not understand ‘what aspect of themselves or the situation’ was being asked, an explanation was added (in brackets) to item 1 clarifying the sentence: motivation/lack of motivation, effort/ lack of effort, ability/ lack of ability, etc.)

It took them 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. No other problems were observed or mentioned during the pilot study and decision was made to administer the questionnaires to the sample without any more changes. A “call for students” (Appendix 9) was also added to the questionnaires in order to encourage the students to

participate to the program. The questionnaires were administered to a total of 602 students from which the sample for treatment was drawn.

### **3.7. Sample Selection for the Training Program**

The research employed purposeful sampling. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), purposeful sampling employs groups and individuals who are most likely to be employed in the process being studied. Purposeful sampling seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in depth and in which elements are chosen based on the purpose of the study. It is a strategy of deliberately selecting a particular group, settings, or individuals, in order to provide important information that cannot be obtained as well from other choices (Maxwell, 1996)

On the basis of the median split procedure on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), 40 students were selected only if they met all of the following criteria: (a) they were not satisfied with their mid-term grades (b) they perceived themselves unsuccessful in learning English (c) they had maladaptive attributional style. As provided by research, AR is considered to be effective for students who are academically at risk. Students experiencing poor performance, or having low perceptions of success and an external locus of control are more likely to benefit from the AR treatments than those who have been successful, perceive themselves as successful, or have an internal locus of control (Haynes et al., 2009; Menec et al., 1994; Ruthig et al., 2004).

40 students were contacted through e-mail and/or by phone and were invited to participate in the study. 17 students appeared in the first session of the program and formed the experimental group. Of the remaining 23 students, 19 could be reached during posttest and thus formed the control group.

### **3.8. Interviews**

Interviews are commonly used in qualitative research. As defined by Cannell and Kahn (1968), an interview is a “two-person conversation, initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and

focused by him on contents specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation. As Patton (1990) states:

The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. The purpose of open-ended interview is not to put things in someone's mind, but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed. We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe (as cited in Best and Kahn, 2006, p.278).

Interviews can be placed on a continuum of formality, ranging from unstructured through semi-structured to structured. An unstructured interview develops by the responses of the interviewee. Hence, the direction of the interview is shaped by the interviewee. The researcher has little or no control over the course of interview. In contrast, in the structured interview, the most formal type, the content and procedures are determined in advance totally by the researcher. The interview is conducted in a rather rigid way, and the interviewer is not allowed to make any changes.

In a semi-structured interview, however, there are no preset questions and the interviewer has a general idea of where the interview is going and what should come out of it. Because the semi-structured nature of the questions allows researchers flexibility in how the required information is obtained, the semi structured interview has found favour with many researchers in educational research. According to Dowsett (as cited in Nunan, 1992), the semi structured interview is:

Quite extraordinary - the interactions are incredibly rich and the data indicate that you can produce extraordinary evidence about life that you don't get in structured interviews or questionnaire methodology – no matter how open ended and qualitative you think your questionnaires are attempting to be. It's not the only qualitative research technique that will produce rich information about social relationships but it does give you access to social relationships in a quite profound way (Dowsett 1986:53).

To gain richer and wider understanding of the students' experiences and to counterbalance the weakness of one method with the strengths of another, interviews with 8 key informants were conducted. The semi-structured interview was considered to

be the most appropriate instrument to be used in present research. The questions which were used in the interviews were devised by the researcher based on the literature review regarding academic failure. Before being used for the interviews, the questions were reviewed by the researcher's supervisor to ensure relevance and clarity. A total of 7 questions were designed to gain broad and in-depth views of students' reasons for failure.

Those students who agreed to participate in the training program were also invited for an interview. A total of 8 students agreed to be interviewed. The other two students agreed to be interviewed but did not keep their appointments. All participants were interviewed in Turkish and each interview took around 30-40 minutes. Interviews were conducted in the researcher's office and were tape recorded. The interview questions were phrased in a general, open-ended way so that each participant could speak naturally and effortlessly about his or her thoughts, beliefs, and experiences, and, hence, were not being led or directly influenced to elicit any particular or contrived response. The initial interviews provided the researcher with a general picture of the participants' beliefs before the intervention experience. These same initial interview questions were asked after the intervention period. The before and after-interview answers were compared and contrasted to determine whether or not any relevant or noteworthy changes took place as a result of the participant's involvement in the treatment..

The interview questions were as follows:

1. Why do you think you are unsuccessful?
2. What are reasons of being successful or unsuccessful in learning English?
3. Do you think that you can be more successful in learning English?
4. If yes, how can you be more successful?
5. If no, why?
6. Have you tried to be more successful before?

### 3.9. AR Protocol

The treatment protocol used for this study was adapted from Haynes et al. (2009). This protocol consisted of 5 components that are administered sequentially over an academic year. The procedure was as follows:

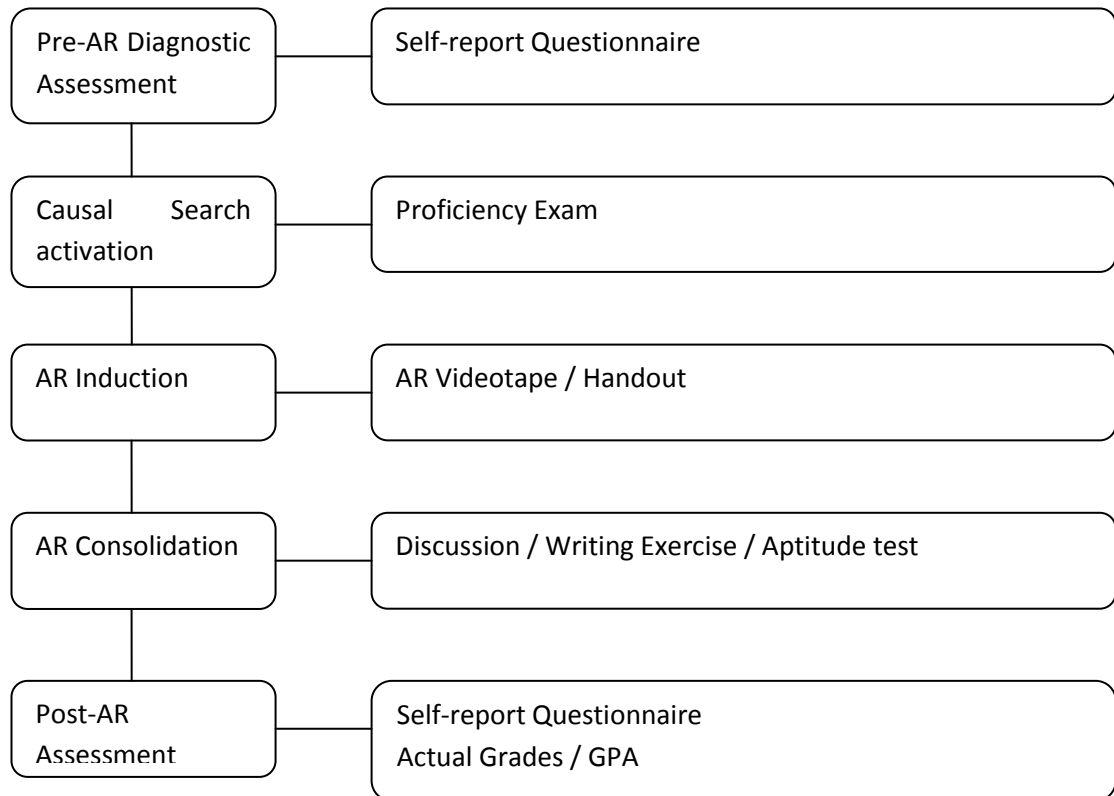


Figure 3.2. Components of Attributional Training. Adapted from Haynes et.al. (2009)

**Pre-Ar Diagnostic Assessment:** This component consists of the identification of those students that who are academically at-risk as candidates for AR. The pre-AR diagnostic assessment component is implemented by having students complete questionnaires that assess a range of variables and learning conditions students have experienced to that point in the academic year.

**The Causal Search Activation:** The causal search is activated by instructing students to rate their perceived success by reflecting on their performance on exams so far. Then students are asked to report attributions for their perceived success or failure.



These initial responses taken from students may also be used as pre-test for assessing the effectiveness of AR.

These first two steps in AR encourage students to think in depth about their academic performance. The timing of the causal search activation is very important. As Haynes et al. (2009) suggest, causal search activation should occur shortly after students receive performance feedback early in the year, and directly before administration of the AR treatment.

**AR Induction:** The AR induction component is the treatment portion of the cognitive intervention. It takes place immediately after causal search activation and is the critical element in the implementation of the treatment.

Ar induction component is designed to encourage students to make adaptive rather than maladaptive attributions for academic performance. The content of AR treatments often highlight the importance of attributing failure to internal, unstable and controllable factors rather than external, stable and uncontrollable factors. As already mentioned, students' adaptive attributions include lack of effort or bad strategy (i.e. internal, unstable and controllable), whereas maladaptive attributions include bad luck, poor teaching or task difficulty (i.e. external, stable and uncontrollable).

Two methods of AR induction are suggested in AR literature. In the first method, the attributional content is presented using an *AR videotape*. The content of the AR videotape usually involves two senior students having a discussion about their first-year experiences. One of the students explains that he performed poorly on a test and started to doubt his academic abilities. He goes on to explain how he realized that he had not studied enough and thus, began to put more effort and his performance improved. The other student shares a similar story of academic failure and discusses how she decided to change her study strategies and how this change improved her academic performance. As such, students describe how academic performance can be affected by causal attributions, and emphasize how a change in causal thinking led to better subsequent performance. After the students' discussion a psychology professor concludes by summarizing the main points and emphasizing the importance of using internal/unstable/controllable attributions for poor academic performance.

In the other AR induction method, the attributional content is presented using an *AR handout*. On an AR handout, there are commonly used maladaptive attributions on the left side of the page, and adaptive ones on the right side of the page (see Appendix 13 for Turkish and Appendix 14 for English). In a typical AR session, students are first asked to read the handout carefully, and to think about their own academic experiences and attributions for academic performance. The handout is then projected onto a screen and explained in detail by giving real life examples and encouraging discussion.

A combination of AR videotape and AR handout has been proved effective as well. In one study, Jesse and Gregory (1987) gave students attributional retraining in both formats. In another study, Noel, Forsyth and Kelly (1987) also successfully used the combination of both videotape and handout formats in attributional retraining. Students improved their exam scores and final course grades after viewing a videotape depicting failure unstable and receiving a handout summarizing the main points of the video.

***AR Consolidation:*** The AR Consolidation component immediately follows the AR induction. The procedures used in this component solidify the attributional content presented in AR induction. Four AR consolidation procedures have been developed: group discussion, aptitude test, writing assignment, and handout.

In *group discussion* procedure, students are organized into small groups and encouraged to discuss their attributions concerning recent academic experiences. The groups think about a time when they experienced a failure, then find the most important reasons for their failure. After discussing the reasons with their group, one of students in the group reports them to the trainer and to the other discussion groups. The trainer reviews the reasons with the students, and identifies which are adaptive (controllable) and which are maladaptive (uncontrollable). For each uncontrollable attribution, the coordinator and students try to find an alternative controllable attribution. This AR procedure has been shown to improve the academic performance of college students who regard themselves as unsuccessful academically (Perry and Struthers, 1994).

In the *aptitude test procedure*, students experience failure immediately following the AR induction. This failure experience allows the students to practice what they have

learned from the AR induction by endorsing controllable attributions to explain their failure. This procedure has been used in some studies to endorse adaptive attributions and improve academic performance (Hall et al., 2004; Menec et al., 1994; Perry and Penner, 1990; Perry et al., 2009).

The *writing assignment procedure* encourages deeper processing of the attributional content through elaboration and helps students maintain the content of treatment through summarization. Students summarize the main points of the videotape in their own words, list important reasons for why students may not perform as well as they could in their courses, and finally describe how the main points of the videotape apply personally to their own lives (see Appendix 15-16). This procedure has been shown to increase students' end-of-year perceptions of control and academic performance (Hall et al., 2004, 2006).

The *emotion-elaboration* writing assignment is based on research by Pennebaker and colleagues involving written emotional expression. Pennebaker (1997) and Pennebaker and Seagal (1999) found that writing about emotional experiences leads to significant improvements in both mental and physical health. Writing about significant life events allows people the opportunity to view past experiences differently and to find meaning and increased understanding of their emotional reactions to the event (Pennebaker and Francis, 1996).

In an AR context, Pennebaker's writing paradigm is used as a potential therapeutic intervention to help students reflect back on past academic failure and interpret it in a more positive way. Students are asked to recall an exam in which their performance was unsatisfactory, and then describe their feelings about the event and how they learned from it. This emotion-writing assignment has been shown to elicit affective responses from students (Haynes et al., 2008), and to increase adaptive attributions, perceived control, and academic performance (Hall et al., 2007; Haynes et al., 2006).

The fourth AR consolidation procedure consists of the *AR handout* described earlier in the AR induction section above. As a consolidation procedure, the AR handout has been combined with the AR videotape induction technique. At the end of

an AR videotape administration, students receive AR handout and are encouraged to keep it readily accessible for studying. This study also used such a design in which AR videotape and AR handout methods are combined.

***Post-AR Assessment:*** The post-AR assessment component occurs some months after the administration of the AR treatment and consists of administering the questionnaires designed to reassess students' attributions, perceived control, motivation, etc., allowing for pre- to post-AR. In addition, objective performance measures (e.g., test scores, final grades, and GPA) and indicators of persistence and attrition (e.g., number of courses completed, number of courses dropped, class attendance and participation) are obtained from course instructors and institutional records as part of the post-AR assessment.

In sum, the AR protocol described above is based on a powerful reinforcement of attributional information, strategic administration of the intervention, and systematic collection of pretreatment and posttreatment measures. Administrations of AR treatments that have followed this multistep sequence have successfully improved the attributions and academic performance of college students (Perry et al., 1993; Perry and Penner, 1990)

### **3.10. Procedure**

This study consisted of 3 phases in which students assigned to the AR group participated in the last two phases of the study and students assigned to the no-AR group participated in only the third phase of the study. Students were assigned to this groups based on their responses to the Phase 1 questionnaires. The students in the control condition (No-AR) did not complete a filler task, in keeping with a study by Perry et.al. (1993) which showed no significant differences between no-AR participants who performed a filler activity and those who did not.

#### **3.10.1. Phase 1**

Phase 1 of study consisted of the Pre-AR Diagnostic Assessment and Causal Search activation part of the AR program. The procedure employed in this phase consisted of videotaped treatment followed by a consolidation exercise intended to

facilitate the cognitive integration of the attributional principles presented in the videotape. It occurred 12 weeks after the 2010-2011 academic year began (in December) conducted in a classroom allocated for the treatment. In fact, the study started later than planned due to a postponement of mid-term exams in November. Phase 1 was timed intentionally to ensure that all the students received the results of all exams-speaking, listening, reading and grammar-(no writing class in the first term) and had an indication of how they were performing in their English classes. The results of the mid-term exams also gave students a good basis upon which to respond to the questionnaires, which helped them engage in causal search. On the class days, after students received the results of mid-term exams, they were given Phase I questionnaires during class. There were 41 beginner classes at the department of Basic English, each having an average of 25 students. Of 41 classes, 28 were visited and 602 students filled out the questionnaires. The questionnaires were written in Turkish to ensure that participants had no difficulty in understanding the items. At the initial introduction of my study, I explained the students that I was conducting a study about the reasons of success and failure in language learning. I also explained that their participation in the study would have no effect on their grades or their positions as students. They were also informed about confidentiality and my responsibility not to allow anyone else to read their responses on the questionnaires. Two questionnaires on attributions, two on self-efficacy and BALLI were given to the students. First, they were asked to evaluate whether they perceived their grade to be a success or failure, then to indicate attributions for their achievement. Measure of success and failure was not determined by student's grades, rather, by students' perception of whether the score was a success or failure. The reason behind this thinking was that getting a 60, for example, may be considered as a failure at the preparatory program, but for students with very low expectations of themselves may view it as a success. Then they were asked to indicate their perceived success in learning English on a 10-point scale, ranging from 1 (very unsuccessful) to 10 (very successful). Next, they rated how much they believed their perceived success in learning English was due to locus of causality, stability, personal control, or external control factors. Next, students were given measures assessing their self-efficacy beliefs, language learning beliefs and demographic information. Demographic questions were left at the end of the questionnaire. The participants were

also asked to write their names so that I could associate their responses with follow-up questionnaires. Participants were assured confidentially in keeping with the way Glikzman, Gardner and Smythe (1982, p.637, as cited in Dörnyei, 2003) promised confidentially to the students who completed their questionnaire:

Your answers to any or all questions will be treated with the strictest confidence. Although we ask for your name on the cover page, we do so only because we must be able to associate your answers to this questionnaire with those of other questionnaires which you will be asked to answer (p.23).

In an effort to encourage participation to the training program, a call for students (see Appendix 10) for the training program was attached at the end of the questionnaire. Participants were thanked for their time and cooperation at the end of questionnaire administration.

### **3.10.2. Phase 2**

This phase of the study included the administration of AR Induction and AR Consolidation part of AR to students in the experimental group and occurred two weeks after Phase 1. The phase consisted of three sessions: AR treatment, a speaking class conducted by a native English teacher and another class conducted by the researcher that aimed to engage students in four skills of writing, reading, speaking and listening.

The research participants completed an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix 11) prior to engaging in the treatment. This consent form outlined the purpose of the study and their rights as participants.

**AR Videotape:** In the first session, a 22-minute videotape based on attribution theory and causal ascription was presented to the students. The videotape started with a 5-minute interview with two students who had successfully completed the English preparation program in School of Foreign Languages in previous years. While AR studies in literature have used scenarios, this study used real life examples of language learning experiences of two students. Hakan (all student names are pseudonyms) , a third year student at Forestry engineering, and Gökay, a third year student at

Geophysics department, discussed some of the reasons for their poor achievement during the first term in the preparatory program and what they subsequently did to improve their performance in the second term. Specifically, they explained, having graduated from regular high school, they knew very little English when they started the preparatory program. They went on explaining how they were initially upset after failing the proficiency exam and mid term exams in the first semester and that they thought the tests were too difficult and that there was no way they could learn English and pass preparatory class. They then explained that after discussing the experience with an instructor, they discovered that many people have difficulties learning English but can improve through practice, leading to success in later exams. They then said that increasing effort allowed them to take control of their academic performance and finally led them to success.

This procedure was thought to provide a vicarious experience for the students. Vicarious experiences, as mentioned before, are situations in which people estimate their capabilities in comparison to others (Palmer, 2006). Vicarious experiences may be fostered by exposing students to peers with similar capabilities who have successfully performed task given. Such observations enhance students' expectation of success. Thus, vicarious experiences are considered to be a powerful tool because observing similar others serves both informational and motivational functions (Bandura, 1997; Schunk and Zimmerman, 2007).

The videotape continued with Assoc.Prof.Dr. Hikmet YAZICI, a psychology and counseling professor, who talked about the importance of understanding the causes of achievement outcomes and how the way in which these events interpreted affects future outcomes. Some of his statements like “Failure is a choice” were subtitled to highlight their importance. The professor encouraged students to attribute poor performance to lack of effort and emphasized that the amount of effort that a person expends is not a stable trait, but is actually controllable. The students watched the video that lasted for 22 minutes. Appendix 17 includes a photograph that shows the students watching the video. The speech, which had been transcribed (see Appendix 12), was given to students to keep in their possession. A sample CD including the professor’s speech was added at the end of the dissertation.

The justification for the use of this videotape again derives from self-efficacy theory by Bandura (1997) who states that social persuasion is one means of raising people's beliefs concerning their operative capabilities. As he noted, although social persuasion itself alone may not create enduring increases in efficacy beliefs, "it is easier to sustain a sense of efficacy, especially when struggling with difficulties, if significant others express faith in one's capabilities than if they convey doubts" (p.101). Although social persuasion alone may be limited in its power to create increases in self-efficacy, it can contribute to successful performance if the heightened appraisal is within realistic bounds (Bandura, 1982).

After the videotape ends, the researcher reviewed the content of these conversations. The students then were given the AR handout. After an explanation of the AR handout by the researcher, students were allowed to study the handout before starting the writing assignment (see Appendices 15 and 16). Then they completed the writing assignment. As Pennebaker and Seagal (1999), students were instructed to write continuously for a period of approximately 15 minutes. Pennebaker and Seagal (1999) found that writing about important personal experiences in an emotional way for as little as 15 minutes over the course of three days brings about improvements in mental and physical health. After the completion of writing assignment, the students were offered drinks and cookies. Then next meeting was scheduled and they were told that they were expected to attend the next session. Because the first session occurred just before the midterm holiday, the students were encouraged to make good use of the holiday time and spend some of their time studying. With this in mind, the students were given the photocopies of a beginner-level short story with a CD (Railway Children by Edith Nesbit) and asked to read and listen to it during midterm holiday. They were also asked to write a short summary of the story. The students were told that at the next sessions we would be covering the story and that they would be asked to speak about it. The aim was engaging the students in four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The students were also given the AR handout and videotape transcription and told to keep in their possession and were subsequently dismissed.

Next session included a speaking class conducted by a native speaking teacher. The class took place in the same classroom setting used in session 1. The teacher



started the class by introducing herself. She then asked the students their names, hometown and favorite places in Trabzon one by one. Next she played two games that allowed the students to practice English. At the end of the lesson, she expressed how good they were and talked about her Turkish learning experience. She emphasized how it seems difficult to learn a language at the beginning but that it could be achieved through effort. She also advised them to create an emotional connection with the language they were learning. Appendix 17 includes some photographs taken during the class. The class lasted approximately one and a half hour. At the end of the lesson students were offered drinks and cookies. The native teacher gave her e-mail address so that students could get in touch with her after the class.

This class conducted by a native teacher served to offer a mastery experience for the students. According to Bandura (1997), the most effective way of creating a strong self-efficacy is through mastery experiences. Such experiences provide the most solid evidence source for assessing whether one has the sufficient skills to succeed. Self-efficacy beliefs develop out of self-appraisals of previous performances. Positive interpretations of previous performance strengthen one's sense of self-efficacy while negative interpretations lower it. When self-efficacy is high, it leads to positive expectations of success in similar tasks.

The last session included another class with the researcher and again served as a mastery experience for the students. At the beginning of the lesson, the students were asked to summarize the story in their own words. Discussion questions like "Why does the children's father go away? Where do you think he goes? Do you think he will return?" were asked in order to keep the conversations going. The students encouraged to speak as much as possible. Then they read the summaries that they had written. Grammar explanations were given whenever needed. An activity worksheet (<http://www.penguinreaders.com/pdf/downloads/pr/activityworksheets/9781405869645.pdf>) was given to them to finish as homework.

### **3.10.2. Phase 3**

The third phase of the study was carried out after the third midterm examinations immediately after the students in both control and treatment groups received their

grades (in May, 2011). The same Phase I questionnaires were administered to the students. After the courses were completed, exam results and final course grades were obtained from course instructors, and cumulative GPAs and attendance were provided from the assessment and evaluation office.

### **3.11. Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS (13.0). Regarding the qualitative data, content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. Following each interview, the tape recordings were transcribed and analyzed through content analysis. Since interviews were carried out in Turkish and all quotations from the interview transcript were translated into Turkish by the researcher. In earlier stage of data analysis, an overall reading of the data was conducted and summary tables were prepared for each interview and participant.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **4. FINDINGS**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a training program on attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement and effort of a group of undergraduate learners of English as a foreign language. A further concern was to see whether students who believed their exam score was a success versus those who viewed their exam score a failure differed on their attributional responses and self-efficacy beliefs. Gender differences were also explored to see whether male and female students differed on whether they attributed successes and failures differently. Relationships between attributions, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs were also sought.

First analyses included the entire sample of 602 students. These analyses provided a picture of the various beliefs that students held, the differences between successful and unsuccessful students, and different beliefs that male and female students held.

#### **4.2. Results of Quantitative Analysis (Pre-test)**

##### **4.2.1. Descriptive analyses of the demographic questionnaire**

The demographic questionnaire provided information about the participants including gender, department, age and high school they have graduated from. Table 4.1 provides the descriptive statistics on Phase 1 participants' demographic information.

As shown in Table 4.1, of the 602 participants, 391 (66, 3%) were male and 199 (33, 7%) were female. 12 participants did not indicate gender. The age range of the participants was from 17 to 31 years of age with a mean age of 19 years ( $SD=1, 32$ ). Of the students who participated in this study, more than half graduated from a general

high school (N=325, %54), followed by students who graduated from Anatolian high school (n=179, 29, 7%).

Table 4.1.

*Sample responding to the Phase I questionnaires*

|    | Department   | Number of Subjects responding to the questionnaire |      |     |      |
|----|--|--|------|-----|------|
|    |  | M  |      | F   |      |
|    |  | N  | %    |     | %    |
| 1  | Electrical-Electronics Engineering                 | 55   | 14,1 | 9   | 4,6  |
| 2  | Mathematics  | 16   | 4,1  | 39  | 19,8 |
| 3  | Geomatics Engineering                              | 39   | 10   | 16  | 8,1  |
| 4  | Chemistry  | 14   | 3,6  | 30  | 15,2 |
| 5  | Civil Engineering                                  | 34   | 8,7  | 4   | 2    |
| 6  | Biology  | 9  | 2,3  | 29  | 14,7 |
| 7  | Physics  | 19   | 4,9  | 14  | 7,1  |
| 8  | Public Relations and Advertising                   | 22   | 5,6  | 12  | 6,1  |
| 9  | Computer Engineering                               | 22   | 5,6  | 9   | 4,6  |
| 10 | Maritime Transportation and Management Engineering | 24   | 6,1  | 1   | 0,5  |
| 11 | Mechanical Engineering                             | 23   | 5,9  | 2   | 1    |
| 12 | Mining Engineering                                 | 20   | 5,1  | 3   | 1,5  |
| 13 | Metallurgy and Material Engineering                | 18   | 4,6  | 7   | 3,6  |
| 14 | Geology Engineering                                | 16   | 4,1  | 5   | 2,5  |
| 15 | Others   | 42   | 10,8 | 19  | 9,6  |
|    | <i>Total</i>                                       | 373  | 100  | 199 | 100  |

In the above table, others include the students from Architecture (N=3), Geophysics Engineering (N=16), Forest Engineering (N=3), Guidance and Psychological Counseling (N=2), Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, Fisheries Technology Engineering, School of Medicine (N=6), and International Relations Department.

#### 4.2.2. Attributions made by successful and unsuccessful students

Before dividing the students into successful and unsuccessful groups, the the means, standard deviations, and the range of scores on the measures of students' attributions and self-efficacy beliefs. Table 4.2 presents the results:

Table 4.2.

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges on Attribution and Self-efficacy Measures at Phase One*

| <i>Name of Measure</i>                    | <i>Mean (SD)</i> | <i>Range</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| locus of Causality                        | 10,88 (2,31)     | 1-15         |
| stability                                 | 11,28 (2,47)     | 1-15         |
| personal Control                          | 7,30 (2,74)      | 1-15         |
| external Control                          | 7,99 (2,87)      | 1-15         |
| ability                                   | 2,62 (1,33)      | 1-5          |
| effort                                    | 3,51 (1,20)      | 1-5          |
| difficulty                                | 2,81 (1,20)      | 1-5          |
| luck                                      | 2,24 (1,30)      | 1-5          |
| teacher                                   | 2,54 (1,20)      | 1-5          |
| strategy                                  | 3,27 (1,12)      | 1-5          |
| MSLQ Self-efficacy Scale                  | 3,57 (0,68)      | 1-5          |
| MSLQ Control of Learning Scale            | 3,85 (0,76)      | 1-5          |
| self-efficacy measure – percent confident | 23,41 (21,32)    | 1-100        |
| N=602                                     |                  |              |

To analyze the data, students were then grouped first by whether they perceived their test scores as a success or failure. That is, they were categorized into successful and unsuccessful groups not based on their test scores but rather on their perceptions of whether their grade was a success or a failure. Table 4.3. shows the number of students who rated themselves successful or unsuccessful on their mid term exams.

Table 4.3.

*Students Ratings of Success and Failure*

|   | <b>N</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------|----------------|
| Number of students who thought they were successful   | 136      | 22,6 %         |
| Number of students who thought they were unsuccessful | 466      | 77,4 %         |
| <i>Total</i>  | 602      | 100 %          |

Further analyses were conducted to see whether students who rated themselves as successful differed from those who rated themselves as unsuccessful in terms of specific attributions. The Mann Whitney U test is used to test the significance of the difference between two populations. It is the nonparametric equivalent of parametric *t*-test. Table 4.4 below presents the results of the Mann Whitney U Test.

Table 4.4.

*Results of the Mann Whitney U test of the difference of in the mean rank of attributions between successful and unsuccessful students.*

|                    | <b>Successful</b> | <b>Unsuccessful</b> | <b>Mean rank</b>           | <b>Z</b> | <b>Asymp. Sig.<br/>(Two-tailed)</b> |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Attribution</b> | M (SD)            | M (SD)              | Successful<br>Unsuccessful |          |                                     |
| Ability            | 3,39 (1,13)       | 2,39 (1,29)         | 400,07<br>270,61           | -7,881   | ,000                                |
| Effort             | 3,72 (1,12)       | 3,45 (1,22)         | 328,38<br>292,99           | -2,210   | ,027                                |
| Difficulty         | 2,45 (1,01)       | 2,92 (1,23)         | 251,75<br>313,56           | -3,788   | ,000                                |
| Luck               | 1,63 (1,04)       | 2,41 (1,32)         | 216,89<br>323,82           | -6,625   | ,000                                |
| Teacher            | 2,11 (1,08)       | 2,66 (1,20)         | 240,36<br>316,91           | -4,688   | ,000                                |
| Strategy           | 3,67 (0,95)       | 3,15 (1,13)         | 361,50<br>281,93           | -4,895   | ,000                                |

Significant differences between successful and unsuccessful students were found in the specific reasons for success and failure. Students in the successful group

attributed their grade to ability (U=) more than did unsuccessful students (M=2, 39, SD=1, 29). This indicates that successful students thought that their high level of ability was the reason for their success, whereas unsuccessful students thought that ability was not the reason for their failure. Similarly, successful students considered effort and strategy as the reasons for their success more than unsuccessful students did. Unsuccessful students tended to rate lack of effort for their failure.

These results are remarkable in that they show a difference in the way successful and unsuccessful students think about the reasons of their success and failure. Results also indicated that the successful students tended to attribute their success to ability and effort more than any other attributions, whereas the unsuccessful students attributed their failure to lack of effort. This type of attribution is theorized to be the best combination and has been the most valued attribution to increase students' self-efficacy in attribution retraining programs (Hsieh, 2004).

Further analyses were conducted to see whether who perceived themselves successful in learning English differed from those who perceived themselves unsuccessful in terms of the dimensions of attributions. Because this study aimed to not only find out the specific reasons students gave for their successes and failures but also the dimensions of the attributions. Weiner (1983) notes that the "dimensions are conceived as invariant, whereas the location of any specific cause on a dimension is variable". Table 4.5 shows the results of the Mann Whitney u Test for attributions of students for their reasons of success and failure in learning English. Test showed significant differences between successful and unsuccessful students in terms of dimensions of attributions. Results showed that successful students endorsed internal and personal attributions more strongly than unsuccessful students.

The results indicated that students who perceive themselves successful in learning English tended to endorse more internal attributions than students who perceive themselves unsuccessful in learning English. Similarly, students in the successful group also tended to attribute their success to personal and stable factors more than those students in the unsuccessful group. No significant reasons were found for external control factors.

Table 4.5.

*Results of the Mann Whitney U test of the difference of in the mean rank of attributions between successful and unsuccessful students.*

|                  | <b>Successful</b> | <b>Unsuccessful</b> | <b>Mean rank</b>           | <b>Z</b> | <b>Asymp. Sig.<br/>(Two-tailed)</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| Attribution      | M (SD)            | M (SD)              | Successful<br>Unsuccessful |          |                                     |
| Locus            | 11,87 (2,02)      | 10,57(2,32)         | 354,99<br>254,93           | -6,372   | 0,00                                |
| Personal control | 12,07 (2,11)      | 11,03 (2,52)        | 340,04<br>272,57           | -4,206   | 0,00                                |
| Stability        | 8,41 (2,38)       | 6,96 (2,76)         | 365,33<br>270,39           | -5,788   | 0,000                               |
| External control | 7,61 (2,59)       | 8,10 (2,94)         | 274,30<br>303,42           | -1,691   | 0,91                                |

These results support the results of LAAS, which identified strong endorsement of ability, effort and strategy attributions by the successful students and task difficulty, luck and teacher attributions by unsuccessful students. The next analysis was done in order to determine the association of specific attributions with dimensions of attributions. Table 4.6 shows the results:

Table 4.6.

*The correlation between specific attributions and their dimensions*

|         |                     | <b>Locus</b> | <b>Stability</b> | <b>Personal</b> | <b>External</b> |
|---------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Ability | Pearson correlation | ,016         | ,242             | -,066           | ,023            |
|         | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,705         | ,000             | ,115            | ,579            |
|         | N                   | 555          | 581              | 573             | 588             |
| Effort  | Pearson correlation | ,167**       | -,058            | ,213**          | -,103*          |
|         | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000         | ,159             | ,000            | ,012            |
|         | N                   | 557          | 583              | 575             | 590             |



Table 4.6 (*continues*)

|            |                     |         |       |         |        |
|------------|---------------------|---------|-------|---------|--------|
| Difficulty | Pearson correlation | -,169** | ,088* | -,219** | ,092*  |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000    | ,033  | ,000    | ,026   |
|            | N                   | 554     | 580   | 572     | 587    |
| Luck       | Pearson correlation | -,144** | ,039  | -,181** | ,099*  |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,001    | ,352  | ,000    | ,016   |
|            | N                   | 554     | 580   | 572     | 587    |
| Teacher    | Pearson correlation | -,190** | ,081  | -,195** | ,301** |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000    | 0,50  | ,000    | ,000   |
|            | N                   | 554     | 580   | 572     | 587    |
| Strategy   | Pearson correlation | ,145**  | -,034 | ,090*   | -,031  |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,001    | ,417  | ,031    | ,452   |
|            | N                   | 555     | 581   | 573     | 588    |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

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

According to Table 4.6 above, there are significant correlations between specific attributions and their dimensions. Task difficulty was found to be positively correlated with stability dimension, indicating that students who attributed their failure or success to task difficulty believed that their success or failure in learning English is stable. Another positive correlation was found between effort and strategy attributions and locus and personal dimensions. That is, students who attribute their failure or success to effort and strategy also attribute their failure and success to more or less internal and personal factors. Effort and strategy were also found negatively correlated with external dimension. External dimension was found to be positively correlated with task difficulty, luck and teacher attributions, meaning that students who attributed their success and failure to difficulty, luck and teacher also attribute their success and failure to external reasons.

#### 4.2.3. Gender differences in attributions

Participants' scores on the LAAS and CDS II were also analyzed by gender. To compare the means of both samples, a t-test was run. From the t-test procedures revealed in Table 4.7, it was found that female students tended to make more strategy attributions ( $t(3,592) = 585, p = .000$ ) than male students. Female students believed that their use of strategies made a difference in their exam results.

Another difference in strategy difference was found in unsuccessful group. The t-test results reported in Table 4.7 indicates that in the unsuccessful group, female students attributed their failure to lack of strategy ( $t(3,428)=450, p =,001$ ) more than female students.

Table 4.7

*T-test results for the males and females' scores on the LAAS.*

| Gender                              |                      |                    |       |     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------|-----|----------------|
|                                     | Females<br>Mean (SD) | Males<br>Mean (SD) | t     | df  | Sig.(2-tailed) |
| Strategy                            | 3,49 (1,02)          | 3,14 (1,15)        | 3,592 | 585 | ,000           |
| Strategy<br>(Unsuccessful<br>Group) | 3,39 (1,03)          | 3,01(1,16)         | 3,428 | 450 | ,001           |

Table 4.7 displays the results for gender differences in attribution scores on LAAS. Another t-test was run to examine gender differences on students' attributions using the CDS II questionnaire. CDS II measured internal, external, stable, and personal attributions. No significant differences were found between how male and female students make attributions in terms of causal dimensions.

#### **4.2.4. Correlations between self-efficacy and attributions**

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the association between perceived success, attributional and self-efficacy beliefs. Correlations for all variables in the study are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8.

*Intercorrelations among attribution ratings and self efficacy beliefs*

|            |                     | <b>Self-Efficacy</b> | <b>Control of learning beliefs</b> |
|------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ability    | Pearson correlation | -,191**              | -,083*                             |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000                 | ,044                               |
|            | N                   | 587                  | 595                                |
| Effort     | Pearson correlation | ,095*                | ,387**                             |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,022                 | ,000                               |
|            | N                   | 589                  | 597                                |
| Difficulty | Pearson correlation | -,226**              | -,152**                            |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000                 | ,000                               |
|            | N                   | 586                  | 594                                |
| Luck       | Pearson correlation | -,064                | -,104*                             |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000                 | ,012                               |
|            | N                   | 586                  | 594                                |
| Teacher    | Pearson correlation | -,132**              | -,171**                            |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,001                 | ,000                               |
|            | N                   | 586                  | 594                                |
| Strategy   | Pearson correlation | ,027                 | ,151**                             |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,508                 | ,000                               |
|            | N                   | 587                  | 595                                |
| Locus      | Pearson correlation | ,354**               | ,399**                             |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000                 | ,000                               |
|            | N                   | 548                  | 554                                |
| Personal   | Pearson correlation | ,367**               | ,417**                             |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000                 | ,000                               |
|            | N                   | 566                  | 573                                |
| External   | Pearson correlation | -,175**              | -,234**                            |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000                 | ,000                               |
|            | N                   | 580                  | 587                                |
| Stability  | Pearson correlation | -,028                | -,104*                             |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,505                 | ,012                               |
|            | N                   | 575                  | 581                                |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

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

Consistent with the literature, self-efficacy scores correlated negatively with external attributions. These findings indicated that students who attributed causes to either internal or personal reasons also had higher self-efficacy than those who made external attributions. The positive correlation between students' self-efficacy and internal/personal attributions support the definition of self-efficacy as an individual's

judgment of his or her capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1977, 1997).

Control of learning beliefs are students' beliefs that their efforts to learn will result in positive outcomes (Pintrich et al., 1991). They also refer to how much the student expects to be able to control the outcomes of the course. Analyses showed that control of learning beliefs are positively correlated with internal and personal attributions (i.e. effort and strategy) and negatively correlated with external and stable attributions (i.e. ability, task difficulty and teacher).

Further analyses were done using the ratings on the LAAS. It was found that self-efficacy scores correlated positively with effort and strategy attributions but negatively with difficulty, luck and teacher factors. Again, those students who took responsibility for their own successes and failures tended also to have higher self-efficacy beliefs.

#### **4.2.5. Relationship between language learners' beliefs and attributions**

In order to determine whether language learners' beliefs are constructed in a similar way to their attributions for success and failure, a Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was run. Attributions were found to be correlated significantly with certain items in subscales of BALLI. Table 4.9 shows the correlations between students' language learning beliefs about foreign language aptitude and attributions. In the table, BALLI-1, BALLI-2 and BALLI-8 stand for the items "Bazı insanların yabancı dil öğrenme konusunda özel bir yetenekleri vardır", "Dil öğrenme konusunda iyi bir hafızaya sahibim." and "Yabancı dil öğrenmeye karşı özel bir yatkınlığım var.", respectively.

Table 4.9.

*Correlations between students' language learning beliefs about foreign language aptitude and attributions*

|                  |                     | BALLI-1          |                    | BALLI-2          |                    | BALLI-8          |                    |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Attributions     |                     | Successful Group | Unsuccessful Group | Successful Group | Unsuccessful Group | Successful Group | Unsuccessful Group |
| Ability          | Pearson correlation | -,015            | ,212**             | ,388**           | -,270**            | ,471**           | -,352**            |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,865             | ,000               | ,000             | ,000               | ,000             | ,000               |
|                  | N                   | 136              | 446                | 134              | 445                | 134              | 445                |
| Effort           | Pearson correlation | ,130             | -,124**            | ,075             | -,018              | ,001             | ,003               |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,132             | ,008               | ,388             | ,702               | ,994             | ,957               |
|                  | N                   | 136              | 448                | 136              | 447                | 134              | 447                |
| Difficulty       | Pearson correlation | -,050            | ,191**             | ,214*            | -,179**            | ,201*            | -,255**            |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,565             | ,000               | ,012             | ,000               | ,020             | ,000               |
|                  | N                   | 136              | 445                | 136              | 444                | 134              | 444                |
| Luck             | Pearson correlation | -,194**          | ,134**             | -,151            | ,031               | -,107            | ,075               |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0,024            | ,005               | ,079             | ,508               | ,219             | ,117               |
|                  | N                   | 136              | 445                | 136              | 444                | 134              | 444                |
| Teacher          | Pearson correlation | -,121            | ,153**             | ,025             | ,011               | ,006             | ,006               |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,159             | ,001               | ,774             | ,819               | ,948             | ,905               |
|                  | N                   | 136              | 445                | 136              | 444                | 134              | 444                |
| Locus            | Pearson correlation | ,041             | -,021              | ,251**           | ,126**             | ,214*            | ,179**             |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,641             | ,666               | ,003             | ,011               | 0,14             | ,000               |
|                  | N                   | 134              | 407                | 134              | 407                | 132              | 406                |
| Stability        | Pearson correlation | -,204*           | ,219**             | ,291**           | -,010              | ,227**           | -,047              |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,017             | ,000               | ,001             | ,843               | ,008             | ,329               |
|                  | N                   | 136              | 432                | 136              | 432                | 134              | 431                |
| Personal Control | Pearson correlation | ,077             | -,084              | ,138             | ,172**             | ,035             | ,192**             |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,371             | ,083               | ,109             | ,000               | ,689             | ,000               |
|                  | N                   | 136              | 424                | 136              | 424                | 134              | 424                |
| External Control | Pearson correlation | -,009            | ,168**             | -,102            | -,078              | -,041            | -,098*             |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,913             | ,000               | ,237             | ,100               | ,641             | ,039               |
|                  | N                   | 135              | 440                | 135              | 440                | 133              | 440                |

The students in the successful group, whatever their reasons are for success, do not believe that some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a foreign language. But the students in the unsuccessful group who attribute their failure to lack of ability, task difficulty and luck feel that some people have *a special ability* to learn languages. Stable and external reasons for being unsuccessful in learning a language also correlate with the belief that some people have *a special ability* to learn languages. While the successful students who endorsed ability, task easiness, internal and stable attributions believe that they a good memory, unsuccessful students who attributed their failure to lack of ability and task difficulty believe that their memory is not good.

It was also found that students' beliefs about having the aptitude to learn a foreign language correlated positively with attributing the test results to ability, task easiness, internal and stable attributions. This result shows that students who believe that they have foreign language learning aptitude will attribute the outcome of their exams to internal factors, giving more credit to themselves for success because they believe they are equipped with the ability. In the unsuccessful group, ability, task difficulty and external reasons were found to correlate negatively with the belief about having the language aptitude. But student who attribute their failure more to internal and personal reasons believe that they have the ability to learn a language.

The belief that English learning is difficult correlated positively with the scale that measured attribution of success or failure to the difficulty of the task and lack of ability. That is, successful students who attribute their success to their ability and task easiness believe that English is an easy language. However, students who think that their failure is due to their lack of ability and to task difficulty think that English is a difficult language. Scores on the beliefs scale indicating the degree to which an individual believes that practice is an important aspect of success in foreign language learning (item 10) correlated positively with attribution ratings of effort. Tables 4.10 and 4.11 present these results. In Hsieh's (2004) study, these correlations shown these tables were not found to be statistically significant.

Table 4.10.

*Correlations between the belief about difficulty of language and ability and task difficulty attributions*

| Attributions    |                     | BALLI item 30: Difficulty of English |                    |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                 |                     | Successful Group                     | Unsuccessful Group |
| Ability         | Pearson correlation | ,140                                 | -,293**            |
|                 | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,104                                 | ,000               |
|                 | N                   | 135                                  | 450                |
| Task Difficulty | Pearson correlation | ,349**                               | -,513**            |
|                 | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000                                 | ,000               |
|                 | N                   | 135                                  | 449                |

Table 4.11.

*Correlations between the belief about practice and effort attributions*

| Attribution |                     | BALLI item 10: It is important to repeat and practice a lot. |                    |
|-------------|---------------------|--|--------------------|
|             |                     | Successful Group   | Unsuccessful Group |
| Effort      | Pearson correlation | ,213*  | -,033              |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,013   | ,492               |
|             | N                   | 135  | 449                |

### 4.3. Results of the Comparisons between Quantitative Pre-and Post Tests

The quantitative analyses showed significant differences between pre and post test scores on attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, control for learning beliefs and effort. No significant differences were found with respect to language learning beliefs and achievement, indicating that the training program did not affect beliefs about language learning and achievement.

#### 4.3.1 Comparison of pre-and post-test scores on attributional beliefs

Paired sample t tests were conducted within both groups to assess changes in participants' beliefs over time. First analyses compared the attributions of students for success and failure. Students' attributions were measured using two scales, the Causal Dimension Scale II (CDS II; McAuley, Duncan, & Russell, 1992) and the Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS; Hsieh and Schallert, 2008). LAAS measures the actual reasons for students' believed success and failure using Weiner's examples of effort, ability, teacher, task difficulty, and luck and the CDS II measures the dimensions of causal attributions (locus, personal control, stability, and external control).

First, a paired sample t-test was conducted on LAAS scores to determine whether scores from the posttest would be statistically more significant than the pretest. Table 4.12 summarizes the results of the paired sample t-test analysis performed on the pretest and posttest measures of LAAS.

Table 4.12.

*Comparison of the Experimental and Control Group's scores on LAAS before and after the training program*

| <i>Pair</i>                         |                     | <i>Paired Differences<br/>Mean (SD)</i> | <i>t</i>      | <i>Sig.<br/>(2-tailed)</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---|---------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Abilitypre-Abilitypost</i>       | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>,176 (1,776)</i>                     | <i>,410</i>   | <i>,687</i>                |
|                                     | <i>Control</i>      | <i>-,052 (1,129)</i>                    | <i>-,203</i>  | <i>,841</i>                |
| <i>Effortpre-Effortpost</i>         | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>-1,176(1,286)</i>                    | <i>-3,771</i> | <i>,002</i>                |
|                                     | <i>Control</i>      | <i>,315(1,293)</i>                      | <i>1,064</i>  | <i>,301</i>                |
| <i>Difficultypre-Difficultypost</i> | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>,823(1,704)</i>                      | <i>1,992</i>  | <i>,064</i>                |
|                                     | <i>Control</i>      | <i>,473(1,020)</i>                      | <i>2,024</i>  | <i>,058</i>                |
| <i>Luckpre-luckpost</i>             | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>,117(1,76)</i>                       | <i>,275</i>   | <i>,787</i>                |
|                                     | <i>Control</i>      | <i>,473(1,645)</i>                      | <i>,1,255</i> | <i>,226</i>                |
| <i>Teacherpre-teacherpost</i>       | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>,941(1,197)</i>                      | <i>3,241</i>  | <i>,005</i>                |
|                                     | <i>Control</i>      | <i>,789(1,618)</i>                      | <i>2,126</i>  | <i>,048</i>                |
| <i>Strategypre-strategypost</i>     | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>-,529(1,504)</i>                     | <i>-1,450</i> | <i>,166</i>                |
|                                     | <i>Control</i>      | <i>-,210(,976)</i>                      | <i>-,940</i>  | <i>,360</i>                |

***P < .05***

The results indicate an improvement in the lack of ability attributions and teacher attributions in the AR (experimental) group as compared with those in the control (No-AR) group, although teacher attributions of the control group also changed to some extent. There was a significant difference in the pre and post scores of effort attributions ( $t(-3,77), p=,002$ ) in the experimental group. Students in the experimental group made more lack of effort attributions, indicating that they saw themselves responsible for their failure in exams. They also made less teacher attributions ( $t(3,24), p=,005$ ) which is external, stable and uncontrollable. No significant changes were found in other attributions.

Next analysis was performed to see if there was a change in perceived success of both groups. As shown in Table 4.13 the paired sample t-test showed no significant differences between pre-and posttest scores in perceived success within groups ( $t(-1,97), p=0,66$  for experimental group,  $t(1,073), p=,297$  for control group), indicating that groups are homogeneous and comparable in terms of their attributions. Students in both groups perceived themselves low with respect to success in learning English with means (SD) of 4,70(1,40) for experimental group and 3,89(,80) for control group. However, the reasons for low perceived success appeared to change in the experimental condition.



Table 4.13. presents the Experimental and Control Group's scores on CDSII before and after the training program.

Table 4.13.

*Comparison of the Experimental and Control Group's scores on perceived success and CDSII before and after the training program*

| <i>Pair</i>  |                     | <i>Paired Differences<br/>Mean (SD)</i> | <i>t</i>      | <i>Sig.<br/>(2-tailed)</i> |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Perceivedsuccesspre-<br/>perceivedsuccesspost</i> | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>-,588(1,227)</i>                     | <i>-1,975</i> | <i>,066</i>                |
|  | <i>Control</i>      | <i>-,421(1,709)</i>                     | <i>-1,073</i> | <i>,297</i>                |
| <i>Locuspre-locuspost</i>                            | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>-1,500 (2,58)</i>                    | <i>-2,324</i> | <i>,035</i>                |
|  | <i>Control</i>      | <i>-,947 (2,54)</i>                     | <i>-1,620</i> | <i>,123</i>                |
| <i>Personalcontrolpre-<br/>personalcontrolpost</i>   | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>-2,529(3,572)</i>                    | <i>-2,919</i> | <i>,010</i>                |
|  | <i>Control</i>      | <i>,105(4,507)</i>                      | <i>,102</i>   | <i>,920</i>                |
| <i>Stabilitypre-Stabilitypost</i>                    | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>-,411(5,303)</i>                     | <i>-,320</i>  | <i>,753</i>                |
|  | <i>Control</i>      | <i>-1,000(4,434)</i>                    | <i>-,983</i>  | <i>,339</i>                |
| <i>Externalcontrolpre-<br/>Externalcontrolpost</i>   | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>1,823(4,246)</i>                     | <i>1,771</i>  | <i>,096</i>                |
|  | <i>Control</i>      | <i>,263(4,147)</i>                      | <i>,277</i>   | <i>,785</i>                |

***P < .05***

The difference between the experimental and control groups was on the locus and personal attributions. Compared to control group, experimental group endorsed more internal ( $t(-2,32), p=,035$ ) and personal ( $t(-2,919), p=,010$ ) attributions after the training program. This result indicates that students in the experimental group being successful in learning English result was an internal and personal factor, and thus were more likely to expect success in the future. No significant changes were found in the control group.

These results support the findings from the previous analysis suggesting an increase in the endorsement of lack of effort attributions (internal and personal) in the experimental group.

### 4.3.2. Comparison of pre-and post-test scores on self-efficacy and control of learning beliefs

From results of the paired sample t-test, it was found that there was a significant difference between experimental group's control of learning beliefs, assessed through the MSLQ, before and after the training program. No significant differences were found with respect to self-efficacy beliefs. The beliefs that changed are listed in the table below.

Table 4.14.

*Comparison of the Experimental and Control Group's scores on MSLQ before and after the training program*

| <i>Pair</i>  |                     | <i>Paired Differences<br/>Mean (SD)</i> | <i>t</i>      | <i>Sig.<br/>(2-tailed)</i> |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------|----------------------------|
| <i>It is my own fault if I can't learn English.</i>                      | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>-,882(1,452)</i>                     | <i>-2,504</i> | <i>0,23</i>                |
|  | <i>Control</i>      | <i>-,157(,958)</i>                      | <i>-,718</i>  | <i>,482</i>                |
| <i>If I don't learn English, it is because I didn't try hard enough.</i> | <i>Experimental</i> | <i>-,823(1,236)</i>                     | <i>-2,746</i> | <i>0,14</i>                |
|  | <i>Control</i>      | <i>-,157(1,25)</i>                      | <i>,547</i>   | <i>,591</i>                |

*P < .05*

With regard to the first item in Table 4.14, the mean score on the pretest for the experimental group was 2,55 (SD = 1,20) and the posttest was 3,05 (SD = 1,09). The mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -,882,  $t(-2,504)$ ,  $p = 0,23$  (two tailed). As for the second item, the mean score on the pretest for the experimental group was 2,58 (SD = 1,18) and the posttest was 3,27 (SD = 1,16). The mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -,823  $t(-2,746)$ ,  $p = 0,14$  (two tailed).

These results indicated that after the training program, students in the experimental group started to take more responsibility for their failure and believed that they could learn the course material only if they tried hard enough and that it is their responsibility if they failed to learn English.

### 4.3.3 Comparison of pre-and post-test scores on effort

Students' effort was operationalized as the number of classes attended and classroom participation grades (CPG) given by instructors in speaking, listening,

reading, grammar and writing courses. An independent samples t-test was run to see if there was a significant difference between experimental and control groups in terms of class attendance and CPG. Results indicated a significant difference for class attendance but no significant differences for CPGs. Table 4.15 displays the results:

Table 4.15.

*Means and Independent samples t-test results for Experimental and Control Group's scores on Class Attendance.*

|                   | <i>Experimental Group</i> | <i>Control Group</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>Sig (2-tailed)</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|
|                   | <i>Mean (SD)</i>          | <i>Mean (SD)</i>     |          |           |                       |
| <i>Attendance</i> | 227,64(28,34)             | 172,31 (84,18)       | 2,699    | 22,446    | ,013                  |

*P < .05*

As shown in Table 4.15, there was a significant difference in the number of classes attended by experimental and control groups ( $t(2,699)$ ,  $p=0,13$ ). The students in the treatment group attended more classes than the students in the control group. Clearly, controllable and unstable causal attributions for failure are functional because they foster academic engagement as reflected in class attendance Perry et al. (2008).

#### **4.4. Results of Qualitative Analysis (Pre-test)**

This section presents the qualitative analysis of pre and post interviews with 8 participants. The purpose was to detect any changes in the informants' perceived self-efficacy and attributional tendencies. Of the the 8 interviewees, 3 were female and 4 were male, studying at different departments (2 from Computer Engineering, 2 from Public Relations and Advertising, 1 from Maritime transportation and Management Engineering, 1 from Biology, 1 from Physics and 1 from Geology Engineering). Each participant was asked a series of questions which were open-ended and allowed for free discussion at many points during each of the interview. The pre-intervention interviews were conducted during the last week of November 2010. The post-intervention interviews were conducted in May 2011.

#### 4.4.1. Qualitative analysis of pre-test interviews

Table 4.16 shows participants's attributions for failure and classifications of those attributions according to their dimensions:

Table 4.16.

*Participants' attributions for doing poorly in learning English(pre-interview)*

| Participants | Attributions for failure         | Locus    | Stability | Controllability |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Inf.01       | Lack of ability                  | Internal | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
|              | Ineffective language instruction | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.02       | Lack of ability                  | Internal | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
|              | Lack of interest                 | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
| Inf.03       | Lack of ability                  | Internal | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
|              | Dislike for English              | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
| Inf.04       | Lack of ability                  | Internal | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
|              | Difficulty of English            | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.05       | Dislike for English              | Internal | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
|              | Lack of interest                 | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
|              | Teachers                         | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.06       | Lack of ability                  | Internal | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.07       | Difficulty of English            | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
|              | Lack of opportunities            | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.08       | Lack of opportunities            | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |

The participants perceived their grades in English as failures and reported that they were not satisfied with the grades they had received. Most attributions for failure

mentioned by participants were uncontrollable. One attribution stated by participants for failure in learning English was lack of ability. These participants felt that their failures were due to limitation in their abilities, including poor memory, not understanding lessons, not remembering what they had studied before, not being good at English. The students told about how they became overwhelmed and perform poorly at the outset. They all became discouraged after the exams. Inf.03 explains how she gave up trying after a failure as a result of attribution to lack of ability:

Initially, everything was good. I was studying. I was so keen on learning English. I bought different notebooks for each class. I was bringing all my books to class. I even bought an English grammar book in Turkish in case I didn't understand what is taught in class. But I was discouraged soon after I learned my grammar score. It was 18. I thought no matter how hard I had studied, it never seemed to be good enough. I'm still studying but not as much as previously. I don't have the ability. This is what I exactly think.

This can also be illuminated in the following response by Inf.06:

I was disappointed. I made a great effort but that effort resulted in failure. I fortunately got nowhere. Some students are getting really high grades on grammar exam. I wonder how they do it. I am sometimes questioning my ability.

Inf.04 attributed her failure to her poor memory. Her statements are a good example for the relationship between attributions and language learning beliefs:

I think I have no ability to learn languages. I am memorizing every word but forgetting too soon. That's why I 'm not getting succeed.

She goes on to say:

As I said before, there is such a thing as memory. You study one night before an exam, memorize everything for the exam, write them down on your exam paper and pass the class! You see this is not success.

Similar ideas were stated by Inf.02, too:

I am bad at memorizing. If I memorize all the material and then take the exam, I'm sure I will be successful. But memorizing is not learning. Is it possible to learn without memorizing? If it is, I don't know how.

Another attribution for failure that prevailed among the participants in this study was school-related factors including ineffective language instruction, inappropriate assessment and teachers which are external, stable and uncontrollable attributions.

Inf.05 said explanations about teachers also involved personal conflicts between teacher and student. He said he failed because:

I had a quarrel with the speaking teacher in class over the grades. I said that the grades are not fair. The teacher got very angry. The quarrel turned out to be a running battle. Finally, I gave up when I got to know that a teacher can not be beaten. I sat down saying 'OK, you're right'.

Inf.06 also mentioned how a conflict with a teacher negatively contributed to her performance:

For example, the behaviors of the teacher are very important for me. If a teacher behaves cold and indifferent to students, I become uninterested in his class. If you're not interested in class, you won't be able to succeed. I had a quarrel with a teacher here. After that, I took a dislike to English.

Students seemed mostly to blame teachers when they failed an exam in which they expected to do well. That is, they explained their failure as being the fault of the teachers or ineffective language instruction. Inf.01 shared her disappointment with the education given in the preparatory program, which she thought was the reason for her failure:

The reason is I didn't find what I expected here. I was initially so willing to learn English. But I don't know. Maybe the teachers are fast in teaching. I just can't keep up with the teachers. For example, the teacher is writing a few words on the board and explaining them in English

which I can't understand. But the class goes on and on. The result is when the teacher asks questions about that subject I dare not look at him in case he calls me. This is the reason why I am not successful in reading..

Inf.03 presented a different perspective on teacher factor. According to her, negative experiences she had in high school were responsible for an emotional block she seems to have developed to learn English.

I have a dislike for English that has been constantly growing since high school. I was graduated from Anatolian High school. We had 10 class hours of English a week. I didn't have a good relationship with the English teacher. That's why I failed English. Because I failed English, I failed the class. This made me hate English.

Dislike for English was an attribution mentioned by other students, too. There appeared to be a relationship between students' success and how English appealed to them as a discipline. As a graduate of a regular high school, Inf.05 developed a dislike for of English. His dislike of the discipline is evidenced in the following quote:

Why do I not like English? I think English is *too exaggerated in Turkey*. *English* should be offered *as a selective course*. What if I wanted to learn another language? You can't! Because English is an international language! Why should I learn a language of a nation which colonizes another!

Lack of opportunities to practice was an attribution mentioned by three students. It was seen as a constraint to their learning English. In fact, this is a typical complaint in an EFL context, where opportunities to speak English is confined to the classroom. As pointed by Inf.08's statement, most schools fail to prepare students to use English in-real situations.

What makes it worse is that we have no opportunity to use English. In class, teachers rarely speak English. I've no idea how to seek and create opportunities to use the language.

They pointed out that they were unable to use English to communicate in real situations as they were weak in speaking skills and in putting their knowledge of English into practice. Inf.07 expressed: “When having to speak in class suddenly, I became stunned and can’t speak out at that moment. I couldn’t even understand the teacher says to me!”

Another attribution emerged from participants’ accounts was the difficulty of English language. Inf.07 says:

English is a very difficult language. For example, Turkish is an easy language because it is read as it is written. French is much more difficult. English is difficult because it isn’t read as it is written. This is the most difficult thing in English. Maybe I can achieve this with a huge effort. If a person doesn’t have an ability to learn a language, he/she has to put in a lot of effort and be so willing to do it. But I’m not.

The quotation above is another indication that attributions may be closely associated with learners’ beliefs about language learning.

In sum, attributions for failure were mostly external ones, indicating that these students tended to see outside factors as more in control of their learning than themselves. All the students perceived themselves as a failure in English language learning. Inf.06 seemed helpless to do anything about it:

Who should I ask for help? I don’t know. I need someone to tell me what to do when I go home. I need someone to wind me up. I need someone to encourage me. Someone with patience. I don’t want to give up again.

The ways learners view these failures may determine grounds for future action in terms of persistence, investment of more time and effort. For this reason, investigations on attributions are of fundamental importance. Tse (2000) pointed out that “attributions of success and failure in FL classrooms have implications for student decisions whether to continue language study” (p.72).



#### 4.4.2. Qualitative analysis of post-test interviews

Students' prior attributions for failure were explored in the pre-interviews; the same students were interviewed a second time after the training. All students perceived themselves failure again but the reasons for failure given were different. Table 4.17 shows students' attributions for failure and their classification. Compared to Table 4.16, participants' reported attributions for failure in learning English were notably different after the treatment. The exception was Inf.06, who reported that he had inability to learn English.

Table 4.17.

*Participants' attributions for doing poorly in learning English (post-test interview)*

| Participants | Attributions for failure | Locus    | Stability | Controllability |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Inf.01       | Ineffective instruction  | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
|              | Lack of effort           | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
| Inf.02       | Lack of effort           | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
|              | Passing criteria         | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.03       | Laziness                 | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
|              | Lack of effort           | Internal | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.04       | Lack of strategy         | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
|              | Passing criteria         | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.05       | Lack of interest         | Internal | Stable    | Controllable    |
|              | Lack of effort           | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
|              | Passing criteria         | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.06       | Lack of ability          | Internal | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
| Inf.07       | Lack of strategy         | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
| Inf.08       | Lack of interest         | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |
|              | Passing criteria         | External | Stable    | Uncontrollable  |
|              | Lack of effort           | Internal | Unstable  | Controllable    |

The attribution "lack of effort" was mentioned by 5 participants. Not studying for exams and not practicing English enough were what informants believed caused

their failure. But students had another reason for not studying and for not wanting to put effort into learning English: passing criteria for preparatory class. Five of the students reported that they gave up studying because the passing grade was too high. They complained about how hard they have to work for a passing grade. Inf. 02 said “I gave up studying this semester. Because I know I will fail. How can I get a 70 %? To get a passing score of 70%, I need to score at least 90% on the midterm exams! It is impossible.” Inf.05 shared a similar concern: “I never studied this term. It takes too much time and I know I won’t get a passing score.”

Inf. 08 also complained that 70% is too high a standard to meet. She stated that:

It (passing the preparatory class) is very difficult. You need to keep your second semester GPA over 70% so that you can pass the final exam. I think the passing score is too high. If the passing score were 50%, I believe I would pass. I would just study harder.

The above excerpt demonstrates that Inf.08 had an internal attributional profile and believed that outcomes are linked to effort. This is an indication of a healthy attributional profile (Graham and Weiner, 1996; Weiner, 1986; Zimmerman, 2000). As mentioned before, the literature on attribution retraining identifies effort attributions as a means for correcting maladaptive attributions.

Inf.01 also felt her failure was due to lack of effort: “Learning English is different than learning mathematics. Most of the time I don’t feel like studying. What I know is what I learned at school. At home... No, I don’t study at all.”

In sum, students believed that learning English would take effort. They also recognized that success is linked to effort but they did not invest the required effort. The passing criteria for the final exam constituted an impediment to their achievement striving and school engagement. However, they believed that they can learn English outside of school, for example, going to private courses. Inf.02 says “I will learn English sooner or later. If I study harder then I will succeed. I have what it takes to succeed. Next year, I will go to a private course. I think that studying English at a private course is much better than studying at the school. Because you won’t have any concerns about an exam.” Inf.01 was also sure of herself: “I know I will fail but I made

a good start here. The semester passed. But I know I can learn English through my own effort. I can even learn a second language. Maybe Spanish.”

‘Lack of strategy’ was an attribution mentioned by two students (Inf.04 and Inf.07). Inf.07 mentioned how the use of wrong strategies caused his failure:

I don’t feel dejected any more this semester. Looking back, I feel that I was unsuccessful because I made use of wrong study strategies. I know which strategies work best in science and maths but I don’t know any in English. It was a kind of trial and error thing. I have tried some methods but lost a lot of time.

He also added how the intervention helped him regulate his studies on his own:

Remember you gave us a story book? You told us to work on it over the midterm break. We also worked on it in the classroom. Studying it helped me a lot. It aroused a feeling in me that I can do. Just when I was beginning to learn, the school finished. But because that feeling aroused in me, I will go on studying. (Inf.07)

Inf.04 also seemed to recognize the value of using the right strategies: “English is still difficult for me. But if I knew the right methods, I could learn easily. I think this can be done practicing a lot.”

Participants also shared their impressions about the training. Inf.03 talked about how much he enjoyed the speaking class with the native teacher. She said:

It was really fun. I haven’t had such a fun since the beginning the year. Her attitudes and sincerety affected me positively. I was very relaxed and felt very good. I thought I knew everything about English. I am not afraid of making mistakes any more. I don’t care I don't care. Let 'em laugh at me.

They viewed it as a step in their learning, such as Inf.08:

I have never had a native teacher. It was just wonderful. I could understand most of what she said. I felt very successful. When the class finished; I thought I could do it. I thought I could try. It was an important step as it gave me the confidence I needed.

Another participant identified himself with the native teacher: “She was the exact opposite of us. That is, she knew very little English. We completed each other. She gave us the confidence to learn English. Forever Emily! (Inf.02)

Inf.06, though he found himself unsuccessful in the class, explains how he was positively affected by the class: “This experience was a real life experience rather than a class. Speaking to someone whose native language is English and seeing how she is reflecting her language encouraged me to learn.”

Inf.06 was the only student who attributed his failure to lack of ability was still exhibiting the symptoms of learned helplessness. He desperately wanted to succeed but still thought he had the inability to do it: “I really need to feel that I can succeed. I need to put aside the feeling that I’m always making mistakes. But it’s beyond my power to do that.”

Lack of interest was another internal, controllable attribution that informants reported. Disinterest was a recurrent attribution in Inf.05’s statements. He described his disinterest in learning English in these words: “If I force myself to study, I can learn English. But I don’t want to”.

Overall, participants’ reported attributions for failure in learning English were notably different after the treatment. These findings from the analyses of the qualitative data collected through the interviews with 8 key informants, to a very great extent, were found to be consistent with the findings from questionnaires used in quantitative data collection.

## CHAPTER V

### 5. DISCUSSION

#### 5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the most important findings of this study will be described and evaluated based on the literature. Finally, implications for research and education practice will be discussed.

#### 5.2. Summary of the Findings

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of a training program that included attributional retraining in a foreign language learning environment for undergraduate learners of English as a foreign language. The program was intended to affect students' maladaptive attributional beliefs about the causes of failure in language learning, their low self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement and effort. It was hypothesized that motivationally at-risk students completing this training program would make more attributions to internal/unstable/controllable factors (i.e. effort), have higher self-efficacy, and improve classroom performance and effort.

A further concern was to investigate the explanations of EFL students of success and failure, assigning them to successful and unsuccessful groups based on their satisfaction ratings for the grades they had received on mid term exam. Gender was also explored to see whether male and female students differed on their attributions for success and failure. Another concern was to examine the nature of the relationship between self-efficacy, attributions for success and failure and language learning beliefs.

##### 5.2.1. Attributions in foreign language learning

Attributions have been researched in various areas from psychology to sports. However, it is a relatively unexplored area in foreign language learning (Hsieh, 2004). Dornyei (2001) suggested that because of the generally high frequency of language

learning failure worldwide, attributional processes are assumed to play an important role in language studies, but that investigation with much further scope is needed.

This study contributed to this line of research by exploring the attributions of a group of undergraduate EFL students for their success and failure in learning English. Consistent with past findings (Hsieh, 2004; Hsieh and Schallert, 2008), students' attributions in language learning differed depending on whether achievement outcome was judged to be a success or a failure. Significant differences between successful and unsuccessful students were found in the specific reasons for success and failure. Students in the successful group attributed their grade to ability more than did unsuccessful students. This indicates that successful students thought that their high level of ability was the reason for their success, whereas unsuccessful students thought that ability was not the reason for their failure. Similarly, successful students considered effort and strategy as the reasons for their success more than unsuccessful students did. Unsuccessful students tended to rate lack of effort for their failure.

Another finding that supported the above observations was the similar patterns found in the dimensions of attributions. This study aimed to not only find out the specific reasons students gave for their successes and failures but also the dimensions of the attributions. Results showed that successful students endorsed more internal and personal attributions (effort and strategy) more strongly than unsuccessful students.

Thus, it may be concluded that language learners who participated in first phase of the study had "healthy attributions." That is, these language learners made internal, stable attributions, such as attributing success to ability, and internal, unstable attributions, such as to lack of effort, for failure, something over which they had control. These language learners seemed to have positive beliefs that they could succeed with more effort because they viewed failure as unstable.

Gender difference was also examined. Past research suggests inconsistent findings regarding gender difference in attributions. Nicholls (1975) found that boys more often attribute their successes to ability and their failures to lack of effort. Girls often attribute their successes to luck (Reis, 1987) or to effort (Rimm, 1991) and their failures to lack of ability (Nicholls, 1975; Reis, 1987). Stipek and Gralinski (1991) also

found that girls were less likely than boys to attribute success to high ability and failure to luck, and were more likely to attribute failure to low ability. Campbell and Henry (1999) found no difference in general attributional style by gender but the results showed that there were gender differences in specific explanations for performance in a course. Although effort was the most stated reason for course performance, women mentioned effort significantly more often than men. Women were less likely to attribute their performance in the course to ability than were men.

To expand on the investigation of students' attributions for their achievement and to help clarify prior inconsistent findings, this study also looked at gender differences in the attributions made by foreign language students. It was found that female students made both effort and strategy attributions while male students tended to attribute their success or failure to effort. Both are internal and personal "positive" attributions for success and therefore do not indicate a strong difference between men and women.

### **5.2.2. Important correlations**

In this study, attributional beliefs were related to self-efficacy beliefs. Research on the relationship between self-efficacy and attribution have been investigated in areas such as mathematics (Shehni Yailagh, Lloyd and Walsh, 2009), distance learning (Wang, Peng, Huang, Hou and Wang, 2008), general academic performance (Adam, Schmidt and Aaron, 2008; Lane & Lane, 2001; Lynden, Chaney, Danehower, and Houston, 2002; Sherman, 2002) and sports (Chase, 2001; Bond, Biddle and Ntoumanis, 2001) In general, results have indicated that individuals with low self-efficacy were more likely to attribute their failure to lack of ability than were individuals with high self-efficacy. In addition, Bond et al. (2001) reported that individuals whose self-efficacy increased made significantly more stable and internal attributions than those whose self-efficacy decreased over time.

Consistent with this literature, self-efficacy scores correlated negatively with external attributions. The findings indicated that students who attributed causes to either internal or personal reasons also had higher self-efficacy than those who made external attributions. The positive correlation between students' self-efficacy and

internal/personal attributions support the definition of self-efficacy as an individual's judgment of his or her capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1977, 1997). That is, when students attribute a successful outcome to internal and stable factors, they are attributing success to high ability, meaning that they have confidence that they have the ability to successfully complete future tasks. When students attribute success to external factors, they are attributing the outcome to something out of their control, which may not be a good indicator for their confidence about future success.

Control of learning beliefs were also found to be positively correlated with internal and personal attributions (i.e. effort and strategy) and negatively correlated with external and stable attributions (i.e. ability, task difficulty and teacher). In terms of specific attributions, it was found that self-efficacy scores correlated positively with effort and strategy attributions but negatively with difficulty, luck and teacher factors. Again, those students who took responsibility for their own successes and failures tended also to have higher self-efficacy beliefs.

In order to determine whether language learners' beliefs are constructed in a similar way to their attributions for success and failure, the relationship between language learning beliefs and attributions were examined. Important correlations were found. The belief that some people have a special ability to learn languages positively correlated with stable and external reasons (lack of ability and task difficulty). It was also found that students' beliefs about having the aptitude to learn a foreign language correlated positively with attributing the test results to ability and internal attributions giving more credit to themselves for success because they believe they are equipped with the ability. Similar findings were also reported by Hsieh (2004).

The belief that English learning is difficult correlated positively with the scale that measured attribution of success or failure to the difficulty of the task and lack of ability. That is, successful students who attribute their success to their ability and task easiness believe that English is an easy language. However, students who think that their failure is due to their lack of ability and to task difficulty think that English is a difficult language. Scores on the beliefs scale indicating the degree to which an individual believes that practice is an important aspect of success in foreign language learning



(item 10) correlated positively with attribution ratings of effort. In Hsieh's (2004) study, were not found to be statistically significant.

### **5.2.3. Comparison of pre-and post-test results**

The major concern in this study was to test the effectiveness of a training program on attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement and student effort. A comparison was done of students who attended a training program which included an attributional retraining and those who did not attend. The quantitative analyses showed significant differences between pre and post test scores on attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, control for learning beliefs and effort. No significant differences were found with respect to language learning beliefs and achievement, indicating that the training program did not affect beliefs about language learning and achievement.

Students when confronted with failure may develop self defeating maladaptive attributions (i.e. attributions to external, stable, and uncontrollable causes. In foreign language education we can sometimes encounter students who think that there is a stable cause for failing an exam or for failure in learning English. Very often we hear students saying "No matter how hard I study, I will not be able to learn a foreign language". Or they may believe that foreign language learning is difficult and they do not have the ability to do it. These students may in advance expect to fail on the exams and will not spend much time studying. Thus, many students can develop maladaptive attributions for academic failure (i.e. lack of ability) which leads to less motivation, poor performance and low-self efficacy.

It has been suggested that attribution retraining can provide remedial assistance for students by changing maladaptive beliefs to more adaptive ones. AR is a psychotherapeutic treatment designed to modify students' causal explanations for failure, and thereby bolster perceived control, motivation, and subsequent achievement (Haynes, Perry, Stupnisky and Daniels, 2009). It aims to replace maladaptive and self-defeating attributions with more adaptive and functional ones encouraging to make internal/stable/controllable attributions for academic failure (i.e. lack of effort, poor strategy use) in place of internal/stable/uncontrollable attributions (i.e.lack of ability).

Through these changes, the program is intended to enhance self-efficacy, motivation and subsequent achievement.

The training program was expected to enhance internal, unstable and controllable attributions for failure (i.e. lack of effort). The training program induced a more adaptive attributional profile in experimental group. Pre and posttest results showed an increase in the “lack of effort” attributions and a decrease in teacher attributions in the experimental group as compared with those in the control (No-AR) group, although teacher attributions of the control group also changed to some extent. Students in the experimental group made more internal and personal attributions (i.e. lack of effort), indicating that they saw themselves responsible for their failure in exams. They also made less teacher attributions which is external, stable and uncontrollable.

These findings are analogous to research with college students in which AR encouraged college students to endorse more controllable attributions and de-emphasize uncontrollable attributions in explaining achievement outcomes (Hall et al., 2004; Haynes et al., 2006; Perry et al, 2010; Ruthig et al. 2003; Wilson and Linville, 1982).

In parallel to this finding, the training program resulted in significant improvements in control of learning beliefs. The training had positive effects on such beliefs as “*It is my own fault if I can’t learn English*” and “*If I don’t learn English, it is because I didn’t try hard enough.*” Students in the experimental group started to take more responsibility for their failure and believed that they could learn the course material only if they tried hard enough and that it is their responsibility if they failed to learn English.

Surprisingly, the training program had no effect on self-efficacy beliefs. This may be because the self-efficacy scale had items pertaining to their beliefs about being successful in prep class. The students in both groups had very little confidence in their competences needed to achieve success in the preparatory program (means (SD)= 23,52(36,90) and 7,36 (23,53) for experimental and control groups, respectively). The students did not feel self-efficacious because they did not expect to pass the preparatory class. Schunk and Pajares (2001) points out that outcome expectations, or the

consequences expected from one's actions, are related to self-efficacy beliefs but they are not synonymous. Students believed that they had the capability to learn English but they also believed that despite their perceived capability they will not pass preparatory class because the passing score is too high to achieve.

This is also the reason for lack of effort attributions stated by informants in the posttest interviews. Before the treatment, pre-interviews indicated that attributions of students for failure were mostly external ones, indicating that these students tended to see some external, stable or uncontrollable factors as more in control of their learning than themselves. Post-test interviews revealed more internal, unstable and controllable reasons for failure. The students expressed that they gave up studying because they did not have any hope of passing the class. They complained that 70% is too high a standard to meet and there is no way that they get a 70 %. The implementation of attributional training in such a setting is limited by this condition because its effectiveness is inherently tied to students being able to see the connection between success and effort without being confronted with such an anxiety provoking situation. The results may have been different or more significant if there were not such a boundary condition.

Controllable and unstable causal attributions for failure are functional because they foster academic engagement as reflected in class attendance (Perry et al.2008) This study also found a significant difference in the number of classes attended by experimental and control groups ( $t(2,699)$ ,  $p=0,13$ ). The students in the treatment group attended more classes than the students in the control group. No significant differences between the two groups were found in the classroom participation grades.

The research also had no effect on achievement. There were no significant differences in achievement of the two groups as measured by GPA which is the average of the grades the students received in courses grammar, speaking, listening, writing and reading at the end of the academic year. It is important to recognize that high motivation cannot improve achievement if the students lack the necessary skills to succeed. Van Overwalle and De Metsenaere (1990) argued that while AR could increase motivation, a study strategy course would enhance students' skills in effective study. Therefore, future research can add a language learning strategy training to attributionsl training.

This result contradicts the other studies that found significant increases in achievement (Hall, et al. 2010; Haynes et al. 2006; Perry et al., 2010). However, it must be noted that most of these studies were carried out in psychology. Learning a foreign language is different in many ways from learning other school subjects. First of all, students are asked to make something foreign a part of their self. As Horwitz (1990) notes, probably no other field of study requires an individual to take social risks or endure potential public embarrassment in the way language study does. Therefore, learning a foreign language may be very different from other areas of learning and the motivation to learn a language may work differently in influencing their achievement.

As for the language learning beliefs, no changes were observed. Beliefs about language learning are generally thought to be strongly held and difficult to change (Kern, 1995; Weinstein, 1994; Peacock, 2001). As already mentioned in the literature review section, some studies reported evidence of change in these beliefs, especially in ESL contexts (Amuzie and Winke, 2009; Kayaoğlu, 1997) These two studies support the view that beliefs may be socially constructed and responsive to context, suggesting that learning context and length of context exposure influence belief changes. Moreover, these studies were longitudinal in nature. Thus a longitudinal study may offer a better evidence of the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the training program used in this study.

### **5.3. Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

One of the most important strengths of this study is the comprehensive data which was gathered through different data collection instruments. The data collected through four different scales and interviews allowed an in-depth analysis of participants' attributions for failure in learning English as a foreign language and of the factors that underlie the learners' perceived attributions. This study also gave the opportunity to collect information about the relationships between attributions, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs, an area of research that has been received little attention in foreign language field.

By this study, implications about what should be done to develop more adaptive and functional attributions for failure were drawn as well. Maybe the most important

strength of this study is that it showed how useful it could be to change students' maladaptive beliefs in terms of their control beliefs, engagement and effort.

There were also some limitations encountered in this study. First, limitations related to the sample will be addressed. The sample was done purposively from an overall sample of 602 students. Students who had maladaptive attributional styles and low self-efficacy were involved in the study. In addition, all students who participated in the study were undergraduate EFL students (N = 602) enrolled in a preparatory program at Karadeniz Teknik University. Therefore, this study is only generalizable to this population of students. Nonetheless, this research is beneficial in that instructors in other universities would benefit from knowing whether or not attribution training has benefits in regards to student performance on academic-based tasks and student effort.

#### **5.4. Implications for Future Research**

Research on AR in foreign language field is still in its nascent stages and more research will need to be done. There are positive indicators from this study to suggest that more research on this topic would be worthwhile. It would be interesting to do a longitudinal study to see the long-term effects of AR.

Participants' attributions for their learning failures were measured using two questionnaires: LAAS and CDS II. A further study may use participants' own classifications of attributions according to locus, stability and controllability dimensions as postulated by Weiner (1986). Considering the range of students' attributions for failure is considerably wide, as Weiner (1986) acknowledged, these attributions may be classified differently by different people. In future studies, the participants may be asked about the causes that, in their opinion, lead to failure in learning English and if they perceive these causes as internal or external to them, stable or unstable, controllable and uncontrollable.

As already indicated, attributions are linked to different emotions such as pride, shame, and guilt. Weiner (1986) notes that "how we think influences how we feel" (p.119). Locus particularly influences feelings of pride in success and self-esteem. A student might be happy, for example, after getting a good grade on a difficult exam, but he or she will not feel pride if she or he believes that the teacher gives high grades.

Controllability dimension influences whether guilt or shame is experienced following a failure. Attribution of failure to lack of effort often causes guilt, whereas lack of ability attributions elicits feelings of shame and embarrassment. Stability dimension is more linked to feelings of hope. This study did not deal with emotional consequences of attributions. Future research on attributions in foreign language learning should take emotions into account and examine how different attributions are linked to different emotions. Moreover, it may also be interesting to investigate how emotions can be changed when attributions are retrained.

Another area for future research is to investigate the sense of progress in L2 language learning. Sense of progress is a construct which has been gaining attention in foreign language learning field due to its potential in revealing learners' management and assessment of academic outcomes (successes or failures) of their learning activities in face of their personally established learning goals (Bahia, 2004). Sense of progress is closely related to attributions in that students' perceptions about their learning progress may be powerfully influenced by causal attributions they make for their perceived language learning successes and failures.

The treatment used in this study was adapted from Haynes et al. (2009). But some other elements such as the inclusion a class with a native teacher were added to the training in order to make it more feasible to use in a foreign language learning context. Future studies may wish to add more elements, especially cultural ones, to extend the the training program used in this study.

### **5.5. Implications for Educators**

The results of this study offer valuable information to language teachers who are able to influence the causal attributions of learners in foreign language learning settings when those attributions are detrimental to achievement. AR studies have consistently yielded positive behavioral changes in a diversity of areas. They, therefore, demonstrate that such short and economic cognitive interventions can be effectively used to modify behavior in "therapy-like" (Försterling, 1986) situations.

It is clear that attribution theory is a very useful framework to understand how students experience their success and failure in school. (Stipek, 1988; Weiner, 1979,

1985) Clearly, attribution of failure in EFL classrooms has implications for student decisions on whether to continue language study. Attribution of 'lack of ability' is especially damaging to the long-term success and retention of students in language classes, leading also to low self-efficacy and a sense of learned helplessness (Graham, 1990). Teachers and educational administrators thus face the challenge of helping students make desirable attributions that can promote motivation and academic success.

This study revealed that educators may help students be aware of the causes for their successes and failures and create appropriate attributions for failure thus preventing failure in academic activities. Through such a training implemented in this study, they may encourage learners to adopt a more positive approach to failure, thus enhancing their motivation, engagement and achievement. Attributions of effort should be reinforced therefore encouraging learners to be more in control of their learning process and see the link between effort and success.

Given the clear need for more effective strategies that can improve academic performance and motivation of low achieving EFL students, attribution training should be considered a valuable approach to be used in foreign language settings. A better understanding of the nature and impact of AR would allow teachers to help those who withdraw from activity in foreign language settings because of repeated failures.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1. LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT ATTRIBUTION SCALE –Turkish version

Sevgili öğrenciler, bu çalışmanın amacı öğrencilerin İngilizce öğreniminde kendi başarı ya da başarısızlıkları üzerine kurdukları neden-sonuç ilişkileri hakkında bilgi edinmektir.

Bu anketteki soruların doğru cevapları yoktur. Önemli olan sizin gerçek düşüncelerinizi öğrenmektir. Lütfen soruları eksiksiz olarak doldurmaya dikkat ediniz.

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YDYÖ Müdürü

Öğr.Gör. Öznur SEMİZ  
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü

1. Bu dönem İngilizce hazırlıkta aldığınız notların genel ortalamasını yazınız:

.....

2. Aldığınız bu nottan memnun musunuz? (Sadece tek seçeneği işaretleyiniz)

**EVET**

**HAYIR**

Eğer 2. soruya **Evett** şeklinde cevap verdiyseniz , **SADECE** bu kolondaki maddeleri yanıtlayınız ve görüşünüzü yansıtan rakamı (1,2,3,4,5) ilgili boşluğa yazınız.yazınız.

Eğer 2. soruya **Hayır** şeklinde cevap verdiyseniz **SADECE** bu kolondaki maddeleri yanıtlayınız ve görüşünüzü yansıtan rakamı (1,2,3,4,5) ilgili boşluğa yazınız.yazınız.



| (1)                            | (2)                 | (3)               | (4)                | (5)                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Kesinlikle katılmıyorum</b> | <b>Katılmıyorum</b> | <b>Fikrim yok</b> | <b>Katılıyorum</b> | <b>Kesinlikle katılıyorum</b> |

**Aldığım bu not:**

**Aldığım bu not:**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Yabancı dil öğrenme yeteneğimden kaynaklanmaktadır.   |  | 1. Yabancı dil öğrenme yeteneğimin olmayışından kaynaklanmaktadır. |  |
| 2.Göstermiş olduğum çabadan kaynaklanmaktadır.           |  | 2. Yeterli çabayı göstermememden kaynaklanmaktadır.                |  |
| 3. İngilizce'nin kolay olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır.     |  | 3. İngilizce'nin zor olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır.                 |  |
| 4. Tamamen şans.   |  | 4. Tamamen şanssızlık.   |  |
| 5. Hocaların not verme yöntemlerinden kaynaklanmaktadır. |  | 5. Hocaların not verme yöntemlerinden kaynaklanmaktadır.           |  |
| 6.Kullandığım çalışma yöntemlerinden kaynaklanmaktadır.  |  | 6. Kullandığım çalışma yöntemlerinden kaynaklanmaktadır.           |  |

**APPENDIX 2. CAUSAL DIMENSION SCALE (CDS-II)-Turkish version**

**Genel itibariyle İngilizce öğrenme konusunda kendinizi ne ölçüde başarılı buluyorsunuz?**

**Çok başarısız**

**Çok başarılı**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**Benim bu ölçüde başarılı veya başarısız olmam:**

|  | Kesinlikle katılmıyorum | Katılmıyorum          | Fikrim yok            | Katılıyorum           | Kesinlikle Katılıyorum |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Benim bir özelliğimi yansıtmaktadır (çaba, yetenek, beceri, motivasyon, tutum, vb.) | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 2. Benim elimdedir.  | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 3. Kalıcıdır.  | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 4. Kontrolüm altındadır.   | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 5. Başkalarına bağlıdır (hocalar, arkadaşlar, aile, vb.)                               | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 6. Benden kaynaklanmaktadır.   | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 7. Zaman içinde değişmez.  | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 8. Başkalarının denetimindedir (hocalar, arkadaşlar, aile, vb.)                        | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 9. Kendimle ilgilidir.   | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 10. Benim denetimim altındadır.  | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 11. Hep böyle kalacaktır.  | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| 12. Diğer insanlar tarafından kontrol edilebilir.                                      | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |

### APPENDIX 3. ÖZ YETERLİLİK ÖLÇEĞİ-I Turkish version

Bu bölümde İngilizce öğrenmeye yönelik öz yeterlik algısını içeren ifadeler bulunmaktadır. Lütfen, her bir ifadeyi okuyarak görüşünüzü yansıtan rakamı (1,2,3,4,5) ilgili boşluğa yazınız.

| (1)                            | (2)                 | (3)               | (4)                | (5)                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Kesinlikle katılmıyorum</b> | <b>Katılmıyorum</b> | <b>Fikrim yok</b> | <b>Katılıyorum</b> | <b>Kesinlikle katılıyorum</b> |

1. Eğer doğru bir şekilde çalışırsam, İngilizce öğrenebilirim. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sene sonunda çok iyi bir not alacağıma inanıyorum. \_\_\_\_\_
3. En zor İngilizce metinleri bile anlayabileceğimden eminim. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Eğer İngilizce öğrenemiyorsam bu benim kendi hatamdır. \_\_\_\_\_
5. İngilizce'deki temel yapıları öğrenebileceğimden eminim. \_\_\_\_\_
6. İngilizce'nin en zor konularını bile anlayabileceğimden eminim. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Eğer çalışır gayret edersem İngilizce öğrenebilirim. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Bu sene ödevlerde ve sınavlarda başarılı olacağıma inanıyorum. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Hazırlık sınıfını geçebileceğime inanıyorum. \_\_\_\_\_
10. İngilizceyi çok iyi konuşabileceğime inanıyorum. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Eğer İngilizce öğrenemiyorsam, bu yeterince çalışmadığım içindir. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Eninde sonunda İngilizce öğreneceğim. \_\_\_\_\_
13. İngilizcenin zorluğunu, öğretmenleri ve becerilerimi dikkate aldığımda, bence bu sene hazırlık sınıfında başarılı olurum. \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4. ÖZ YETERLİK ÖLÇEĞİ-II Turkish version

Sene sonunda hazırlığı geçebileceğimden eminim.

**EVET**

**HAYIR**

Eğer bu soruya **EVET** şeklinde cevap verdiyseniz, ankete aşağıdan devam ediniz.

Eğer bu soruya **HAYIR** şeklinde cevap verdiyseniz bir sonraki sayfaya geçiniz.



Lütfen sene sonunda hazırlık sınıfını aşağıda verilen notlarla geçip geçemeyeceğinize olan inancınızı Evet (E) veya Hayır (H) seçeneklerinden birisini işaretleyerek belirtiniz. Eğer **EVET** işaretlediyseniz, geçebileceğinizden ne kadar emin olduğunuzu 10 ile 100 arasında bir seçeneği işaretleyerek belirtiniz. Önce verilen örnekleri inceleyiniz:

### Örnek I:

|  |                       |                       |  |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Sene sonunda 95-100 arası bir not ile geçebileceğimden eminim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 10 20 30 40 <input type="radio"/> 50 60 70 80 90 100 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|

### Örnek II:

|  |                       |                                  |                                |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sene sonunda 95-100 arası bir not ile geçebileceğimden eminim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|

Şimdi lütfen her seçeneği teker teker değerlendiriniz:

|  | Evet / Hayır          |                       | EVET ise, ne kadar eminsiniz? (%) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  | E                     | H                     |                                   |
| Sene sonunda 95-100 arası bir not ile geçebileceğimden eminim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100    |
| Sene sonunda 90-94 arası bir not ile geçebileceğimden eminim.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100    |
| Sene sonunda 85-89 arası bir not ile geçebileceğimden eminim.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100    |
| Sene sonunda 80-84 arası bir not ile geçebileceğimden eminim.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100    |
| Sene sonunda 75-79 arası bir not ile geçebileceğimden eminim.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100    |
| Sene sonunda 70-74 arası bir not ile geçebileceğimden eminim.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100    |



## APPENDIX 5. YABANCI DİL ÖĞRENME HAKKINDA İNANIŞLAR ANKETİ-Turkish version

Aşağıda yabancı dil öğrenme konusunda bazı düşünceler verilmiştir. Lütfen her birini okuyarak görüşünüzü

| (1)                            | (2)                 | (3)               | (4)                | (5)                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Kesinlikle katılmıyorum</b> | <b>Katılmıyorum</b> | <b>Fikrim yok</b> | <b>Katılıyorum</b> | <b>Kesinlikle katılıyorum</b> |

şıklarından birini işaretleyerek (X) belirtiniz. Lütfen unutmayın burada doğru veya yanlış cevap yoktur. Önemli olan sizin düşüncelerinizdir.

|   |     |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Bazı insanların yabancı dil öğrenme konusunda özel bir yetenekleri vardır.   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 2. Lisan öğrenme konusunda iyi bir hafızaya sahibim.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 3. İngilizceyi mükemmel bir telaffuzla konuşmak önemlidir.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 4. İngilizcede bir şeyi tam doğrusunu öğrenmeden söylememek gerekir.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 5. En iyisi İngilizceyi İngilizce konuşulan bir ülkede öğrenmektir.   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 6. CD ve teyplerle pratik yapmak, İngilizce TV programlar seyretmek önemlidir.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 7. İngilizcede bilmediğim bir kelimeyi tahmin etmeye çalışmak iyidir.   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 8. Yabancı dil öğrenmeye karşı özel bir yatkınlığım var.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 9. Yabancı dil öğrenmek çoğunlukla kelime öğrenme meselesidir.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 10. Tekrar ve bolca pratik yapmak önemlidir.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 11. Başkalarıyla İngilizce konuşurken kendimi rahat hissedirim.   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 12. İngilizceye yeni başlayan kişilerin hata yapmalarına göz yumulursa, ileride bunların İngilizceyi doğru olarak konuşmaları güçleşir. | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 13. Yabancı dil öğrenmek çoğunlukla o dilin gramer kurallarını öğrenme meselesidir.   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 14. Ana dili İngilizce olmayanlarla pratik yapmak önemlidir.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 15. Yabancı dili konuşmak onu dinleyip anlamaktan daha kolaydır.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 16. İngilizcede çalıştığım bir konu zor gözüküyorsa genelde onu o anlık bırakırım.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 17. İngilizceyi iyi öğrenmem gelecekte akademik veya iş hayatım için daha iyi olacak.   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 18. İngilizceyi yazıp okumak konuşup anlamaktan daha kolaydır.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

|  |     |     |     |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 19. Matematik veya fende iyi olanlar yabancı dili öğrenmede başarılı olur. | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

|                                |                     |                   |                    |                               |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>(1)</b>                     | <b>(2)</b>          | <b>(3)</b>        | <b>(4)</b>         | <b>(5)</b>                    |
| <b>Kesinlikle katılmıyorum</b> | <b>Katılmıyorum</b> | <b>Fikrim yok</b> | <b>Katılıyorum</b> | <b>Kesinlikle katılıyorum</b> |

|   |     |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 20. Çoğu arkadaşım İngilizce konuşmanın önemli olduğu kanısındadır.   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 21. İngilizcedeki bir önemli amacım da İngilizceyi yabancılarla iyi konuşmaktır.                                    | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 22. Herkes İngilizce konuşmayı iyi öğrenebilir.   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 23. İngilizceyi çok iyi öğrenmek benim için oldukça önemlidir.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 24. Yabancı dili, İngilizce metinleri daha iyi okuyup anlayabilmek için ilerletmek istiyorum.                       | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 25. Sosyal bilimlerde iyi olanlar İngilizce öğrenmede başarılı olur.  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 26. Bazıları ne kadar sıkı çalışırlarsa çalışsınlar İngilizceyi çok iyi öğrenemezler.                               | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 27. Yabancı dili öğrenmek diğer akademik konuları öğrenmekten büyük ölçüde farklıdır.                               | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 28. İngilizcede herhangi bir zorlukla karşılaştığımda, çoğu zaman o anda onu çözmek için bir yol bulmaya çalışırım. | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 29. Kişilerin İngilizce öğreniminde ulaşacakları seviye bazı faktörlerden dolayı sınırlıdır.                        | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

30. İngilizce:

- oldukça zor bir dildir.
- zor bir dildir.
- orta zorlukta bir dildir.
- kolay bir dildir.
- oldukça kolay bir dildir.

31. Üniversite öncesi yabancı dil öğrenme sürecinizi nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?

- Çok yetersiz
- Yetersiz
- Ortalama
- Memnuniyet verici
- Çok memnuniyet verici

32. İngilizceniz için yeteri kadar gayret gösterdiğiniz kanaatinde misiniz?

**Evet**  **Hayır**

33. Günde kaç saat İngilizce çalışsınız?

- Hiç
- 30 dk.dan az

- 1-2 saat
- 3-4 saat
- 4 saatten fazla

**34.** Şayet birisi yabancı bir dili öğrenmek için günde bir saat çalışırsa, o dili çok iyi konuşması için ne kadar süre gerekir?

- 1 yıldan az
- 1-2 yıl
- 3-5 yıl
- 6-10 yıl
- Günde 1 saat çalışmakla yabancı dil öğrenilmez.

Anket soruları sona ermiştir.  
Çalışmamıza göstermiş olduğunuz ilgi için teşekkür ederiz.

### **KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER**

Sevgili öğrenciler;

Son olarak, sizden bazı kişisel bilgiler istenmektedir. Bu bilgiler sadece araştırma amaçlı olarak kullanılacak ve araştırmacılar dışındaki kişi ve kurumlarla paylaşılmayacaktır. Sizden istenmekte olan AD SOYAD bilgisi, ilerde dolduracağınız diğer anketlerle eşleştirme ve karşılaştırma yapabilmek içindir. Kişisel bilgileriniz başka hiçbir amaçla kullanılmayacaktır. Katılımınız için tekrar teşekkür ederiz.

1. Ad soyad: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Cinsiyet: Kız  Erkek

3. Bölüm : \_\_\_\_\_

4. Yaş :

17 ( ) 18 ( ) 19 ( ) 20 ( ) 21 ( ) 22 ( ) Diğer ( )

5- Mezun olduğunuz lise türü:

a) Düz Lise b) Anadolu Lisesi c) Özel Lise d) Süper Lise e) Teknik Lise

f) Diğer \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 6. LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT ATTRIBUTION SCALE(LAAS)-English version**

1. How successful do you feel you are in your English Course so far?

Very Unsuccessful

Very Successful

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

2. Are you satisfied with your performance? (Check one)

1 (A) = Yes, I am happy with my GPA     0 (B) = No, I am disappointed with my GPA

| If you checked “Yes, I am happy with my GPA”, rate your responses to questions <b>in this column ONLY</b>  | If you checked “No, I am disappointed with my GPA”, rate your responses to questions <b>in this column ONLY</b>  |
|--|--|
| 3. The GPA that I have is due to my high ability.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree                                | 3. The GPA that I have is due to my lack of ability.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree                                   |
| 4. The GPA that I have is due to the amount of effort I put into studying.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree       | 4. The GPA that I have is due to the lack of effort I put into studying.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree               |
| 5. The GPA that I have is due to the ease of the course material in the classes.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree | 5. The GPA that I have is due to the difficulty of the course material in the classes.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree |
| 6. The GPA that I have is due to good luck.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree                                      | 6. The GPA that I have is due to bad luck.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree   |
| 7. The GPA that I have is due to the way my teacher grades.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree                      | 7. The GPA that I have is due to the way my teacher grades.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree                            |
| 8. The GPA that I have is due to the strategies I used.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree                          | 8. The GPA that I have is due to the strategies I used.<br>1 (A)   2 (B)   3 (C)   4 (D)   5 (E)<br>Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree                                |

## APPENDIX 7. CAUSAL DIMENSION SCALE (CDS-II) English version

My performance so far...

|    |   | <b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b> | <b>Disagree (2)</b> | <b>Neutral (3)</b> | <b>Agree (4)</b> | <b>Strongly Agree (5)</b> |
|----|---|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1  | reflects an aspect of myself (effort, ability, skill, motivation, attitude, etc.) | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 2  | is due to factors that I can manage   | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 3  | is due to a stable factor   | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 4  | is due to something that I have control over                                      | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 5  | is due to something over which others have control                                | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 6  | is due to a factor inside of me   | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 7  | is stable over time   | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 8  | is under the power of other people (e.g. teacher, peers, parents, etc.)           | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 9  | is due to something about me  | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 10 | is due to something over which I have power                                       | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 11 | is unchangeable   | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |
| 12 | is regulated by other people  | 1 (A)                        | 2 (B)               | 3 (C)              | 4 (D)            | 5 (E)                     |

**APPENDIX 8. MOTIVATED STRATEGIES LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE (MSLQ) SELF-EFFICACY AND CONTROL FOR LEARNING ITEMS**

Directions: You have just received your test grade. Please read each item carefully and indicate the extent to which the statement describes you on the line provided in front of each statement.

**1 = Not at all true of me**

**2= Not very true of me**

**3 = Neutral**

**4 = Somewhat true of me**

**5 = Very true of me**

**Self-efficacy items:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I believe I will receive an excellent end-of-semester grade in this class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I am certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in this course.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I am confident I can learn the basic concepts taught in this course.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I am confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments in this course.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I expect to do well in this class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I am certain I can master the skills being taught in this class.

**Control for learning items:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. If I study in appropriate ways, then I will be able to learn the material in this course.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. It is my fault if I don't learn the material in this course.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. If I try hard enough, then I will understand the course material.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. If I don't understand the course material, it is because I didn't try hard enough.

## APPENDIX 9. BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING INVENTORY (BALLI)

### English version

Directions: Please read each item carefully and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your beliefs about foreign language learning in the spaces provided in front of each statement.

**1 = Strongly Disagree    2= Disagree    3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree**  
**4 = Agree                    5 = Strongly Agree**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a foreign language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The language I am trying to learn is:
- 1) a very difficult language,
- 2) a difficult language,
- 3) a language of medium difficulty,
- 4) an easy language,
- 5) a very easy language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The language I am trying to learn is structured in the same way as English.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. You shouldn't say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. If I heard someone speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. It's o.k. to guess if you don't know a word in the foreign language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? 1) less than a year, 2) 1-2 years, 3) 3-5 years, 4) 5-10 years, 5) You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I have foreign language aptitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. Americans are good at learning foreign languages.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.

## APPENDIX 10. CALL FOR STUDENTS

# İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENMEDE

## BAŞARISIZIM

# DIYENLERDENSENİZ!

# 5

**HAFTA SÜRECEK VE UZMANLARIN**

**EŞLİĞİNDE HAZIRLANAN BİR EĞİTİM PROGRAMINA  
KATILMAYA NE DERSİNİZ?**

**NOT:**

- **PROGRAM OKULUMUZDAKİ HERKESE (AÇIK OLUP ÜCRETSİZDİR. OTURUMLAR HER ÇARŞAMBA 2'DE YDYO'DA YAPILACAKTIR.**
- **BELLİ SAYIDA ÖĞRENCİ KABUL EDİLECEKTİR.**
- **EĞER KATILMAK İSTİYORSANIZ HEMEN SİZE ULAŞABİLECEĞİMİZ BİR TELEFON YA DA ya da E-POSTA ADRESİ YAZMAYI UNUTMAYINIZ:**

**TEL: .....**

**EPOSTA ADRESİ: .....**

**Yrd.Doç.Dr. M.Naci KAYAOĞLU  
YDYO Müdürü**

**Öğr.Gör.Öznur SEMİZ  
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü**



**APPENDIX 11. INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Sevgili öğrenciler,

Bu araştırma bir doktora tez çalışmasının bir parçası olarak yapılmaktadır. Araştırmanın amacı 5 haftalık bir eğitim programının öğrencilerin başarısızlık yükleme eğilimleri, öz yeterlik, dil öğrenme inanışları ve başarılarına olan etkilerini saptamaktır.

Bu çalışmaya katılmak isterseniz formu imzalayınız. Çalışma süresince herhangi bir noktada katılmaktan vazgeçebilirsiniz. Vereceğiniz kişisel bilgiler gizli tutulacak ve araştırma dışında başka hiçbir amaçla kullanılmayacaktır. Tez çalışması bittiğinde isterseniz araştırmanın sonuçlarını içeren özet bir rapor e-mail adresinize gönderilecektir. Eğer herhangi bir aşamada bir sorunuz olursa bana e-mail adresim aracılığıyla (oznursemiz@ktu.edu.tr) ulaşabilirsiniz.

**Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu deneye gönüllü olarak katılmaya karar verdim.**

Araştırmacı: Öğrt.Gör. Öznur SEMİZ

**Katılımcı**

Adı Soyadı:

e-mail adresi:

Öğrenci No:

Tarih:

İmza:



**DOÇ. DR. HİKMET YAZICI**

*FATİH EĞT. FAKÜLTESİ -  
DEKAN YRD.  
EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ BÖLÜMÜ  
REHBER. PSİKO. DANIŞ.  
ANABİLİM DALI  
ÖĞR. ÜYESİ*

## APPENDIX 12. VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Sevgili öğrenciler;

Öğrencilerin akademik başarılarını algılama biçimleri onların genel benlik algıları içinde önemli bir yer oluşturmaktadır. Öğrenciler kendi benlik algılarını değerlendirirken aynı zamanda da akademik benlik algılarını da bu değerlendirmenin bir parçası olarak ele alırlar. Bu çerçevede akademik benlik algısıyla ilişkilendirebileceğimiz belli kavramlar var. Bunlardan bir tanesi öğrencilerin başarılarına ilişkin algılamaları başka bir deyişle başarı ve başarısızlıklarını yorumlamalarıdır. Bunlar aslında bireylerin akademik yaşam içerisinde herhangi bir duruma, olaya veya yaşantıya dönük olarak sahip oldukları açıklama biçimleridir. Öğrenciler belli bir nedensellik bu olayları açıklama ve anlama çabası içinde olurlar. Bir bakıma kendi akademik performanslarını bu öznel değerlendirme biçimi içerisinde anlamaya ve açıklamaya çalışırlar. Bu

zihinsel yapıların oluşumunda özellikle yakın çevrenin, okulun, anne-babanın, öğretmenlerin ve bireyin kendisinin yaşamış olduğu bir takım olayların etkisi söz konusudur. Bunu spesifik olarak bazı derslerle ilişkilendirebilme imkanımız da vardır. Örneğin bizim ülkemizde gerek matematik öğretiminde gerek İngilizce öğretiminde öğrencilerin algılamalarıyla ilişkilendirilebilecek birtakım başarısızlık durumları vardır. Yani, öğrenci herhangi bir derse yönelik başarısızlık inancını geliştirirken bunu nasıl temellendirmektedir? Bu soruyu erken dönem yaşantılarıyla ve çevresel etkilerle açıklama imkânımız vardır. Tabii ki burada bireylerin içinde bulunduğu bu durum aynı zamanda kendi geçmiş deneyimleriyle de ilgilidir. Şunu biliyoruz: Deneyimlerimiz genel anlamda olumlu sonuçlar verdiyse bu hem kendimize hem de kendi performansımıza veya akademik değerlendirmemize ilişkin bakış açımızda etkili olabilir. Hem de gelecekte başarabileceğimiz durumlar hakkında bu yaşantılar bizim için önemli birer ipucudur. Bunu biraz daha basitleştirmek gerekirse genelde olumsuz deneyimler yani başarısızlık durumları bireyin kendi başarısını değerlendirme biçimi üzerinde olumsuz etkiler ortaya çıkarırken olumlu yaşantılar, olumlu sonuçlar veya kazanılan başarılar yaşantıların daha anlamlı bir şekilde değerlendirilmesine yol açmaktadır. Şimdi bu değerlendirme biçimi üzerinde yine olayların yorumlama biçimlerinin etkili olduğu kanaatindeyim. İnsanlar bazen bir zihinsel süzgeç kullanırlar. Bazı insanlar bu zihinsel süzgeçten sadece başarısızlıklarını geçirirler

hiçbir başarıları bu zihinsel süzgeçten geçmez. Çünkü genel anlamda onların kendileriyle ilgili algılama biçimlerinde olumsuz bir değerlendirme biçimi vardır. Şimdi burada bazen insanlar başarısızlığın kendi kaderleri olduğu veya ömür boyu başarısızlık durumuyla karşı karşıya kalabileceklerini düşünebilirler. Öğrenciler örneğin herhangi bir derste başarısız olduklarında bunun sürekli olarak ortaya çıkacak bir sonuç olduğu şeklinde değerlendirme yapabilirler. Burada aklımıza gelen önemli unsurlardan bir tanesi başarısızlığı önlemenin aslında bireyin elinde olduğuna ilişkin bir bakış açısının ön plana çıkmasıdır. Birey geçmişteki yaşantıları ne olursa olsun veya içinde bulunduğu durum ne olursa olsun kendi başarılarını oluşturabilme veya başarısızlığını ortadan kaldırabilme güç ve yeteneklerine sahiptir. Bu aynı zamanda bireyin kendi yeteneklerine gücüne öğrenme performansına veya geçmişte yapmış olduğu yüklemeye ilişkili bir durumdur. Kendisini değerlendirme biçimi ortaya koyacağı başarı performansı açısından son derece önemlidir diyoruz.



**"Birey geçmişteki yaşantıları ne olursa olsun veya içinde bulunduğu durum ne olursa olsun kendi başarılarını oluşturabilme veya başarısızlığını ortadan kaldırabilme güç ve yeteneklerine sahiptir."**



Başarısızlık yaşantılarını önlemenin en önemli yollarından bir tanesi başarısızlığa yüklediğimiz anlamı değiştirmekle ilişkilidir. Çünkü eğer bireyde başarısızlık kimliği yerleşmişse ne yaparsa yapsın bu temel anlayışı değiştirmedikten sonra davranışlarında bir değişimin olması son derece güç olur diye düşünüyorum. O nedenle başarısızlık hangi alanda ortaya çıkmışsa çıksın biz bunu eğer akademik alanda veya dersle ilgi olarak düşünüyorsak bunun geçici ve kontrol edilebilir bir durum olduğuna ilişkin bir kanata sahip olmamız gerekiyor. Bu kendi tabiatımızı da değerlendirmeye ilişkili bir durumdur. Zaman zaman insanlar bireyler öğrenciler yani hangi kategoride değerlendirecek değerlendirelim

durumsal anlamda başarısızlık yaşayabilirler. Yani başarısız durumlarla karşılaşp engelleri aşmada zorlanabilirler. Ama biz şu çerçeveden bakıyoruz. Bireyin kendi yapabilirlik inançlarıyla ilgili farkındalık alanını geliştirebilirse ve başarılarını değerlendirme becerisine sahip olabilirse o zaman yaşamış olduğu başarısızlıkların telafi edilebilir olduğunu da fark edebilir. Bu çerçevede başarısızlıkla ilgili algılarımızın doğrudan egomuza dönük olmasından çok aslında yaşamda karşılaşılan bir engel olduğuna ilişkin bir inanca sahip olmamız söz konusu. Şöyle düşünün. Ben İngilizce öğrenemiyorum başaramıyorum o halde kötü bir öğrenciyim veya kötü bir insanım şeklindeki düşünce yapısıyla İngilizce dersini başaramıyorum bu benim akademik performansımı geleceğimi olumsuz etkiliyor anlayışı arasında farklılık vardır. Farklılığı şu şekilde vurgulayayım müsaade edersiniz. Birincisinde bireyin doğrudan kendine dönük kendi egosuna yönelik bir

olumsuz değerlendirme var. Başarısız isem kötü bir insanım kötü bir öğrenciyim. İkincisinde ise başarısızlığın ortaya çıkardığı olumsuz sonuçların genel gidişatta veya yaşamında ortaya çıkarabileceği sonuçları algılama söz konusudur. Şimdi şüphesiz ki şimdi kendimizi insanları dersleri tüm çevresel durumları algılamamız tek başına bir şey ifade etmez. Aynı zamanda özellikle akademik açıdan değerlendirdiğimizde var olan durumu değiştirmeye yönelik bir çaba içerisinde de bulunmamız çok önemli. Ne tür çabalar ortaya koyarız? Ne yapıyoruz sorusunu sıklıkla ortaya koymamız gerekiyor. Durumu değiştirmek için başarısızlığı ortadan kaldırmak için daha iyi bir performans sergileyebilmek için ne yapıyoruz bu yaptıklarımız acaba bizim sahip olmamız gereken başarı performansına ulaşmamıza ne kadar destek sağlıyor. Herkesin bir defa şu soruyu kendisine sorması gerekiyor. Hedefime ulaşmak için yaptıklarım gerçekten bu anlamda gerekli bir çabayı oluşturmada yeterli oluyor mu veya çabam ortaya koyduğum çaba uygun mudur? Bu soruyu sorarız tekrar ediyorum. Ne istiyorum sorusunu

• • •  
**"Ne istiyorum?Ne yapıyorum?İstediğimi elde etmek için yaptıklarım yeterlimidir?"**  
 • • •

genel anlamda ortaya koymak durumundayız. İstediğim şeye ulaşmak için ne yapıyorum sorusunu soracağız. Yaptığım eksi istediğim bu arada çıkan fark çok önemli. Eğer gerçekten yaptıklarım istediklerimi karşılamada yetersiz kalıyorsa o zaman daha uygun birtakım çabaların ortaya konmasında daha farklı performansların geliştirilmesinde önemli unsurları dikkate almamız gerekiyor. Yani çabalarımızı gayretlerimizi ilgimizi değiştirme anlayışı içerisinde olmamız gerekir diyoruz. Şimdi burada olaylara kişilere akademik başarılarla veya kendimize ilişkin nedensel yüklemelerimiz ile düşünce yapılarımız arasında bir ilişki olduğunu ifade

etmiştik. Bir bakıma başarısızlığa ilişkin düşünce yapılarımızın algılamalarımızın muhakemelerimizin aracılık ettiğini söyleyebilme imkânımız vardır. Şüphesiz ki yapılan yüklemeler bu farklı kaynaklara dönük olarak bizim düşüncelerimizi duygularımızı davranışlarımız etkiler. Eğer olumsuz anlamda yüklemeler varsa yani biz örneğin herhangi bir durumla ilgili dersle ilgili bu dersi başarabilme imkânım yok zaten bu dersten çoğu kişi kalır. Bu dersten kalmak normalmiş gibi bir anlayışı ortaya koyarsak bu bizim düşünce süreçlerimizi etkili olabilir. Bu mantıksız bir düşünme biçimidir. Ve aslında fonksiyonel olmayan bir düşünceyi ortaya koymuş olduğu bir yükleme biçimi olarak ortaya koymuş oluruz. Şimdi burada yüklemelerimizin özellikle kendimizi algılama biçimlerimizle de ilişkili olduğunu söylemiştik. Kendimizi yetenekli değil de yetersiz olarak algılasak akademik başarılarımızı da olumsuz değerlendirme inancı geliştiririz. Ama her birey yetenekli olduğuna, başarılı olabileceğine, ilgilerinin herhangi bir konuda kendisi için yeterli olabileceğine ilişkin bir inanç geliştirebilirse böyle bir durum

yeteneklilik inancıyla ilişkilendirebileceğimiz bir durum aynı zamanda bireylerin çaba göstermesi açısından önemli bir unsurdur

Kendimizi nasıl algıladığımız kendi nasıl tanımladığımız son derece önemlidir. Akademik benlik algımız bunun bir parçasıdır. Akademik benlik algımız içerisinde akademik performansımızı olumlu veya olumsuz şekilde düşük veya yüksek bir biçimde değerlendirme olanağına sahibiz. Kendimize dönük değerlendirme sistemimizin yeniden ve gerçeğe uygun bir biçimde buradaki gerçek aslında insan tabiatının gerçeğidir çünkü her insanın yetenekleriyle başarılı olma eğilimleriyle değerleriyle tutumlarıyla kendi yaşamını sürdürebilme kendine özgü başarılar ortaya koyabilme ve yeni başarılar ortaya koyabilme gücünü kabul ediyoruz. Bunun var olduğuna inanıyoruz. Olayları yorumlama biçimimiz eğer değişebilirse geçmişteki akademik performansımızı doğru olarak değerlendirebilme ve eğer birtakım başarısızlıklar varsa ve bunları uygun şekilde telafi edebilme imkânımız olursa ve davranışın kendi içimizden kaynaklandığını algılayabilirsek çünkü bu bir seçimdir her davranış bir seçimdir ve davranışları biz seçeriz. Olumsuz bir davranışı olursa da bunu biz seçmiş oluruz. Başarısızlıkta bu anlamda bir seçimdir. Bunu kendi iç dünyamızda ararsak yani çevresel durumları yansıtmazsak ve çevresel nedenlere bağlamazsak bu şekilde başarısızlığı önleyebilme kendi elimizde olduğu ve başarısızlığın ve sadece belli durumlarda ortaya çıkan geçici bir durum olduğu genel anlamda insanın yaşam boyunca etkilemeyecek bir durum olduğu konusunda bir anlayış geliştiriz. Bu bizim çabalarımızla ve kendimizi kendi yeteneklerimizi kendi performansımızı algılama biçimimizle ilişkilidir.

Sonuç olarak düşünce yapılarımızı gerçeğe ve mantığa uygun olarak bu şekilde oluşturabilirsek davranışlarımızı kontrol edebilme ve seçme gücümüzü ortaya koyabilirsek yüklemelerimizin daha sağlıklı olabileceği kanaatindeyim. Hepinize başarılar diliyorum.



**"Her davranış bir seçimdir  
ve davranışları biz  
seçeriz. Olumsuz bir  
davranış olursa da bunu  
biz seçmiş oluruz.  
Başarısızlık ta bu anlamda  
bir seçimdir."**



## APPENDIX 13. AR HANDOUT

Yabancı dil öğrenmede başarısız olduğunuzu mu düşünüyorsunuz?

Ümitsizlik, kızgınlık ve endişe mi yaşıyorsunuz?

İşte daha başarılı olabilmeniz için bazı öneriler:

Böyle düşünmektense...

- İngilizce'yi kafam almıyor, bir türlü öğrenemiyorum.
- İngilizce çok zor bir dil.
- Bu işi tek başıma yapamayacağım.
- Bu iş hazırlık sınıfında olmayacak.
- Yabancı dil kaygım var.

Bunları deneyin...

- Eğer gerekli zaman ve çaba harcarsa, herkes yabancı dil öğrenebilir. İşte nasıl başarılı olabileceğiniz konusunda bazı öneriler:
  - Hergün düzenli çalışın
  - Kendinize net hedefler koyun .
  - Öğrendiklerinizi aynı gün içinde tekrar edin.
  - Gerektiğinde yardım alın.
  - İngilizce'nin kolay *unutulacağını düşünerek* sık sık tekrar yapın.
- Belki de doğru öğrenme yöntemlerini bilmiyorum.
- Yardıma ihtiyacınız olduğunda, hiç çekinmeden ve beklemeden öğretmenlerinizden veya arkadaşlarınızdan yardım alın.
- Yine de iyi bir başlangıç yaptım. En azından ne yapmam gerektiğini biliyorum.
- Hata yapmak İngilizce öğrenme sürecinin doğal sonucudur ve son derece normal bir durumdur. Hata yapmaktan korkmayın.

Eğer İngilizce öğrenmede başarısız olduğunuzu düşünüyorsanız ve hiç ümidiniz yoksa unutmayın ki bu durumu kontrol altına alıp değiştirmek tamamen sizin elinizde.

İngilizce öğrenmek ciddi manada çaba ve zaman ayırmayı gerektirir.

## APPENDIX 14. AR HANDOUT (Haynes et al., 2009)

**Didn't do as well on a test as you wanted?  
Feeling frustrated, depressed, angry?**

**Here are some suggestions as to how you can change the way you think about negative experiences in your life:**

**Rather than thinking...**

- I'm stupid.
- The test was too difficult.
- My professor is lousy.
- I had a bad day.
- I panicked.

**Instead...**

- Everybody can succeed - you just have to work at it. Here are some examples as to how you can study more effectively:
  - read chapters several times
  - review notes several times
  - use your study guide
  - study with someone*Note: Counseling Services offers various study skills courses*
- Tests can appear difficult when you're not well enough prepared. Study more for the next test.
- If you are having problems with a professor, talk to him or her about your difficulties. If that doesn't help, you may have to work extra hard to do well in the course.
- We all have bad days once in a while, but make sure that you study enough for the next test to improve your grade.
- If you have a problem with test anxiety, try to relax under stress (see your psychology text for relaxation methods or check the Counseling Services for courses on stress management).

***The next time you don't do as well on a test or assignment as you wanted, remember that most reasons for doing poorly are under your control and can be changed.***





**APPENDIX 16. AR ELABORATION WRITING ASSIGNMENT-English****(Haynes et al., 2009)**

1. Discuss and summarize the main points of the video/ handout in your own words.
2. Discuss and describe several important and controllable reasons for why university students may not perform as well as they could in their courses, and provide an example for each.
3. Discuss and describe several examples of how you apply the main points of the video to the way you currently approach your English courses.
4. What are the factors or reasons for success and failure in language learning. Could you write about your experiences, ideas and beliefs about language learning?

**Emotion Elaboration Writing Assignment**

5. Try to recall a recent instance when you performed poorly, or did not perform as well as expected on an English test. Discuss as openly and honestly as you can how the event made you feel (e.g. anxious, regretful, angry, ashamed, helpless, guilty, etc.) If possible, also explain how you were able to learn from this event, or how you were able to reinterpret the event in a positive way. All your writing is completely confidential.

**APPENDIX 17. PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN DURING THE TRAINING PROGRAM**









## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

She was born in Erzurum in 1977. She completed all steps of her education in Erzurum and graduated as the top student from the ELT Department of Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education, Atatürk University in 1999. In the same year, she began to work as an English teacher. Her academic life began in 2002 as a research assistant and MA student in ELT Department of Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education, Atatürk University. She received her MA in teaching English to children in 2004. She has been working as an instructor at English Language and Literature, Karadeniz Technical University. She is married and has a son.