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EFL INSTRUCTORS' CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND FAILURE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO CLASSROOM PRACTICES

THESIS BY

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I

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ÖZET

İNGİLİZCE OKUTMANLARININ ÖĞRENCİLERİN BAŞARI VE BAŞARISIZLIKLARINA AİT NEDENSEL YÜKLEMELERİ VE SINIF İÇİ UYGULAMALARIYLA İLİŞKİSİ

Özge GÜMÜŞ

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Yabancı dil öğrenimi ve öğretimi alanında Yükleme Teorisinin önemi birçok araştırmacı tarafından kanıtlanmıştır. Yabancı dil öğrenimi ve öğretimi alanındaki öneminin sebebi, yabancı dil öğrenmenin ilk evresinde bir kişinin neden başarılı ya da başarısız olduğunu bilmek başarı için gerekli yardımda bulunma ihtimalini arttırabilmesindendir. Böylece, öğretmen kendi öğrencileri hakkındaki inançları ve neden başarılı ya da başarısız oldukları bilgisini kullanarak, gerekli değişiklikleri yapabilir. Böyle bir bilginin ışığında da, öğrencilerle iletişim yöntemini, verdiği ödevleri, öğretme yöntemini, beraber oluşturdukları öğrenme ortamını ve hatta öğrencilerin kendi başarı ve başarısızlıklarına yaptıkları yüklemeleri değiştirebilir. (Dörnyei, 2001). Bu çalışmada, İngilizce okutmanlarının öğrencilerin İngilizce sınavlarındaki başarı ve başarısızlıklarına yaptıkları nedensel yüklemeleri ve öğrencilerin başarı ve başarısızlıkları hakkındaki algıları ve sınıf içi uygulamaları arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmak hedeflenmiştir. Veriler anket, sınıf gözlemleri ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerle toplanmıştır. Bulgular, okutmanların öğrencilerinin İngilizce sınavlarındaki başarı ve başarısızlığını birden çok sebebe atfettiklerini ve okutmanların sınıf içi uygulamaları ve nedensel yüklemelerinin bir dereceye kadar tutarlı olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yükleme, Yükleme Teorisi, Öğretmen Faktörü

ABSTRACT

**EFL INSTRUCTORS' CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS OF STUDENT SUCCESS
AND FAILURE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

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Within the field of foreign language learning, the significance of Attribution Theory has been well documented by most of the language researchers. Its significant place in foreign language learning and teaching is due to the search for causality's being functional in that knowing why one has succeeded or failed at the stages of learning a foreign language may increase later chances of success by taking appropriate instrumental action. Thus, based upon the analyses teachers make about their own beliefs about students and why they succeed or fail in achivement contexts, teachers can make changes where necessary. In the light of such knowledge, they can change the way they interact with their students, the tasks they assign, the way they teach, the learning environments they create together, or even their students' beliefs about their success and failure (Dörnyei, 2001). In this study, it was aimed to gain insights about English Language instructors' causal attributions for their students' success and failure in English exams, and how instructors' perceptions regarding their students' success or failure and classroom practices are related. The data were collected through the questionnaire, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that the instructors attributed their students' success and failure in English exams to multiple causes and the instructors' classroom practices were to some extent in consistent with their causal attributions.

Keywords: Attribution, Attribution Theory, Teacher Factor

ABBREVIATIONS

AR   : Attribution Retraining

AT   : Attribution Theory

CDS-II   : The Causal Dimension Scale

EFL   : English as a Foreign Language

ELT   : English Language Teaching

ELLT   : English Language Learning and Teaching

ESL   : English as a Second Language

FL   : Foreign Language

FLL   : Foreign Language Learning

FLLT   : Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

LAAS   : The Language Achievement Attribution Scale

L2   : Second Language

Non-NEST   : Non-native English speaking Teachers

RQ   : Research Question

SLL   : Second Language Learning

Q   : Question

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, human beings have a tendency to explore and understand causes behind their or others' actions. They often ask 'why' questions to gain predictability and control in their own world. The responses of such questions are in the form of causal explanations, i.e., causal attributions, which are "the attempts to identify what factors gave rise to what outcomes and central to explaining events and also to social cognition in general" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 22), and enable them to make sense of the likely causes of events or actions around them (Wong & Weiner, 1981; Försterling, 2001). In general, the underlying causes of these actions are very important when they are to explore and understand the context accurately, predict/interpret the real causes behind these actions and make important decisions and control events and behaviors of themselves or others' (Mizerski, Golden, & Kernan, 1979; Försterling, 2001) because the causes for events and behaviors affect their cultural, societal, interpersonal and personal lives in intricate ways (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2013).

It is also important to keep in mind that causal explanations can be generated for almost any event of interest such as: 'Why did you say that, why do you sleep late, why are there so many languages in the world, and why did you perform poorly in your exams, etc.?' The process of asking and answering 'why' questions, trying to understand and explain how and why these events happen as they do is so fundamental that Heider (1958) first discussed *attribution*, which is the process of inferring the causes of events or behaviors in his book, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, and then a family of theories has been developed to understand how people explain things. This set of theories, collectively called *Attribution Theory (AT)*, is concerned with how individuals interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behavior (Weiner, 1986). Thus, AT, first proposed by Heider (1958) within social psychology as a means of dealing with questions of social perception and developed by Weiner and his colleagues (Jones, Kanouse, Kelley, Nisbett, Valins, & Weiner, 1972; Weiner, 1974, 1986), attempts to look at the ways in which people seek causal explanations for events in their lives, other people's behavior or their own behavior.

AT which has originated from within the field of social psychology has been studied mostly in the sphere of psychological disciplines such as personality, experimental, clinical, organizational, motivational and education psychology (Försterling, 2001). The growing interest in attributions in educational settings arises because learners face these 'why' questions very often in the process of learning to explain the causes of their success or failure to themselves or others and they try to answer them in different ways. Through the causal explanations of learners for their success or failure, it is possible to give insights into success or failure of learners and to predict their subsequent actions. Therefore, AT, shaped by Bernard Weiner (1974) depends on the notion that no matter what reason the learner comes up with for his/her success or failure, it is likely to create different affective, emotional reactions and subsequent motivation, which, in turn, will affect his/her future performance (Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Weiner, 1982).

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that there are many different factors that influence effective teaching and efficient learning in the classroom because the process of learning and teaching is a highly complex process including the learning process itself, teachers' ways of teaching, their aims, their beliefs, students' individual differences, their beliefs, perceptions and learning experiences, and so on. Some of these factors are within teachers' control while others are not, but being aware of them might make it easier to control or at least account for them. Thus, this dynamism between a teacher and a student makes it increasingly important for educators and teachers to be aware of and/or understand learners' beliefs, perceptions, their learning experiences and their attributions (Meskill & Rangelova, 2000). Moreover, the number of foreign language learners is constantly increasing and concern over how to teach English more effectively and how to deal with learners' negative feelings and attitudes has also been growing (i.e., Krashen, 1988; Young, 1991; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999). On the other hand, the topic of attributions in foreign or second language learning and the role of attributions in language learning motivation are relatively unexplored area in Turkey, though there is a growing interest in attribution studies in English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) contexts in most countries (Williams & Burden, 1999; Tse, 2000; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2000; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002; McLoughlin, 2004; Williams, Burden,

Poulet & Maun, 2004). With regard to these facts and many others, this theory, AT, is an important piece in education and much research with much further scope is needed in this area.

1.1. Background to the study

People are naturally curious about the causes of their or others' actions and have a need to understand and interpret these causes to perceive and control their world. To this end, they act as 'naive scientist' or observers who look for the answers to 'why' questions (Heider, 1958).

Past research on this issue has been grounded in social-cognitive theory as AT was originally developed by Psychologist Fritz Heider (1958) who discussed what he called 'naive' or 'commonsense' psychology and made several contributions that laid the foundation for further research. However, Weiner and his colleagues (e.g., Jones, et al., 1972; Weiner, 1974, 1986) developed a theoretical framework that has become a major research paradigm of social psychology. Then, Bernard Weiner has played the biggest role in the application of AT in the achievement domain (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Weiner (1974), in his theory known as the '*Attribution Theory of Motivation*' which examines how an individual's reasons attributed for success and failure determine their current and subsequent strivings regardless of their accuracy (Weiner, 1974; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Weiner, 2000; Şahinkarakaş, 2011; McLoughlin, 2013). In his theory, he suggested that individuals' beliefs surrounding the causes of their academic success have an effect on their emotions and motivation. He also identified ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty as the most important factors influencing achievement or motivation. In his theory, these factors, mainly providing details of the things which are under or beyond our control, are classified along three causal dimensions: locus of causality (internal versus external), stability (stable versus unstable), and controllability (controllable versus uncontrollable) (Stipek, 1988). Rather than the specific content of the causal attributions, the positions of the causal attributions in the causal space defined by the basic causal dimensions explain the consequences of attributional processes (Weiner, 1985, 1986). In other words, the importance of dimensionality comes from the notion that "the relationship between the attributions and the consequences of attributional processes can be predicted entirely

through the perceptions of the underlying dimensions" (Dresel, Schober, & Ziegler, 2005, p. 32). In this context, for example, ability and effort are both perceived as internal, and luck and task difficulty as external. Luck is perceived as uncontrollable and unstable, while task difficulty is perceived as stable. Effort is perceived to be under the control of individuals and unstable; whereas ability is generally perceived to be uncontrollable and stable. Although this classification seems relatively simple, it is stressed that the degree to which students attribute the cause(s) of past performance to be internal, stable and controllable determines their orientation of control in achievement contexts (Perry, 2003; Perry, Hall, & Ruthig, 2005). Consequently, AT contends that when a student attributes success and failure *internal/unstable/ controllable* rather than *internal/stable/uncontrollable* causes, he or she is more likely to try harder and try to get better results for future performance. Among the causal attributions, effort is assumed to be the most productive for learning because effort is perceived by students as a factor which is controllable over their own success and failure. On the other hand, if a student attributes his/her past failure to *external/stable/ uncontrollable* factors, he or she is unlikely to try harder (Weiner, 1985). Moreover, a student with a tendency to attribute success or failure to *internal/stable/uncontrollable* causes is thought to have a 'maladaptive attributional style'. A student with a maladaptive style believes he or she has little control over academic outcomes no matter how hard he or she studies or devotes his or her time to language learning.

In the educational context, Weiner's (1985, 1995, 2006) AT has received considerable empirical support and been extensively employed to guide the research of students' academic motivation and performance and to account for the relationship between attributions and behavior. From educational point of view, AT has received increasing attention as success and failure in achievement contexts occur in a rich social context that affects and is affected by achievement performance (Weiner, 2000) and the educational process in these contexts is not only an exchange of information between teachers and students, but it is also a set of conventions influenced by the belief systems and behavioral norms between these parties (teachers and student) (Tudor, 2001). Likewise, Weiner (2000) stresses the importance of teachers' being aware of their students' attributions by stating that "understanding learners' beliefs, perceptions, and their learning experiences is a precondition for efficient learning" (cited in Taşkıran,

2010, p. 12). With regard to these facts, a number of studies carried out in this context have been intended to explore the attributions that students make for their success and failure and link causal attribution about success and failure to subsequent strivings (Weiner & Kukla, 1970; Weiner, 1972, 1985; Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978).

The consequences of students' attributions for success and failure for their subsequent achievement behavior have been well described in the research literature (e.g. Julkunen, 1989; Dörnyei, 1990; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1999; McLoughlin, 2004; Tse, 2000; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002; Graham, 2004; Gobel & Mori, 2007; Lim, 2007; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Within the field of foreign language learning (FLL), the significance of AT has also been well documented by most of the language researchers (Ely, 1986; Gardner, 1991; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; McQuillan, 2000; Tse, 2000; Ushoida, 2001; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Graham, 2004; Hsieh, 2004; Williams, et al., 2004; Lim, 2007; Gobel & Mori, 2007; Kun & Liming, 2007; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Rui & Liang, 2008; Lei & Qin, 2009; Gobel, Mori, Thang, Kan, & Lee, 2011; Pishghadam and Zabihi, 2011). The significant place of AT in foreign language learning and teaching (FLLT) is due to the search for causality's being functional in that knowing why one has succeeded or failed at the stages of learning a foreign language (FL) may increase later chances of success by taking appropriate instrumental action (Betancourt & Weiner, 1982). Likewise, Şahinkarakaş (2011) highlights the importance of AT in FLLT in her article by stating the following;

> Understanding the causal attributions of students is an important educational phenomenon that may require further investigation. This importance gains greater weight if the focus is on the students at the initial stage of learning a foreign language. Therefore, if the teacher begins to do so at an early stage in the students' language learning, it is possible to identify students' expectations of success and motivational styles that are to be encouraged in the classroom. (p. 5)

One another crucial factor which emphasizes the significance of AT in FLLT is that the number of foreign language learners is increasing and their experiencing failure in learning a FL is a common occurence. In other words, very few students seem to

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achieve an adequate level of FL competence even though many of them put forward a certain amount of effort or allocate their time to learn English. As a result of this, they develop a particular set of beliefs about their success or failure and make attributions with regard to their experiences in the process of language learning. The attributions they make in this process are extremely important for English language learning and teaching (ELLT) as they are signs of how they perceive their achievement, they show their current performance and they also shed light on future performance in learning English (Weiner, 1986; Weiner, 1994; Williams & Burden, 1997). Thus, it, in turn, facilitates to take precautions for the factors that hinder learning. In other words, based upon the analyses teachers make about their own beliefs about students and why they succeed or fail in achievement contexts, they can make changes where necessary. In the light of such knowledge, they can change the way they interact with their students, the tasks they assign, the way they teach, the learning environments they create together, or even their students' beliefs about their success and failure (Dörnyei, 2001). As stated in (Ford, 2006), the capacity to affect change in the classroom will often be referred to as teachers' power (or causal power) in the classroom.

By taking these facts into account, it is easy to understand that teachers' role here is crucial and complex. There are lots of things to do to help students believe that if enough effort is put forward, success is inevitable. Language teachers should help language learners become aware of their achievement attributions and control them. They should use more contextual knowledge in their assessments to be aware of the causes behind their students' success and failure, they should be aware of their own attributions about why students succeed or fail, and emphasize and model the importance of effort in achieving a successful outcome (Dörnyei, 2001).

In line with these ideas, Weiner (2000) also maintains that success and failure occur in a rich social context which affects and is affected by performance of actors including peers, teachers, and parents. Within his view, the crucial role of teacher on student motivation in language classrooms is clear. The importance of making attributions in achievement contexts has been expressed by some other researchers. For example, as Reyna (2008) stated in her article, making attributions about causes of students' success and failure is an intrinsic part of the educational system. Şahinkarakaş (2011) further adds that students are not the only individuals who can attribute causes

for success and failure in classroom settings but teachers also construct explanations for why their students succeeded and failed. While making such attributions, they attribute depending on causes and nature of their students' success or failure.

With these facts in mind, it is clear that AT is a very useful framework to understand how students experience their success and failure in language learning and the effects that teachers' perceptions can have on students (Weiner, 1979; Stipek, 1988). Clearly, depending on the conclusions made in plenty of researches, it is apparent that attributions of failure and success in EFL classrooms have implications for both students and teachers.

The central point of AT that constitutes the background for this research is that both teachers' and students' attributions about students' success and failure in FLL are important because they have consequences for the language learning process affecting students and teachers' expectancies for future success, their interactions and subsequent strivings. That is, how students and teachers explain students' success and failure in classroom may affect what is going on in the classroom about academic performances (Weiner, 1985, 2000).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

AT has been a popular theoretical framework (Försterling, 2001). However, few research studies have been conducted on attributions in the area of FLL though many researchers have stressed the important role of attributional processes in language studies in recent years (Williams & Burden, 1999; Tse, 2000; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002; Hsieh, 2004; McLoughlin, 2004; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Cochran, McCallaum, & Bell, 2010; Hassaskhah & Vahabi, 2010). Moreover, this domain of research seeks to answer, in one form or another, how individuals' attributions to success and failure influence academic performance in achievement contexts. All the research studies cited above have provided us with steady accumulation of knowledge about what kind of causal attributions individuals make to explain their success and failure in educational settings, how these attributions influence expectations for subsequent success or failure and emotions of students, and how they affect achievement behaviors (Weiner, 1979; Tse, 2000; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun,

2004). However, despite numerous positive qualities demonstrated in the above-mentioned attribution studies, much research with much further scope is needed in this area because of the generally high frequency of FLL worldwide (Dörnyei, 2000). Moreover, it is known that attributions vary across contexts, from culture to culture and from individual to individual. In other words, they cannot be generalized (Siegel & Shaughnessy, 1996). Even though many attribution studies have been conducted in many different cultural contexts, there has been very little research on FLL in Turkish contexts and no study in Adiyaman University.

In addition, there is no doubt that teachers also construct explanations why their students are successful or unsuccessful in FL classrooms. The attributions teachers construct for students' success or failure affect how they interact with their students, thus in turn, their behaviors or practices in the classroom settings. The need to study the crucial role of the teacher 'variable' on AT has been elucidated by some researchers (Gürel, 1994; Deniz 1998; Oktan, 1999; Dursun, 2000; Özdiyar, 2000; Can, 2005). According to these researchers, it is not sufficient for attribution studies to dwell on attributional processes in isolation from the essential role that the 'teacher factor' plays in this process as well as in the FL contexts in which these studies take place. For example, Reyna & Weiner (2001) have conducted a study into the type of action teachers exhibited dependent upon the teachers' attributions of students' negative academic outcomes. Through this study, they have realized that teachers are constantly being called upon to make assumptions about the causes of students' behavioral and academic outcomes (Reyna, 2008). It is also through this study that they have become aware of the central role of this 'teacher factor' in attribution studies. They end the study with a call for research attention to be paid to what causes teachers attribute to their students' success and failure in classroom settings. Kornblau (1982) takes a step further and has conducted a study concerning teacher-pupil relations. Through this study, they suggest that "the nature of teachers' attitudes, attributions and expectations for their pupils are translated into behaviors that affect pupil achievement and adjustment" (Thelen, 1967; Jackson, 1968; Rist, 1970; Brophy & Good, 1971, 1972, 1974; Helton, 1972; Willis, 1972; Good & Dembo, 1973; Kornblau & Keogh, 1980, cited in Kornblau, 1982, p. 1). The findings of this study showed classroom dynamics depend on factors such as teachers' beliefs and contextual influences. So, in order to

bridge the gap between theory and practice, classroom contexts should be discovered in their original settings. Besides, as stated in Beckman (1976), an attributional type of analysis has not been applied to teacher perceptions while parents' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding students' success or failure have been compared in few studies (Can, 2005). However, enough recent evidence remains at least suggests that teachers' perceptions regarding a student's attributes can affect that student's future performance without calling for research attention to how teachers' perceptions regarding students' success or failure are reflected in the classroom settings. Therefore, despite the common concern shared among these studies about the 'teacher factor', no further efforts are reported to have been exerted to explore the shape it takes as well as the way they are reflected in classroom settings. It seems that such insufficient knowledge of the 'teacher factor' has delayed the process of our understanding of the nature of attributional processes. Therefore, a more systematic study of this factor is called for. AT is an evolving field, and it is likely that further research will lead to additional practical insights regarding motivation. In this respect, this study will not only fill the gap in this research area, but the findings may also help shed light on further research questions in this area.

In addition, at Adiyaman University, most of the students tend to demonstrate low persistence and motivation during their language learning process. Thus, their grades in English exams are not satisfactory. Although there are no preparatory schools at Adiyaman University, all of the students have English courses as compulsory in their first year of university education. Hence, the importance of the role of EFL instructors in such a firm setting with limited time for ELLT cannot be underestimated. Thereby, it will be possible to gain insights about teachers' beliefs related to possible causes of their students' success and failure in English exams, and how teachers' perceptions regarding their students' success or failure and classroom practices are related. So, understanding EFL instructors' attributions regarding their students' success and failure in English exams may be of help for instructors to take precautions for the factors that hinder learning and thus, in turn, to achieve success in their English exams.

1.3. Aim of the Study

Therefore, taking these ideas as a starting point, this study aims to identify the EFL instructors' multiple causal attributions to their students' successes and failures in their English exams, with causal dimensions. Exploring the tensions between the instructors' attributions to their students' successes and failures in their English exams and their classroom practices are also aimed to be explored.

1.4. Research Questions

In this research, with the aims in mind, the study tries to find answers to the following research questions (RQ) which constitute the basis for the study:

RQ 1: What reasons do EFL instructors attribute to their students' successes and failures in their English exams?

RQ 2: How are EFL instructors' attributions to students' successes and failures and their classroom practices related?

1.5. Operational Definitions

The following list of terms is integral to this study:

Attribution: Attribution is defined as individuals' perceptions regarding reasons, explanations or causes of events or outcomes that happen to and around them (Ickes & Laydon, 1976; Kelley & Michela, 1980; Schunk, 1991; Försterling, 2001). According to Weiner's AT of Motivation (1985), attributions are the explanations and justifications individuals give for their success and failure. Weiner (1979, 1982, 1984, and 1985) highlighted that the causes that are attributed for success and failure affect their future expectations, emotions, motivation, and academic performance. In EFL contexts, they are the reasons or beliefs individuals construct for why they have succeeded or failed (Peacock, 2009).

Attribution Theory: A theory of social psychology proposed by Heider (1958) to explain why and how individuals create meaning about others' and their own behavior and how this relates to their thinking and behavior. AT of Motivation which was developed by Bernard Weiner is concerned with how a person's beliefs regarding the causes of academic success and failure have an effect on his/her emotions and motivation.

Teacher Factor/ Teacher Variable: The term, 'teacher factor', has been used in ELT in Bailey, Bergthold, Braunstein, Jagodzinski Flesihman, Holbrook, Tuman, Waissbluth, & Zambo's studies (1996) although it may refer to different things to different researchers. In ELT and general education, it has been acknowledged that "teachers' internal attributes such as beliefs, assumptions, knowledge and experience make up the 'teacher factor'" (Woods, 1996; Borg, 2006; Richards, 2008) and this teacher factor has a crucial role in determining teachers' perceptions and shaping their practices or actions in a classroom atmosphere.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The present study has several limitations. First of all, this study is limited to the EFL instructors of Adiyaman University and was carried out in 2012-2013 teaching year. For this reason, it is not possible to generalize the results of this study for all EFL instructors in Turkey. An important limitation of this study is also its small sample size. Moreover, the participants were not selected randomly (Adler & Clark, 2008). In addition, the study is a case study and it faced some limitations associated with this kind of work. Mainly, it was embedded in the social and physical contexts of the university which I studied and social and ideological contexts of the school. The study followed a qualitative orientation. Therefore, it was subjective. Also, this study used an interpretative inquiry approach, which means that the data presented originated from my own researcher interpretation of the observations, interviews, and documents. Hence, its findings may be unique to this particular case and may not generalize to other contexts.

Furthermore, one another limitation of this study is the fact that I worked at the same university with participants. This fact might raise questions about the researcher bias. While collecting and analyzing the data, the necessary precautions were taken to be able to take an outsider's perspective to events. Multiple data sources were used. A colleague with a master's degree checked part of my data and I compared her groupings and analyses with mine. Any differing points were discussed for clarifications.

One of the other limitations that is related to the study setting needs to be pointed out as well. The present study was carried out in one particular city of Turkey. Previous studies have shown that individuals' causal attributions and beliefs related to individuals' academic achievement are influenced by the surrounding culture

(Kornblau, 1982; Holloway, 1988; Lummis & Stevenson, 1990; Stevenson & Lee, 1990; Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990; Crystal & Stevenson, 1991; Bugental & Happaney, 2002). So, some of the results might turn out to be differently in some other sociocultural contexts.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on a) attribution and attribution theory, b) attribution research. The first section describes the meaning of attribution, the history of attribution, the meaning and the history of AT, and the background of Weiner' model of AT. The second section details attribution researches carried out in Turkey and other contexts. This section is devoted to the work on FLLT. Finally, the last two sections provide an overview of literature on AT.

2.1. Attribution and Attribution Theory

In everyday life, human beings explore causes or explanations behind their or others' events or actions. Individuals' causes or explanations to control the environment, to penetrate themselves and their surroundings are called *attributions*. In other words, attributing causes to events that usually happen in the environment has been considered as a human tendency. Since it is interesting and informative to understand the process of making attributions and how and under what conditions individuals make certain types of causal judgments, attribution and AT are explained and discussed in detail in the following parts.

2.1.1. Attribution

Before describing the basic principles of AT, it is useful to understand exactly what is meant by the term *attribution*. In social environments, individuals have a need to understand how their own and others' behaviors may cause the outcomes they experience in that situation. In this process, they do not only observe events or behaviors happening around them, but they also have a tendency to explain and understand the causes behind the behaviors and environmental occurrences to gain order and predictability in their own world (Heider, 1958; Försterling, 2001; My Website, 2013). To this end, they are constantly involved in a pursuit of the causes behind their or others' behaviors or actions and look for explanations for how and why their own and other individuals' behaviors and behavioral outcomes happen (Försterling, 2001; My Website, 2013). Thus, an attribution occurs when an individual assigns a cause to

his/her or others' events or behaviors in a social interaction (Weiner, 1986). In that sense, *attributions* refer to the causal explanations that individuals assign to the events that happen to and around them (Banks & Woolfson, 2008).

Since Heider (1958) proposed the term attribution*,* attribution has become one of the most active areas of social psychology and has been extensively researched in many academic disciplines (Kelley & Michela, 1980). Not surprisingly, then, attribution has been defined by a number of researchers who believe that the underlying process of attempting to understand the world around us is universal, pervasive, and predictable. Ickes & Laydon (1976) define attribution as "the way in which individuals explain the causes of positive and negative events in their lives" (p. 2). According to Manusov & Spitzberg (2008), attribution is "the internal (thinking) and external (talking) process of interpreting and understanding what is behind our own and others' behaviors" (p. 2). Similarly, Ellis (1985) explains attribution as "causal statements that answer 'why' something happened" (p. 32). In short, there is a number of definitions for attributions, but a common way to define 'attribution' is "the process in which people attempt to explain the causes of their and others' behaviors" (Satıcılar, 2006, p. 44).

Similarly, in an educational setting, learners are constantly involved in a pursuit of the causes or the reasons of their success or failure. In that sense**,** those reasons constructed by learners serve as attributions that explain why they succeed or fail at a particular task and are indicators of their perception of achievement. Attributions in educational settings have been explored and defined by a number of researchers. For example, Weiner (1974) explains that attributions reflect students' explanations for their success or failure. Furthermore, Eggen & Kauchak (1994) define attributions as "… explanations for learners' success or failure" (p. 444). In line with Weiner (1974) and Eggen & Kauchak (1994), Fairbarin, Moore, & Chan (1994) define attributions as "what students perceive as the cause of their success and failure in school" (p. 51). According to these definitions, a common way to define attributions in educational settings is the way in which learners explain the causes of their success and failure in their educational lives and they give insights into the causes of events or actions (Wong & Weiner, 1981). Thus, attribution, stated as the process of inferring the causes of events or behaviors, has been widely applied in branches of psychology and related

disciplines under the title of '*Attribution Theory*'. AT and its components are explained in the following part.

2.1.2. Attribution Theory

The process of trying to find why events have occurred is so crucial that the Austrian psychologist Heider (1958) characterize it as a human tendency in his book, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. He argues that people behave as 'naive scientists' who have a need to predict and control the environment (Hewstone, Fincham, & Foster, 2005; Manusov & Spitzberg, 2013). Can (2005) adds that "they impose structure to social stimuli and to the environment, make inferences from those structures and behave in accordance with them" (p. 17). Consequently, he concludes that to predict and control the outcomes, an awareness of the causal structure of human behavior is essential.

By taking Heider's core ideas into account, psychologists have taken a keen interest in attributions and a family of theories have been developed to explore why people behave this way, why these meanings have been attributed to these behaviors, how we know the data which are the sources of people's expectations, aspirations, confidence, fears, concerns, values, and attitudes, whether our guesses about other people's behaviors are true or false, etc. (Duman, 2004). In other words, they try to outline the relationship of people's attributions to their thoughts, feelings, and their behavior. This set of theories, collectively called *Attribution Theory*, is concerned with "the 'how' and the 'what' by which people process information in attempting to understand events, judge those events, and act on those events" (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2013, p. 2). Thus, AT is a cognitive theory that was proposed to explain why and how we create meaning about others' and our own behavior. This theory focuses on how a person uses information in his/her social environment to attribute a cause for events or behaviors. AT also provides explanations for why different people can interpret the same event in different ways and thus helps us understand how people arrive at explanations for their behavior and the behavior of others.

Attribution theory is a topic within the field of social psychology which seeks the ways in which people search for causal explanations for events in their lives, other people's behavior or their own behavior (Weiner, 1974, 1979; Alderman, 1999). Such

explanations are constructed through a process of causal attribution whereby people attribute outcomes, events or behaviors to particular causes. It is a theory about how common sense operates; therefore, these are not the actual causes but perceived causes of behavior by the individual. In AT, it is crucial to note that the focus is on perceived (interpreted causes) rather than actual causes and they can have considerable psychological and behavioral consequences, regardless of their accuracy because as in other cognitive approaches, the central focus of AT lies in the investigation of thoughts or cognitions (Zaltman & Wallendorf, 1983). To illustrate, the actual cause of why a person failed an exam would not fall in the realm of AT. However, how the person interprets the negative outcome and, thus, what he or she perceives as the cause of the negative outcome is the main focus of this theory (Stipek, 1988; Weiner, 2000; Försterling, 2001).

AT, introduced by Fritz Heider and developed by other scholars including Kelley, Jones, Ross, Davis, and Weiner, is a dominant conception in the area of motivation, social psychology, and educational psychology (Feshbach, Weiner, & Bohart, 1996). Heider (1958) and Kelley (1967, 1972) were among the first to describe the causal attribution process that people use to explain events that occur in their lives. The one who has related AT to achievement motivation is Bernard Weiner and Weiner's model of AT has been probably the most influential contemporary theory with implications for academic motivation since 1970s (Weiner, 1974). His AT, in an educational setting, depends upon the notion that "different learners will have different understandings and create their own meanings that are personal to them" (Özkardeş, 2011, p. 23). In that sense, those beliefs or reasons behind their success or failure at a particular task serve as attributions. Therefore, in an educational setting, AT is concerned with individuals' attributions for their own successes and failures as well as others' attributions for individuals' successes and failures (Weiner, 2013). It also assumes that individual's beliefs about causes of outcomes will influence expectancies and their subsequent actions and also create different affective and emotional reactions (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1979; Försterling, 2001). In short, the guiding principle of AT is that people search for the causes behind why something has occurred to understand the environment. The search for causality is functional in that knowing one has succeeded

or failed might increase later chances of success by instigating appropriate instrumental action.

Consequently, AT achieved a unique status among contemporary motivation theories as the first theory because it manages to link individuals' past experiences with their subsequent efforts by introducing causal attributions as the mediating link (Dörnyei, 2003). Attribution subject which gained ground in the 1950s in social psychology has become mainly a part of educational psychology since the mid 1970s and a number of attribution studies have been carried out after that. Therefore, in order to better see how AT has a powerful empirical support and has stood the test of time, the origin of AT and Weiner's model of AT are explained in the following parts.

2.1.2.1. History of Attribution Theory

Historically, while origins of causal explanations can be traced back to the philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant, Hum, and Mill, the original and most important cause of AT is Psychologist Fritz Heider who was the first to propose a psychological theory of attribution in his 1958 book, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (Taşkıran, 2010; Özkardeş, 2011). According to Rudolph & Reisenzein (2013), "It is only rarely the case in psychology that a single publication serves as a lighthouse, providing both the point of departure and a continuing reference point for subsequent researchers" (p. 3). Likewise, Lakatos (1978) stated that Heider's book played a pivotal role in starting a major research paradigm of social psychology. In line with Lakatos (1978), Jones, et al. (1972) highlight: "It is due to Heider more than to any other single individual that attribution theory can be 'attributed'" (p. Xi) as Heider (1958) made several contributions that laid the foundation for further research on AT. In his book, Heider (1958) introduced what he called 'naive psychology' to have a better understanding of the ways people try to make sense of every single event that occurs in their lives. In his book, Heider (1958) asserts that all people are 'naive psychologists' who have an innate desire to explain and interpret the causes of behaviors and outcomes or to assign causality for behavioral events to make sense of the world and to perceive the world as predictable and hence controllable (Hewstone, 1989; Davis & Lennon, 1991; Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008; Fatemi, Pishghadam, & Asghari, 2012). Basically, Heider's AT relies upon three-step process:

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1) People believe that there are causes behind behaviors;

2) People believe that it is important to understand why others behave as they do;

3) The cause of behavior is within a person, a situation, or both (Sweeton & Deerrose, 2010).

He argues that in order to explain events, people need to make some kind of inference about either the person (e.g. internal causes, such as ability) or the environment (e.g. external causes, such as task difficulty). In other words, according to Heider, there are two groups of concepts for the explanation of behavioral outcomes. In that way, he differentiated personal causes from situational causes. For example, if we were discussing why a particular learner has become unsuccessful in an exam, we would consider either personal factors (such as his or her academic ability and how hard he or she studied) or situational factors (such as whether he or she had good tuition and devoted sufficient time to study). Heider later argues that we have a tendency to overestimate internal or personal factors and underestimate situational or external factors when explaining behaviours (Hewstone, Fincham, & Foster, 2005). This tendency has become known as fundamental attribution error.

Heider's work had some effect on the attribution theorizing of John & Davis, and Kelly (Hewstone, 1989; Lennon & Davis, 1989). Jones & Davis (1965) examine how the social perceiver makes attributions about the causes of other people's behavior in their model of attributional processes 'Jones and Davis's correspondence of inference theory'. They argue that we tend to make correspondent inferences when we try to explain and understand other people's behavior. They claim that this tendency is due to our need to view people's behavior as intentional and predictable, reflecting their underlying personality traits. In other words, "dispositional attributions often take the form of assigning a number of traits to the person in spite of the inadequate empirical evidence for their existence" (Jones & Nisbett, 1972, p. 12). However, it is not always easy to make correspondent inferences. The information we have to make inferences may not be enough, requiring us to draw additional cues in the environment (Hewstone, Fincham, & Foster, 2005).

Expanding on Heider's ideas, Kelley (1967, 1980), on the other hand, focuses on the conditions in which people ascribe their behaviors to internal or external factors

(Kelley & Michela, 1980). According to Kelley, perceivers examine three different kinds of information (consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus) in their efforts to see how a person's behavior co-varies across time, place, and different targets of behavior. Consistency information refers to whether the target person always responds in the same way to the stimulus across time and circumstances. Distinctiveness information refers to whether the target person responds in the same way to other stimuli as well. Consensus information refers to whether all or only a few people behave towards the same stimulus in the same way as the target person. Kelley proposes that the levels of these behavioral co-variables provide the perceiver the informational basis or assessing the behavior of the target person. As it can be easily understood from Kelley's ANOVA model, the theory is concerned with how perceivers assign responsibility for the outcomes of other people (Martinko, 1995). It claims that a clear and specific attribution can be made with the combination of these three sources of information (Can, 2005). Moreover, Kelley's attribution cube predicts that when consensus, distinctiveness and consistency are perceived as high, then the causes of another person's behavior will be attributed to external factors by individuals. On the other hand, when consistency is high while both consensus and distinctiveness are low, the causes of another person's behavior will be attributed to internal factors by individuals (Attribution Theory, 2013). Ployhart & Harold (2004) stresses the importance of Kelley's co-variance model by stating that the value of the co-variation model is not as a descriptive model of attribution formation, but rather as a normative model of what individuals should do to make clear attributions.

Kelley's attributional mechanism gave inspirations to many other researchers about causal attributions and led Rotter to make a plain distinction between *internal* and *external* factors and thus to introduce one dimension '*locus of control*' to the AT. Psychologist Julian Rotter proposed in 1966 that expectancies of people govern their actions (Taşkıran, 2010). He maintained that "people vary in the degree to which they perceive the things that are happening to them as being under their own internal control or under the control of outside forces" (Darity, 2008, p. 56). Thus, the breakdown of the structure of causality logically began with an internal-external dimension (locus of control) which was brought to the AT by Rotter.

From Rotter, Weiner took the locus of control dimension. In addition to this, Weiner, et al. (1971) highlighted the requirement of the second dimension by stating that some of the internal and external causes change over time, whereas others remain relatively constant. To illustrate, while ability is perceived as a stable capacity, effort or mood are perceived to be changing from moment to moment or from period to period. Among the external causes the same reasoning applies. For example, 'success in rowing across a lake' may be perceived as being due to the unchanging narrowness of the lake or to the variable presence of the wind (Weiner, 1985). Weiner et al. (1971) thus identified four attributions frequently used by learners to account for success and failure in achievement related contexts: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck, within a 2x2 categorization scheme. Ability was thought to be internal and stable, effort as internal and unstable, task difficulty was classified as external and stable, and luck was thought to be external and unstable. Table 1 presents attributions together with their underlying dimensions within a 2x2 categorization scheme:

Table 1.

Weiner's original attribution model

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

Then, the shortcomings of the 2x2 classification became obvious to Weiner and his colleagues in 1983 who realized that the causes within the four cells did not truly represent the classification system and this led Weiner to call for less ambiguous entries such as aptitude, temporary exertion, objective task characteristics, and chance (Weiner, 1985). The identification of the third dimension of causality was then established with the same logical analysis of causal structure by Rosembaum (1972) who recognized that mood, fatigue, and temporary effort, for example, all are internal and unstable causes. In line with Rosembaum, Weiner (1985) further add that "they are distinguishable in that effort is subject to volitional control- an individual can increase or decrease effort expenditure" (p. 6). Thus, Rosenbaum added 'intentionality' as a third dimension.

Weiner, in 1979, termed this property as 'controllability' and also maintained that instead of 'locus of control' it would be better to label it 'locus of causality' to avoid confusion (Weiner, 1985). Therefore, Weiner's final model of AT included 2x2x2 categorization scheme with the three dimensions, locus of causality, stability, controllability.

Heider's understanding of attributional structure inspired many researchers and thus his attributional structure was taken up and extended by many social psychological researchers like (Rotter, 1966; Jones & Harris, 1967; Kelley & Michela, 1980; Weiner, 1986). As a result of these and many other researches, Weiner and his colleagues (Jones, et al., 1972; Weiner, 1974, 1986) began to look into the processes by which people explain successes and failures of their own and others and thus developed a theoretical framework that has become a major research paradigm of educational psychology (Özkardeş, 2011). Therefore, to have a better understanding of how and why Weiner's model of AT has taken a keen interest and has been widely applied especially in education and many other disciplines of psychology, Weiner's model of AT is explained in detail in the following part.

2.1.2.2. Weiner's model of Attribution Theory

The study of attribution was initially associated with Fritz Heider (1958). Later Bernard Weiner of the University of California at Los Angeles developed a more comprehensive theoretical model of AT. Försterling (2001) stresses the importance of Weiner's model of AT by stating that Weiner's attributional analysis of achievement behavior is the most comprehensive theoretical model about the influences of attribution on cognitive processes, affect and behavior. In his model, Weiner (1979, 1980, & 1986) focused his AT on achievement motivation by emphasizing the role of attributional processes in explaining the consequences of academic failure and success. A basic assumption of his model is that the types of attributions that people are likely to make are affected by both environmental and personal factors that in turn affect learners (Anderman & Anderman, 2013). Weiner (1979) posits that learners try to understand the reasons of their success and failure at a particular task by asking the attributional question, e.g., Why did I succeed or fail? He further notes that this causal search is undertaken following an event which is especially perceived as unexpected, negative or

important by the learner because of cognitive limits (Weiner, 2000). He also proposes that the perceived cause of the event is important regardless of their accuracy because whatever learners perceive the cause of the event will ultimately influence their subsequent learning-related affect and subsequent motivation to engage in a particular behavior (Anderman & Anderman, 2013).

The earliest version of Weiner's AT suggested that learners often attribute success and failure to four basic causes: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck. These causes were suggested as being the most crucial and widely cited causes of success and failure (Weiner, 1974). Weiner's conclusion that the most general and salient causes attributed by both teachers and students in identifying success and failure were ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck has received broad support from a number of further researches (Elig & Frieze, 1979; Burger, 1980; Frieze & Snyder, 1980; Burger, Cooper, & Good, 1982; Anderson, 1983; Cooper & Wilson & Palmer, 1983; Bar-Tal, Goldberg, & Knaani, 1984). However, Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning (2004) demonstrated that individuals can make countless attributions that can vary considerably among learners. Further research has also added a larger array of attributions to the list such as strategy, interest, family influence and teacher influence (Vispoel & Austin, 1995); mood, other person, condition in the home, previous experience, habits, attitudes, self-perception and maturity (Tse, 2000; Graham, 2004; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004). Then, Weiner himself acknowledged that the potential causes of an achievement-related outcome are infinite (Weiner, 1986).

One crucial feature of Weiner's AT is that the characteristics of the attribution which is classified along three causal dimensions: locus of causality, controllability, and stability are more important than the specific attribution being made by the individuals (Anderman & Anderman, 2013). Not the specific attribution but these important dimensions affect learners' future achievement striving. The locus of causality dimension refers to whether the cause is something within the person who has succeeded or failed versus something external to the person. According to this dimension, task difficulty and luck are external attributions that learners perceive the causes of their achievement as external to them while ability and effort are internal attributions that learners perceive the causes behind their achievements within them. The stability dimension refers to whether the cause is constant (stable) or variable

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(unstable) over time and situations. For instance, ability and task difficulty can be classified as a stable cause while effort and luck are unstable attributions that learners perceive the causes behind their achievements as unstable to them. Weiner proposed that attributions to stable causes give rise to positive expectations for success in the future in the face of success, while attributions to stable causes can lead to low expectations in the future when a student experiences failure. The controllability dimension refers to whether or not the cause is under the control of the person or other people. In that sense, only internal attribution effort can be considered controllable. In the following table, the relationships among the most common achievement attributions and dimensions are shown:

Table 2.

The relationships among the most widely cited achievement attributions and dimension (Eggen & Kauchak, 1994)

	LOCUS OF CONTROL	STABILITY	CONTROLLABILITY
Ability	*Internal*	*Stable*	*Uncontrollable*
Effort	*Internal*	*Unstable*	*Controllable*
Luck	*External*	*Unstable*	*Uncontrollable*
Task difficulty	*External*	*Stable*	*Uncontrollable*

As seen in Table 2, the main achievement attributions are classified along three dimensions; locus of control, stability, and controllability dimensions. When the dimensions are taken into account, the relevance of AT to motivation becomes more explicit (Weiner, 2000). Weiner's model indicates that expectancies for future success, certain emotional responses, and affective states such as pride, guilt, shame, etc., which have roots in Weiner's AT of motivation and emotion, are associated with each causal dimension (Weiner, 1979, 1983, 1985). Then, Weiner's model posits that they can altogether lead to an individual's subsequent behavioral consequences (Weiner, 1992). Emotional consequences of attributions ultimately affect individuals' subsequent behavior, therefore motivation to engage in a particular task (Anderman & Anderman, 2013). Regarding causal dimensions, Weiner also claims that attributing failure to internal, unstable, controllable rather than internal, stable, uncontrollable causes will

lead to more productive consequences for subsequent performance. Therefore, it is clear that it is very helpful for educational practice especially in FLL, in which interaction is highly vital, to raise the awareness of both teachers and learners about their causal attributions of their academic achievements (Özkardeş, 2011).

2.1.2.3. Main Attributions in Attribution Theory

Potentially, virtually an infinite number of causal attributions that an individual could make are available in memory. However, within the achievement domain, relatively a small number of causal attributions from the vast array tend to be salient. Weiner, Russell, & Lerman (1979) identified four common causal attributions used by individuals to explain their success or failure within the achievement domain such as their ability to perform the task (ability), the degree of effort expanded (effort), the degree which luck is responsible for the outcome (luck), and how difficult the task is (task difficulty).

Understanding these four main causal attributions is of high importance in educational settings. As Graham (1994) and Weiner (1986) state, individuals' attributions for success or failure, whether real or perceived, can be used in the interpretation of their previous success and failure experiences to explain their present performance and in the prediction of their future performance. In the following part, the main causal attributions and their importance in AT are explained.

2.1.2.3.1. Ability

One of the most frequently mentioned causal attributions that learners attribute their achievements in educational settings is ability which is a relatively internal and stable factor over which the learner does not exercise much direct control. If a learner has become unsuccessful at a particular task repeatedly, whatever s/he does to be successful, s/he is more likely to assume that s/he doesn't have the ability to accomplish the task, and thus s/he may attribute his or her failure to a lack of ability. It is clear that learners' past experiences of failure and success are directly related to ability attributions.

As indicated before, when a learner attributes his or her failure to low ability that is external, stable, and uncontrollable, s/he will probably lose his or her expectation for

subsequent success and this situation will finally enable the learner to think that s/he has no control over the outcome and lacks in motivation to behave. Thus, it would be useless to put forward any effort to attain success (Brophy, 1998; Keblawi, 2009). This maladaptive behavior is called as *learned helplessness*. On the other hand, attributing the cause of success to internal and controllable factors such as ability is thought to be adaptive because this kind of attribution raises self-efficacy and experiences a sense of control which encourages learners to put forward further effort to achieve success in the future (Schunk & Gunn, 1986; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Learners with this maladaptive style are more likely to feel a sense of shame because they believe that however hard they endeavor, the outcome they get will never get better (Weiner, 1985). On the contrary, when learners attribute their success to high ability, they are more likely to feel increased pride and great happiness. Their self-esteem, in turn, is increased. Moreover, these learners with higher self-esteem will have high expectations of success in the future and therefore they are highly motivated for success (Thompson, 1994; Covington, 2002).

Besides, learners' causal attributions to ability are related to the performance and percentage of others who are successful. For instance, if a learner fails in a task while most others succeed in it, the learner will probably attribute his/her failure to a lack of ability. Conversely, when a learner succeeds in a task while others become unsuccessful at it, the learner will attribute his/her failure to ability and feel pride. Therefore, understanding attributions to ability is of high importance in educational contexts.

2.1.2.3.2. Effort

Effort which is an internal and unstable factor over which the learner can exercise a great deal of control is another regularly cited factor by learners when they attribute their achievement to. For example, if a learner has studied and done well in previous exams and could not study enough beforehand and so s/he failed, s/he attributes his/her failure to insufficient effort. For this reason, s/he is more likely to feel guilty or regret and a better performance can be expected from him/her in the subsequent tasks. Such a case enables him or her to believe that his/her achievement is under his/her control and s/he can do well if s/he studies hard. In other words, learners' attributions to effort affect their emotional reactions to achievements. Likewise, when a

learner succeeds in an exam and explains his/her success as due to hard work, s/he will have a sense of high-satisfaction and pride (Weiner, 2010).

In conclusion, attribution theorists assign ability and effort a pivotal role in achievement outcomes. Graham (1994) and Weiner (1992) state that ability and effort are the most widely cited attributions for success and failure.

2.1.2.3.3. Task difficulty

It is not impossible to come across learners who relate their achievements to task difficulty which is an external and stable factor that is largely beyond the learners' control. For example, when a learner becomes unsuccessful, s/he sometimes thinks that the task is too difficult to accomplish and it is almost impossible to be successful at it. Likewise, when a learner becomes successful at a task, s/he may feel that it is due the easiness of the task and so s/he can easily gain success in it. According to Weiner & Kukla (1970) and Frieze & Weiner (1971), learners' attributions to task difficulty are affected by other learners' success and failure as well. In other words, the greater the number of others who did well at a task, the more likely learners attribute their success to the ease of the task. Similarly, the greater the number of others who become unsuccessful at a task, the more likely learners attribute their failure to task difficulty.

In addition, according to Försterling (2001), success in a very difficult task will be probably attributed to good luck while failure at a very difficult task will be probably attributed to bad luck. This implies that attributions can be made to internal factors like ability and effort only when tasks are of intermediate difficulty (Bar-Tal, 1978). Moreover, achievement attributions to task difficulty cause decreased shame in the case of failure and decreased pride in the case of success (Satıcılar, 2006).

In conclusion, achievement attributions to task difficulty are likely to lead to a similar performance in the subsequent tasks. That's why; it is of high importance for learners to avoid attributing their failure to task difficulty to become successful in the future.

2.1.2.3.4. Luck

In the educational settings, a learner sometimes attributes his/her achievements to bad or good luck which is an external and unstable factor over which the learner

exercises very little control. In this case, a learner believes that s/he has not control over his/her success and failure and thus s/he cannot change his/her subsequent achievement and make predictions about it. For this reason, when a learner assigns his/her success to good luck, s/he is more likely to expect that failures might occur in the future. Conversely, when a learner attributes his/her success or failure to bad luck, a better performance may be expected in the future. However, if a learner always attributes his/her performance to luck, s/he believes that s/he cannot be more successful because s/he does not have ability and control to achieve it (Weiner, 1974).

Furthermore, a learner's causal attributions to luck, similar to task difficulty, may lead to less pride in the case of success and decreased guilt or shame in the case of failure. In other words, s/he believes s/he has no control over his/her achievement as s/he may not be so lucky or unlucky in the future. Thus, s/he may not put effort to achieve success in the future.

In conclusion, causal attributions regarding learners' achievements have significant consequences for future achievement motivation and behavior. There is a relationship between learners' attributions to luck and their feelings of decreased pride and shame.

2.1.2.4. Causal Dimensionality

In the achievement domain, where AT is thoroughly examined, it has been documented that causal search is most likely to be initiated to determine the causes of success and failure when the outcome is important or unexpected, such as a low grade given to a good student (Weiner, 1992; Moeller & Koeller, 1999). The most prevalent perceived causes of success and failure are ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. These causal attributions are in part interpretations of events based on informational variables, including past experiences and social norms (Weiner, 2000). For example, while a learner who fails an examination and has failed frequently beforehand is likely to attribute his/her failure to lack of ability, a learner who always succeeds examinations and has failed an examination may attribute his/her failure to bad luck or low effort. In other words, the same attributions may not be relevant when one is explaining the reasons for his or her own failure or success against the causes of another's inappropriate social behavior (Graham, 1997). However, what these causal preferences

mean in the context of an attributional theory of motivation is of high importance rather than what learners attribute their success or failure to. It has therefore been of high importance and necessity for the AT to focus on the underlying properties of attributions in addition to specific causes per se. These properties labelled as causal dimensions that all causes share with varying degrees have been identified with some certainty as locus, stability, and controllability.

The first dimension is 'locus of causality' which refers to location of a cause as internal or external to the individual; that is, outcomes are either controlled by personal/internal characteristics and actions or they are beyond one's control and affected by external/environmental circumstances (Rotter, 1966). Likewise, Williams & Burden (1999) define locus of control as "perceived location of causes is internal or external to the learner" (p. 194). Aptitude, ability, and degree of effort are internal attributions while luck and task difficulty are external attributions. For example, when a learner becomes successful, s/he may believe that his/her success is because of his/her ability in English. In such a case, s/he attributes his/her success to internal factor: ability. On the other hand, if a learner who becomes successful at learning English may think his/her success is due to easiness of the task which is an external factor. Moreover, Weiner, Russell, & Lerman (1978, 1979) later found that the locus of causality dimension is closely related to affective states: gratitude, surprise, thankfulness, pride, confidence, and satisfaction; guilt, regret, aimlessness, anger, surprise, and hostility. Learners who attribute their success to internal factors report feelings of pride, confidence, and satisfaction while learners who attribute their success to external factors report gratitude, surprise, thankfulness. On the other hand, learners who attribute their failure to internal factors report guilt, regret, and aimlessness while learners who attribute their failure to external factors report anger, surprise, and hostility. It is therefore inferred that negative self-esteem is experienced as a consequence of attributing negative outcome to the self and positive self-esteem and pride are experienced when positive outcome is ascribed to the self (Weiner et al., 1978, 1979; Stipek, 1983). Lim (2007) asserts that the locus of causality dimension is also related to learners' future strivings along with their feelings of pride and shame. In other words, when learners have a sense of internal locus of control, their previous successes affect their subsequent expectations of success positively while their failures influence their

perceived probability of future success negatively. Nevertheless, learners who have a sense of external locus of control are less likely to connect their previous successes or failures to their future expectancies of outcomes. Studies carried out on attributions in achievement contexts relate internal attributions with higher actual achievement (Stevenson & Lee, 1990; Christenson, Kim, Dysken, & Hoover, 1992; O'sallivan & Howe, 1996). In other words, learners who are successful at language learning attribute their success to internal factors: ability and effort while unsuccessful language learners attribute their failure to external factors: luck and task difficulty.

A second dimension 'stability' is the second classification of attributions suggested by Frieze & Weiner (1971) and Weiner (1972) as necessary because luck which is an external factor fluctuates more than ability which is an internal factor. Stability is defined as "the potential changeability of a cause over time" by Williams & Burden (1999; p. 194). In other words, it refers to to what extent the causes are considered stable or unstable. According to this classification, ability and task difficulty are stable attributions while effort and luck are unstable attributions. Under Weiner's theory, the stability of causal ascriptions is linked to affects that implicate and shape future expectations for future outcomes. For example, stable causes for failure lead to feelings of hopelessness, apathy, or resignations which are associated with the belief that one's expectancies will not improve in the future (Graham, 1991). Weiner also suggests that attributing an outcome to a stable cause such as ability or task difficulty has a stronger influence on expectancies for future success than attributing an outcome to an unstable cause such as luck or effort. For example, if a learner attributes an outcome to a stable cause, it will increase the learner's expectation of similar performance in the future while the learner's unstable causal attributions lead to the expectation of different performances in the future (Woolfolk, 1998).

Controllability dimension - the last classification of attributions - refers to the degree which an individual perceives in accordance with his/her ability to control or change the factor. Whether attributions are controllable or uncontrollable is significant because learners who think the cause of the outcome out of their control are less likely to put more effort in the future. In other words, controllability dimension is closely related to learners' subsequent persistence and strivings. For example, if learners attribute their failure to lack of effort which is the only main attribution that is

controllable, they may believe that they can control their performance to achieve success. Similar to stability dimension, controllability dimension is also associated with feelings. If a learner attributes his/her failure to a controllable factor, s/he often feels guilty. On the other hand, when a learner attributes his/her failure to an uncontrollable factor such as low ability, s/he is more likely to experience feelings of shame, embarrassment, and humiliation. Moreover, when a learner becomes successful at a controllable task, s/he may feel proud, however, when s/he becomes successful at an uncontrollable task, s/he may feel lucky or grateful.

All in all, places of causal attributions on the dimensional scale are of high importance because cognitive processes that produce attributions have strong effects on the learning process. Not only learners' expectancies for future success, but also their affective states, subsequent behavior and performance are affected (Özkardeş, 2011).

2.2. Attribution Research

Attribution and attributional research have drawn interests of many researchers and been applied in a wide range of psychological disciplines (Försterling, 2001; Özkardeş, 2011). The distinction between 'attribution research' which concerns the manipulation and assessment of antecedents without considering consequences of the attributions and 'attributional research' which involves the measurement of perceived causes and their effects on behavior and expectancies is made by Kelley & Michela (1980) to shed light on the importance of behavioral change.

For attribution research, a great deal of research has been conducted on attributions focusing mostly on achievement contexts, causal dimensionality, young learners' attributions, attributions in language learning, gender differences, and age differences (Özkardeş, 2011).

For attributional research which aims to make use of theoretical and empirical advancements in the area of attributional theories and attributional principles to initiate behavioral change, a great deal of research has also been done on effects of attributions on helping behavior and students' interactions, social skills training, motivation, language learning anxiety, affective responses, self-efficacy, and self-esteem (Försterling, 1985; Özkardeş, 2011).

2.2.1. Attribution Research in other contexts

Research on attributions within the field of language learning is relatively limited though in recent years, a number of researchers have provided insights into the attributions for success and failure and the role of attributions in the area of FLL and SLL (McQuillan, 2000; Tse, 2000; Ushoida, 2001; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Graham, 2004; Hsieh, 2004; Williams, et al., 2004; Gobel & Mori, 2007; Kun & Liming, 2007; Lim, 2007; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Rui & Liang, 2008; Lei & Qin, 2009; Gobel, et al., 2011; Pishghadam and Zabihi, 2011).

In one of the qualitative studies carried out, Tse (2000) intended to examine perceptions of 51 American undergraduate and graduate FL university students and their attributions of success and failure. She used autobiographies to enable students to express how they perceive language learning. The findings indicated that the participants generally attributed FLL success to teachers' willingness to help students, a positive classroom environment, and family or community assistance from target language speakers, and motivation to learn. Also, they believed that good student-teacher interaction helped them improve their learning. Additionally, the students who did not feel successful tended to attribute their failure to lack of effort, lack of motivation, the teacher and mixed-level classes. In her study, Tse claimed that being aware of the perceptions of students has important pedagogical implications. She also added that it is easier to become aware of their affective states and decide how best to design certain classroom activities and methods in language classrooms with the help of information about students' opinions and attitudes toward language learning and classroom activities.

In line with Tse's (2000) study, McQuillan (2000) conducted a quantitative study in the USA to investigate 81 students' attributions of success and failure in FLL. The findings are in line with Tse's study. The most widely cited causes for success are motivation, a comfortable pace, a good teacher, ability, time and effort, level, and atmosphere while the most frequently cited explanations for failure are lack of time and effort, poor study strategies, and atmosphere.

In the qualitative study carried out by Ushoida (2001) the attributional patterns of 14 Irish university students rather than distinct attributions of them were investigated. She asked the students why they succeeded in learning French. The results revealed that

four attributional patterns among the students were: attributing success to personal ability, effort or love of French; attributing negative L2 outcomes to temporary shortcomings that may be changed; attributing negative affective experiences to the learning context; and attributing future success or changes in behavior to personal resources. She pointed out that these attributions serve to preserve a positive self-concept.

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

In the qualitative study carried out by Graham (2004), the relationship between attributions of learners of French and their achievement level was examined using sentence completion questions and interviews. The findings revealed that the English students who had high ability and effective learning strategies attributions had higher levels of achievement and persistence while learning French. Besides, the students who made more internal attributions had higher levels of achievement. Consequently, it was concluded that students who have adaptive attributional styles may attribute their success to ability and perceive this ability as a fairly stable and internal factor.

Hsieh (2004) aimed to find out the relationship between FL learners' attribution, their FL achievement and self-efficacy. The results of the quantitative research conducted among 500 participants in Spanish, German and French classes indicated that learners who made more internal, stable, and personal attributions got higher grades in FL classes when compared to those who made more external, unstable, and non-personal attributions. In addition, it was found that there was a positive correlation between self-efficacy and internal, personal, and stable attributions while there was a negative correlation between self-efficacy and external attributions.

Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun's (2004) study aimed to find out 285 secondary school students' perceptions of learning specific languages and their attributions to success and failure in the UK using open questionnaire. From the students' responses to open questionnaire, 21 categories of attribution to success and 16 categories of attribution to failure were formed. According to results, important discrepancies were found between boys and girls, ages, and the languages studied. Also, it was found that students attribute their success to effort, ability, interest and strategy use in language learning while they ignore luck and reward completely. Besides, effort was found to be the most widely used attribution for both success and failure among these attributions. Success oriented students attributed their success to effort more when compared to failure oriented ones. Older students were found to attribute their success and failure to strategy use more than younger ones. On the other hand, for success effort was attributed by both younger and older students, yet they tend not to relate their failures to effort.

Gobel & Mori (2007) conducted a study in Japanese context among college students to investigate perceived reasons for successes and failures in English speaking and reading classes using a questionnaire. They aimed to find whether there was a relationship between the students' achievement levels and their attributions by looking at how first-year Japanese university students judge their successes and failures. The results showed that compared to findings of majority of the studies carried out in that field, students who reported performing poorly ascribed failure to a lack of ability and lack of effort (internal reasons) while students who reported performing well ascribed their success to teachers and classroom atmosphere (external reasons).

The study of Kun & Liming (2007) focused on the effects of achievement attributions on self-regulated language learning behaviors. The findings revealed that one crucial factor influencing self-regulated learning behaviors is achievement attributions and different patterns of attributional beliefs affect self-regulated language learning beliefs in different ways to different extents. Moreover, it was found that maladaptive attributions, such as attribution of failure to ability, have negative effects on self-regulated language learning behaviors whereas adaptive attributions, such as attribution of success to effort or ability, are positively correlated with self-regulated language learning behaviors.

Lim's (2007) study focuses on learners' perceptions and beliefs about the ability to affect the learning outcomes in language classrooms and how this information is related to the anxiety of these learners. That students who had higher internal locus of control would experience less anxiety, which would show there would be a negative correlation between locus of control and anxiety was one of the hypotheses claimed in the study. The results revealed that learners' attributions for success and failure in FLL are directly related to their language learning anxiety. It was also found that learners who attributed their achievements in FLL to external causes, which they believe they have no control over their achievement, had lower language anxiety compared to those who attributed their achievement to internal causes that they have control over their achievements. These findings were in contrast to the predictions.

In order to explore the motivation of 500 undergraduate FL learners in the US, Hsieh & Schallert (2008) attempted to examine the relationship between two motivational constructs, self-efficacy ratings and student attributions using dimensions of attributions and asking about actual reasons for a real outcome. Findings indicated that adaptive attributions ascribed by FL learners for failure are correlated with higher self-efficacy ratings. To illustrate, students who made adaptive attributions indicated that failure was due to lack of effort, not to lack of ability.

The study of Rui & Liang (2008) conducted in Asian context with Chinese learners underlines the importance of adaptive attributions focusing on causal dimensionality and its behavioral effects. In the study, it was found that adult learners are more likely to exert effort and persist when they attribute their performance to internal and controllable causes rather than to external or controllable causes. Attributing success to internal, stable and controllable causes makes the learners believe that they will be successful on the similar subsequent tasks and thus this belief will result in learners' confidence. On the other hand, attributing success to more external, less stable and controllable reasons will lead to experience of less confidence.

The study by Lei & Qin (2009) was carried out to investigate the relationship between Chinese tertiary-level EFL learners' attributions and their English learning achievement. The results showed that the teacher and effort factors were strongly predicted attributions for success in learning English while lack of confidence, lack of practical use and test-oriented learning were strongly predicted attributions for failure.

In another study, Gobel, Mori, Thang, Kan, & Lee (2011) investigated the reasons behind why successful and unsuccessful students in FL and L2 classes make different attributions and how these attributions are related to cultural forms. To find answers to the RQs, they compared the attributions of Thai, Japanese and Malaysian learners' attributions for success and failure in learning English as a first or second language. The results indicated that all three groups showed some salient similarities in the manner in which they ascribed reasons behind their successes and failures. The number of attribution attributed for successes by all three groups is much more than the number of attribution attributed for failure by all three groups. It was also found that in the event of success, they all seemed to focus more on external factors, especially teacher influence while in the event of failure, they all seemed to focus more on internal factors such as lack of ability, preparation and effort, and inappropriate use of strategy.

Pishghadam & Zabihi (2011) conducted an attribution study to 209 EFL learners in Iran context to find out the relationship between EFL learners' attributions for success and failure and their achievement in FL classes using the Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II) and the Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS). To find answers to RQs, learners' language achievement was compared with specific causal attributions (ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, and teacher) and their dimensions. Significant correlations were found between LASS as well as CDS-II subscales and learners' final scores. It was also found that learners who attributed the outcome of their test to effort got higher grades on the final exam and that only stable and internal attributions significantly predicted learners' FL achievement.

In short, all of the studies mentioned so far seem to verify the fact that attributional processes play a crucial role in a variety of ways in achievement contexts. However, in the area of language learning, most of the studies carried out in foreign countries have focused on the perceptions of FL university students and their attributions of success and failure (Tse, 2000), the students' attributions of success and failure in FLL (McQuillan, 2000), the attributional patterns of university students in learning French (Ushoida, 2001), the attributions of EFL schoolchildren for their success and failure in learning English (Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001), the relationship between attributions of learners of French and their achievement level (Graham, 2004), the relationship between FL learners' attribution, their FL achievement

and self-efficacy (Hsieh, 2004), the students' perceptions of learning specific languages and their attributions to success and failure (Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004), perceived reasons for successes and failures in English speaking and reading classes (Gobel & Mori, 2007), the effects of achievement attributions on self-regulated language learning behaviors (Kun & Liming, 2007), the relationship between learners' perceptions and beliefs about the ability to affect the learning outcomes in language classrooms and the anxiety of these learners (Lim, 2007), the relationship between two motivational constructs, self-efficacy ratings and student attributions (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008), the importance of adaptive attributions on causal dimensionality and its behavioral effects (Rui & Liang, 2008), the relationship between EFL learners' attributions and their English learning achievement (Lei & Qin, 2009), the reasons behind why successful and unsuccessful students in foreign and second language classes make different attributions and how these attributions are related to cultural forms (Gobel, Mori, Thang, Kan, & Lee, 2011), the relationship between EFL learners' attributions for success and failure and their achievement (Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2011). In other words, almost all of the studies have been carried out to investigate learners' attributions for success or failure in the area of language learning, though the importance of teachers' causal attributions have been emphasized by some of these researchers in recent years. When the crucial role of teachers and the high frequency of failure among learners of English are thought, the need to study teachers' causal attributions regarding their students' success and failure in learning English can be emphasized.

2.2.2. Attribution Research in Turkish Context

Although within the field of language learning AT has received increasing attention and the importance of attributions has been expressed over and over by many researchers in the literature (e.g. Julkunen, 1989; Dörnyei, 1990; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Schmidt et al., 1996; Skehan, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1999; Tse, 2000; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002; Graham, 2004; McLoughlin, 2004; Gobel & Mori, 2007; Lim, 2007; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008), in recent years, research conducted on attributions in achievement contexts, especially in the area of FLLT is relatively limited, especially in Turkish context. Researchers mainly

focused on achievement attributions (Özduygu, 1995), language learners' past and present experiences and attributions for success and failure (Kayaoğlu, 1997), attributional thinking of university students (Brown, Gray, & Ferrare, 2005), achievement attributions of English language learners (Satıcılar, 2005), locus of control and selected characteristics such as class level and gender (Akbulut, 2006), the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and causal attributions (Büyükselçuk, 2006), the relationship between locus of control and achievement anxiety (Kapıkıran, 2008), EFL students' perceived success and failure and their perceived causes of the outcomes (Taşkıran, 2010), the dimensions of the causal attributions and learning styles of students (Koçyiğit, 2011), the factors affecting young students' successes and failures in learning a foreign language with the focus on the role of the perceived causal attributions (Sahinkarakas, 2011), the effects of a training program on EFL students' attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement and effort (Semiz, 2011), the achievement attributions of preparatory class learners for their perceived success or failure (Özkardeş, 2011).

Özduygu (1995) intended to investigate the achievement attributions of elementary school students who had high or low fear of success. No significant differences were found between these two groups of students in terms of their attributions. Nevertheless, the results showed that compared to unsuccessful students who tended to endorse more external reasons for their failure, successful students stated more internal reasons.

Similarly, Kayaoğlu (1997) conducted his study of the learning strategies of Turkish EFL and ESL adult learners to explore adult language learners' past and present experiences and to identify the reasons behind the learners' success and failure in the language learning process using an open-ended questionnaire. The results revealed that the learners attributed success and failure to different internal and external factors and these factors seemed to affect their approaches to language learning and behavior. The most stated reasons behind their success and failure are teacher-related and attributional factors. Moreover, the results indicated that their strategy choice was affected by stable factors such as ability, a good ear, and a good memory.

One important attribution study on cultural differences was Brown, Gray, & Ferrara's (2005) comparison study which examined the attributional patterns of 61

Turkish, 94 Japanese and 71 Chinese university students attending universities in Chigasaki, Japan, Beijing, China, and Ankara, Turkey. The results revealed that all three samples endorsed internal causes for both success and failure more than external causes. Turkish and Chinese students made more internal attributions for success than they did for failure while Japanese students were more likely to attribute their success to external factors and failures to internal factors. Besides, while Turkish and Chinese students endorsed ability and effort as causes of success and rejected luck and task, Japanese students endorsed effort, ability, luck, and rejected task, as causes of success. In other words, they agreed that effort is the key to success and failure is the result of lack of effort and also all three groups rejected task.

Satıcılar (2006) analyzed the achievement attributions of English language learners at sixth and ninth grades in Cumhuriyet Primary School and Tuğlacılar High School, two of the state schools in the city center of Tekirdağ in the fall semester of the 2005-2006 academic year. Gender, grade, outside help they get while learning English and learners' studying habits are the variables to investigate the differences in achievement attributions of English language learners. The results indicated that the learners tended to attribute their success and failure to internal factors in language learning. The most important cause attributed for success and failure was found to be effort. Gender was examined as one of the variables and it was found that female learners attributed their success to effort more frequently than male learners did and male learners attributed their success to ability more frequently than female learners did.

Similarly, Akbulut (2006) aimed to explore the perceptions of 161 university students, who were studying at music departments at Dokuz Eylül University, Pamukkale University, Süleyman Demirel University and Muğla University, towards their locus of control. The results revealed that 98 % students had internal locus of control. Gender was examined as one of the variables and it was found that female students had more internal locus of control than male students.

One of the other attribution studies carried out to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and causal attributions of 342 undergraduate senior and graduate students at Boğaziçi University was conducted by Büyükselçuk (2006). It was found that in failure situations regardless of the level of their self-efficacy, students tended to make more external and effort attributions. While high self-efficacious

students attributed their successes mostly to ability, low self-efficacious students made mostly external attributions for their successes and attributed their failures mostly to lack of ability. To increase self-efficacy of low self-efficacious students, Büyükselçuk (2006) suggested attributional retraining to change the attributional styles of them.

One another crucial attribution study was conducted by Kapıkıran (2008) to explore the relationship between locus of control and achievement anxiety among 594 high school students in achievement context in Denizli. Kapıkıran found the negative correlation between internal locus of control and achievement anxiety. Results also showed that students who thought the reasons behind their academic successes within themselves felt that they had more control over their performance to achieve success and so they had better psychological states. Moreover, it was found that internal locus of control helps them to feel less stressed and affects their expectancies for future success, behavior and performance positively, and thus it helps them to become more helpful.

A recent study has been conducted by Taşkıran (2010) to explore a group of 158 EFL Anadolu University Preparatory School students' causal attributions of perceived success and failure in language learning process in terms of locus of causality, stability, and controllability and to find out whether causal dimensionality of the students was healthy or unhealthy for forming adaptive or maladaptive future behaviors. To assess students' perceived success and failure and their perceived causes of the outcomes, the self-administered questionnaire was conducted and according to their responses the students were grouped as success-oriented or failure-oriented. It was found that the number of the students who perceived themselves as unsuccessful was slightly more than the number of the students who perceived themselves as successful. Compared to the causal attributions reported for success, the participants made more causal attributions for failure. The students who perceived themselves as successful made significantly more internal, controllable and relatively stable attributions than the students who perceived themselves as unsuccessful did.

In a more recent study, Sahinkarakas (2011) asked 52 students attending third grade between the ages of 9 and 10 to write a self-assessment paper in which they reflected on the reasons for their successes and failures in English to examine the factors that affect the students' successes and failures in learning a FL with specific

focus on the role of perceived causal attributions. The results of the study revealed that out of 52 students, 35 believed they were successful in English while 17 considered themselves unsuccessful. Also, the students mostly considered themselves responsible for their successes and failures than blaming external factors. As with success and failure attributions, the great emphasis was on effort.

Koçyiğit (2011), in his study titled 'Causal attributions and learning styles of university students, intended to find out the dimensions of the causal attributions to success and failure of 300 1st and 4th grade students of three different faculties of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Education, and Engineering in the academic year of 2010-2011 and to identify their learning styles using Causal Dimensions Scale II adapted from McAuley, Duncan, & Russell (1992) and Kolb Learning Style Inventory (1993). The results of the study indicated that attributions to failure are more external, externally more controllable but personally less controllable and stable while attributions to success are more internal, personally more controllable but externally less controllable, stable. In terms of learning styles, 43.7 % of the participants have assimilating, 32 % of the participants have convergent, 14 % have divergent and 10, 3 % of the participants have accommodative learning styles.

In the same year, Semiz (2011), in her study titled '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', aimed to determine the effects of a training program on 36 EFL students' attributional beliefs, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, achievement and effort, to enhance their self-efficacy, success and effort via the training program, and to investigate the explanations of EFL students of success and failure at School of Foreign Languages of Karadeniz Technical University during 2010-2011 academic year. According to the findings of the study, significant differences were found between successful and unsuccessful students in terms of their attributions. Successful students intended to make more internal and personal attributions (effort and strategy) compared to unsuccessful students. No gender differences were observed in terms of causal attributions. Also, important correlations were found between attributions, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs.

Similarly, Özkardeş (2011), in her study of achievement attributions of preparatory class learners at the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale Universtiy

for their success or failure in learning English, intended to find out the achievement attributions of preparatory class learners studying at School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale University, for their perceived success or failure using 'Achievement Attribution Questionnaire' developed by the researchers and interview technique. The results showed that the main attribution to which successful learners ascribed for their success most is the external, uncontrollable attribution 'having a successful teacher' and the three most cited attributions are internal and controllable causes: 'having self-confidence', 'enjoying learning English' and 'being interested in English'. Moreover, it was found that unsuccessful learners attributed their failure to an internal, controllable cause 'lack of enough vocabulary' and attributed their failure to external, stable, and uncontrollable factors such as 'difficulty of exams, short education term to learn English, and lack of background education' at significantly high level. Gender was one of the variables and it was found that the female learners tended to ascribe their success to internal, unstable and controllable attributions more frequently than male learners do. Proficiency level was one of the other variables and the findings revealed that the more proficient learners attributed their success to external factors such as 'having background education and the easiness of learning English' while the less proficient learners tended to attribute failure to external, stable, and uncontrollable causes such as 'lack of background education in English and short education term to learn English' in the case of unsuccessful learners.

There are very few studies conducted on teachers' causal attributions in achievement contexts although the importance of teachers' attributions has been expressed by some researchers (Gürel, 1994; Deniz 1998; Oktan, 1999; Dursun, 2000; Özdiyar, 2000; Can, 2005).

One important attribution study was carried out by Gürel (1994) to compare individuals' causal attributions concerning their life experiences with their attributional styles using Russell's Causal Dimension Scale (1982) and the Attributional Style Questionnaire. It was found that individuals' real life event attributions are not congruent with their hypothetical cases attributions on the dimension of stability and there are significant differences between types of attributions made for academic and social situations which raise doubts about the existence of an attributional style for individuals; that is, generalizable across different contexts.

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Another attribution study was carried out by Deniz (1998) to find out about teacher candidates' conceptions of a 'contemporary teacher', 'successful teacher', and 'good teacher'. A 'contemporary teacher' was defined by most of the participants (70%) as one who is in the pursuit of new teaching methods and materials and a 'successful teacher' was defined as one who assures that the students meet the learning objectives set for them by nearly half of the teacher candidates. Besides, a 'good teacher' was defined as one who has good interaction with his/her students by half of the teacher candidates and one who is 'generous' in terms of grading policy by 20% of the teacher candidates.

Oktan (1999) conducted a study to explore the relationship between self-actualization and attributional style of secondary and high school teachers and teacher candidates using adapted Turkish form of E. Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory (1964) and adapted Turkish form of Peterson et al.'s Attributional Style Questionnaire (1982). A negative correlation was found between teacher candidates' self-actualization levels and the stability of their causal attributions; however, no significant relationships were found between locus of causality and global scores, and self-actualization levels of neither the teachers nor the teacher candidates. The teaching experience was one of the variables and it was found that compared to male teachers with two to five years of experience, male teachers with six or more years of teaching experience had more attributional styles.

One another attribution study on teachers' causal attributions was conducted by Dursun (2000) to find out the relationships between teacher burn-out, attributional style, gender, level of education and years of teaching experience in high school teachers using adapted form of Seidman and Zager's Teacher Burn-out Scale (1987) and Peterson et al.'s Attributional Style Questionnaire (1982). The results indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between burn-out and years of teaching experience and there was a positive correlation between the generality of causal attributions across situations and burn-out.

Özdiyar (2008) conducted a study among 252 students studying at Primary Education at Faculty of Education of Hacettepe University in 2007-2008 academic year. 45 item-questionnaire and interview were used to collect data in the study. The findings revealed that the teacher candidates attributed their success to the lesson, the aims of the

lessons' being significant, interest in the course topics, teachers' ability to take attention to the lesson, and whether they like the teacher or not. In the same study, they attributed their failure to the course topics which do not draw their attention the course, the course topics or teachers that they do not like, measurement tools which are not clearly understood.

The other important attribution study on causal dimensionality and attributions by Can (2005) intended to analyze 231 elementary school teachers' causal attributions for their perceived success and failure in their professions in terms of locus of causality, stability, and controllability. Can (2005), in her study, used self-administered questionnaire composed of open-ended questions concerning areas the teachers considered themselves 'most successful' and 'least successful' in their profession, and the perceived primary causes of these outcomes, and Russell's Causal Dimension Scale. According to the results of content analysis, T-tests and one-way analysis of variance, teachers made more internal, stable, and controllable than they did for failure. Gender difference was also apparent as female teachers made more internal attributions for success than male teachers. Besides, compared to female teachers, male teachers tended to believe that they were more in control of their failures. No significant effect of amount of teaching experience and educational background on the causal attributions made for success and failure was found.

As a result, all of the studies mentioned so far seem to verify that AT is one of the most crucial research areas in the area of language learning and teaching. Studying teachers' causal attributions regarding their students' success and failure in language learning will help to clarify the underlying reasons behind students' success and failure and understand the cognitive reasons behind their performance and shed light on the way whether they act with the attributions regarding their students' success and failure in mind in the classroom setting, how they can act and help their students persist at learning English. Thus, perceiving attributions may be of help students to take control of their language learning outcomes (Williams & Burden, 1997). Moreover, being aware of teachers' attributions of student success and failure provides chances of changing both teachers' and students' achievement attributions with attribution training programs. When the high frequency of failure which is a common occurrence in learning a foreign language is considered, it becomes easier to figure out why it is so

important to understand both students and teachers' attributions regarding students' success and failure and how we can encourage these failing students to persist in the process of learning English. Although the need for further awareness of teachers' causal attributions is called for by some attribution researchers, there is still very little research that has been conducted in the area of language learning in Turkish context. In this sense, this study will help to bridge the gap in attribution research in FLLT in Turkish context.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the methodology adopted for this study. It contains information about the purpose, the research questions which informed the data collection methods and analysis, the mode of inquiry which was employed in this study, and justification of its choice, the population and the sample, the instrument that was used in the study, and finally the procedure and the analyses that were carried out on the data.

3.1. Research Questions

The purpose of the study is twofold. As discussed in the literature review, existing research on AT has been limited to language learners' causal attributions in the area of FLL with almost no focus on teachers/instructors' causal attributions regarding their students' success and failure. Although it is not certain, almost none of the researches carried out on AT has focused on the relationship between teachers' attributions to their students' success and failure in their exams and their classroom practices. Furthermore, studies on teachers' attributions have focused on teachers' perceived causes for their own success and failure, and there are few case studies on AT. The main purpose of this case study attempts (1) to identify the EFL instructors' multiple causal attributions to their students' successes and failures in their English exams, with causal dimensions, and (2) to explore the tensions between the EFL instructors' attributions to their students' successes and failures and their classroom practices. Specifically, with the aims in mind, the following research questions framed the study:

RQ 1: What reasons do EFL instructors attribute to their students' successes and failures in their English exams?

RQ 2: How are the EFL instructors' attributions to students' successes and failures and their classroom practices related?

3.2. Research Design

This study is a qualitative case study. In other words, it is descriptive in nature. It aimed to describe the EFL instructors' causal attributions to their students' success and failure in their English exams and to examine the instructors' perceptions about dimensionality of these attributional responses. It also intended to explore whether there are any relationships between the EFL instructors' attributions to their students' successes and failures and their classroom practices. Mason (2002) has stated that "Often qualitative researchers will use the existing literature……..as a background or springboard for launching their own research in ways to which connect it with current debates" (p. 19). The existing literature has emphasized the significance of studying what reasons teachers attribute to their students' success and failure and how these attributions are related to their classroom practices. It also pointed to be the crucial role of teachers' beliefs and contextual factors in determining the success or failure and to the connection between beliefs and practices in the classroom contexts (Woods, 1996; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Borg, 2003; Handal & Herrington, 2003; Borg, 2006; Keys, 2007). In the area of language learning, some researchers have also employed qualitative methods to examine learners' attributional beliefs in FLL and SLL (Williams & Burden, 1999; Tse, 2000; Ushoida, 2001; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004). In these studies, interviews, or questionnaire-interview data collection tools were used. Therefore, the existing literature was used as a background to inform and direct the research questions and design of this study.

In this study, data was gathered over one month (i.e., 6 weeks) involving an open-ended questionnaire administered at first, observations made during over 4 weeks for each instructor, and interviews used to collect qualitative data for the study as data collection methods. Before the open-ended questionnaire, the EFL instructors and the school managements of the participants were informed about the content, objectives, and procedures of the study. The school management and the participants helped the researcher fix time and classes for the study.

In the present study, before giving the questionnaires to the participants, the aim of the questionnaire was explained to the participants of the study by the researcher. After giving the questionnaires to the participants, the instructions and all the statements

were read to the participants of the study by the researcher. In addition to this, the participants were reminded that the data obtained from the questionnaire would be kept secret and they would not be used except for the present study. Similar to the qualitative studies mentioned above, the open-ended questionnaire in the form of short-answer questions employed to construct the questionnaire that is going to be used to elicit data in the main study was used. The reason why the participants were not given pre-determined causal explanations in this study is that attributions are context-specific and they might vary from one person to another. Instead, categories were let to emerge from the data gathered through the open-ended questionnaire in which they were allowed to come up with a variety of attributions. Therefore, the aim of the open-ended questionnaire was to permit greater freedom of expression to collect rich and detailed information about the EFL instructors' attributions to their students' success and failure in their English exams.

In order to investigate how the instructors' attributions to their students' success and failure are related to their classroom practices, in the study, students and the instructors were observed in their real classroom environment. Before recording the class hours of the English instructors, the participants of the study were invited to be the participant of the observations with the invitation letter by the researcher (see Appendix 1). Thus, the three participants of observations were purposefully selected for the study. The participants were also informed about the aim and the content of the observations by the researcher.

In the present study, interview was used as the third data collection technique to enrich the findings of the questionnaire and observations, and to gain more insights about the attributions of the participants and the tensions between their attributions and their classroom practices. To this end, semi-structured interview technique was utilized at last. The semi-structured interview consists of specific defined open-ended questions determined beforehand, but at the same time it allows for some elaboration in the questions and answers (Seliger, 1989). In other words, interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses. These questions have highly gained ground with researchers because of their flexibility (Nunan, 1992). In line with Nunan, McNamara (1999) states that interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. Thus, the

interviewer can be in a pursuit of in depth information around the topic. Therefore, in the present study, semi-structured interview was employed to supplement the data.

Table 3.

The outline of the research design

Participants	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
	The open-ended questionnaire	Classroom Observation 1	Classroom Observation 2	Classroom Observation 3	Classroom Observation 4	The semi-structured interview
All of the instructors	18.04.13	X	X	X	X	X
I1	18.04.13	25.04.13	02.05.13	09.05.13	16.05.13	20.05.13
I2	18.04.13	25.04.13	02.05.13	09.05.13	16.05.13	20.05.13
I3	18.04.13	25.04.13	02.05.13	09.05.13	16.05.13	20.05.13

The study was carried out in the schedule presented in Table 3. At first, before the observations, the questionnaire was administered to all of the EFL instructors working at Adiyaman University to explore what reasons they attribute to their students' success and failure in English exams. Then, over four weeks, observations were carried out to three of the instructors selected purposefully. I was a non-participating observer/instructor while collecting and recording data. After the observations, the semi-structured interview was conducted to the participants of the case study.

3.3. Participants of the Study

The study was conducted at Adiyaman University which is a state university in Turkey over a six week period between April and May during the spring term of the 2012-2013 academic year.

3.3.1. Questionnaire Participants

This study was based on the qualitative data collected by the open-ended questionnaire, video-taped observations and audio-taped semi-structured interviews which were conducted to the EFL instructors working at Adiyaman University in

Turkey. The questionnaire participants consisted of 17 EFL instructors working at Adiyaman University. These instructors were all of the EFL instructors who worked at the different departments of Adiyaman University in the spring term of 2012-2013 Academic Year at the time of the study. All of the participating EFL instructors who attended the study share the same native language which is Turkish. In other words, they are non-native English speaking teachers (Non-NEST). Initially, all of this population was administered to the open-ended questionnaire called 'Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire'. Then, three of them were selected for the case study which consisted of focused observations and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was administered between 15th and 19th of April in 2013. It was mass administered both at the conference site and in their office rooms. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed and all of them were returned, with a return rate of 100 %. Data collected by the questionnaire about the EFL instructors regarding their age, gender, teaching experience, educational background, and the level(s) of English taught were analyzed. Table 4 - 10 report the distribution of instructors according to the variables mentioned above.

Table 4.

Gender distribution of the sample

Gender	Non-NEST	
	f	%
Female	7	41.17
Male	10	58.82
Total	17	100

It can be seen from Table 4, of the EFL instructors who participated in the study, 7 (41.17%) were females and 10 (58.82%) were males.

Of the EFL instructors who participated in the study, 9 (52.94%) of them are between 20 and 30 years old, 5 (29.41%) are between 30 and 40 years old, and 3 (17.64%) are between 40 and 50+ years old (Table 5).

Table 5.

Age distribution of the sample

Age	Non-NEST	
	f	%
20-30	9	52.94
30-40	5	29.41
40-50+	3	17.64

Table 6.

Distribution of Instructors According to Their Teaching Experience as an EFL teacher

Experience	Non-NEST	
	f	%
1-5 years	8	47.05
5-10 years	4	23.52
More than 10 years	5	29.41
Total	17	100

As seen in Table 6, the instructors had a variety of teaching experience which ranges from 1 year to more than 10 years. Hereunder, 8 (47.05%) instructors had teaching experience as an EFL teacher between 1 and 5 years, 4 (23.52%) of them had between 5 and 10, and 5 (29.41%) instructors had teaching experience of more than 10 years.

Table 7.

Distribution of Instructors According to Their Teaching Experience as an EFL Instructor at a University

Experience	Non-NEST	
	f	%
1-5 years	11	64.70
5-10 years	2	11.76
More than 10 years	4	23.52
Total	17	100

As seen in Table 7, the instructors had a variety of teaching experience as an EFL instructor which ranges from 1 year to more than 10 years. 11 (64.70%) instructors had teaching experience as an EFL instructor between 1 and 5 years, 2 (11.76%) of them had between 5 and 10, and 4 (23.52%) instructors had more than ten years of teaching experience as an EFL instructor at a university.

Table 8.

Distribution of Instructors According to Their Teaching Experience as an EFL Instructor at Adiyaman University

Experience	Non-NEST	
	f	%
1-5 years	11	64.70
5-10 years	6	35.29
More than 10 years	0	0
Total	17	100

Table 8 shows that 11 (64.70) instructors had teaching experience as an EFL instructor at Adıyaman University between 1 and 5 years, 6 (35.29) of them had teaching experience between 5 and 10. There is none who had teaching experience more than 10 years because Adıyaman University was founded in 2006.

Table 9.

Distribution of Instructors According to the Level of English Taught

Level	Non-NEST	
	f	%
Beginner	13	76.47
Elementary	10	58.82
Pre-intermediate /Intermediate	6	35.29

As seen in Table 9, when the instructors were asked to state the level(s) of English they taught, 13 (76.47%) instructors noted that they taught beginner level learners, 10 (58.82%) reported that they taught elementary level, and 6 (35.29%) of them reported teaching pre-intermediate/intermediate level. The proportion of instructors who taught beginner levels is bigger than the proportion of instructors who

taught elementary/pre-intermediate/intermediate level. Of the EFL instructors above, 3 instructors (17.64%) only taught elementary level learners while 6 (35.29%) of them only taught beginner levels. 2 (11.76%) instructors taught both beginner and elementary levels while 1 (5.88%) instructor taught both pre-intermediate and intermediate level. 5 (29.41%) instructors reported teaching from beginner to intermediate level.

Table 10.

Distribution of Instructors According to Their Educational Background

Educational Background	Non-NEST	
	f	%
English Language and Literature	4	23.52
ELT	13	76.47
Total	17	

As seen from Table 10, 4 (23.52%) instructors have a diploma in English Language and Literature, 13 (76.47%) instructors have a diploma in ELT.

3.3.2. Selection of Participants

Selection of the case is important in case studies because the case(s) should be typical or representative of other cases. Stake (1995) stated that case study research is not sampling research. Rather than a random selection approach, informative cases were selected for this study to present contextual influences on EFL instructors' attributions to their students' success and failure and their classroom practices using the questionnaire findings as a background to select them. In other words, when selecting the participants of observations and interviews, Patton's (1990; 2002) 'maximum variation sampling' technique was followed. Based on Patton (1990) and Maxwell (1996), purposive sampling involves selecting particular settings and individuals/groups deliberately not based on the research questions, but also based on information available about these individuals/groups. The participating instructors were chosen on the basis of their potential for yielding data which could reveal teachers' attributions and their classroom practices in general.

3.3.3. Observation and Interview Participants

For the qualitative part of the study, as the next step, classroom observations of three selected EFL instructors were videotaped and one to one interview sessions were conducted with 3 participating instructors. Pseudo names were given for these instructors as I1, I2 and I3. I1 was a 46 years old male instructor who graduated from ELT department. He had 23 years of teaching experience as an EFL teacher and in the 14 years of it, he worked as an EFL instructor at a university. He has worked at Adiyaman University for 8 years. The level that he taught was elementary. I2 was a 28 years old female instructor who graduated from ELT department. She had 3 years of teaching experience as an EFL teacher and she started to work as an EFL instructor at Adiyaman University this year. She taught language learners from beginner to intermediate levels. I3 was a 38 years old male instructor who graduated from ELT department. He had 14 years of total teaching experience as an EFL teacher. He had 6 years of teaching experience as an EFL instructor as Adiyaman University. He taught beginner level language learners. Table 11 summarizes the key information about the three EFL instructors. All the names used were pseudonyms for confidentiality.

Table 11.

Summary of background information about the participants

Name	I1	I2	I3
Gender	Male	Female	Male
Age	46	28	38
Educational Background	ELT	ELT	ELT
Years of teaching experience as an EFL teacher	23	3	14
Years of teaching as an EFL instructor at a university	14	1	13
Years of teaching experience as an EFL instructor at Adiyaman University	8	1	6
The level(s) that s/he teaches	Elementary	Beginner to Intermediate	Beginner

3.4. Procedures

In this study, the data was gathered over one month (i.e., 6 weeks) with the questionnaire, classroom observations, and interviews used to collect qualitative data for the study. On the first day of collecting data for the study, the researcher collected the data with the questionnaire called 'Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire'. The questionnaire took approximately fifteen minutes.

The data from observations was collected to investigate how the instructors' attributions to their students' success and failure are related to their classroom practices. In the study, students and the instructors were observed and recorded in their real classroom environments. Before recording the class hours of the EFL instructors, the participants of the study were invited to be the participant of the observations with the invitation letter by the researcher (see Appendix 1). Thus, the three participants of observations were purposefully selected for the study. Meeting the participants, the participants were also informed about the aims and the procedures of the observations and the study by the researcher. Then, after midterm exams, recording the instructors' class hours started. The underlying reason for this was to give an opportunity to the participant instructors to get familiar with their students. The durations of the observations were presented in the following table:

Table 12.

The durations of the observations

Participants of the classroom observations	The dates and durations of the observations			
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
I1	1:12:06	1:03:51	1:17:00	39:05
I2	1:12:51	1:16:08	1:04:36	25:59
I3	1:33:51	1:22:25	1:16:28	14:45

Interview was used as the third data collection technique to enrich the findings of the questionnaire and observations, and to gain more insights about the attributions of the participants and the tensions between their attributions and their classroom practices. To this end, semi-structured interview technique was utilized at last. The durations of the semi-structured interviews were presented in the following table:

Table 13.

The durations of the semi-structured interviews

Participants of the semi-structured interviews	The durations of the semi-structured interviews
I1	37:43
I2	23:46
I3	28:18

3.5. Data Collection

In order to study the issues mentioned, a qualitative research design employed as a mode of inquiry. In order to establish a sense of reliability, several methods were included in the study. Data collection methods consisted of the questionnaire called 'Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire' in which the EFL instructors were asked to write their causal attributions to their students' success and failure in their English exams, classroom observations in which video and audio recordings of the three instructors' actual classroom practices were obtained, and follow up interviews in which the three instructors commented on their attributions, classroom practices and discussed the factors shaping these factors.

3.5.1. Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire

The questionnaire in this study was developed by the researcher. The statements of the questionnaire were determined according to the objectives of the study by the researcher. The questionnaire called 'Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire' was structured in 2 parts. The first part of the instrument aimed to elicit information about the subjects' gender, educational background, amount of teaching experience and the level(s) that they teach. The second part contains nine open-ended questions about the achievement attributions of the EFL instructors to their students' success and failure in their English exams. It was developed to investigate what reasons the EFL instructors attribute to their students' success and failure in their English exams, and try to examine dimensionality of these attributional responses with respect to different variables such as levels of the students (Appendix 2).

3.5.2. Classroom Observations

The students and the instructors in the EFL classroom were observed during their class hours. According to Wall & Alderson (1993), the perceived value of classroom observation is that it allows researchers to have more direct access to the teachers' behaviors and interaction patterns in the classroom. By taking this into account, classrooms observations aimed at examining the specific activities the instructors were engaged in related to their attributions. The main purpose of the observation was to find out whether there is a relationship between the instructors' attributions to students' success and failure in their English exams and their classroom practices. Meanwhile, it was hoped that conducting classroom observations might help determine whether the instructors' accounts of their attributions conform to their classroom behaviors. Four rounds of observations were carried out during the four-week period (between April and May, 2013) at the three case-study settings (I1, I2, and I3). In each round of observations, I observed the same classes of each instructor for three consecutive hours each. A total of thirteen hours of observation were conducted.

3.5.3. Semi-structured Interview

Interviews are commonly used in qualitative research. Cannell & Kahn (1968) defines interview as "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" (cited in Semiz, 2011, p. 77). Interviews can be placed on a continuum of formality, ranging from unstructured through semi-structured to structured. In this study, to gain richer and wider understandings of the instructors' attributions and their classroom practices and to counterbalance the weakness of one method with the strengths of another, interviews with the case-study participants 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 questions of the questionnaire and classroom observations regarding students' failure and success in their exams. Before being used for the interviews, the questions were reviewed by the researcher's supervisor to ensure relevance and clarity. The questions were designed to gain broad and in-depth views of

instructors' reasons for students' success and failure in English exams and their relation to the instructors' classroom practices.

Those students who agreed to participate in the case-study were also invited for the follow-up interview. All the case-study participants agreed to be interviewed. They were interviewed in Turkish and each interview took around 20-40 minutes. Interviews were conducted in the researcher's office and were audio-recorded with the interviewees' permission. The interview questions were phased 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. All the recordings were, then, summarized in English by the researcher.

3.6. Data Analysis

This study is descriptive in nature. Students and the instructors were observed in real classroom environment. Data were gathered from three sources. Qualitative research design was applied. Data were subjected to the content analysis. "Content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings (p. 453)" (Patton, 2002). In the content analysis, frequencies of occurrence of ideas were counted, recurring responses of different participants were noted and these data were interpreted. At the end, themes were specified and data were interpreted reflectively.

As the first step, the frequencies and percentages of the demographic data were tabulated. For the nine open-ended questions, content analysis of the data was carried out by the researcher and the supervisor. In order to analyze what the instructors attributed their students' success and failure in English exams to, each cause that the instructors mentioned for their students' success and failure was given a number. All causes were typed as two lists, one for 'Success causes' and the other for 'Failure causes'. By this way, there would be no confusion while reanalyzing the data. Two copies of the lists were made and taken by the researcher. The researcher analyzed the causes and assigned a meaningful label to each cause. The responses were discussed with the supervisor, and labels were assigned only when agreement had been reached on the final categories. Meanwhile, the data was reanalyzed continually in the light of

emerging labels. Then, the findings have been interpreted according to *locus of control* dimension.

Then, following each classroom observation and semi-structured interview, the tape and video 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 English by the researcher. Then, the findings have been interpreted in terms of whether there are any relationships between the instructors' attributions to students' success and failure in English exams and their classroom practices.

CHAPTER 4

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the analyses of the data gained from the questionnaire, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. The data obtained from these instruments was analyzed utilizing content analysis. The purpose of this study was to identify the EFL instructors' multiple causal attributions to their students' successes and failures in their English exams, with causal dimensions. A further concern was to explore the relationship between the EFL instructors' attributions to their students' successes and failures and their classroom practices. The results and findings of the analyses are presented in the light of the research questions.

First analyses included the entire sample of 17 EFL instructors. These analyses provided a picture of the various attributions ascribed by the participants for their students' successes and failures in their English exams. Then, the findings of each case are presented in three sections.

4.1. Findings of the Causal Attributions

This section presents the findings concerning the first research question. The findings of the questions asked on the open-ended questionnaire are presented in this section.

4.1.1. Instructors' attributions for their students' successes in their English exams

The first open-ended question was: *What reasons do you attribute to your students' successes in their English exams? If possible, describe briefly why?* The instructors were asked to identify the reasons they considered behind their students' successes in their English exams in the first open-ended question. A summary of the responses to the success attributions in English exams is provided in Table 14. The results revealed that nearly all instructors attributed their students' successes in their English exams to multiple causes. Specifically, for success, 16 instructors (94%) made at least two attributions, and 1 instructor (6%) made only one attribution.

Table 14.

Instructors' success attributions to their students

Participants	Success Attributions

1   -Regular attendance
       -Studying style/methods
       -Interest
       -Expectations
       -Success in other disciplines/ courses
       -Level of acceptance
       -Motivation

2   -Listening to the lessons
       -Working-in groups
       -Peer-assessment

3   -Attaching a great importance to the language for their future jobs
       -Having a good basic knowledge about the language

4   -Their effort
       -Their background level
       -The quality of the materials that are used

5   -Memorizing grammar rules
       -Not doing listening and speaking exercises in the exams

6   -Their regular study
       -The concentration of the students during the lesson
       -Having a purpose for learning English

7   -Their high motivation

8   -Having clear goals
       -Being ambitious
       -Having inner motivation
       -Studying regularly
       -Being aware of the importance of learning a language

9   -Studying to pass the exams and get higher marks
       -External motivation

10   -Their liking English as a subject
       -They enjoy talking a new subject
       -Necessary for their job

	-Liking their teachers
11	-Being afraid of their grades
	-Interest
12	-Focusing on grammatical issues
	-Focusing on the exams
	-We measure their grammatical knowledge
13	-Having sympathy for English
	-In the exam I ask what I have taught
	-Having a good prior knowledge
	-Having a desire to learn English
	-Being successful in other courses
	-Being active participants
14	-Being hardworking
	-Studying beforehand
	-Listening to the lessons
	-Asking further questions during lesson and afterwards
15	-Interest
	-Consciousness of the students
	-Willingness of the learners
16	-Enjoy talking about a hot topic
	-Their liking watching English videos as a part of the lesson
	-Knowing that English is so important for finding a job
	-Knowing that English is important for the official exams
	-Their liking their teachers as well
17	-Enjoy learning a new language
	-Liking English as a subject
	-Liking talking about a new subject in English
	-Thinking that English is necessary for their job
	-Thinking that English is necessary in the government exams
	-Their liking their teacher

Total	61

Table 14 shows that seventeen instructors reported a total of 61 causal attributions for their students' successes in their English exams. Almost all instructors most frequently mentioned students' characteristics, particularly *their regular study*, *motivation*, and *having clear goals* as the causes of students' success. *Having clear*

goals was the leading causal attributions and *motivation* and *their regular study* came in the second place.

It is noteworthy that instructors seldom mentioned their own teaching as a factor influencing students' performance in the exams. Enabling students to *work-in groups* and using *peer-assessment* as an assessment tool in the classroom were mentioned by instructors as causes of their students' success. These causes are related to instructors, especially what they do in the classroom setting. As seen in Table 14, there are just few attributions of success related to instructors. The instructors were more inclined to ascribe their students' success in the English exams carried out at Adiyaman University to students' characteristics. The only possible evidence for counter defensive attribution is the instructors' higher ratings of student factors when reporting students' success in English exams. These findings might have been obtained because instructors expect their own behavior to produce success rather than failure. Also, since there are some students who performed well in each classroom, the instructors logically could deduce that failure would not be due entirely to their own behavior or teaching.

Finally, analyses were conducted to determine whether multiple attributions differed along causal dimensions of success. For example, instructors were more inclined to view their first cause of students' success in English exams carried out at Adiyaman University as more internal within the students (i.e., *regular attendance*, *listening to the lessons*, *attaching a great importance to the language for their future jobs*, *their effort*, etc.) (see Table 14). Ratings of these causes indicated that the multiple attributions differed along Weiner's (1985) causal dimensions of internal/external, stable/unstable, and controllable/uncontrollable within each instructor. Answers to the first open-ended question were coded by the researcher and the supervisor into the following categories (see Table 15).

Table 15.

Causal dimensions of success attributions

Internal	%	External	%
Internal Academic		**External Academic**	
Effort	22.6%	*Others' influence and*	8.1%
listening (2)	3.2%	*circumstances*	
studying regularly (8)	13.1%	classroom activities (2)	3.2%
participating (2)	3.2%	task difficulty (3)	4.9%
regular attendance (1)	1.6%		
effort (1)	1.6%		
Success in other disciplines (2)	3.2%		
Background level (3)	4.9%		
Internal Nonacademic		**External Nonacademic**	
Interest/Personal Traits	42.2%	*Others' influence and*	1.6%
desire to learn English (5)	8.1%	*circumstances*	
interest (3)	4.9%	the quality of the materials	
level of acceptance (1)	1.6%	used (1)	1.6%
being ambitious (1)	1.6%		
being hardworking (1)	1.6%		
afraid of grades (1)	1.6%		
liking their teachers (3)	4.9%		
motivation (7)	11.4%		
enjoy talking about a new subject in English (3)	4.9%		
like watching videos as a part of the lesson (1)	1.6%		
Target setting	14.7%		
having clear goals (8)	13.1%		
having a purpose for learning English (1)	1.6%		
Note: * numbers in brackets refer to how many times they appeared in instructors' questionnaire			

As it can be seen from Table 15, the instructors' answers to the first open-ended question on the questionnaire were grouped in 4 categories: Internal Academic, Internal Nonacademic, External Academic, and External Nonacademic. Academic and nonacademic traits can be internal or external, stable or unstable, and controllable or

uncontrollable. In Table 15, only locus of causality was presented. Content analysis of the data suggested that success attributions could be grouped by 6 factors: *effort, success in other disciplines, background level, interest/personal traits, target setting,* and *others' influence and circumstances* (Table 15). The analysis revealed that their major attributions for success were *interest/personal traits* (42.2%), *effort* (22.6%), *and target setting* (14.7%). *Others' influence and circumstances* (9.7%), *background level* (4.9%), and *success in other disciplines* (3.2%) were the other attributions for success. Under *effort*, the most cited reasons, *studying regularly* (13.1%), *listening* (3.2%), and *participating* (3.2%) were mainly related to the students. In other words, the instructors mostly considered students themselves responsible for their successes in English exams. Other emerging internal academic attributions, which were related to the students' successes, were *success in other disciplines* and *background level. Success in other disciplines* (3.2%) was ascribed by two instructors regarding their student students' success in English exams while students' *background level* (4.9%) was mentioned three times by instructors. So, this shows that they are important for some students to become successful. The internal nonacademic attributions were grouped by 2 factors: *interest/personal traits* and *target setting*. Under *interest/personal traits*, the most cited reasons for students' success in English exams were *motivation* (11.4%) and *desire to learn English* (8.1%). *Motivation* was cited by seven instructors, and *desire to learn English* was cited by five instructors. It was followed by *interest* (4.9%), *liking their teachers* (4.9%), *and enjoying talking about a new subject in English* (4.9%). According to the instructors, one of the reasons of success in English exams including teacher is that students like their teachers. This may indicate the value of teachers in the process of FLLT these instructors place on their students' success in English exams. Each of these causes was cited by three instructors. Each of the other internal nonacademic attributions, *level of acceptance* (1.6%), *being ambitious* (1.6%), *being hardworking* (1.6%), *being afraid of grades* (1.6%), and *like watching videos as a part of the lesson* (1.6%) was cited by one instructor as for the cause behind their students' success in English exams. Under *target setting*, two reasons were cited by instructors. *Having clear goals* (13.1%) was cited by eight instructors, and *having a purpose for learning English* (1.6%) was cited by one instructor.

The considerable point in this study is that *ability* and *luck* did not appear as causal attributions for success. In other words, of the 61 causal attributions, only *effort* and *task difficulty* were amongst the four causes – ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck- presented in Table 15. The reason for not citing *ability* could not be that the subject-matter under focus was English, in which success is related to ability/aptitude more than many subjects in education. Although multiple choice questions were included in English exams carried out at Adiyaman University, *luck* was not cited by the instructors as a cause or causes of the students' success in English exams.

As with success, the external attributions were *classroom activities* (3.2%), *task difficulty* (4.9%), and *the quality of the materials* (1.6%) used which were mainly related to the instructors. This may indicate the value of their teaching these instructors place on their students' success in English exams, as they believe students learn from what the instructor tells them in the classroom and what s/he gives them as activities. They also believe that the *task difficulty* is a factor influencing students' success in English exams.

4.1.2. Instructors' attributions for their students' failures in their English exams

The second open-ended question was: *What reasons do you attribute to your students' failures in their English exams? If possible, describe briefly why?* The instructors were asked to identify the reasons they considered behind their students' failures in their English exams. A summary of the open-ended responses to the failure attributions in English exams is provided in Table 16. The results indicated that nearly all instructors attributed their students' failures in their English exams to a variety of causes. Specifically, for failure, 16 instructors (94%) made at least two attributions, and 1 instructor (6%) made only one attribution. These findings also strongly emphasize that most EFL instructors attribute their students' successes and failures in their English exams to multiple causes.

Table 16.

Instructors' failure attributions to their students

Participants	Attributions for failure
1	-Negligence -Relative evaluation -Attributing inadequate importance to the degree to be endeavored in the end of the program -Disbelieving in being successful
2	-Lack of concentration on what they work -Not being interested in learning a language -The classroom atmosphere
3	-Not having basic knowledge about grammar -Not being familiar with grammatical terminology even in Turkish -Attaching importance to their occupational courses, rather than English -Not being enthusiastic about learning -Believing not to learn English -Being admitted to university without examination
4	-Their prejudice towards language learning and English -Laziness -Ability
5	-Not being aware of the importance of learning a foreign language -Thinking that English is a lesson that they must pass, it is not a language
6	-Being indifferent to lessons -Their irregular study -Not having a specific reason for learning English except passing the class
7	-The idea of learning English is useless
8	-Lack of motivation -Lack of discipline -Having no goals related to their future -Not knowing the reason why they learn English or why they must learn English -Not knowing effective learning strategies -Lack of studying habits
9	-The feeling to fail the exam causes them to be unmotivated

-Bad experiences in the past
-Having the idea that they do not have any ability about learning English

10   -Trying to memorize the rules
-Seeing English only as a school subject to write that is why they are only seeking to pass it rather than learn it
-Confusing the rules
-Being uninterested towards English

11   -Not caring English
-Finding it difficult to learn

12   -Not knowing how to learn a foreign language.
-Comparing their mother tongue amd the foreign language in grammatical rules

13   -In the exam they think that they have the same group then they cheat and choose the same option as a result they fail
-The idea not being good at English and that will never good at it
-Having pre-existing barriers against learning a foreign language
-Sometimes I find myself asking difficult questions and they fail

14   -Being lazy
-Giving their energy and attention to other lessons
-Not enthusiastic and opportunitive

15   -Biological differences
-Desire for sexuality
-The news system(syllabus)

16   -Seeing English as an ordinary lesson that they must pass it rather than learn it
-Not having opportunity to practice English with a native speaker
-Trying to memorize the rules and forget them after the exam
-Thinking that English is a burden on their shoulder
-Having some prejudice against English

17   -Thinking that learning a new language is very difficult
-Trying to memorize the rules by heart
-Not having much chance of making practice
-Lack of interest in English
-Seeing English only as a school subject that they seek to pass it
-Confusing the rules

Total   60

As shown in Table 16, all the participants reported a total of 60 causal attributions for students' failures in English exams. As with failure, the greatest

emphasis within attributions of failure was also on students' characteristics, particularly *attributing inadequate importance to English*, *disbelieving in being successful,* and *lack of interest* as causes of students' failure in English exams. *Attributing inadequate importance to English* was the leading causal attributions and *lack of interest* came in the second place.

It is noteworthy that on the second open-ended question the instructors never spontaneously mentioned their own teaching as a factor influencing students' performance in the exams. Only one instructor mentioned both *his asking difficult questions* and *having groups in exams* as causes of students' failures in English exams. One another instructor mentioned *relative evaluation* as a cause of students' failure. These causes are related to *task difficulty*, *luck*, and *testing*. Except for these causes, in all cases the instructors most frequently mentioned students' characteristics as causes of their failure (i.e., *not being enthusiastic about learning*, *lack of interest in English*, *having some prejudice against English*, *being lazy, not knowing how to learn a foreign language*). Ratings of these causes indicated that the multiple attributions differed along Weiner's (1985) causal dimensions of internal/external, stable/unstable, and controllable/uncontrollable. Analyses were conducted to determine whether all multiple attributions ascribed by the instructors for students' failures in English exams differed along locus of causality dimension. Answers to the second open-ended question were coded by the researcher and the supervisor into the following categories: Internal Academic, Internal Nonacademic, External Academic, and External Nonacademic (see Table 17).

Table 17.

Causal dimensions of failure attributions

Internal	%	External	%
Internal Academic		**External Academic**	
Lack of effort (13)	21.6%	*Others' influence and*	
not studying regularly (2)	3.3%	*circumstances (5)*	8.3%
not studying styles/ skills (5)	8.3%	being admitted to university	
confusing the rules (3)	5%	without examination (1)	1.6%
giving their energy and attention		task difficulty (1)	1.6%
to other lessons (1)	1.6%	testing/assessment (1)	1.6%
lack of practice (2)	3.3%	the new system	
		(curriculum/syllabus) (1)	1.6%
Lack of Ability (1)	1.6%	luck (1)	1.6%
Background level (3)	5%		
lack of basic knowledge about			
grammar (2)	3.3%		
lack of effective learning			
strategies (1)	1.6%		
Internal Nonacademic		**External Nonacademic**	
Interest/Personal Traits (34)	56.6%	*Others' influence and*	
lack of discipline (1)	1.6%	*circumstances (1)*	1.6%
attributing inadequate importance		the classroom atmosphere (1)	1.6%
to English (9)	15%		
disbelieving in being successful			
(4)	6.6%		
lack of motivation (3)	5%		
lack of interest (5)	8.3%		
not being enthusiastic about			
learning (2)	3.3%		
their prejudice (3)	5%		
being lazy (2)	3.3%		
bad experiences in the past (1)	1.6%		
find it difficult to learn (2)	3.3%		
biological differences (1)	1.6%		
desire for sexuality (1)	1.6%		
Target Setting (3)	5%		
not having a purpose for learning			
English (2)	3.3%		
having no goals related to their			
future (1)	1.6%		
Note: * numbers in brackets refer to how many times they appeared in instructors' questionnaire			

As seen in Table 17, analysis of the data gathered from the second open-ended question suggested that failure attributions could be grouped by 6 factors: *lack of effort, lack of ability, background level, interest/personal traits, target setting,* and *others' influence and circumstances.* Analysis also revealed that the instructors' major attributions for their students' failures in English exams were *interest/personal traits* (56.6%), *lack of effort* (21.6%), and *others' influence and circumstances* (8.3%). The other attributions for students' failures were *lack of ability* (1.6%), *background level* (5%), and *target setting* (5%). Under *lack of effort*, the most cited reasons were *not studying styles/ skills* (8.3%) and *confusing the rules* (5%). These causes are mainly related to the students themselves. *Studying styles/ skills* was mentioned by 5 instructors while *confusing the rules* was mentioned by three instructors as causes of students' failures. Under *lack of effort*, the other emerging attributions were *not studying regularly* (3.3%), *giving their energy and attention to other lessons* (1.6%), and *lack of practice* (3.3%). Other emerging internal academic attributions were *lack of ability* (1.6%) and *background level* (5%). *Lack of ability* was ascribed by one instructor as a cause for their students' failure in English exams while *background level* (5%) was mentioned three times in two separate attributions as *lack of basic knowledge about grammar* and *lack of effective learning strategies* by the instructors. These findings show that the instructors see their students' background level as crucial to their success in English exams.

The internal nonacademic attributions were grouped by 2 factors: *interest/personal traits* and *target setting*. Under *interest/personal traits*, the most cited reasons for students' failure in English exams were *attributing inadequate importance to English* (15%), *lack of interest* (8.3%), and *disbelieving in being successful* (6.6%). *Attributing inadequate importance to English* was mentioned by nine times by the instructors. It can be concluded that the instructors tend to consider that the main cause of students' failure in English exams is *attributing inadequate importance to English*. *Lack of interest* was ascribed by five instructors as causes of students' failures while *disbelieving in being successful* was mentioned four times by the instructors. These causes were followed by *lack of motivation* (5%), *their prejudice* (5%), *not being enthusiastic about learning* (3.3%), *being lazy* (3.3%), *finding it difficult to learn* (3.3%), *lack of discipline* (1.6%), *bad experiences in the past* (1.6%), *biological*

differences (1.6%), *desire for sexuality* (1.6%). Under *target setting*, the reasons cited for students' failures by the instructors *having a purpose for learning English* (3.3%) and *having no goals related to their future* (1.6%) were mentioned three times in total by the instructors.

As with failure, the external attributions were *being admitted to university without examination* (1.6%), *task difficulty* (1.6%), *testing/assessment* (1.6%), *the new system (curriculum/syllabus)* (1.6%), *luck* (1.6%), and *the classroom atmosphere* (1.6%) under '*Others' influence and circumstances*' category. Each of these causes was mentioned once according to the analysis. One instructor ascribed *being admitted to university without examinations* as a cause behind his students' failures in English exams because his students at Adiyaman Vocational School of Adiyaman University are accepted to university via open admission. In other words, students graduated from Vocational High Schools in Turkey do not have to enter university entrance examination to be accepted as a student in Vocational Schools at any universities. This may indicate the value of the university entrance examinations this instructor places on his students' success in English exams, as he believes that such students do not have studying habits and goals related to their future, thus in turn they fail in the exams carried out at the university. One another instructor mentioned *asking difficult questions in the exams* as a cause behind his students' failures. This cause is related to Weiner's (1985) one of the four main attributions: task difficulty. One of the other external causes mentioned by one of the instructors was *testing/ assessment*. The instructor saw *relative evaluation* as a cause behind his students' failures in the exams. He may think that students do not have to study hard to pass English exams, so in turn their grades are not good enough. *The new system (curriculum/syllabus)* conducted in FLLT in Turkey was seen as a reason behind students' failure in English exams by one of the instructors. *Luck* was one another external attribution ascribed for students' failures. As seen in Table 17, Weiner's four main attributions (ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty) were mentioned as causes behind students' failures by the instructors as opposed to success attributions.

The only external nonacademic attribution ascribed by the instructors was *the classroom atmosphere*. The instructor saw students' coming from different social and cultural backgrounds as a cause that may bring failure to students in their English

exams. To understand the in-depth reason behind why the instructor mentioned this attribution as a cause for her students' failure, an in-depth analysis is needed.

To conclude, when we look at the instructors' higher ratings of students' factors for causes behind the students' failures in English exams, we can easily say that the instructors were more inclined to view their causes of students' failures as more internal within the students. For failure attributions overall, interest/personal traits was again the most common attribution (34 times, 56.6%). In other words, the instructors mostly considered students themselves responsible for their failures in English exams. However, there are few instructors who seemed to accept their responsibility for their students' failures in English exams. Despite the diversity of the types of the instructors' attributions, they typically attributed their students' success to *interest/personal traits* and *effort* as internal factors within students and attributed failure to *interest/personal traits* and *lack of effort* as internal factors within students as in success attributions.

4.1.3. Instructors' perceptions of causal dimensionality of success and failure attributions

Through the reported causal attributions, we found that almost all instructors attributed both their students' success and failure in English exams to internal attributions within the students. The nature of these attributions in terms of internal/external, stable/unstable, controllable/uncontrollable examined through the instructors' answers to the open-ended questions (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) on the questionnaire will be presented in this section. In other words, the perceptions of the instructors regarding causal dimensions of the attributions they ascribed for their students' success and failure were gathered through the questionnaire.

The third and fourth open-ended questions on the questionnaire '*To what extent are these reasons caused (3) by something about you and (4) by something about your students*?' were asked to the instructors to state their perceptions regarding causal dimensionality of the attributions they ascribed for their students' success and failure. According to the content analysis of the data gathered from the third open-ended question, two of the instructors reported no responsibility either for students' success or failure. Except for these two instructors, the other instructors seemed to accept their responsibility for success and failure at varying degrees. One of the other instructors

(Participant 10) accepted her responsibility for her students' success but not for their failure.

The extract below shows how participant 10 accepted the responsibility for her students' success but not for failure.

> If they like me and respect me, the students will be interested in the lesson and this brings the success. However, I do not think that the students will fail the exam because they do not like me. As they have to pass English exams to graduate. (Participant 10)

The other eight instructors seemed to take the responsibility for their students' success and failure, but they gave most of the credits to students or other factors for their students' success and failure. Here are the extracts of some of these eight instructors from their answers to the third open-ended question:

> A little is caused by me because the classes are very crowded and there is not enough time to deal with students one by one. (Participant 9)

> Although I try to do my best, sometimes I cannot raise awareness of some students. (Participant 12)

> They show some interest in the lessons and it causes to be successful for them in the exams, if they respect and like their teacher. (Participant 16)

> If their exams results are high, I motivate on teaching but on the other hand, I sometimes can feel depressed. (Participant 4)

When we look at the extracts above, the instructors seemed to accept more responsibility both for their students' success and failure compared to their causal attributions that they stated on the first two questions of the questionnaire. Among the reported 121 causal attributions for both success and failure, only twelve (9.9%) of the attributions were ascribed to external factors within the students. One hundred and nine (90.08%) of the attributions were ascribed to internal factors within the students by their instructors. Thus, it is noteworthy that most of the instructors may be more inclined to ascribe their students' success and failure to internal factors within the students and they

take more responsibility for their success and failure when asked to state to what extent these are caused by something about you.

Another important finding is that one of the instructors (Participant 15) mentioned their own teaching as a cause for his students' failure in English exams.

> Insufficiency of the teachers or inability to control the class, and teaching process may of course have an adverse effect on teaching and thus failure in exams but I do not think it is a notable effect. (Participant 15)

This finding is not consistent with the findings of the data gathered on the first two open-ended questions. Among the reported causal attributions on the first two open-ended questions, none of the instructors directly mentioned his/her own teaching as a cause behind either students' success or failure (see Table 14/16).

Five of the instructors articulated more internal factors within themselves for their students' success and failure than the previously mentioned instructors. Some of them articulated:

> Partly. E.g., No time for preparing and adapting teaching materials and no time for having them carry out performance tasks. (Participant 3)

> I may be weak on the barrier point. As an instructor I should help them more to overcome their prejudices against language learning but many times I find myself struggling for nothing, because they accept the defeat even in the beginning. I can also diversify my materials but since they are reluctant I end up getting angry with class. (Participant 13)

> I find myself a bit lack of using multi-media resources and activities. I observe that students sometimes get bored of listening the same type of lessons. Especially, in the beginner level the courses should be conducted in a joyful way to attract their attention to the course. But the number of students sometimes makes it difficult to use activities in the classes. (Participant 2)

The extract below indicated that participant 6 was aware of his important role as an instructor on both students' success and failure in their English exams. He articulated that:

… I know the reasons for failure and success and that' why I do what I should do according to these reasons. Thinking this, I can say that these reasons are directly associated with me and I have an important role on these reasons. (Participant 6)

The considerable point in these extracts is that the instructors above mostly mentioned personal factors for their students' success and failure in their English exams: not using multimedia resources and activities, not preparing and adapting teaching materials, not making lesson interesting for students, and etc. In other words, the instructors mentioned their own teaching as a factor influencing students' performance.

According to the analysis of the data gathered from the fourth open-ended question, three instructors (Participants 13, 16, and 14) gave the full responsibility for the students' success and failure to students themselves. Below are some questionnaire extracts that illustrate how these participants emphasized the importance of students themselves in English exams.

I always say if you want something you can manage everything. I do not teach them the linguistics or phonology. I only teach beginner level English in which primary school pupils get successful, it is strange that university level students manage to fail in such an easy course. So, I witness that failed students are the ones who never try. (Participant 13)

Learning a foreign language is the full responsibility of the students. We, the teachers, do not have a magic wand though our students' expectations are so high from us. (Participant 16)

The extracts below show that participants 2 and 3 attributed their students' failure to causes internal within the students. In other words, they gave the responsibility to their students in the case of failure.

Students are not volunteer to participate in the activities performed in the classes. They are not aware of self-studying, either. Since they are not active in learning process, it is not surprising that they fail. (Participant 2)

Lack of motivation, indifference to the course, no anxiety about extending the school year, their perceptions of the language: unimportant, not necessary, a waste of time, etc. (Participant 3)

The extract below shows that participant 7 tended to see the students themselves and the education system behind their students' success and failure in English exams.

It is all about the students and the education system. (Participant 7)

It is interesting that one of the instructors (participant 12) did not see students as causes behind students' success and failure; rather she thought that the teaching system and the conditions are the causes behind students' success and failure.

The problem is not caused by the students; it is about the conditions and the teaching system. (Participant 12)

Participant 4 saw both the teacher and the students as causes behind students' success.

Both the student and the teacher are the factors that affect the success. (Participant 4)

Below are some extracts that illustrate how most of the participants tended to give most of the responsibility of their students' success and failure to students themselves.

Most of the problems are caused by the students since they do not have enough motivation to learn English. They do not have any realistic goals related to their future profession. (Participant 8)

To great extent I can say that failure is caused by students themselves as they are not aware of being students and studying. So they do not care much. (Participant 11)

Actually language learning is the responsibility of the students. Although they expect much from teachers, they can only show the ways and make learning easy for them. However, the students have to study in all steps. (Participant 10)

Most is caused by the students because they do not pay enough attention to the exams. (Participant 9)

99 % of the success is gained by endeavor and only 1% pf the success is gained by inspirations. Teachers only make students inspire, they are guides but the responsibility and burden of success is over the shoulders of students. (Participant 15)

The effect of the teacher for learning English can be meaningful as long as students are motivated for learning it. That's why reasons caused by something about my students occupy an important place. Whatever the teacher does or however he tries, without students' concern for the lesson, it is nearly impossible to make them learn. (Participant 6)

Analysis of the data gathered through the fifth open-ended question '*Were these causes present in your previous years of teaching*?' revealed that out of the seventeen instructors, the thirteen instructors reported they had the same causes they ascribed on the first two questions behind their students' success and failure in English exams in their previous years of teaching.

Participant 6 and participant 13 stated similar perception with the thirteen instructors. However, they emphasized the importance of the proficiency level of students on causes behind students' successes and failures. They articulated that:

Generally the students I taught are at the same levels and that's why these causes are more or less similar. (Participant 6)

I start working as an English instructor in a primary school and my students were mostly successful in the course and they were willing to learn English. Of course there were some silent and reluctant ones but they were trying to do something in the course. When it comes to university level teaching these problems were present since I started and every passing year the number of reluctant students get higher. (Participant 13)

One of the other instructors emphasized the importance of the program they attend. The extract below shows that how participant 1's focus was on the program and the level of the students.

For higher education, they always persisted (but at various rated depending on the program they attend). At lower levels, proportion changed in teachers' favor. (Participant 1)

Participant 2 reported that she had different causes in her previous years of teaching and she articulated that:

I was working in a primary school last year. I cannot say that the causes are the same because the age level is an important factor affecting students' success. It was hard for me to keep their attention to the lesson for forty minutes. Moreover, the physical conditions of the school, equipment, families, etc. were the ones affecting their success. (Participant 2)

The analysis of the data gathered through the sixth open-ended question '*Will these causes be present in your following years of teaching?*' indicated that sixteen instructors (94.11%) reported that they would come across the same causes behind their students' success and failure. Below are some extracts that show how the instructors mentioned high probability of coming across the same causes in their following years of teaching.

I think the answer is yes because the situations are same again. (Participant 9)

I think they will be present as long as I teach. (Participant 16)
Most probably they will be present in the following years as the system has become a vicious circle in terms of learning English. (Participant 6)

The past always says about future. To be frank I am hopeless about future as long as same style reluctant and anti-English students enter universities. (Participant 13)

As seen in the extracts above, they believed that they would have the same causes in the future. Only one instructor responded differently compared to the others.

The extract below shows how participant 15 emphasized the necessity of the way to teach English when he reported his being unsure about the possibility of coming across the same causes in his following years of teaching.

I am not sure about that but something had better change urgently or else teaching English will not go beyond the loading of grammatical rules. (Participant 15)

The seventh open-ended question is '*Are these causes specific to your students this year?*'. The analysis of the instructors' answers to the question revealed that all of the instructors thought that the causal attributions they reported for their students' success and failure were not specific to their students. However, two of the instructors further added that there was a gradual deterioration in terms of students and FLLT. The extracts below show how these instructors articulated their beliefs about this issue.

No, not but we experience a gradual deterioration resulting from the class capacities. (Participant 1)

I do not think these are specific causes. The things I mentioned are almost the same every year but getting a little worse. (Participant 13)

The analysis of the data gathered through the eight open-ended question '*Are these causes present in all of your classes or most of your classes?*' indicated that of the 17 instructors who answered this question, 5 (29.4%) of the instructors reported that the causes that they ascribed behind their students' success and failure in English exams carried out at Adiyaman University were present in all of their classes. 9 (52.9%) of the instructors reported that the causes they mentioned on the first two open-ended questions for their students' success and failure were present in most of their classes. There remained three instructors who responded differently to the question. Two of them (Participants 1 and 9) thought that the causes they ascribed for their students' success and failure were present neither all nor most of their classes, rather they were present some of their classes. One instructor (Participant 7) believed that the causes he ascribed were present in his classes in varying degrees depending on the departments.

The analysis of the instructors' answers to the last open-ended question '*If you teach at different levels, do you think that there are different reasons behind their*

successes and failures in their English exams?' revealed that of the 14 instructors who answered the question, 5 (29.4%) of the instructors stated that there were different reasons behind students' successes and failures in English exams at different levels. 8 (47.1%) of the instructors reported that there were different reasons behind their students' successes and failures in English exams at different levels. Below are some extracts which show how the instructors responded the last question.

> Of course. At beginner levels teachers' contribution into failure and success will vary to a great degree. (Participant 1)

> Of course, I think so. Different levels mean different reasons, responsibilities, and different knowledge areas. That is why there are different reasons behind their successes and failures while learning English at different levels. (Participant 11)

3 (17.6%) of the instructors did not respond the question as they have never taught English beyond beginner levels.

4.2. Instructors' Success and Failure Attributions and their Classroom Practices

In this section, each instructor's classroom practices are presented case by case. Each case is first introduced with their background information and causal attributions and then their classroom practices are explained.

4.2.1. Case one: I1

4.2.1.1. Background Information

I1, a 46-year-old male instructor, had a BA in English and a MA in Education Programs and Its Teaching. He graduated from an ELT department of a university in Turkey. He had 23 years of teaching experience as an EFL teacher. Out of 23 years of teaching experience, he had been working as an EFL instructor at a university for 14 years at the time of the study. First, he started to work as an EFL instructor at Gaziantep University and after that he started to work at Adiyaman University in 2006. At the time of this study, he had been working as an EFL instructor at Adiyaman University for 8 years. The level that he taught was elementary.

I1 was observed teaching elementary level students who has studied at Faculty of Education. The students have taken English as one of their compulsory school subjects at the preparatory stage in their first year of studying at university. The number of the students during the lessons I observed with I1 ranged from 35 to 45. Students in I1's class were sitting in desks which were fixed to the floor. Two students shared each desk. The desks were arranged in rows facing the board.

4.2.1.2. I1's causal attributions for his students' successes and failures

I1's perception about the causes behind his students' successes and failures in English exams carried out at Adiyaman University has been collected through the questionnaire called 'Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire' and the follow-up interview. The analysis of the data gathered through the questionnaire showed that I1 attributed his students' successes and failures to multiple causes. He attributed his students' success in English exams to: *regular attendance*, *studying styles/methods (modular-linear)*, *interest*, *expectations*, *success in other disciplines/courses*, *level of acceptance*, and *motivation*. The considerable point here is that I1 attributed his students' successes to student-related factors, or in other words, internal factors within the students. He never mentioned his own teaching or factors related to himself (namely external factors for students) as causes behind his students' successes in English exams. However, when we look at his answers to the 3rd and 4th open-ended questions 'To what extent are these reasons caused (3) by something about you (4) by something about your students?', he seemed to accept his responsibility for both students' successes and failures in English exams. He thought 15% of the causes he ascribed both for students' success and failure were related to him. One of the crucial points here in this finding is that though he seemed to accept his responsibility in students' success and failure, he never mentioned factors related to him behind his students' success and failure.

One of the considerable points was that during the interview he did not mention any other reasons behind his students' successes and failure. He only explained why he attributed these causes behind the students' successes and failures in English exams carried out at Adiyaman University. He commented on why he attributed his students' successes in English exams to *level of acceptance*:

There is a difference in terms of students' abilities between universities at big cities and universities at rural areas. In other words, students who study at universities at big cities are more successful than our students. So, our students' successes should be in consistent with their success to enter this university. This fact cannot be overestimated. The reason why our students' success is decreasing every year is the increasing quota. With the increasing quota, they accept much more students, so the students who come to our university are those who are at low level. This affects success. (I1. Int. 1).[1]

The quote above shows the reason why he attributed *level of acceptance* as a cause behind his students' successes in English exams.

I asked him to reflect further on his causal attributions. He commented that:

Expectations. Actually, it is related to motivation. Most of our students think like this: 'How does it affect my life if I learn English? If I were a teacher, they would not give me any chances to work at the city center, I will go and work at a rural place, nobody asks me about English.' I cannot improve myself about my field of study with what I have learned in English lessons. With these facts in minds, these beliefs prevent students from exerting efforts. They never think English would provide them benefits in their future lives. (I1. Int.1).

The quote above indicates the reason why he ascribed *expectations* and *motivation* to his students' successes in English exams. The quote below show the reason why I1 saw *success in other disciplines/courses* behind his students' successes:

If you speak your mother tongue with 350-400 words, you can speak your foreign language with 350-400 words. Your success in other disciplines is the sign of how successful you express yourself there. So, this means that you can use what you have learned in your life. So, success in other disciplines has a direct effect on success in foreign language. (I1. Int. 1).

He attributed his students' failures in English exams to multiple causes as similar in success attributions. He ascribed *negligence*, *relative evaluation*, *attributing*

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[1] I1: Instructor 1, Int: Interview, 1: The number of the interview

inadequate importance to the degree to be endeavored in the end of the program, and *disbelieving in being successful* to his students' failures. It is noteworthy that the only external factor I1 attributed to his students' failure was *relative evaluation*. This finding showed the importance of testing/assessment I1 focused on his students' failures in English exams. In line with the findings of I1's success attributions, for failure attributions I1 also mentioned mostly student related factors (internal factors within his students). In short, I1 was more inclined to view his reported causes behind the students' successes and failures in English exams carried out at Adiyaman University external (internal within his students).

When we look at I1's answers to the other open-ended questions, it is clear that I1 thought that the causes he ascribed for his students' successes and failures were present at varying degrees in his previous years of teaching. He further added that these causes would go on under prevailing conditions and these causes were not specific causes to his students this year, though he stated that we experienced a gradual deterioration resulting from the class capacities. He also thought that the causes he ascribed were present in some of his classes. He maintained that at beginner levels teachers' contribution into failure and success would vary to a great extent.

4.2.1.3. I1's practices

In this section, I present a detailed account of I1's practices. I1 was observed teaching lessons from an elementary level coursebook. The coursebook is divided into twelve units of eight pages, and each unit is further divided into six sections which include starter, presentation of the new language, practice, skills work, vocabulary, everyday English. In each unit, there is a particular theme, which is developed in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and reading, listening, speaking, and writing activities.

During the lessons I observed with I1, the units thay I1 covered were Unit 10 and Unit 11. The title of the 10th Unit was 'Where on earth are you?' and the title of the 11th Unit was 'Going far'. Turkish was the dominant language of classroom interaction. It was frequently used by I1 and the students.

One strong impression from the observations was that the students were asked to sign the attendance sheet regularly in each lesson at the beginning of the lesson. He also gave importance to his students' bringing their course books to the classroom with

themselves all the time. The following episode shows the extents to which I1's practices are consistent with his reported causal attributions.

Episode 1

S: Excuse me. I am sorry. I am late.

T: Come in. Sit down. But you are absent in this lesson and you do not have your book. (I1. O. 1)

The pattern presented in the above episode during the observations was repeated more than two times throughout all the lessons I observed with I1. When we look at the causal attributions he ascribed, we realize that the first causal attribution for his students' successes in English exams carried out at Adiyaman University was *regular attendance*. In order to get insights into the rationale and the factors which underlie his practices, I interviewed him after the observations in addition to the data gathered through the 'Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire'. The interview was conducted in his office. During the interviews, he reflected upon what he wrote for the open-ended questions and upon the beliefs which underlie his practices. He expressed his views about what he attributed his students' successes and failures to and why he attributed to those. He also referred to different factors which had an impact on what he did in the classroom. The analysis of the rationales for his practices will enable us to understand some of the tensions between what he attributed his students' successes and failures in English exams and what he does in the classroom setting.

The following quotes highlight his preference for regular attendance and students' bringing their coursebooks to the lessons:

Now, our students do not exert any efforts to learn English. The effort they exert is to pass the exam. They can be motivated at the beginning of the semester to some extent. 1/3 of the students believe that I can learn English. However, as with the time passing, these students start to think like the rest of the students and lose their motivation towards English. As teachers, we should always motivate these students periodically, and this is what most of us neglect. We need to decide whether I teach my lesson or I spend my class hour to motivate them. Students see what they learn, what they can do, and the extent to what they have learned to be in line with what they expected at the beginning of the

year. They start to think that what they have learned is not in consistent with what I have expected and they stop to exert effort… (I1. Int. 1).

… I said motivation. As we do not motivate our students enough and our students do not believe in learning English as they wanted to learn. So, what should we as teachers do to enable the students to become successful in their English exams and how do we keep our students attend to the lessons regularly? They do not study their lessons at home anyway. Then, they come to university always, bring their books to the lessons and learn what they should learn at university. For this reason, I stated 'regular attendance' as the first cause behind students' successes in English exams. (I1. Int. 1).

… I did not care about students' attendance in some years in my previous years of teaching. The mean of the success scores change between 7% and 8% between the years in which I said I would add extra points to exam results of the students who regularly attend to the lessons and the years in which I did not care about students' regular attendance. That was not due to what I added extra points. Their successes increased. I make students bring their books to the lessons obligatory; this affects their successes in English exams to a great extent. Maybe, students come to class without looking inside the book before coming to the class but even students' bringing their books to the class with themselves remind what we have learned in our previous lesson. In other words, what I do or what I do best for my students at least to learn and remember what we have covered is this. (I1. Int. 1).

The quotes above highlight one of the fundamental practices that I1 believe on his students' successes in English exams. During the lessons I observed with I1, I1' these practices were one of the practices which were in line with what he attributed for his students' successes and failure in English exams to. He ascribed his students' successes in English exams carried out at the university to '*regular attendance, studying styles/methods, interest, expectations, success in other disciplines/courses, level of acceptance, and motivation.*' He ascribed his students' failures to '*negligence, relative evaluation, attributing inadequate importance to the degree to be endeavored in the end of the program, and disbelieving in being successful*'. The quotes above show that

regarding expectations, motivation, interest, level of acceptance, and negligence, I1, with these in minds, think that what he should do is only to keep them attend to the lessons regularly and enable them to bring their books to the class. Actually, it is not difficult to understand that these causes are affected by each other. So, it is clear that the factors behind I1's classroom practices were in line with his reported causal attributions to some extent.

The lessons in each unit of the coursebook are divided into reading, vocabulary, and grammar, listening, speaking, and writing lessons. However, during the lessons I observed with I1, he skipped all of the listening activities, the speaking activities and the writing activities of the units that he covered. I asked him why he skipped these activities:

> … Pacing of the activities should be in accordance with the level of the students. As there is limited time, it is necessary to finish what is intended in that time. … (I1. Int. 1).

He reflected on the omission of the listening and speaking activities:

> … What you enable students to do in the classroom and what you provide in the classroom should be in line with students' expectations. The first reason is that we do not ask students to do speaking and listening activities in our exams. The second reason is that when I enable them to produce one or two sentences, they do not catch what is said on the tape. There were times in which I tried to use them, but I did not believe these times to be used effectively. The beliefs that I could have done something different for my students and I could have done something beneficial for my students seemed reasonable to me… They also consume our time to a great extent. (I1. Int. 1).

Clearly, he has negative attitudes towards listening activities and feels that students would not benefit from these activities. Also, since the exam did not include listening, speaking, and writing sections, he decided to skip these sections. Overall he considered the pressure of the exams carried out at the university as an obstacle towards the effective implementation of these activities. For him, both teachers and students considered the skills which are not tested in the exams to be of little importance. These

were thus omitted, particularly because he also felt under time pressure to complete what he needed to do. Classroom observations and the follow up interview showed that these practices were also in line with his reported causal attribution *expectations* to some extent. He ascribed *expectations* to his students' successes in English exams on his answers to the questions of the open-ended questionnaire. With respect to the impact of learner beliefs (expectations, level of acceptance, studying styles/methods, negligence, etc.), he asserted that students' beliefs also have a part to play in the way that teachers teach. Furthermore, he felt that examination was another influence on her classroom practices. He went on to explain how *relative evaluation* leads to students' failures in English exams:

> Relative evaluation was used as an assessment tool this year. Students start to ask the mean of the students in the classroom and say 'Ok, I will pass the exams with these scores.' In our previous years, we have at least 60 as a barrier score for students to pass the exams. This affects students' successes in a negative way to a great extent. One of the most important reasons behind students' failures is that. (I1. Int. 1).

In this respect, he blamed the exams and assessment/testing for the students' failures in English exams. These findings need to be reinterpreted in terms of washback.

In the lessons that I observed, the following path was followed in each of the four weeks lessons: I1 read the text aloud word by word and sentence by sentence. While he was reading aloud, he frequently stopped at individual words and wrote them on the board. The students were then asked to figure out the meaning of some words from the context through reading the sentences in which these words appeared. When students were not able to give the meaning of the words, he would give the meaning of these words, if possible provide synonyms of these words that they had learned in their previous lessons, or give the meanings of these words in Turkish. He wrote these words in English and their meaning in Turkish. Then, he asked the students to do silent reading. He went on with the post reading activities on the book skipping the listening, speaking, and writing activities in each unit that he covered. After doing post-reading activities, he selected individual students and asked them to read aloud the text. While students were reading aloud, he never stopped them. Rather he took notes of the words

which were not appropriately pronounced. After the students finished reading the text, he wrote them on the board and provided the correct pronunciation. Students demonstrated their understanding by translating these words or sentences into Turkish. During the class hour, he spent considerable time on reading aloud, asking the meaning of some words from the texts that he read, and focus on form. There were limited chances for the students to work together to develop skills in using the target grammar and vocabulary to express meaning communicatively.

A key principle regarding teaching grammar which was illustrated in his lessons was that grammar was not always overtly taught in the early stages of the unit. The students saw and heard examples of the target language used in variety of situations. They were then more able to focus on analysis, followed by accurate use of the target language in productive situations. The students were expected to add what they covered to what they had already learned. So, they were asked to work on grammar analysis and use the grammatical items that they had already studied and that they learned new. He selected individual students to come up with examples of the target language. While individual students were taking turns to make examples of the target language, he corrected the students' grammar and spelling mistakes.

He required the students to follow him while he was reading aloud. He described his approach to dealing with the reading text and why he did not require the students to do listening activities:

> … If you paid attention, I read the text word by word, sentence by sentence and I ask individual students to do the same type of reading. I try to make students produce similar sentences. (I1. Int. 1).

> I read the text aloud and the students follow me while I am reading aloud. But, if I required the students to listen the text from the tape, I needed to play it more than two times. I think this is a little bit difficult for the students. Also, we as teachers did not have a lot of times in a fixed curriculum. We only have forty minutes for one lesson. 3 class hours for each week. This is not enough to make the tape play more than twice. But when I read word by word and sentence by sentence aloud, and try to concentrate on pronunciation, it will be easier for them to follow me and understand what is written on the text. (I1. Int. 1).

The quotes above highlight the factor influencing his practices in the classroom. It is clear that his practices are shaped by his beliefs to some extent.

Another strong impression from the observations was that the students were asked to add what they learned new to what they had already learned in their previous lessons. His approach to relate what they learn new to what they have already learned was based on his views about the process of learning a foreign language:

> … Students, in their previous years of education, at high school, or when they have studied for the university entrance examination, study their lessons in modules. In other words, I can learn this unit without knowing, understanding the previous issues. But, for mathematics or a foreign language, this way of studying is not appropriate. These two lessons are those which you need to relate what you learn new to what you have already learned. If you do not know the previously learned items, you cannot move on to next items. It is not possible to teach the present perfect to students who cannot make simple sentences in the present simple or present continuous tense. (I1. Int. 1).

I asked I1 whether he did any activities to enable students to understand this fact. He explained that:

> When I begin to teach, I explain students how they relate to what they learn new to what they have already learned. But, this is not through only explaining, I present what they have already learned. I provide examples of the previously learned items. Now, we start like this: 'We will change now this part of the sentence.' As a result of this changing, this sentence occurs. This is what I teach as grammar. (I1. Int. 1).

It is clear that with studying styles/methods in mind, he tries to reach all the students and wants them to learn English in a meaningful way by relating the newly learned items to previously learned items. The following episode sheds light on the implementation of this fact in his work.

Episode 2

I: Who is wearing a scarf?

Ss: Sherry.

I: Sherry is wearing a scarf. All of the exercises here in this part are the same. This part goes on like this. Let's change it a little bit different. Who has got long hair in the class? Do not say teacher. What is your name?

S: Suna.

I: (In Turkish) How can we answer 'Who has got long hair in the class?'

S: Suna has got long hair.

I: (In Turkish) How can we say if it is the longest?

Ss: Suna has got the longest hair.

…

I: (In Turkish) How can we say the shortest?

S: Yusuf has got the shortest hair.

I: (In Turkish) Yusuf. Say 'My teacher has got no hair.' We have learned a new item in our previous lesson. Use it in this sentence.

Ss: My teacher has got no hair.

… (I1. O. 2.)[2]

Episode 2 illustrates that he encouraged the students to use the items that they had already learned in their previous lessons with the items they learned new.

4.2.1.4. Case summary

In this section, I provided a detailed account of I1's work during the lessons I observed with him along with the data gathered through the questionnaire and the follow-up interview. The questionnaire findings showed that I1 were more inclined to attribute his students' successes and failures to student-related factors (internal within his students). *Relative evaluation* was the only external causal attribution ascribed by I1 as a cause behind his students' achievement in English exams. However, his answers to the 3rd and 4th open-ended questions showed that he accepted the responsibility over his students' successes and failures in English exams. Classroom observations and interview findings revealed that there were some aspects of I1's work which to some extent were in line with his reported causal attributions. This was particularly evident in his giving great importance to his students' regular attendance, enabling the students to

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[2] I1: Instructor 1, O: Observation, 2: Observation number

bring their books to the class, his omitting the listening, speaking and writing activities, and his relating what they learn new to what they have already learned. Another key factor in his work was exams, and these influenced his decision to focus more on grammar than on listening, speaking, and writing.

4.2.2. Case two: I2

4.2.2.1. Background Information

I2 was a 28-year-old female instructor who graduated from an ELT department of a university in Turkey. She had 3 years of teaching experience as an EFL teacher and she had been teaching English as an EFL instructor at Adiyaman University for one year. She taught language learners from beginner to intermediate levels at Adiyaman University.

I2 was observed teaching beginner level students who had been studying at Vocational School of Adiyaman University. The students have taken English as one of their compulsory school subjects at the preparatory stage in their first year of studying at university as similar to other departments at Adiyaman University. During the lessons I observed with her, the number of the students ranged from 20 to 30. In some cases, three students shared a desk. Students in her class were sitting in desks which were fixed to the floor. The desks were arranged in rows facing the board.

4.2.2.2. I2's causal attributions for his students' successes and failures

The analysis of the data gathered through the questionnaire and the follow-up interview revealed that I2 attributed her students' success and failure to multiple causes as I1. According to the analysis of her answers to the first open-ended question, she ascribed her students' successes in English exams to: *listening to the lessons*, *working-in groups*, *and peer-assessment*. She further added that:

> I believe that peer-assessment provides students with necessary feedback and I generally tend to apply to use it in my daily classes. Students want to be assessed and receive feedback to see their progress. And, with the fear of negative evaluation of their friends or teacher, they try to do their best.

The considerable point of this finding here is that in contrast to I1, I2 mentioned factors related to herself behind her students' successes. She only mentioned one student-related factor *listening to the lessons carefully* as a cause behind her students' successes in their English exams. It is clear that this cause is related to effort. However, *working in groups* and *peer assessment* are related to her classroom activities. In other words, she attributed her students' success both internal and external factors within the students in contrast to I1. Furthermore, when we look at her answers to the 3rd and 4th open-ended questions, she seemed inclined to view the causes she reported on the questionnaire both as internal and external within the students. In other words, she saw herself responsible for her students' both successes and failures in English exams and she did not only appreciate or blame her students for their successes and failures (see extracts 13 and 18). However, when we look at her causal attributions for her students' failures: *lack of concentration on what they work*, *not being interested in learning a language*, and *the classroom atmosphere,* we realize that she did not mention any factors related to her teaching or herself in contrast to her causal attributions for success. It is noteworthy that the only external factor she attributed to her students' failures was the classroom atmosphere. She also added about this issue:

> … Also, learners come from different social and multicultural backgrounds. So the classes are shaped with heterogeneous students. So, the classroom atmosphere affects their feelings on language learning in a negative way.

She further added that the reason why she saw the classroom atmosphere as a cause behind her students' failures was that students' coming from different social and cultural backgrounds was its being the obstacle for communication between students.

She expanded on these causes and commented on why she ascribed *lack of concentration on what they work* to her students' failures in English exams:

> I do not know their concentration in their other lessons but I think they have prejudice to English. For example, they think in their future jobs it is not necessary. They say most of the time 'Why do we learn English?' and 'What

would we do if we learned?'. So, they do not have the concentration during the English lessons. (I2. Int. 1).[3]

The above interview extract shows that she felt the importance of students' concentration during English lessons over her students' successes in English exams. However, she saw their having some prejudice to English (factor related to students themselves) as the reason behind her students' having lack of concentration during the lessons.

In short, as I1, I2 was more inclined to view her reported causes behind the students' success and failure external (internal within her students). However, I asked her about whether she wanted to add any other causal attributions behind her students' success to her reported attributions on the questionnaire. She further added in one interview that:

> I wanted to add that: I have some students who have background knowledge and some students who do not have background knowledge. I think that those who have background knowledge are successful in their English exams. (I2. Int. 1).

The quote above shows that she mentioned *students' having background knowledge* behind her students' successes in English exams though she did not ascribe *having background knowledge* to her students' successes on the questionnaire. During the interview, I2 also ascribed *the materials used in the classroom* to her students' successes:

> To tell the truth, students' bringing their book to the class is important. I think the materials themselves are more important. And we as teachers, we have to only follow the coursebook as a material due to the number of the students in each class and the curriculum that we have to follow. (I2. Int. 1).

> … Students who do not have their books in front of them lose their motivation and interest when I do not use PowerPoint and something like this. So, bringing the book to the class is important. (I2. Int. 1).

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[3] I2: Instructor 2, Int: Interview, 1: The number of the interview

The data above illustrate the importance of the coursebook that she emphasized on students' achievement. She also saw *her students' bringing their books* to the class as important for their success in English exams. In other words, she ascribed *the coursebook* and *bringing the books to the class* to her students' successes in English exams.

The interview data showed that I2 also saw herself responsible for her students' failures in English. She explained:

> I sometimes taught my lessons in an unenjoyable atmosphere. I thought I did not my lessons active. I sometimes think that I do not use my voice effectively. And sometimes, I think I do not give good examples of the target structures. I think I have an effect on students' failures. Actually, to make the lessons enjoyable is related to me. (I2. Int. 1).

The quote above shows that she felt the responsibility over her students' successes in English.

Her answer to the 5th open-ended question revealed that the causes she ascribed for her students' successes and failure were not present in her previous years of teaching. She had been working in a primary school before she started to work at Adiyaman University. So, because of the age factor, she believed she had different causes behind her previous students' successes and failures in their English exams. Thus, she emphasized the importance of age factor in learning a foreign language. Her answer to the 6th open-ended question indicated that she suggested paying attention to self-perception and evaluation of teachers. She stated that:

> Experience is an important concept in education. As I keep teaching by using different styles in accordance with the needs of the learners, I will develop my strategies more. So, self-perception and evaluation of teachers should be paid attention.

This finding revealed that I2 believed that if she developed her strategies in accordance with the needs of the students, she would not come across the same causes in her following years of teaching. In other words, she was aware of the responsibility that she needed to have for her students to become successful in their exams and

especially in the process of language learning. Another crucial point that she emphasized was the need to pay a great deal of attention to the professional development of teachers.

Her answer to the 7th open-ended question showed that she thought that the causes she ascribed for her students' successes and failures were not specific to her students this year. This finding is in line with the other instructors' answers. She stated her thought on the open-ended questionnaire:

> I think similar causes take place in most of the educational environments. When I follow the reasons of failure or success in different learning institutions, I see that they have nearly the same problems. When I compare my previous years experiences with this year, still I do not think so.

The analysis of her answer to the 8th open-ended question showed that she believed that she had the causes she attributed for her students' successes and failures in English exams in most of her classes. She maintained that there should be different reasons behind students' successes and failures at different levels. She stated that:

> It should be different. Students become aware of learning strategies and are autonomous in time as they make a progress. At the beginner level, for example, you cannot expect students to create their own learning strategies. So, it should be different.

It is clear that I2's thought was in line with most (47.1%) of the instructors who reported that there were different reasons behind their students' successes and failures in English exams at different levels.

4.2.2.3. I2's practices

I2 was observed teaching lessons from the beginner level of the same coursebook that I1 used. The couserbook is divided into fourteen units of six pages, and each unit is further divided into six sections as in the elementary level. In each unit, there is a particular theme, which is developed in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and reading, listening, speaking, and writing activities. The units that she covered, during

the observations with her, were Unit 12 and Unit 13. The titles of the units were 'Please and thank you' and 'Here and now'.

Her students in each lesson were asked to sign the attendance sheet regularly at the beginning of the lesson. However, she did not ascribe students' regular attendance to to the lessons to her students' successes either on the questionnaire or during the interview though she made students' regular attendance obligatory for her students to pass the lesson. Those who did not attend regularly to the lessons would fail in her lesson. Once again the observations were followed by the interviews in which she talked about the reported causal attributions and the factors behind her instructional decisions. She commented on why she did not see her students' regular attendance important for her students' successes in English exams:

> Students' physically being in the class is not important. Those who come to class but spend their time with their mobile phones or talk with their peers do not pay attention to what we do in the class. This is also because we speak Turkish, not English in the lessons. They are not exposed to the language in the classroom, and when they do not listen to the lesson; their being in the class physically does not have a positive effect on their successes. (I2. Int. 1).

She was very clear about her own beliefs about students' regular attendance' being not important for the students' successes in English exams, though, her beliefs were in opposite to what she did in the classroom during the observations with her. One of the considerable points was also that though she ascribed students' bringing their books to the lesson to her students' successes in English exams in the interview, she did not check whether her students brought their books to the lessons. She commented:

> I stopped checking whether the students brought their books because the students who did not bring their books to the class at the beginning of the year continued not bringing their books to the class and they became unsuccessful in the exams. (I2. Int. 1).

The quote above shows that her practice was not consistent with her reported causal attribution '*bringing their books to the lessons*'.

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I2's lessons were also characterized as being knowledge-oriented and teacher-dominated. Grammar and reading were the primary skills emphasized by her. The focus of her instruction was predominantly on language knowledge. She talked took about 70-80% of her class time. Much of the classroom instruction was carried out in Turkish. What caught my attention was as part of the class routine was that she invariably started each new lesson leading her students to go over what they had learned in their previous lessons and what they would cover in the lesson before giving her lecture on the unit. Apart from reading texts aloud and translation, she was never observed interacting with her students for the purposes of communication. Throughout the observation process, group-work was never observed in her class. Furthermore, she never encouraged her students do peer-assessment. She explained:

> I do not use peer-assessment in the classes that you observed. I used it in the preparatory schools. Especially in writing I used peer-assessment much. The students edited and gave feedback to each other's writing and then they submitted to me. I gave feedback both to writing and the peer-feedback. (I2. Int. 1).

The above interview extract indicates that she felt the curriculum was not appropriate for the classes except for those in which the class hours are much to use peer-assessment during her classroom practices. However, her views about the importance of using peer-assessment over her students' successes in English exams did not seem to be consistent with her classroom practices. She attributed her students' successes to *peer-assessment* on her answer to the open-ended question of the questionnaire (see Table 14).

She invested most of her energy and effort in doing grammar exercises, reading the dialogues, and texts. She was not particularly keen to provide students listening, speaking, and writing activities. In explaining the rules, I2 commonly used grammatical terminology. She also used Turkish freely in teaching grammar (and her teaching generally). Doing reading aloud was a key characteristic of I2's practices during the lessons. First, I2 read the dialogues or texts aloud, and then individual students were selected to read the dialogues aloud in pairs.

Episode 3

I: Can I help you?

I: Yes, please.

I: I would like some shampoo.

I: We have lots, would you like it for dry or normal hair?

I: Dry. I think.

I: Ok, try this one, anything else?

I: Hımmm, yeah… I don't have any conditioner. I would like to have a conditioner for dry hair.

I: Yes, of course. That is six four and ninety pound please.

…

I: Yes.

I: (In Turkish) Ok, now. Necmi: a. Sevginur: b. Let's start.

S: Ok

… (I2. O. 1)

The episode above shows that she first read the dialogue on the book aloud. She read word by word and sentence by sentence. While she was reading aloud, she did not translate into Turkish. After reading aloud the whole dialogue aloud alone, she selected individual students to read the dialogue in pairs. While they were reading aloud, she did not stop them to check their comprehension and to correct their pronunciation. This pattern of classroom interaction was frequently repeated throughout all the lessons I observed with her. During the observations, what struck me was that pair work was observed only in dialogues. Individual students were asked to read the dialogues aloud in pairs. Furthermore, classroom observation showed that students were not given the chance to work in pairs during the activities which required students to exchange ideas in English.

Classroom observation illustrated that she dominated classroom interaction. She often asked questions and selected individual students to answer these questions. During the classes I observed with her, students were not given opportunities to work together to do the activities. In other words, the absence of group work was one of the key

characteristics of I2's practices during the lessons I observed. When I asked her about the absence of group work during the activities, she commented:

> As I said before, there are some students who are good at English; in group works other students around those who are good at English can learn something. I used groupwork in the fall term of this year. You have five min. Let's do these exercises together. These works were more beneficial. However, in this term, I do not have enough time to do such works. (I2. Int. 1).

Her views about the importance of using group work over her students' successes in English exams did not seem to be consistent with her classroom practices. She attributed her students' successes in English exams to *work in groups* on the questionnaire. Although she expressed positive attitudes towards the use of group work, she did not require her students do group work activities. The limited time appeared to be the reason for not instructing the students to work in groups during classroom activities.

A key principle regarding teaching grammar which was illustrated in her lessons was that the students saw and heard the examples of the target structures used in a variety of situations and so began to notice and understand it. This was usually done in the introductory grammar activities on the coursebook. Then, she started to analyze the grammatical points with her students. She provided examples of the target structures and wrote some of them on the board. Then, she went on the activities on the coursebook. By observation, she spent most of their class time conducting activities based on the content of their coursebook. She further expanded her views during the interview:

> I think the importance of coursebook over students' successes and failures is much; actually the quality of the materials used is important. Firs, the coursebook used needs to be multicultural because language is not a course which can be taught apart from its culture. For example, the book we use this year is too ordinary in terms of its pictures, listening activities. Having different topics, thus giving chances students to expose a large number of words from different topics are important. (I2. Int. 1).

If our book was more colorful or if it had different activities and if we used this coursebook effectively in the class, the percentage of attendance to the lesson, motivation and concentration of the students would be affected positively to a great extent. (I2. Int. 1).

The quotes above indicate that she felt the importance of the coursebook over her motivation, concentration, and thus students' successes in their exams. It is also clear that though she expressed negative attitudes towards the book of this year, she spent most of their class time conducting activities based on the content of their coursebook and she did not bring any other materials to use in her lessons. She commented:

Our exams are based on what is included in the coursebook, so we did not have the courage to go beyond the coursebook… otherwise, the students would say 'we fail in the exams because we did not do the activities on our book', so we did not use any other materials and we taught our lessons in line with the coursebook and our book was not effective one. (I2. Int. 1).

The interview extract above reveals that I2 seems to have contradicting views when it comes to coursebook. On the one hand, she believed the importance of the couserbook over students' successes and spent nearly all of her class time conducting activities based on the content of their coursebook. On the other hand, she had negative attitudes towards the book that they used this year.

Classroom observation showed that she always skipped the activities which require the students to speak, listen, and write English on the coursebook. She explained why she skipped these activities:

Our classes are too crowded. The number of the students in each class is much. We need to use these activities but the classroom atmosphere should be appropriate for such activities to be included in the lesson. So, because of the inappropriate classroom atmosphere, using these activities and multimedia in the classroom lose its effectiveness to some extent. It is also important to use them effectively. (I2. Int. 1).

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She was very clear about her own beliefs about omitting the activities which require the students to speak, listen, and write English on the coursebook. These beliefs were in consistent with her practices underpinning the class.

Over the interviewed period, she changed her inclination to attribute her students' successes and failures mostly to student-related factors. Instead of placing a great emphasis on the importance of external factors (internal within students) over her students' successes and failures in English exams as at the time of answering the questions of the questionnaire, she shifted the focus to herself, ready to take more responsibility for her students' successes and failures and exert more effort. She blamed herself for her students' failures in English exams:

> I sometimes taught my lessons in an unenjoyable atmosphere. I thought I did not my lessons active. I sometimes think that I do not use my voice effectively. And sometimes, I think I do not give good examples of the target structures. I think I have an effect on students' failures. Actually, to make the lessons enjoyable is related to me. (I2. Int. 1).

4.2.2.4. Case summary

This section has presented an in-depth account of I2's practices during the lessons I observed with her along with the data gathered through the questionnaire and the follow-up interview. The questionnaire findings showed that she ascribed her students' successes in English exams to: *listening to the lessons*, *working-in groups*, *and peer-assessment*. The analysis of the data gathered through the follow-up interview revealed that I2 mentioned *students' having background knowledge*, *the coursebook*, and *bringing the books to the class* behind her students' successes in English exams. In other words, I2 attributed her students' success both internal and external factors within the students. I2 ascribed her students' failures to: *lack of concentration on what they work*, *not being interested in learning a language*, and *the classroom atmosphere.* The questionnaire findings showed that I2 were inclined to attribute her students' successes and failures both to factors within herself (external within her students) and to student-related factors (internal within her students). Classroom observations and interview findings revealed that there were many instances where her classroom practices were not in line with her reported causal attributions. This was mainly evident in the absence

of group work activities during classroom activities, spending her class time conducting activities based on the content of their coursebook, and the absence of peer-assessment. The interviews with I2 provided insights into the factors which had an influence on her practices. I2 also explained her teaching (her decision to focus more on grammar than on listening, speaking, and writing) with reference to external factor such as English exams carried out at the university in the interview.

4.2.3. Case three: I3

4.2.3.1. Background Information

I3, a 38-year-old male instructor, had a BA in English. He graduated from an ELT department of a university in Turkey. At the time of the study, he had 14 years of total teaching experience as an EFL teacher. He started to work as an EFL teacher in a state school. He had just one year of teaching experience as an English teacher in as state school. He spent his thirteen years in teaching English as an EFL instructor at two different universities. He had 6 years of teaching experience as an EFL instructor as Adiyaman University. He taught beginner level language learners at Vocational School of Adiyaman University.

I3 was observed teaching beginner level students who had been studying at Vocational School of Adiyaman University. His students have taken English as one of their compulsory school subjects at the preparatory stage in their first year of studying at university. During the lessons I observed with him, the number of the students ranged from 30 to 40. Students in his class were sitting in desks which were fixed to the floor. Two or in some cases three students shared a desk. The desks were arranged in rows facing the board.

4.2.3.2. I3's causal attributions for his students' successes and failures

The analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire and the follow-up interview indicated that I3 ascribed his students' successes and failures in English exams to multiple causes as other instructors did. He attributed his students' successes in English exams on the questionnaire to: *attaching a great importance to the language for their future jobs* and *having a good basic knowledge about the language*. He never mentioned factors related to his teaching or himself (external factors within students). In

other words, he seemed to have a tendency to attribute his students' successes to student-related factors as I1 and most of the other instructors did. He further added that there were two departments whose students were successful in English exams: Food and Computer Departments at Vocational School of Adiyaman University. The reason why he stated that was that he worked at Vocational School of Adiyaman University and he believed that most of the students at Vocational Schools did not have good background knowledge and they did not attach any importance to language. It is clear that for him those who attach a great importance to the language for their future jobs and have good basic knowledge about the language and language learning process are mostly students who become successful in their English exams and in the process of language learning. This finding was also in consistent with the some other instructors' perceptions about the causes behind their students' successes (see Table 14). I3 commented on the reason why he ascribed *having a good basic knowledge about the language* to his students' successes in English exams:

> The students who have some basic knowledge about the language and give importance to the language can understand easily what we teach in the beginner level in the lesson with the help of their background knowledge. So, these students do not have difficulty in understanding the language that we provide them in the class. (I3. Int. 1)[4].

He maintained that:

> Actually, I did not study on what reasons our students perceive behind their successes and failures. If I asked them, I would make more explicit attributions. But, I can guess some of the reasons. (I3. Int. 1).

The interview extract shows his views about the importance of knowing the students' attributions for their own success and failure in English exams.

He ascribed his students' failures in their English exams to: *not having basic knowledge about grammar*, *not being familiar with grammatical terminology even in Turkish*, *attaching importance to their occupational courses rather than English*, *not being enthusiastic about learning*, *believing not to learn English, and being admitted to*

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[4] I3: Instructor 3, Int: Interview, 1: The number of the interview

university without examination. I3 ascribed *being admitted to university without examination* as a cause behind his students' failures in English exams because his students at Adiyaman Vocational School of Adiyaman University are accepted to university via open admission. In other words, students graduated from Vocational High Schools in Turkey do not have to enter university entrance examination to be accepted as a student in Vocational Schools at any universities. This may indicate the value of the university entrance examination this instructor places on his students' success in English exams, as he may think that such students do not have studying habits and goals related to their future, thus in turn they fail in exams carried out at the university. It is clear that I3 did not attribute any factors related to his teaching or any other factors within himself. He seemed to have a tendency to ascribe both his students' successes and failures to internal factors (factors related to students). However, I3's answers to the 3rd and 4th open-ended question showed that he seemed to accept his responsibility over his students' success. This finding was not in consistent with his answers to the first two questions on the questionnaire in which he never mentioned any factors related to his teaching or himself.

Over the interviewed period, he changed his inclination to attribute his students' failures mostly to student-related factors. Instead of placing a great emphasis on the importance of external factors (internal within students) over his students' successes in English exams as at the time of answering the questions of the questionnaire, he shifted the focus to himself, ready to take more responsibility for his students' successes and and exert more effort. He further added in one interview:

> One of the reasons behind our students' failures in the exams is our not providing feedback for their works in the class. We know the importance of giving feedback to our students but because of some reasons we do not give feedback to all of our students. I think one of the reasons behind our students' failures in English exams is that. I wish I gave them feedback for their listening, speaking, writing, and reading activities, but it is not possible all the time. The first reason is that the classrooms are crowded, it is impossible to deal with students one by one. (I3. Int. 2).

The interview extract above shows that he ascribed his students' failures in English exams to *not giving feedback to students*. When I asked him whether there were any other reasons that he wanted to ascribe, he commented:

Yes, I have some other reasons for students' failures. One is, as teachers, not to use additional materials except for coursebook or not to adapt the materials. Second one is not to give our students performance tasks which require them to expose to English outside the class. Third one is not to check our students bring their books, notebooks to the class with themselves. The fourth one is not to give feedback students for their classroom activities. (I3. Int. 2).

Along with his failure attributions reported on the questionnaire, I3 attributed his students' failures to: *not using additional materials, not adapting materials, not giving students performance tasks, not check whether they bring their books to the lesson, and not giving feedback to students*. He ascribed *regular attendance* and *bringing books to the classroom* to the students' successes in the interview.

His answer to the 5th open-ended question revealed that the causes he ascribed for his students' successes and failure were present in his previous years of teaching. He explained that:

Yes, when I was a teacher at Trade High School, students were not keen on learning the language and when I was a lecturer at Vocational School of Balikesir University, I experienced the same problems. I suppose this is a general problem at Vocational High Schools and Vocational Schools of universities.

He had been working in a vocational high school before he started to work as an EFL instructor at a university. Then, he started to work as an EFL instructor at Vocational School of Balikesir University. At the time of the study, he worked at Vocational School of Adiyaman University. So, he emphasized the reasons behind students of Vocational Schools in general on his answer. A further study is needed to understand the causal attributions of students of Vocational Schools. If needed, both students and instructors should be provided with attribution retraining programs.

His answer to the 6th open-ended question was in line with his causal attributions for the students' failures. He maintained that:

Yes, it depends. If some departments of Vocational School keep admitting their students without university entrance examination, we will suffer from the same problem.

This finding revealed that he emphasized the importance of university entrance examination on students' successes and failure at Vocational Schools.

His answer to the 7th open-ended question showed that he thought that the causes he ascribed for his students' successes and failures were not specific to his students this year. This finding was in line with the other instructors' answers. For the last question on the questionnaire, he did not have any idea because he never went beyond teaching beginner level for students of Vocational Schools. However, he emphasized the need to move on to elementary level on his answer to this question.

4.2.3.3. I3's practices

I3 was observed teaching lessons from a beginner level coursebook. This is the same material I2 teaching. The units that he covered, during the observations, were Unit 12 and Unit 13. The titles of the units were 'Please and thank you' and 'Here and now'.

During the lessons I observed, students were asked to sign the attendance sheet regularly in each lesson at the beginning of the lesson as I1 and I2 did. He also gave importance to his students' bringing their coursebooks to the classroom with themselves all the time. I3' practices were in line with I1 and I2. When we look at his causal attributions for his students' achievement, we realize that he ascribed *regular attendance* and *bringing books to the classroom* to the students' successes in the exams. The quotes below show the importance of students' regular attendance and bringing their books to the class that I3 places on his students' successes:

There is a difference in terms of success in the exams between students who attend the lessons regularly and those who do not attend the lessons regularly and do nothing outside the class regarding English. (I3. Int. 1).

I think the students who bring their books to the class are definitely more successful than those who do not bring. We took some notes about these issues. I noted the students who brought their books and students who did not bring their books in my previous years of teaching. I realized that the students who came to the lessons with their books were more successful in the exams. (I3. Int. 1).

He expressed his views about his preference for regular attendance and students' bringing their coursebooks to the lessons. Classroom observations revealed that the factors behind his practices were in line with what he attributed for his students' successes to *regular attendance* and *bringing their books to the lessons*.

Unlike other participants who attached more importance to language forms, I3 stressed the development of students' ability to use English. He was so highly motivated that he spontaneously experimented with communicative activities as well as cooperative learning activities (e.g. pair works, questions and answers, using the multimedia, listening to the songs) in his class. Not only was he observed frequently utilizing authentic materials, but I3 was also found using the coursebook more creatively and trying hard to encourage his students to interact in class. Furthermore, he was often seen using power-point slides to teach vocabulary and present background knowledge. The explicit grammar teaching, the use of examples and the use of Turkish in explaining grammar were key characteristics of his work during teaching grammar. It was noted during the observations that his students showed higher motivation in learning English and were more active in class than those of other classes observed. In contrast to I1 and I2's practices, he did not skip the listening activities, the speaking activities and the writing activities on the coursebook. The interviews provided an opportunity for I3 to talk about his causal attributions for his students' successes and failures in English exams, and his classroom practices. When recounting the reasons why he implemented these interactive activities, brought the extra materials to the lessons, used pair works and used multi-media in class rather than spending a lot of time on language forms, he articulated:

I did to increase the students' interest and motivation during the lessons. Adapting the materials is obligatory for all teachers. Obligatory means teachers should adapt the materials. It is not possible to teach English in an effective way

without adapting the materials. It is not all teachers should do. To use effectively in the lessons, the suitability of the classroom is required to do so. (I3. Int. 1).

We had students do the listening activities, the speaking activities and the writing activities based on the coursebook. Unfortunately, we spend most of our class time conducting activities on the book. Actually, that is not desirable but we have to do like this for some reasons. (I3. Int. 1).

The data illustrate the impact of teachers' beliefs on their classroom practices. In other words, the above extracts highlight several influences on I3's practices: his views about adapting materials, bringing the class extra materials and his views about the role of the activities over students' motivation and interest. Collectively, these factors provide insights into why his practices were to some extent consistent with his causal attributions for her students' achievement.

In spite of his efforts, his class still seems deficient in that he was seldom seen calling on students to do pair work/group work. He only had students read the dialogues in pairs as a pairwork activity as I2 did. He was also aware that he had articulated some obstacles while carrying out student-centered activities as we see in the following quote:

You as teachers have to follow the curriculum intended for the lesson. You aim to finish the language forms which the students are responsible for their exam. But, time is limited and the classrooms are crowded. (I3. Int. 1).

What we should note is that in the above statement, he mentioned the exams, the limited time, and the crowded classrooms as the obstacles to his teaching. It is clear that I3 did believe that the exam and the large amount of time devoted to FLL could foster changes in teaching and learning. They thought their teaching was more closely related to the learners' beliefs than the exams.

4.2.3.4. Case summary

I3 attributed his students' successes in English exams on the questionnaire and during the interview to: *attaching a great importance to the language for their future jobs* and *having a good basic knowledge about the language, regular attendance, and bringing their coursebooks to the class*. He ascribed his students' successes to student-

related factors (internal factors within students). I3 ascribed his students' failures in their English exams to: *not having basic knowledge about grammar*, *not being familiar with grammatical terminology even in Turkish, attaching importance to their occupational courses rather than English, not being enthusiastic about learning, believing not to learn English, being admitted to university without examination, not using additional materials, not adapting materials, not giving students performance tasks, not check whether they bring their books to the lesson, and not giving feedback to students*. He seemed to have a tendency to ascribe both his students' successes and failures to internal factors (factors related to students) on the questionnaire.

The interviews highlighted different factors which appeared to have an impact on his work during the lessons I observed with him. These factors included a range of beliefs about language teaching and learning, additional contextual factors such as the lack of resources, the crowded classrooms, and the role of the exams as well as his causal attributions for his students' successes and failures in English exams. Classroom observations showed that I3 practices were to some extent consistent with the reported causal attributions. This was particularly evident in his attributions: *regular attendance, not adapting materials, not using additional materials, and not checking whether students bring their books to the class*.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings in relation to the research questions, notes the limitations of the study, outlines its contributions and suggestions for further research, and discusses its educational implications. First of all, the starting point for the study and the summary of the findings with respect to each research question are provided. Secondly, the implications gained from the study are presented with the recommendations for further study. The last section presents the limitations of the study.

5.1. Summary and Discussion of the Study

Given the key role of teachers in the process of FLLT, the purpose of this study was to examine the EFL instructors' multiple causal attributions to their students' successes and failures in the English exams carried out at Adiyaman University, with causal dimensions. Identifying the instructors' attributions to their students' successes and failures in their English exams and the tensions between the English instructors' attributions to their students' successes and failures and their classroom practices are also aimed to be explored. It shed light on the rationales and the factors which had an impact on the instructors' practices. Specifically, the study aimed to find out the answers to the following research questions:

1. What reasons do EFL instructors attribute to their students' successes and failures in their English exams?
2. How are the EFL instructors' attributions to students' successes and failures and their classroom practices related?

5.1.1. Summary and discussion of the findings from RQ1

In order to examine the instructors' causal attributions to their students' successes and failures in English exams carried out at Adiyaman University, the data was collected with the questionnaire called 'Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire' and the follow up semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was

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administered to all of the EFL instructors who worked at Adiyaman University at the time of the study, however, the follow-up interviews were conducted to the three of them whose classroom practices were also videotaped.

The results of both questionnaire and follow-up interview indicate that nearly all of the instructors attributed their students' successes and failures in the English exams carried out at Adiyaman University to multiple causes. The questionnaire results show that almost all instructors most frequently mentioned students' characteristics, particularly *their regular study*, *motivation*, and *having clear goals* as the causes of students' success. Of the 61 reported causal attributions for students' successes, h*aving clear goals* was the leading causal attributions and *motivation* and *their regular study* came in the second place. The wide range of reported causal attributions (61) is due to the qualitative nature of this study that was primarily based on the questionnaire and the interview. Uncovering causal attributions related to students' success and failure in English exams using an open-ended questionnaire and interviews is a major contribution to research. In other research, participants are mostly administered to a questionnaire that forces a set of causal attributions possibly obtained from previous research (Birenbaum & Kramer, 1995; Bornholt & Möller, 2003).

An interesting finding was causal attributions *ability* and *luck*'s not being cited for students' successes by any instructors in the present study. This finding is in consistent with Gosling's (1994) belief that "In the teachers' eyes, the student who succeeds owes his success to broad psychological traits, and not to intellectual ability or stamina." (p. 10). The reason why *luck* was not cited by any of the instructors needs to be further searched because in the English exams carried out at Adiyaman University multiple choice questions were included.

Analysis of the data suggested that success attributions could be grouped by 6 factors: effort, success in other disciplines, background level, interest/personal traits, target setting, and others' influence and circumstances. The questionnaire results show that their major attributions for success were interest/personal traits (42.2%), effort (22.6%), and target setting (14.7%). It is interesting that *interest/personal traits* were rated by instructors as the top cause of students' successes. Weiner (1972, 1979) states that "teachers, as a general rule, tend to consider that the main cause of academic success or failure is effort- or lack of it (cited in Gosling, 1994)." However, in this

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study, the instructors attributed their students' success to *interest/personal traits* more than *effort*. *Effort* came in the second place. Based on Weiner's (1985) point of view, this causal attribution has very positive implications for students' academic achievement as effort is personal controllable, changeable attribution.

As with success, the external attributions were *classroom activities* (3.2%), *task difficulty* (4.9%), and *the quality of the materials* (1.6%) used which were mainly related to the instructors. One of the noteworthy findings is that instructors seldom mentioned their own teaching as a factor influencing students' performance in the exams. In other words, the instructors mostly considered students themselves responsible for their successes in English exams. These findings support Brehm & Kassim' (1993), Zukerman's (1979) and Fry & Ghosh's (1980) studies that conclude people naturally make favorable attribution for their own behavior. People take more responsibility for success than for failure. These findings can also be reinterpreted in light of research into the actor/observer difference. "The actor tends to explain his behavior in terms of the situation, whereas the observer tends to make internal attributions (Gosling, 1994, p. 70)". In line with Gosling (1994), Jones & Nisbett (1971) suggested that attributions for situations involving the self and those involving other people do differ. Consistent with the previous findings (Darom & Bar-Tal, 1981), the present findings also suggest that teachers accept their responsibility for success. The only possible evidence for counter defensive attribution is the instructors' higher ratings of student factors when reporting students' success in English exams. These findings might have been obtained because instructors expect their own behavior to produce success rather than failure. Also, in each classroom there are some children who are successful in English exams, teachers could logically that, and poor performance would not be entirely due to their own behavior. Thus, our findings provide support for earlier studies (Beckman, 1973; Ross, Bierbrauer, & Polly, 1974) which indicated that counter defensive attributions occur among teachers. For the present, instructors should be cautioned about the possible effects of ego-relevant attribution.

As with failure, the greatest emphasis within attributions of failure was also on students' characteristics, particularly *attributing inadequate importance to English*, *disbelieving in being successful,* and *lack of interest* as causes of students' failure in English exams. *Attributing inadequate importance to English* was the leading causal

attributions and *lack of interest* came in the second place. It is noteworthy that on the second open-ended question instructors never spontaneously mentioned their own teaching as a factor influencing students' performance in the exams. Only one instructor mentioned both *his asking difficult questions* and *having groups in exams* as causes of students' failure in English exams. One another instructor mentioned *relative evaluation* as a cause of students' failure in English exams. These causes are related to task difficulty, luck, and testing. Except for these causes, in all cases the instructors most frequently mentioned students' characteristics as causes of their failure on the questionnaire. These findings thus lend weight to the hypothesis that teachers tend to make defensive attributions in cases of failure (Gosling, 1994). However, some of the results could be dependent on the population. So, the generalization is dependent on others' studies taking into account others' teachers, of different degrees and from different countries.

Another noteworthy finding was that instructors in this study also attributed their students' failures to internal, personal controllable causes, and a self-critical attribution pattern that is similar to Asian students' pattern (Gobel & Mori, 2007). Especially, the analysis of the 3rd and 4th open-ended questions and the follow up interview showed that the instructors seemed more inclined to attribute factors related to their teaching. This finding suggested that the instructors who are more self-regulated have a tendency, even in cases of failure, to attribute outcomes to internal factors like teaching.

Analysis of the data gathered from the second open-ended question suggested that failure attributions could be grouped by 6 factors: *lack of effort, lack of ability, background level, interest/personal traits, target setting,* and *others' influence and circumstances*. The instructors' major attributions for their students' failures in English exams were *interest/personal traits* (56.6%), *lack of effort* (21.6%), and *others' influence and circumstances* (8.3%). Effort is something the students can control, and attributing the students' failure to effort allows the students the responsibility to improve in the future, in contrast with an attribution to an uncontrollable cause, such as lack of ability or poor teaching. Gosling (1994) states that "effort is an intentional behavior which clearly places responsibility on the student, and sanctions him/her while at the same time clearing the teacher of his/her own responsibility in this failure. (p. 70)" Why the instructors tended to assign an important role to student effort in the case

of academic failure can be explained with the findings of the previous studies (Buss, 1979; Hamilton, 1980; Hewstone, 1989), in that they report that teachers are more likely to make a responsibility attribution in the case of failure and failure may thus be seen as a deviant and abnormal phenomenon that requires designation of someone/something responsible for it.

When we look at the instructors' higher ratings of students' factors for causes behind the students' failures in English exams, we can easily say that the instructors were more inclined to view their causes of students' failures as more internal within the students. The challenge that surfaces is that instructors have a tendency to attribute causal factors for students' successes and failures to factors that preserve the instructors' self-worth.

As with failure, the external attributions were *being admitted to university without examination* (1.6%), *task difficulty* (1.6%), *testing/assessment* (1.6%), *the new system (curriculum/syllabus)* (1.6%), *luck* (1.6%), and *the classroom atmosphere* (1.6%) under 'Others' influence and circumstances' category. Each of these causes was mentioned once according to the content analysis of the answers to the second open-ended question. It should be considered that the beliefs that failure was caused by luck will produce more certainly of future success than considering ability as the cause of failure. Furthermore, these findings provided evidence that the subjects attributed their students' success and failure to both external and internal factors. These findings are in contrast with Darom & Bartal's (1981) explanation that teachers accept their responsibility for success but not for failure.

Despite the diversity of the types of the instructors' attributions, for success and failure attributions overall, '*interest/personal traits*' was the most common attribution. However, when asked to define which factor has contributed more to the outcome, subjects' tendency to provide internal attributions for both success and failure became apparent. This finding is in consistent with Johnson, Feigenbaum, & Weiby (1964) and Beckman's (1970) studies which found that teachers mentioned their own efforts more in accounting for children's success than for children's failure. This finding is also in line with Ross, Bierbrauer, & Polly' s (1974) studies which found that teachers had a tendency to mention student factors on the open-ended questions, which, in general, is strongly supported by our data. Perhaps, because of the way the question was phrased or

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the format used, instructors' own teaching was not salient for them on the open-ended questions. The somewhat different results with open-ended questions and structured questions show that the assessment tool used is itself a determinant of the type of attributions made, and points up the value of using multiple assessment techniques.

5.1.2. Summary and discussion of the findings from RQ2

In order to identify the characteristics of the instructors' work, classroom observations were conducted over a period of four weeks for each instructor. Follow up semi-structured interviews were also conducted with each of the three instructors to listen to their views about the causal attributions that they attributed, their answers to the questions of the questionnaire and their perspectives. During these interviews, the instructors commented on their causal attributions to their students' successes and failures in the exams and their practices, and discussed a range of beliefs and contextual factors which had an impact on the way they worked in the classroom.

The questionnaire findings showed that I1 attributed his students' success in English exams to: *regular attendance*, *studying styles/methods (modular-linear)*, *interest*, *expectations*, *success in other disciplines/courses*, *level of acceptance*, and *motivation*. He attributed his students' failure in English exams to multiple causes as similar in success attributions. He ascribed *negligence*, *relative evaluation*, *attributing inadequate importance to the degree to be endeavored in the end of the program*, and *disbelieving in being successful* to his students' failures. The questionnaire findings showed that I2 ascribed her students' successes in English exams to: *listening to the lessons*, *working-in groups*, *and peer-assessment*. The analysis of the data gathered through the follow-up interview revealed that I2 mentioned *students' having background knowledge*, *the coursebook*, and *bringing the books to the class* behind her students' successes in English exams. She ascribed her students' failures to: *lack of concentration on what they work*, *not being interested in learning a language*, and *the classroom atmosphere*. I3 attributed his students' successes in English exams on questionnaire and during the interview to: *attaching a great importance to the language for their future jobs* and *having a good basic knowledge about the language, regular attendance, and bringing their coursebooks to the class*. I3 ascribed his students' failures in their English exams to: *not having basic knowledge about grammar*, *not*

being familiar with grammatical terminology even in Turkish, attaching importance to their occupational courses rather than English, *not being enthusiastic about learning*, *believing not to learn English, being admitted to university without examination, not using additional materials, not adapting materials, not giving students performance tasks, not check whether they bring their books to the lesson, and not giving feedback to students*. The data showed that I1 and I2 seemed to have a tendency to ascribe both their students' successes and failures to both to factors within themselves (external within their students) and to student-related factors (internal within their students). However, I1 were more inclined to attribute his students' successes and failures to student-related factors (internal within his students). These findings suggest that the instructors should be cautioned about the possible effects of self-serving bias.

Classroom observations and interview findings also revealed that there were some aspects of I1 and I3's work which to some extent were in line with their reported causal attributions and that there were many instances where I2's classroom practices were not in line with her reported causal attributions. The tensions between I1's practices and his causal attributions were particularly evident in *his giving great importance to his students' regular attendance*, *enabling the students to bring their books to the class*, *his omitting the listening, speaking and writing activities*, and *his relating what they learn new to what they have already learned*. Another key factor in his work was exams, and these influenced his decision to focus more on grammar than on listening, speaking, and writing. The tensions between I3' practices and his causal attributions were particularly evident in his attributions: *regular attendance, not adapting materials, not using additional materials, and not checking whether students bring their books to the class*. The instances where I2's classroom practices were not in line with her reported causal attributions were was mainly evident *in the absence of group work activities* during classroom activities, *spending her class time conducting activities based on the content of their coursebook*, and *the absence of peer-assessment*.

In addition to teachers' prior experience and existing beliefs, this study pointed to a range of contextual factors which led to the tensions between the intentions of the curriculum and what actually happens inside the classroom. Therefore, any teacher training programmes need to take into account the contextual factors which influence

what teachers do inside the classroom. The need to take the context into consideration has been stressed by Johnson (2006) when she writes:

> Teacher educators could no longer ignore the fact that teachers' prior experiences, their interpretations of the activities they engage in, and most important the contexts within which they work are extremely influential in shaping how and why teachers do what they do. (p. 236)

However, a description of classroom observations alone does not allow us to understand why teachers do in particular ways. As Breen, Hird, Milton, & Thawaite, (2001) put it "we cannot infer the intentions of teacher action or the reasons why teachers work in the ways they do in particular lessons with particular students only from observed practices" (p. 498). Richards (1996) calls for "the need to listen to the teachers' voices in understanding classroom practice in order to be in able to understand teaching in its own terms and in ways in which it is understood by teachers" (p. 281). Frechtling (2000) adds that "it is essential not only to observe instruction, but also to talk to teachers about their instructional decisions" (p. 281). More recently, Borg (2006) has argued that:

> Observation on its own... provides an inadequate basis for the study of what teachers think, know, and believe. Researchers may draw inferences about cognition from what is observed, but verification for these must be sought through further sources of data. (p. 247)

As mentioned earlier, this study goes beyond teachers' beliefs and takes into account the contextual factors which had an influence on what teachers did in the class. As Borg (2006) puts it:

> The social, institutional, instructional, and physical settings in which teachers work have a major impact on their cognition and practices. The study of cognitions and practices in isolation of the contexts in which they occur will inevitably, therefore, provide partial, if not flawed, characteristics of teachers and teaching. (p. 275)

Reflecting these concerns, this study did not only focus on what teachers do, but also on the factors behind their actions. As explained in Chapter 3, interviews provided with the opportunity to listen to the teachers' voices. Thus, during these interviews teachers reflected upon their own practices and articulated both the beliefs and the contextual factors which had an impact on their classroom practices. By observation, all the participants spent most of their class time conducting activities based on the content of their coursebook. However, I1 and I2, with the exception of I3, have increased, though at varying degrees, the amount of their class time spent on reading, and language forms. During the reading lessons, teachers spent substantial time reading word by word and sentence by sentence, explaining vocabulary, translating into Turkish, and reading aloud. Little attention was given to activities included in the book such as listening, speaking, and writing. Activities which aimed to give the students the chance to speak the target language were either omitted completely or talked through by the teachers, with little student involvement. Pair work activities (a core component of the curriculum) were either skipped or carried out at the class level between the student and the student only in dialogues in which the students were asked to read the dialogue aloud. The listening activities which were designed to enhance the students' skills of prediction, listening for gist and to develop the students' confidence and competence in comprehension were omitted altogether by all five teachers. Grammar items were taught in discrete activities without developing students' abilities to use the grammar for communicative purposes. The results also showed that there were also different factors which appeared to have an impact on I3's work that included a range of beliefs about language teaching and learning, additional contextual factors such as the lack of resources, the crowded classrooms, and the role of the exams. The interviews with I2 provided insights into the factors which had an influence on her practices. I2 also explained her teaching (her decision to focus more on grammar than on listening, speaking, and writing) with reference to external factor such as English exams carried out at the university in the interview. The data gathered so far showed that I1 and I2's lessons were more exam-oriented than I3's. However, all of these three instructors saw 'exams' as a factor influencing their teaching to some extent. These results seem to imply that a school with a high emphasis on examination achievement is bound to generate certain kinds of feelings about success and failure, and, paradoxically, may not

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foster in learners an ability to make sense of their own learning in the most helpful way. Such an environment tends to encourage learners to focus on 'performance' rather than 'learning goals' (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), and may, therefore, not be the most effective way of fostering language learning. Furthermore, the research into waschback to date implies that changing the examination system is not enough for an attempt to innovate in education's being successful (Watanabe, 2004). Then, more appropriate approach would be the one that starts at the level of individual teachers. The importance of taking account into the AT in the research into washback was suggested by Alderson & Wall (1993) which found that different combination of causal attributions may lead to different action outcomes. Thus, a type of 're-attribution training' may be one important course that would need to be included in the teacher training which helps teachers to change their tendency to attribute exams, from being seen as 'external' 'uncontrollable' factors to being seen as 'internal' 'controllable' factors.

5.2. Implications and Recommendations for Further Study

Despite the limitations outlined below, this study contributes to the relevant literature in many ways. Little attention has been given as to how teachers teach with their perceptions about students' success and failure in their English exams. In this respect, this study provides detailed insight into a range of factors which shape how teachers teach.

Methodologically, this study shows the value of qualitative research with a longitudinal element as it involves both observations and interviews in studying the tensions between instructors' causal attributions to their students' success and failure and their classroom practices in particular ways. With this in mind, given the crucial role of teachers in the class in the process of FLLT, the findings of the study are valuable because they add new content to Weiner's AT, and address gaps in previous studies.

In addition to contributions to educational research in general, this study suggests several implications for English language teaching in Libya. The results of this study are important for instructors for several reasons. Teachers are constantly being called upon to make assumptions about the causes of students' behavioral and academic outcomes (Reyna, 2008). Understanding the AT and the effects that the instructors'

perceptions about students' success and failure can have on the instructors' practices, and thus on the student can lead instructors to intentionally construct a framework for dealing with students' negative outcomes. This framework will lead students to feel like they know what to expect from the instructor. When the students know what to expect, they understand that they play a part, or have some control, over the outcomes of their future actions, since part of staying motivated is the belief that the individual has control over the situation to be able to ensure a desired outcome.

The way in which instructors explain their students' success and failure is considered crucial because the causes to which instructors attribute to their students' successes and failures are to some extent in consistent with their classroom practices. Given the clear need for more effective strategies that can improve academic performance and motivation of EFL students, attribution training should be considered a valuable approach to be used in FL settings. A better understanding of the nature and impact of AR would allow instructors to be more in control of and evaluate their teaching and see the link between causal attributions and classroom practices.

Having identified the main contributions of this research study, and illustrated its educational implications, I now proceed to propose some suggestions for further research. Given the fact that this study has provided insights into tensions between instructors' causal attributions and classroom practices, more research of this kind will provide insights.

Further qualitative study of the instructor' practices and causal attributions for their students' success and failure will be valuable to build on the insights highlighted in this study. The findings from this study can provide the basis for the design of a survey in which the practices and causal attributions of a wider range of instructors can be studied. The suggestion would be to increase the sample size so that sufficiently large categories are formed under rather specific/highly differentiated reasons and factors influencing instructors' teaching are to be examined.

Throughout this study, the instructors frequently referred to students as having an impact on how they teach. It should be noted that this study did not focus on students. Therefore, all teachers' comments about students reflect the teachers' perceptions. Further research is needed to examine the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices and students' causal attributions.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

Some limitations of this study need to be acknowledged here. The first limitation is from a methodological point of view. English language instructors in Libya in general are not used to being observed or asked about their instructional decisions. Observation in this context is also associated with appraisal. Therefore, it was inevitable that the instructors I worked with had some concerns about my presence in their classrooms and this may have influenced their behaviors (and perhaps those of the learners) while I was there.

Second, due to the qualitative nature of this study, another limitation related to the small number of instructors studied and the number of categories that emerged during content analysis. Although the study provided an in-depth understanding of causal attributions, beliefs and practices of this group, one has to be cautious when generalizing the results. This study is only generalizable to this population of instructors. A larger sample size is necessary to find out if this had been the case. Furthermore, we did not want to limit the number of categories in order for results to reveal some of the subtle differences between responses which may have a bearing on the type of causal attributions in terms of causal dimensions. However, since the frequencies of some of these responses were very small, in a second round of categorization, some had to be combined to form broader categories. Also, the participants were not selected randomly (Adler & Clark, 2008).

Moreover, while instructors' perceptions of their students' successes and failures have been acknowledged to some extent as factors influencing instructors' classroom practices, they have been elusive and difficult to measure.

Finally, another limitation is related to the translation of data. The interviews with the instructors were conducted in Turkish, and then translated into English. Despite the fact that I paid considerable attention to the translation of the interviews, and asked one of my colleagues to check the translated data, the process is not without its shortcomings. I believe that it is not possible to have perfect translation and that there always be certain meanings that will be lost in translation. However, I am confident that the translated data captured faithfully the meanings instructors expressed during the interviews and these data presented here do not misrepresent the instructors in any way.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix 1: Invitation Letter

<div align="right">

The University of Adiyaman

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</div>

Department of Foreign Languages

INVITATION LETTER (PARTICIPANTS)

Title: Exploring Tensions between English Instructors' Causal Attributions to Their
     Students' Successes and Failures and Their Classroom Practices

To: Participants

My name is Özge Gümüş. I work as an EFL instructor at Adiyaman University, I am
also studying for my master of artsin the Department of English Language Teaching at
the University of Mersin Cağ. I am currently undertaking a study of the tensions
between EFL instructors' causal attributions to their students' successes and failures and
their classroom practices over four weeks.

You are invited to participate in this study and I would appreciate any assistance you
can offer me. As part of my research, I need to get data from three EFL instructors who
worked at Adiyaman University.

If you have any queries or concerns (or you wish to know more), please phone me on
+90 530 600 24 04 or e-mail me at ogumus@adiyaman.edu.tr or write to the following
address:

Qunyan Zhong

Department of Foreign Languages

Adiyaman University Altinsehir District 3005 St.

Number: 13, Adıyaman, TURKEY

7.2. Appendix 2: Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire

Multiple Causal Attributions Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect data for finding out the reasons that you as an English Language Instructor attribute to your students' successes and failures in their English exams. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. All the information you provide will be kept confidential and shall solely be used for my own research for the above mentioned reason. Thank you for your participation.

Part one: Background Information

Name and Surname: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

The Department that you graduated from: _____

It is _____ years since I first started to work as an English Language Teacher.

It is _____ years since I first started to work as an English Language Instructor at a university.

It is _____ years since I first started to work as an English Language Instructor at Adiyaman University.

The levels that you teach: _____

Part two: Causal Attributions

Please read and answer the following questions.

Q1: What reasons do you attribute to your students' successes in their English exams? If possible, describe briefly why? *(You can write more than one reason.)*
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q2: What reasons do you attribute to your students' failures in their English exams? If possible, describe briefly why? *(You can write more than one reason.)*
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q3: To what extent are these reasons caused by something about you?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q4: To what extent are these reasons caused by something about your students?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q5: Were these causes present in your previous years of teaching?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q6: Will these causes be present in your following years of teaching?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q7: Are these causes specific to your students this year?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q8: Are these causes present in all of your classes or most of your classes?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q9: If you teach at different levels, do you think that there are different reasons behind their successes and failures in their English exams?

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information

Name: Özge Gümüş

Place/ Date of Birth: Adıyaman/ 27.08.1988

Occupation: Instructor, School of Foreign Languages, Adıyaman University

E-mail: gumus_ozge@hotmail.com / ogumus@adiyaman.edu.tr

Educational Background

Date	University	Field
2006-2010	Marmara University	English Language Teaching

Job Experience

Date	Institution
2010 – present	School of Foreign Languages, ADYÜ