THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG SELF-EFFICACY, ATTRIBUTION AND ACHIEVEMENT IN A TURKISH EFL CONTEXT

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PhD DISSERTATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM

GAZI UNIVERSITY

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OCTOBER, 2016

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Teslim tarihi :

TEZİN

Türkçe Adı Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğreniminde öz-yeterlilik, yükleme ve başarı arasındaki ilişki- Türkiye örneği

İngilizce Adı : The relationship among self-efficacy, attribution and achievement in a Turkish EFL context

ETİK İLKELERE UYGUNLUK BEYANI

Tez yazma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyduğumu, yararlandığım tüm kaynakları kaynak gösterme ilkelerine uygun olarak kaynakçada belirttiğimi ve bu bölümler dışındaki tüm ifadelerin şahsıma ait olduğunu beyan ederim.

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JÜRİ ONAY SAYFASI

Jiydegul Alymidin Kyzy tarafından hazırlanan "The relationship among self-efficacy, attribution and achievement in a Turkish EFL context" adlı tez çalışması aşağıdaki jüri tarafından oy birliği / oy çokluğu ile Gazi Üniversitesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği Anabilim Dalı'nda Doktora tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Üye: Yard. Doç. Dr. Semra SARAÇOĞLU

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Tez Savunma Tarihi: …/…/…

Bu tezin İngilizce Öğretmenliği Anabilim Dalı'nda Doktora tezi olması için şartları yerine getirdiğini onaylıyorum.

Unvan Ad Soyad

Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Müdürü

To my beloved family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am using this opportunity to thank all the persons who have contributed in the different aspects of this study. They have all made it possible for me to commence and complete this enormous task. I would like to acknowledge and commend them for their effort, cooperation and collaboration. The work would not be possible without the contributions and involvement of the teachers and voluntary participants in the host institution who I think will take pride in this work. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my colleagues, family, and my friends.

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paşa Tevfik Cephe for the continuous support of my dissertation, for his patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this dissertation. I would also like to express my gratitude to my committee members, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bena Gül Peker and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Arif Sarıçoban for their invaluable guidance and advice.

Besides my supervisor, I owe a special thanks to my master and colleague Assoc. Prof. Dr. Carol Griffiths, who contributed enormously to the completion and success of this study, for her encouragement, invaluable comments, and constructive criticism. She was always there to guide me through with insightful comments whenever I felt desperate.

A special thanks to my family. Words cannot express how grateful I am to my husband Ruslanbek Maripov and my precious daughter Ayjamal for all of the sacrifices that they have made on my behalf and for your endless support, patience and understanding.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank my parents, my dear father Alymidin Kulamshaev and my beloved mother Gülnar Kalilova, for supporting me materially and spiritually through every stage of my life. It is their encouragement and trust in me that have always kept me on the track.

Thank you all.

YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENİMİNDE ÖZ-YETERLİLİK, YÜKLEME VE BAŞARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

TÜRKİYE ÖRNEĞİ

(Doktora Tezi)

Jiydegul Alymidin Kyzy

GAZİ ÜNIVERSİTESİ

EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ

Ekim 2016

ÖZ

Yabancı dil öğrenimini ve yabancı dil öğrenimindeki başarıyı etkileyen faktörler uzun yıllarca araştırıla gelmiştir. Bunların arasında motivasyon, öğrenci tutumları, öğrenme stratejileri ve başka faktörler bulunmaktadır. Ancak son yıllarda, öğrenme sürecini ve öğrenme başarısını etkileyen ve büyük bir ölçüde katkıda bulunan öz-inançlar (self-beliefs) da büyük bir ilgi odağı haline gelmiştir (bkz. Mercer & Williams, 2014). Bu inançlardan bazıları da öz-yeterlilik ve yükleme faktörleridir. Öz-yeterlilik kişinin bir amaca ulaşmak için gerekli olan etkinlikleri düzenleme ve uygulama yeteneği hakkındaki inancı olarak tanımlanmıştır (Bandura, 1997). Yükleme (teorisi) ise bireyin olay ve davranışların sebeplerini açıklama işlemidir. Örnekle açıklayacak olursak, yükleme bir öğrencinin sınav performansını, başarı ya da başarısızlık gibi, neye bağladığını ya da atfettiğini gösterir.

Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin öz-yeterlilik inançları, atıflar (yüklemeleri) ve akademik başarıları arasındaki ilişkiler incelenmiştir. Akademik başarıyı etkileyen faktörler olan bu değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler ile bu değişkenlerin akademik başarıya olan etkileri ve bu başarıyı ne derece önceden belirleyebildikleri (yordayabildikleri) araştırılmıştır.

Çalışmada karma yöntem (mixed method) kullanılmış olup çalışmaya İngilizce Hazırlık sınıflarında eğitim gören 141 öğrenci katılmıştır. Öğrencilerin öz-yeterlilik seviyeleri ve yükleme stillerinin belirlenebilmesi için eğitim öğretim yılının başlangıcında ve sonunda

ölçekler uygulanmıştır. Bu ölçek sonuçları daha sonra onların sınav sonuçları ile karşılaştırılarak öz-yeterlilik ile başarı, yükleme stilleri ile başarı arasındaki ilişkiler değerlendirilmiştir. Aynı zamanda, hangisinin daha çok başarıyla ilişkili olduğunu ölçmek için, öz-yeterlilik türleri olan akademik öz-yeterlilik ve dil öğrenme öz-yeterliliği ile başarı arasındaki ilişki de incelenmiştir. Son olarak, bütün değişkenler regresyon analizine dâhil edilerek, her bir değişkenin akademik başarıyı yordama (öngörme) gücüne bakılmıştır. Buna ek olarak, rastgele seçilmiş 25 öğrenciye yapılandırılmış açık uçlu sorular sorularak nitel veriler elde edilmiştir.

Araştırma sonucunda, öğrencilerin öz-yeterlilik seviyelerinin ilk ölçüme göre yılsonunda düşüş gösterdiği, sınavdaki performanslarını (başarılarını/başarısızlıklarını) öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun yetenek ve ilgiye, ikinci sırada ise sınav esnasındaki psikolojik durumlarına yordukları görülmüştür. Bunun dışında nitel araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin büyük kısmı çabanın/veya az çaba harcamanın kendi performanslarını etkilediklerini düşünmektedir. Bunların dışında, sınavdaki başarılarını/başarısızlıklarını değişik faktörlere (hocanın bilgili olmasına, ders işleyiş metoduna, çok tekrar etmeye, sınavın zor olmasına, sadece sınav için çalışma eğilimine ve yanlış çalışmaya vs.) yoran öğrenciler de olmuştur.

Son olarak, "yukarıda ele alınan değişkenlerin hangisi daha çok başarıyı (etkiler veya) yordama gücüne sahiptir?" sorusunun cevabı aranmıştır. Sonuç olarak, dil öğrenme öz-yeterliliğinin dilsel gelişimde en büyük yordama gücüne sahip olduğu, sonrasında ise sırasıyla dış faktörler, yetenek/ilgi ve çabanın istatistiksel olarak anlamlı derecede dil öğrenme başarısı üzerinde yordama gücüne sahip oldukları bulunmuştur.

Bu ve daha önceki çalışmaların bulgularından yola çıkarak, öz-yeterliliğin dil öğrenimindeki başarıya olan etkisinin göz önünde bulundurulması, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerine öz-yeterlilik inançlarını geliştirmelerine yardımcı olmaları önerilmiştir. Aynı zamanda, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin başarı veya başarısızlığın neye yüklendiği onların bir sonraki göreve olan yaklaşımını belirlediği de belirtilerek, onların yükleme stillerini daha içsel ve değişebilir yüklemelere değiştirmelerini sağlayıp akademik ortamda daha başarılı olmalarına katkıda bulunmaları önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: akademik başarı, akademik öz-yeterlilik, öz-yeterlilik, yükleme, Yükleme Teorisi, Sosyal-Bilişsel Kuram.

Sayfa Adedi : 126

Danışman : Doç.Dr. Paşa Tevfik CEPHE

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(Ph.D Thesis)

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

October 2016

ABSTRACT

The factors that affect foreign/second language learning have long been studied. In early studies, among other affective factors, mostly learner attitudes and motivation were dwelled on. However, in recent studies different forms of self-beliefs that are related to human learning, motivation, and achievement have received a great deal of attention (Mercer & Williams, 2014). Among these beliefs, attributions and self-efficacy have opened new paths to the understanding of the relationship between achievement and the beliefs learners have about themselves. Self -efficacy refers to personal judgments (beliefs) of one's capability to fulfill designated activities successfully (Bandura, 1977). An attribution is a causal explanation for an event or behavior [e.g. what the students attribute their test results (success or failure) to.]

This study investigated the relationship among self-efficacy, attribution and achievement in a Turkish EFL context. The relationship among these variables, which are stated to affect academic achievement and their predictive power or academic achievement have been analyzed.

A mixed- method design has been used in this research. 141 learners of English as a foreign language from preparatory classes comprised the participants of the study. In order to determine self-efficacy level and attribution styles Language Learning Self-Efficacy Scale, Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, Attribution Scale have been distributed in the beginning and at the end of the academic year. Data obtained from the scales have been compared with the exam results and the correlation analysis between self-efficacy and achievement and attribution styles and achievement have been conducted at the end. At the same time, language learning self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy have been correlated to see which of them is closely associated with achievement. Finally, predictive power of each variable has been tested by entering all the variables in regression analysis. Additionally, randomly selected 25 students filled a structured- open-ended questionnaire.

As a result of the study, there was a decline in students' self-efficacy levels in the second measurement, also ability/ interest attribution was the most referred factor followed by psychological state during the exams. Besides, the majority of the students who participated in the qualitative research thought that effort or lack of effort affected their exam grades. In addition, various attributions have been reported such as teacher knowledge, method of instruction, revision, difficulty of exam, test-oriented learning and wrong studying strategy and etc.
Finally, the predictive power of each variable has been investigated. As a result, language learning self-efficacy was found to be the best predictor of language achievement. Academic self-efficacy was found to have no predicting power in language learning achievement. It is because of the nature of the measurement of academic self-efficacy. The models of predicting language learning achievement included language learning self-efficacy, external factors, ability/interest and effort.
Since the self-efficacy is one of the most influential factors in learning a foreign language and was found to be the strongest predictor of achievement in the present study, teachers were suggested–to help students to develop their self-efficacy. Also, how students make attributions to their performance (success or failure) may influence how they approach future tasks. It was also recommended for teachers to contribute student success in academic setting by modifying students' attributions to more internal and controllable factor.

Key Words : academic achievement, academic self-efficacy, attributions, Attribution Theory, self-efficacy, Social Cognitive Theory.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASE	Academic Self-Efficacy
ASQ	Attribution for Success Questionnaire
AFQ	Attribution for Failure Questionnaire
CASES	College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FLA	Foreign Language Achievement
LLSE	Language Learning Self-Efficacy
PS	Problems Solving
PSS	Problem Solving Skills
SE	Self-Efficacy

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The factors that affect foreign/second language learning have long been studied. In early studies, among other affective factors, mostly learner attitudes and motivation were dwelled on (Gardner & Lambert 1972; Oxford, 1996; Dörnyei, 2001). Different scholars (Gardner, 1985; Schunk, 1991; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993) have stated that there is a positive correlation between motivation and language achievement. Besides, the role of language anxiety in learners' performance has been recognized by many researchers (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1991; Ehrman, 1996; Horwitz, 2001). However, in recent studies different forms of self-beliefs that are related to human learning, motivation, and achievement have received a great deal of attention (e.g. Mercer & Williams, 2014). Studies involving self-beliefs suggest that people with positive views of themselves try to succeed and overcome even the greatest obstacles in life. On the other hand, those people with low or negative self-beliefs seem to fail to reach their fullest potential and fall short of their expected performance in light of their objective capacity (Bong & Clark, 1999). Among these beliefs, attributions and self-efficacy have opened new paths to the understanding of the relationship between achievement and the beliefs learners have about themselves.

Attributions are one's beliefs about what causes success or failure in performing a task (Weiner, 1985). The central point of attribution theory is that attributions are important because they have consequences for the learning process affecting students' expectancies for future success, their affective states, and their subsequent behavior and performance (Weiner, 1985, 2000). That is, how students explain their success and failure may have an impact on academic performance. Similar ideas have been reported in self-efficacy theory, too. As defined by Bandura (1986), *self-efficacy* refers to people's judgement (belief) of their capabilities to complete a task successfully. Bandura (1977) proposed that

perceived self-efficacy has a directive influence on one's choice of activities and determines how much effort will be put in and the level of persistence in the face of obstacles and adverse experiences.

These two kinds of students' beliefs are interrelated. Hsieh (2004, (p.17)) explains it as follows:

> Self- efficacy is a perception of competency and can be based on one's attribution for an outcome. Having higher self-efficacy gives an individual more confidence to approach the task and positive beliefs about one's capabilities lead to positive results, which in turn, may lead the individual to believe that it is his or her effort that led to success

Bandura (1994) also suggested that there is a reciprocal relationship between attributions and self-efficacy. People who believe they are highly efficacious attribute their failures to lack of effort; whereas those who regard themselves as inefficacious attribute their failures to low ability. Hence, success will increase self-efficacy if the individual attributes the outcome to an internal attribution such as ability rather than luck.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of the present study was to investigate the relationships among three self-beliefs – attribution, language learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy - and achievement in a Turkish EFL context. It also aimed to examine how well the students' self-beliefs can predict their achievement. The participants were learners of English as a foreign language at a tertiary level preparatory school of different majors.

Significance of the Study

In a Turkish EFL context self-efficacy and attribution have been studied independently to explain academic achievement. Studies were carried out on EFL learners' attributions for success and failure by Taşkıran (2010). Satıcılar (2006) and Özkardeş (2011) dealt with the achievement attributions of the EFL learners in their MA theses. Despite the fact that a few works have been written on the relationship of self-efficacy, attribution and achievement, separately, still there is no research that tackles the interrelationship among self-efficacy, attribution and achievement in a Turkish EFL context.

Assumptions

It is assumed that positive correlations will be found among these three concepts. Main hypotheses of the study are as follows: (a) language learning self-efficacy would be positively related to language achievement; (b) academic self-efficacy would be positively related to language achievement; (c) language learning self-efficacy would have a stronger relationship with achievement than academic self-efficacy; (d) personal and controllable attributions would be positively related to language achievement; (e) all variables may show difference depending on gender.

The following research questions guide the study in achieving the purposes:

Research Questions

Research questions are as follows:

Research question 1: What is the language learning self-efficacy level of tertiary prep-school students in Turkey?

Research question 2: What is the academic self-efficacy level of tertiary prep-school students in Turkey?

Research question 3: What are the attribution styles of tertiary prep-school students in Turkey?

Research question 4: What is the achievement level of tertiary prep-school students in Turkey?

Research question 5: Is there a relationship between language learning self –efficacy and achievement?

Research question 6: Is there a relationship between academic self –efficacy and achievement?

Research question 7: Is there a relationship between attributions and achievement?

Research question 8: Is there a relationship among academic-self-efficacy, language learning self-efficacy and attributions?

Research question 9: Is there a relationship between academic-self-efficacy and language learning self-efficacy?

Research question 10: Do the results vary according to gender?

Research question 11: How well do foreign language learners' self-efficacy and attributions predict their achievement?

Limitations

In the present research participants were chosen from a private university in Istanbul. The data collected in the study is therefore limited to the context and the size of the sample group. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to the entire Turkish EFL context. The number of institutions could be increased in future studies. Also, it may be applied to state and private universities and a comparison may be drawn between the beliefs of the learners at private and state universities.

Definitions of Key Terms

Academic achievement: academic achievement in this study refers to the students' overall grades in each level of English classes.

Academic self-efficacy refers to individuals' convictions that they can successfully perform given academic tasks at designated levels (Schunk, 1991).

Attribution: An attribution is a causal explanation for an event or behavior. The term "attribution", "causal attribution" emerged from Attribution Theory.

Attribution Theory was first proposed by Heider (1958). A central aspect of Heider's theory was that how people perceive events rather than the events themselves influence behavior.

Self-efficacy: Self -efficacy refers to personal judgments (beliefs) of one's capability to fulfill designated activities successfully. Bandura (1977) introduces the concept of self-efficacy as a key component in social cognitive theory in the late 1970s. Bandura (1997) states that self-efficacy has a powerful influence on how people feel, think, behave and motivate themselves.

Social Cognitive Theory: Social cognitive theory defines learning as an internal mental process that may or may not be reflected in immediate behavioral change (Bandura, 1986; p. 2). Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a conceptual framework for the study covering the literature on concepts of self-efficacy, attributions, achievement and the relation between them. A more detailed look at each concept is included in each section.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social learning theory proposed by Bandura has become perhaps the most influential theory in learning and development. Bandura rejected the views of the behaviorist theory of learning which construes learning as a process in which responses were directly linked to stimuli. He believed that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning and that behavioral change could not be explained in terms of mere stimuli and response without any conscious involvement by the responders. Behaviorist theories posit that human functioning is caused by external stimuli. They present inner processes as transmitting rather than causing behavior. Bandura (1986) considered that to explain the complexities of human functioning is not possible without introspection. He stated that by looking into their own conscious mind people make sense of their own psychological processes. Bandura (1986) emphasized that to predict how human behavior is influenced by environmental outcomes; it is crucial to understand how the individual cognitively processes and interprets those outcomes.

Bandura (1986) tried to explain the complex nature of human functioning by the capabilities that are inherent in human beings. One of these capabilities is *capacity to symbolize*. This capability enables them to extract meaning from their environment, construct guides for action, solve problems cognitively, and gain new knowledge by reflective thought. This process enables people to model observed behavior.

Bandura (1977) believed that much human behavior is developed by the way of modelling. He showed how it functions as follows: "From observing others, people can form the conception of how new behavior patterns are performed, on later occasions the

symbolic construction serves as a guide for action. Self-regulations, then were made based on the informative feedback from performance" (p. 192).

Another capability is *forethought*. Through the use of symbols obtained from observing different consequences of their own actions people find which responses are appropriate in which contexts and engage in forethought. They plan courses of action, anticipate the possible consequences of these actions, set goals and challenges for themselves to motivate, guide and regulate their activities.

People do not learn solely from their own experiences but also from observing the others' behaviors. This *vicarious learning* enables people to learn a novel behavior by observing others. Seeing others perform novel activities (difficult or threatening) without any difficulties, observers have expectation that they also can perform the same task successfully if they put in more effort and persist in their effort. Vicarious learning is governed by the processes of attention, retention, production and motivation. Attention refers to the ability to selectively observe the actions of a model. Behaviors can be reproduced if only they are retained in the memory. Retention comes about through the ability to symbolize. Production refers to the process of undertaking the observed behavior. Finally, if this attempt produces a valued result, the person is motivated to adopt the behavior and repeat it in the future (Bandura, 1986).

People have *self-regulatory mechanisms* that provide self-corrective adjustments in a learned behavior and enable self-direction. Self-regulations are done on the basis of their self-observations, self-monitoring, the judgements they make regarding their actions, choices and attributions; they include evaluations of one's own self and self-motivators that act as personal incentives to behave in a self-directed way (Pajares, 2002a).

The last and the most prominent human capacity in social cognitive theory is *self-reflection.* It is through self-reflection people analyze their experiences, monitor their ideas, explore their own cognition and self-beliefs, engage in self-evaluation and change their thinking and behavior accordingly (Bandura, 1989b).

Self-Efficacy

Among self-reflective mechanisms, *self-efficacy* (further referred as SE) stands at the very core of social cognitive theory. Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy as

> people‘s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required attaining designated types of performance. It is concerned not with the skills one has but with the judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses (Bandura, 1986, p.391).

In other words, "what people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave" (Bandura, 1986, p.25). Bandura (1992) stated that self-efficacy beliefs influence people’s behavior through cognitive, motivational, affective and selective processes (Bandura, 1992).

Cognitive Processes

Self-efficacy affects cognitive processes in both positive and negative ways. Much human behavior is regulated by forethought embodying valued goals. Personal goal setting is influenced by self-appraisal of capabilities. People with stronger self-efficacy beliefs set higher goals for themselves and are firmly committed to them.

People form most of their actions first in their thoughts. People's beliefs in their efficacy influence the types of anticipatory scenarios they construct and rehearse. Low self-efficacy can lead people to believe tasks to be harder than they actually are; they visualize failure scenarios and undermine their performance. Efficacious people, on the other hand, by visualizing themselves executing tasks skillfully, can enhance subsequent performance. These cognitive simulations, i.e. visualizations about future performances, and perceived self-efficacy affect each other bidirectionally. A high sense of efficacy enhances cognitive construction of effective actions, and cognitive reiteration of efficacious actions strengthens self-perception of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989c).

The central function of thought is to enable people to predict events and to find ways to control those that affect their lives. Such coping skills require effective cognitive processing of complex information. In learning predictive and regulative rules, people must exploit their knowledge in order to create options, to analyze and consider predictive factors, revise the results of their previous actions and to remember which factors they have tested and how well those factors have worked (Bandura, 1995).

Besides coping skills, a strong sense of efficacy is required to stay task-oriented in difficult and stressing situations. When people are faced with the task of coping with difficult demands under stressful situation, those with a low sense of self-efficacy become more and more indecisive and unstable in their analytic thinking and lose their motivation. And this affects their performance negatively. On the contrary, those who have higher self-efficacy are more resilient in the face of difficult, stressful situations.

They set themselves challenging goals and may remain task oriented using good analytic thinking, thus they may succeed in their performance (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Motivational Processes

Self-efficacy beliefs play a key role in motivation. As Bandura (1991) puts it, with the help of cognitive representation of future outcomes people motivate themselves and guide their actions. Based on the previously mentioned capacities as forethought, vicarious learning, and self-reflection, people form beliefs about what they can do. It's here where the self-efficacy belief plays a great part. Bandura (1977) explained that people can believe that particular courses of action will lead to certain outcomes, but if they have serious doubts whether they can perform the necessary actions, they will hardly engage in such activity. Thus, the belief of personal mastery, i.e. self-efficacy belief, affects both initiation and persistence of coping behavior.

People's self-efficacy beliefs determine their level of motivation, how much effort they will expend in an endeavor and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles. The stronger the belief in their capabilities, the more persistent they are in their efforts and the greater the level of their achievement. When people with higher self-efficacy face difficulties, they exert greater effort to cope with the difficulties, whereas people with low self-efficacy will tend towards discouragement and giving up (Bandura, 1989c. pp. 1175-1176).

Bandura differentiated three types of cognitive motivators as *causal attributions*, *outcome expectancies*, and *cognized goal* all of which have originated from separate theories. Figure 1 shows how self-efficacy beliefs affect motivation. Self-efficacy beliefs operate in all these three forms of cognitive motivation. They affect causal attributions. People with higher self-efficacy level attribute their failures to lack of effort; those with lower self-efficacy attribute their failures to low ability. Causal attributions affect motivation, performance, and affective factors through self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1993).

According to expectancy-value theory, motivation is directed by two factors-expectancies for success and subjective task value. Expectancies refer to how confident an individual is in his or her ability to succeed in a task whereas task values refer to how important, useful, or enjoyable the individual perceives the task. Individuals' actions are based on their beliefs about what they can do as well as on their beliefs about the likely outcomes of performance. Therefore, motivating influence of outcome expectancies is

partly governed by self-efficacy beliefs. There are numerous attractive tasks people do not pursue because they judge they do not have capabilities for them (Bandura, 1993).

Figure 1. *Schematic representation of conceptions of cognitive motivation based on cognized goals, outcome expectancies and perceived causes of success and failure.*

taken from Bandura, 1993 p.130

Affective Processes

People's belief in their coping capabilities affect how much stress and depression they experience in threatening and difficult situations, as well as the level of their motivation (Bandura, 1989c). Such emotional reactions can affect action by changing the course of thinking. Perceived self-efficacy to exercise control plays a key role in anxiety arousal. It does so in several ways. First of all, it affects people's perception of potentials threats. Because of their *coping deficiency,* they start thinking that potential threats are unmanageable. They magnify the severity of possible threats and worry about things that rarely happen. This way of thinking makes them anxious and impairs functioning. Conversely, those who believe they can cope with potential threats do not conjure up threatening thoughts about them and therefore, are not disturbed. Another way that perceived self-efficacy affects anxiety arousal occurs through *perceived efficacy to control disturbing thoughts*. It regulates thoughts producing stress and depression. Not just the frequency of threatening thoughts, but the perceived inability to turn them off is stated being a major source of distress (Salkovskis & Harrison, 1984; Kent & Gibbons, 1987). Both perceived *coping self-efficacy* and *control self-efficacy* operate together to reduce anxiety and avoidance behavior. The third way in which efficacy beliefs reduce anxiety is by supporting effective modes of behavior that change threatening environments into safe ones. Here, *self-efficacy regulates stress and anxiety* through the impact on coping behavior. The stronger the senses of efficacy the bolder people are in tackling problematic situations which create stress (Bandura, 1995, p. 9). People who

believe they can exercise control over difficulties do not call up apprehensive cognitions and therefore are not disturbed.

Selection Processes

The previous section described the effects of self-efficacy beliefs that lead people to represent future outcomes, set certain goals, change their thinking, create beneficial environments and control their stress and anxiety. Besides the above-mentioned processes, people's beliefs of their self-efficacy also affect the selection of courses of actions and environments. Bandura viewed people as products and producers of their own environments (Bandura, 1997.). People tend to avoid engaging in activities they think they are unable to control, but readily choose challenging activities they judge themselves capable of managing. The choices people make shape their personal development and life courses since their choices make them cultivate certain competencies, values and social networks. Several studies in career decision-making and career development (Betz & Hacket, 1986; Lent & Hacket, 1987) have showed the power of self-efficacy beliefs to shape, change life paths through selection processes. The stronger people's belief in their efficacy, the more career options they think appropriate, the more interest they show in them, the better they prepare themselves educationally for different occupations, and the greater their resilience and success in difficult occupational pursuits (Bandura, 1989c).

The effect of self-efficacy beliefs in human functioning can be summarized as follows: people who have low self-efficacy in a given area avoid difficult tasks they think they are not capable of managing. They do not set challenging goals and have weak commitment to their goals. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their deficiencies and the obstacles they will encounter instead of focusing on their competencies and how to get through and succeed. Because of the lack of self-efficacy beliefs, they are prone to give up quickly in the face of difficulties. They are slow to get over their failures, because they view their failures as deficient aptitude that is they attribute their failures to lack of ability. Thereby, they quickly go into depression and experience stress.

On the contrary, people with high self-efficacy approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered. They set themselves challenging goals and have strong commitment to them. They display greater perseverance in obtaining their goals. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after their failures since they attribute their failures to lack of effort

or skill rather than ability. Consequently, they approach threatening situations with belief that they can get through. Such an efficacious view leads to personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression.

Sources of Self-Efficacy

How is self-efficacy belief formed? Self-efficacy belief starts to develop in early childhood. Nevertheless, it does not stop during one's youth, but continues throughout his/her life - gaining new experiences, knowledge and understanding (Bandura, 1992). Self-efficacy belief is unlikely to arise from auto suggestion: it is the product of a complex process of self-persuasion that relies on cognitive processing of various sources of efficacy information that Bandura (1992) called self-efficacy appraisals. These include personal mastery (i.e. enactive/ performance accomplishments) experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological states.

Mastery experiences/performance accomplishments are stated to be the most influential source of efficacy belief because they are based on the outcomes of personal experiences (Bandura, 1977; Usher & Pajares, 2009; Phan, 2012). Outcomes interpreted as success enhance self-efficacy. All people have mastery experiences. They occur when people attempt to do something and become successful, in other words when they have mastered something. Mastery experiences are the most effective way to increase self-efficacy beliefs because people are more likely to believe they can do something new similar to something they have already done well (Bandura, 1977). At the same time the influence of the mastery experiences change depending on perceived difficulty of the task. If the task is simple and success is achieved with ease, the outcome (i.e. the accomplishment) enhances the self-efficacy less than when the task is accomplished without external assistance with sustained effort and occasional failures.

On the other hand, outcomes interpreted as failure lower self-efficacy belief. Repeated success at a task develops self-efficacy belief. Once their self-efficacy beliefs are established, people worry less about minor failures. They attribute any kind of failures to lack of effort and try it again to be successful (Crain in Zulkovsky, 2009). For instance, a student who has continuously been successful in a Math exam does not lose his/her self-efficacy belief in Math for only one failure (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Schunk, 1991).

Numerous studies carried out in different domains have showed that mastery experience is superior to the other sources of efficacy beliefs. Most of the initial research in this field

has been conducted in treatments of different phobias where, to eliminate fearful and defensive behavior, researchers implemented treatments through performance or symbolic procedures. The results of these treatments showed the superiority of performance-based treatments regardless of the method applied. Wolpe (1974), in his desensitization approach, had his clients be exposed to aversive events together with anxiety reducing activities, mostly in the form of muscular relaxation. In the treatment participants were exposed to scenes in which they visualize themselves engaging in progressively more threatening activities or with enactment of the same hierarchy of activities with the real threats accompanied by muscular relaxation. The results of studies on different phobics consistently showed that performance desensitization produced considerably greater behavioral change than did symbolic desensitization (Strahley, 1966; Sherman, 1972).

Self-efficacy beliefs have been investigated across different academic settings. In those studies mastery experience consistently predicts students' self-efficacy (Lent et al., 1991; Lopez & Lent, 1992; Lopez et al., 1997; Hampton, 1998; Usher & Pajares, 2006; Britner & Pajares, 2006; Pajares et al., 2007). The findings of these studies are summarized in Table 1. It shows correlations among four sources of self-efficacy and the self-efficacy outcomes used in these studies. Correlation between mastery experiences and self-efficacy outcomes are significant in each study. It ranges from .29 to .67 (median r = .58).

In a case study, Milner & Hoy (2003) investigated an African American teacher's self-efficacy sources, who encountered a racial stereotype threat. They noticed that in spite of many challenges she faced, she did not lose her belief and persevered. When they examined the sources of her efficacy that make her persistent, they found out that remembering and recreating previous accomplishments helped her a lot. As she stated, when her efficacy weakened she recalled her mastery in a previous context with similar characteristics – both schools were predominantly white schools, and racial stereotypes towards African Americans were operating in both of them, and she transferred a similar experience to the current situation.

Table 1.

Correlation between the Sources and Self-Efficacy Assessments

Study	Self-efficacy measure	Mastery experience	Vicarious experience	Social persuasions	Physiological indexes
Matsui et al. (1990)[a]	Mathematics	.42*	.19	.37*	–.27*
		.56*	.39*	.57*	–.47*
Lent et al. (1991)[a]	Mathematics	.59*	.10	.52*	–.46*
		.67*	.23*	.57*	–.53*
Lopez and Lent (1992)	Mathematics	.57*	.26	.34*	–.23
Lopez et al. (1997)[b]	Mathematics	.64*	.41*	.58*	–.57*
		.63*	.19*	.35*	–.57*
Gainor and Lent (1998)	Mathematics	.58*	.28*	.58*	–.57*
Hampton (1998)—Study 1	For learning	nr	nr	nr	nr
Hampton (1998)—Study 2	For learning	.58*	.53*	.16	.19
Panagos and DuBois (1999)	Career	.38*	.34*	.36*	–.09
Chin and Kameoka (2002)	Educational and occupational	nr	nr	nr	nr
Hampton and Mason (2003)[c]	For tasks in classroom	.55*	.40*	.21	.20
		.66*	.58*	.29*	.25*
		.50*	.58*	.30*	.41*
		.67*	.47*	.44*	.18
Hampton and Mason (2003)[c]	For organizing school related activities	.46*	.31*	.10	–.08
		.64*	.53*	.25*	.08
		.29*	.39*	.32*	.25*
		.62*	.43*	.41*	.12
Klassen (2004)[d]	Mathematics	.36*	.27*	.22*	–.17*
		.44*	.28*	.23*	–.33*
Johnson (2005)	Computer	.38*	nr	nr	–.26*
Britner and Pajares (2006)	Science	.55*	.34*	.42*	–.40*
Stevens et al. (2006)	Mathematics	.46*	.15*	.36*	.23*
Usher and Pajares (2006a)[e]	Academic and self-regulatory	.67*	.36*	.62*	–.53*
		.60*	.45*	.50*	–.27*
		.66*	.29*	.53*	–34*
		.59*	.40*	.53*	–.43*
Usher and Pajares (2006b)	Academic	.57*	.39*	.45*	–.39*
Usher and Pajares (2006b)	Self-regulatory	.63*	.44*	.51*	–.44*
Bates and Khasawneh (2007)	Online learning	.48*	nr	–.05	–.56*
Pajares et al. (2007)	Writing	.61*	.22*	.44*	–.35*
Stevens et al. (2007)[a]	Mathematics	.44*	.15*	.23*	nr
		.39*	.09	.31*	nr
Median correlation		.58	.34	.37	.33

Note. Sign of each correlation is reported as it was in the study from which it was obtained. Median correlations were calculated using absolute values. nr = correlation not reported and/or not measured; LD = learning disability.

a. Coefficients for girls are reported above those for boys.

b. Coefficients for students in advanced algebra are reported above those for students in geometry.

c. Coefficients from top to bottom are: LD girls, non-LD girls, LD boys, and non-LD boys.

d. Coefficients for Indo-Canadian students are reported above those for Anglo-Canadian students.

e. Coefficients from top to bottom are: girls, boys, African American students, and White students.

*$p < .05$.

Windows'u Etkinleştir
Windows'u etkinleştirmek için kişi ayarlarına gidin.

taken from Usher and Pajares (2008, pp. 773-774)

Vicarious experience is another source of self-efficacy when people form self-efficacy beliefs by observing others perform tasks. They watch others do a task and gain confidence that they can also accomplish the same task successfully with the same or similar outcomes. Although it is not as influential as mastery experience, observing others' performances enhances the observers' self-efficacy beliefs especially if the observers are uncertain about their own abilities or have no or limited previous experience. In this context, the effects of models are particularly relevant (Schunk, 1981, 1983, 1987, 2003). If a model's behavior is rewarded, observers tend to behave similarly. Conversely, if the modeled actions are punished or result in failure, they are unlikely to be repeated by the observers. However, we shouldn't disregard the fact that the key factor here is the similarity of the model and the observer; vicarious experiences can exert an effect on an observer's self-efficacy belief if s/he believes that s/he is similar to the model and has the same abilities. If a model is viewed as more able or talented, observers will discount the relevance of the model's performance outcomes for themselves. In the same vein, a model's failure has a more negative effect on self-efficacy if observers judge themselves to have similar ability to the model. If, on the other hand, observers think their capability is superior to the model's capability, failure of the model does not affect the observer's self-efficacy belief (Pajares, 2002b). The more similar observers are to the models, the greater is the probability that observers will engage and succeed in the same activities. Models play a great role in enhancing and reducing observers' motivation to perform the same activities (Schunk, 2003).

A number of studies (Schunk, 1981; Schunk & Hanson, 1985; Schunk, Hanson & Cox, 1987; Schunk & Hanson, 1989) investigated how vicarious experiences affect skills and self-efficacy development. In a study by Schunk (1981) children with low arithmetic achievement received either modeling of division operations or didactic instruction, followed by a practice period. In the modeling process, which Schunk referred to as "cognitive modeling", children observed an adult model solve different division problems and orally explain strategies used in achieving correct solutions. In the practice part children were guided by a model when they encountered conceptual difficulties or were explained relevant strategies, or they were referred to the appropriate explanatory page. In the didactic treatment, children initially studied explanatory pages on their own. When they experienced conceptual difficulty in practicing the teacher referred them to the relevant explanatory pages and told them to review it. During practice, half of the

children in each instructional treatment received effort attribution feedback for success and difficulty. As a result, both instructional treatments enhanced division persistence, accuracy, and perceived efficacy, but cognitive modeling produced greater gains in accuracy (Schunk, 1981).

Part of vicarious experience also involves the social comparisons made with other individuals. These comparisons, along with peer modeling, can strongly influence the development self-perceptions of competence (Schunk, 1983a). Schunk & Hanson (1985) conducted an experimental research to investigate how peer models affected children's self-efficacy and achievement in cognitive learning. The participants were aged 8 to 10 who had difficulties in subtraction operations. Participants' self –efficacy levels in subtraction operations were measured in a pre-test. Then participants were randomly grouped into 6 experimental groups: male mastery model, female mastery model; male coping model, female coping model of the same age; teacher model, and no model. Only boys were assigned to the first two, only girls to the second two. Equal number of boys and girls were assigned to the teacher model and no model groups. All 4 model groups viewed 45 - minute videotapes of a teacher providing subtraction instructions to a child model of the same age as themselves, followed by the model solving problems and verbalizing his/her achievement belief such as high self-efficacy (e.g., "I can do that one"), high ability ("I'm good at this"), low task difficulty ("That looks easy"), and positive attitudes ("I like doing these"). Videotapes for the teacher model group included only the teacher providing instruction and the last group did not watch videotapes. The day after they watched the videotapes they received days of instruction. On the last day of the instruction subtraction self-efficacy, skill, and persistence were assessed. It was found that participants who viewed peer models improved their subtraction more than the ones in the teacher model and no model groups. Children who viewed the teacher model videotapes showed a higher subtraction self-efficacy and skill than the ones in the no model group. Children who watched their peer models showed the highest mathematic skills (Schunk & Hanson, 1985).

In other research, Schunk & Hanson (1989) investigated the effects of self-model treatments on children's achievement beliefs and behaviors during mathematical skill learning. Children were divided into four groups: peer model, self-model, peer and self-model, and no model, i.e. just videotape control group. Before the treatment all groups watched videotapes presenting fraction skills. Afterwards they were given tasks where

some children were recorded while they solved the problems. These children then watched themselves. Models in all groups verbalized their problem-solving operations while they solved tasks. It was found that self-modeling promotes cognitive learning skills. The children in the self-modeling group were as successful as those in the peer modeling group in mathematical skill learning; and they were statistically more successful than those with no model. Their achievement beliefs were significantly higher than of the children whose performances were taped but not shown to themselves, or whose performances were not taped at all. Based on this, Schunk & Hanson (1989) determined that children who doubted their ability were the ones who benefited most from recording their performances to enhance self-efficacy beliefs.

These studies show that observing models especially models similar to them, is another source of self-efficacy. Bandura (1986) stated that observed experiences enhance the observers' self-efficacy beliefs especially if the observers have no previous experience in that area.

Verbal persuasion is the third way of strengthening self-efficacy, which is used to get people to believe they possess capabilities that will enable them to achieve what they seek. People who are persuaded that they possess the abilities to succeed in a desired task are likely to put greater effort into a task and maintain it than if they have self-doubts and consider their weaknesses when they face with difficulties. Verbal encouragement leads people to try hard and develop skills needed for attaining goals, which make them more confident (Bandura, 1994).

Verbal persuasion has a more limited impact on self-efficacy beliefs since the outcomes in verbal persuasion are merely described not witnessed. It can contribute to successful competence if it is within realistic bounds, the person giving appraisal should be highly credible. Feedback of experts in the field or encouragement of mentors, coaches or teachers can enhance personal competence (Bandura, 1982; Mills, 2014)(see Table 1).

Nevertheless, it is also stated that it is difficult to foster self-efficacy by solely verbal persuasion because although positive potent feedback may enhance self-efficacy beliefs, if one constantly fails in a task, this kind of unrealistic bolster is quickly disconfirmed by disappointing results of one's effort (Schunk 1991, Bandura, 1995). Negative feedbacks make people avoid challenging activities that cultivate their potentialities, thus positive persuasion may strengthen, but negative persuasion can work to defeat and weaken self-

beliefs. In fact, it is usually easier to weaken self-efficacy beliefs through negative appraisals than to strengthen such beliefs through positive encouragement (Bandura, 1986). In this sense, any feedback given by teachers, parents, or peers has great importance and therefore, Shrunk (1984) suggests framing the feedback appropriately so as to support students' self-efficacy beliefs as their self-beliefs are developing.

Finally, efficacy beliefs are formed on the basis of psychological reactions such as anxiety, stress, fatigue, tension and so on. Positive psychological reactions contribute to the successful performances and strengthen self-efficacy beliefs, whereas negative psychological arousal during task completion usually leads to dysfunction, therefore weakens self-efficacy belief (Bandura, 1982; 1994; Zimmerman, 2000). Bandura (1994) states that "it is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted" (p.3). For instance, if a person experiencing sweat and having a rapid heart rate before an exam interprets these physiological arousals as anxiety related to the exam and relates the anxiety to the lack of competence, efficacy decreases. On the contrary, if a student attributes those physiological arousals to the weather conditions or to the fact that he is hurrying for the exam, then his efficacy is not affected. Therefore, "people who have a high sense of efficacy are likely to view their state of affective arousal as an energizing facilitator of performance, whereas those who are beset by self-doubts regard their arousal as a debilitator" (Bandura, 1994, p.3).

Self-Efficacy and other Self-Beliefs (Self-Concept, Self-Confidence)

There has been much confusion about the definition, specificity, and overlap among the above-mentioned self-beliefs (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Ferla, Valcke, & Cai, 2009). Some researchers use these terms synonymously, others describe self-concept as a generalized form of self-efficacy. Although, there is some similarity and considerable overlap between the above-mentioned self-constructs and self-efficacy, these self-beliefs differ in their theoretical backgrounds.

In academic settings, (academic) *self-concept* refers to individuals' knowledge and perception about themselves in achievement situations (Byrne, 1984; Wigfield & Karpathian, 1991 in Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). Pajares & Schunk (2002, p. 21) describe self-concept as "a description of one's own perceived-self accompanied by a judgement of self-worth". Self-concept is usually measured at a more *general* level and does not

only comprise of a self-evaluative cognitive dimension but also an affective-motivational dimension as measured by items like “I hate Mathematics” or “I am proud of my Mathematic ability” (Marsh, 1999). Measures of self-concept contain students’ self-comparison to their peers and involve cognitive and affective evaluations of the self as mentioned above (Marsh, 1999; Schunk & Pajares, 2001; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). Bong & Clark (2003) stated that self-concept refers to past experiences. Since self-concept items are not task or context specific, students have to make judgments solely relying on their past experiences and accomplishments in a given area.

Self-concept may be global (general) as well as more specific according to the domains to which it refers. Academic self-concept may be divided into more specific academic domain self-concepts such as Mathematic self-concept, or English self-concept and so on. Language self-concepts may be further divided into domains such as English reading self-concept or listening self-concept (Mills, 2014).

On the other hand, academic self-efficacy (further referred as ASE) refers to individuals’ convictions that they can successfully perform given academic tasks at designated levels (Schunk, 1991). Self-efficacy is usually measured at *task specific* level. According to Pajares (1996), it can be measured on a broad or on an item-specific level; however, self-efficacy judgments that are more item-specific have more predictive power (Chen & Zimmerman, 2007). Typically, self-efficacy items start with “how confident are you… (e.g. that you can successfully solve equations that contain square roots)” (Pajares, Miller & Johnson, 1999). Thus, they clearly measure self-perceived competence at a more task-specific level than self-concept items such as “Compared with others of my age, I’m good at Mathematics” (Ferla, Valcke & Cai, 2009). Self-efficacy items seek goal-referenced evaluation, and do not ask students to compare themselves (e.g. their ability) with others’ (Pajares, 1996; Bandura, 1997; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). In contrast with self-concept, self-efficacy is *future-oriented.* Self-efficacy items such as “I’m confident that I will be able to solve following problems” do not solely rely on mastery experiences; they also focus students’ attention on their *future expectancies* for successfully performing specific academic tasks (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000 in Ferla, Valcke & Cai, 2009).

A third form of self-beliefs is self-confidence. It is a socially defined and trait-like concept in adults (Crawford & Stankov, 1996; Stankov & Crawford, 1996; Kleitman & Stankov, 2007) and children (Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010; Kleitman & Gibson, 2011).

Confidence is assessed by asking the test-taker to indicate, on a percentage scale, how confident he or she is that his/her just-provided answer to a cognitive test item is correct. The findings of empirical research more than 20 years differentiate self-confidence from other self-beliefs since they state domain generality of confidence. Self-confidence is a socially defined construct that "reflects more *global* beliefs that one can cope with almost any task" (McCollum, 2003, p.21).

The difference between self-confidence and self-concept is in the way they form their judgments - self-confidence is based on judgments which are made in relationship to the just-completed task, whereas self-concept involves comparison with other people. Another difference is in terms of domain specificity - where self-concept tends to be domain specific, i.e. closely linked to a particular academic domain (English, mathematics, science etc.). Self-confidence, on the other hand, is more general or global. Self-confidence differs from self-efficacy in timing. While self-efficacy questionnaires are applied before a cognitive act and has predictive power, self-confidence is tested after answering a cognitive item.

In conclusion, self-efficacy can be described as being task and domain specific, competence-based, prospective, and action related, as opposed to similar constructs (Bandura, 1977, 1999).

Self-Efficacy and its Dimensions

Self-efficacy beliefs vary in level, generality, and strength. These dimensions can be explained in the following way: as previously defined, self-efficacy is task and domain specific. The ***level*** of self-efficacy belief refers to its dependence on the difficulty of a particular task, such as reading and comprehending texts of increasing difficulty; **generality** is related to the transferability of self-efficacy across activities, perhaps domains, such as algebra to statistics; and the **strength** of self-efficacy shows certainty, or how confident one is, about performing a given task (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000).

Understanding these dimensions is crucial in the assessment of self-efficacy beliefs; it will help to determine appropriate measurement. If students' essay-writing self-efficacy belief is evaluated, an appropriate level of task should be identified since there are different levels of task demands. For example, it can range from writing a simple

sentence with proper grammatical structure to a higher level of writing complex sentences, or organizing sentences into a paragraph coherently. Then, after the level of writing is identified, the assessment should present multiple items at varying levels that collectively measures the domain of essay-writing. To measure the strength of their belief in their capability performing a given task, students then should be asked to rate how confident they are in spelling all the words in a one-page essay, and other questions as such. Generality refers to the students' belief across the domains. Hence, students may not judge themselves efficacious across all types of writing. Similarly, in this study we will try to assess the generality dimension, e.g. if students' academic self-efficacy influences their efficacy in learning English or vice versa.

Scholars have been interested in the differences between general self-efficacy and specific self-efficacy. Porter, Bigley & Steers (2003, p.133), differentiated the two constructs (self-efficacy and general self-efficacy). They portrayed general self-efficacy as a generalized trait representing one's overall estimate of his/her ability to perform a wide variety of jobs under different conditions, whereas self-efficacy is defined as task and situation specific. Thus, whereas self-efficacy represents a dynamic motivational belief system that may vary depending on unique properties of each task and work situation, general self-efficacy represents an "enduring" personal trait that generalizes and successfully applies to a wide range of different situations. Similarly, the measurement of the two differs in items, task specific self-efficacy scales include items such as *(a) Whether you believe that you are capable or not (yes, no) of performing this task at each of the levels outlined in this scale. Please use column A for these responses. (b)How certain you are (0-100%) about each yes/no response. For example, 0% would indicate no chance, whereas 100% would indicate absolute certainty. Please use column B for these response;* while general self-efficacy items can be exemplified as in the following: "I do not seem capable of dealing with most problems that come up in my life." Bigley et al (2003) suggest that these types of general self-efficacy items/measures fall short in terms of specifying what exactly they relate to, which brings up the question of their construct validity.

Choi (2005) examined whether self-constructs measured at an intermediate level of specificity better correspond with the course grades than general self-constructs or specific self-constructs. Choi looked in the relationship of different types of self-beliefs with different specificity level (general self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, specific self-

efficacy, academic self-concept, and specific self-concept) and achievement. As a result of the study, among three types of self-efficacy course specific self-efficacy was the only significant predictor of term-grades. General self-efficacy, as expected, did not contribute significantly to the amount of variance explained in achievement.

Influencing/Fostering Self-Efficacy

Unlike other self-beliefs such as self-concept, self-esteem or self-competence, which are assumed to have trait-like stability across time and settings, self-efficacy is believed to be responsive to changes in personal contexts and outcomes whether experienced directly, vicariously, verbally or physiologically (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 88). Therefore, self-efficacy theory underlines the importance of arranging experiences designed to strengthen people's self-efficacy beliefs for specific behaviors in specific problematic situations. According to the theory of self-efficacy, instructional interventions should not just solve specific problems, but should provide people with skills and a sense of efficacy for coping with problems themselves.

Instructional interventions for enhancing self-efficacy have been successful in many areas. In sports, coaches using their credibility provided inspirational messages, structure activities that led to success, and avoided placing students prematurely in situations that were likely to bring repeated failures (Bandura, 1997). Other studies used cognitive enactment to raise efficacy and performance. Imagining oneself winning or other mental rehearsal strategies have been shown to enhance competition efficacy beliefs and competitive performance (Feltz & Riessinger, 1990; Garza & Feltz, 1998).

Some studies have investigated the relationship between performance and self-efficacy and found a recursive relationship between them. However, performance variables such as previous success, training history, and playing experience were found to be a stronger predictor of performance than self-efficacy was of performance (George, 1994; Haney & Long, 1995; Kane, Marks, Zaccaro, & Blair, 1996).

Researchers have put forward different ways or strategies to facilitate self-efficacy increase based on the four previously mentioned sources. One of these strategies is to have them experience enactive attainment in a specific task. That is when people can see themselves coping effectively with difficult situations, their self-efficacy beliefs are likely to be increased. In order to realize this, attainable goals must be set. Setting concrete,

specific and proximal goals enhance self-efficacy and skill development more effectively than setting vague, abstract and distal goals, because the proximal attainments contribute to skill development (Locke & Latham, 1990; Bandura & Schunk, 1981). Setting self-concordant goals consistent with the person's developing interest and core values, were found to have a higher level of self-efficacy than people who achieved goals imposed on them (Sheldon and Elliot, 1999). Verbally encouraging students to set their own goals not only contributed to self-efficacy development, but also to commitment to attaining the goals (Schunk, 1985).

In another empirical study, Schunk (1981) found that observing an adult model use a cognitive strategy made children have higher levels of self-efficacy and academic skills than those who received didactic instruction. Dweck (2000) claims that viewing competence as a set of skills to be performed in specific situations rather than as a trait, and acquirable through effort and experience rather than as fixed makes people more likely to persist in the face of obstacles to achieve success. Last but not least, an effective way of enhancing self-efficacy is considered to be by changing causal attribution. In education literature, greatest amount of positive change in self-efficacy occurred when people were led to believe that their failures were due to lack of effort, not lack of capability (Fosterling, 1985). When students related their successful performance to effort, they perceived greater progress, maintained higher motivation, and reported greater efficacy for further learning (Schunk, 1987). These studies show not only the sensitivity of self-efficacy to instructional interventions, but also its impact on learners' achievements (Schunk, 1981).

Self-Efficacy in Language Learning

Many researchers have attempted to discover what distinguishes successful foreign language learners from less successful ones. In order to find out the answer they focused their attention on learning strategies and individual differences (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Griffiths, 2013), learners' belief in their capabilities to perform a task (Bandura, 1997), and motivation (Gardner, 2000; Dörnyei, 2001). Although learning is a complex process which includes different variables, in the last decade more and more research have focused the attention on the effect of human thought and belief in learning and education (Schunk, 2003). Self-efficacy, being in the center of human thought and belief and supported by the above-mentioned studies (Schunk, 1981, 1984; Hackett,

1985; Pajares & Miller, 1994; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984, 1987; Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001; Jeng & Shin, 2008; and Cheng & Chiou, 2010) appears to play an essential role in predicting success across disciplines, even better than actual abilities (Bandura, 1997), or aptitude (Schunk, 1991).

Although early studies on self-efficacy started long before, in the area of second/ foreign language learning it became prominent in the 21st century, and the majority of studies have been done during the last decade. Researchers established a relationship between self-efficacy and foreign language achievement and language learning strategy use (Wong, 2005; Graham, 2007), self-efficacy for self-regulation (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007), foreign language reading and listening proficiency and foreign language anxiety (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006).

Mills, Pajares, & Herron (2006) investigated the relationship among self-efficacy, anxiety and French proficiency in reading and listening skills. They discovered a significant positive relationship between students' reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency whereas listening self-efficacy was positively correlated with listening only for the females, and listening anxiety was positively related to listening proficiency of both males and females.

The link between self-efficacy and strategy use was examined by Wong (2005). Findings obtained by questionnaires and interviews applied to 74 ESL pre-service teachers established a correlation between strategy use and their sense of efficacy. Those who had higher self-efficacy, showed more frequent use of language learning strategies, than did the teachers who had low self-efficacy.

Mills, Pajares & Herron (2007) indicated that self-efficacy for self-regulation was a stronger predictor of college students' achievement in intermediate-level French than were self-efficacy to achieve grades in French, anxiety in reading the target language, and French learning self-concept. Students who perceived themselves as capable of using effective meta-cognitive strategies to monitor their academic work time efficiently were more likely to be successful in French. The study also found gender differences in the interest and involvement in French: female students seemed to have greater self-efficacy for self-regulation, interest, value and enjoyment in learning about both French language and culture than did male students.

More recently, a review of empirical literature of self-efficacy in the area of second/ foreign language learning has been carried out by Raoofi, Tan, & Chan (2012). The review covered articles published between 2003 and 2012 and addressed two aspects of self-efficacy: (1) the effects of self-efficacy and (2) factors affecting self-efficacy. Further they subcategorized the effects of self-efficacy as follows:

Table 2.

Classification of Studies based on Identified Themes

Category	**Sub-category**
Effects of self-efficacy	Effects of self-efficacy on performance
	Effects of self-efficacy on the affective domain
Factors affecting self-efficacy	Contextual variables and sources of self-efficacy
	Strategies
	Styles

taken from Raoofi, Tan, & Chan (2012).

The review showed the effects of self-efficacy on performance were in agreement with the findings in other academic disciplines as indicated by either course grades in foreign language (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Tilfarlıoğlu & Çiftçi, 2011) or proficiency in a specific skill (e.g. listening or reading) of the target language (Abedini & Rahimi, 2009; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006; 2007).

Hsieh & Schallert (2008) analyzed the role attribution and self-efficacy in predicting students' (N = 500) achievements in Spanish, German and French courses. Among other variables, self-efficacy was found to be the strongest predictor of FL achievement.

Tilfarlıoğlu & Çiftçi (2011) looked at the relationships among self-efficacy of English learners (N=250), learning autonomy, and their achievement in English in a Turkish context. The results of the study revealed a positive significant relationship among self-efficacy beliefs, learner autonomy, and academic success. Among other variables that affect academic success both self-efficacy ($\beta = .467$ $p < .05$) and learner autonomy ($\beta = .195$ $p < .05$) were found to be significant predictors of academic success. Self-efficacy and learner autonomy account for %37.7 of the variation in academic success among the other variables such as gender, language aptitude, intelligence, motivation, personality,

socio-cultural factors, cognitive style, gender, native language, input, educational background and learning style.

A skill-based study by Abedini & Rahimi (2009) also supported the previous findings. The results of the study showed that Iranian students' self-efficacy for listening comprehension was significantly related to listening proficiency.

Regarding the effects of self-efficacy on the affective domain, the influences of self-efficacy on motivation (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Pajares, 2003; Schunk, 1991), anxiety (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006; Çubukçu, 2008; Anyadulabu, 2010; Erkan & Şaban, 2011) and attribution (Graham, 2006; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Hsieh & Kang, 2010) within foreign language learning contexts were investigated.

Erkan & Şaban (2011) conducted a study with 188 EFL students in Turkey in relation to the effects of self-efficacy on anxiety. They found a significant negative relationship between learners' writing self-efficacy and anxiety. Similarly, Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) investigated self-efficacy and anxiety in reading and listening and found that self-efficacy was negatively associated with anxiety in reading and listening. However, no relationship was found between self-efficacy and language anxiety in a study by Çubukçu (2008). She attributed the results to cultural and educational contexts, students' shy personality, lack of opportunity to express themselves in their classes and their preference to speak in Turkish due to lesser anxiety and stress.

A growing body of research has showed that the level of self-efficacy can be influenced, as mentioned before, by the learner's past experiences, verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, and physiological cues (Schunk, 1984; Çakır & Alıcı, 2009; Wang & Pape 2007) as well as by other factors like strategy use and learning styles. However, these are not the only factors that influence the development of self-efficacy. Students' beliefs about completing a task successfully can also be formed by the way they interpret the reasons for their success or failure, which Weiner called *attribution.*

Attribution Theory

Attribution Theory is founded on the premise that people seek to understand why a particular event occurred. According to Weiner (1972) how people explain or ascribe previous experience on achievement tasks guides their subsequent behavior (Weiner, 1972). As Social Learning Theory, Attribution Theory also views human as "an active,

information processing organism, seeking to understand his or her world, searching for new sources of stimulation, aiming at personal fulfillment and self-actualization" (Weiner, 1974).

It is based on Rotters (1966), and more importantly, on Heider's (1958) ideas on explaining human behavior. Rotter (1954) added a cognitive explanation to the behaviorist exposition of external reinforcement and its effect on behavior changes. He indicated that the effects of reward or reinforcement on preceding behavior depend partly on whether the person perceives reward as contingent on his own behavior or independent of it (Rotter, 1966). If a person sees the reinforcement as not contingent upon his/her own behavior, it does not increase expectancy. Similarly, when a person perceives the reinforcement as dependent on his/her own behavior, it increases the expectancy. Thus, success and failure at tasks not contingent on a person's behavior will lead to less certainty about the next outcome than when the achievement was contingent on the person's behavior. Rotter developed the external/ internal locus of control theory. The principal idea of locus of control theory is the tendency of people to believe that the control lies internally within them or externally, with others or the situations. People with internal locus of control believe that the events (success or failure) in life are directed by their own decisions and efforts, whereas those with external locus of control believe that the outcomes are determined by chance, luck or other people such as teacher, manager etc.

Heider, unlike Rotter, identified two determinants of behavior – "can" and "try". "Can" refers to personal characteristics such as ability and intelligence. "Try" is determined by intentions (motivation) and effort expenditure of the actor. Heider, also theorized internal and external causes for success and failure. He accepts task difficulty as another source of outcomes. Ability and effort were viewed as internal causes and task difficulty as external causes for success and failure (Heider, 1958).

Weiner added a fourth causal ascription to Heider's causal elements – luck and developed two-dimensional taxonomy of causal attributions (1972, 1974).

As shown in the figure 2, the four causes are analyzed in terms of locus of control (internal or external) and stability (fixed or variable.) Ability and effort are personal properties; task difficulty and luck are external factors. Ability and task difficulty are

considered stable because they do not change much over time. Effort and luck are unstable because they may change over time (Weiner, 1974).

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

Figure 2. Weiner's Attribution Model (1972)

But later the third dimension was added. The last version is given below:

Table 3.

Dimensional Classification Scheme for Causal Attributions (last version)

Attribution factors	**Dimensions**		
	Locus	**Stability**	**Controllability**
Ability	Internal	Stable	Uncontrollable
Effort	Internal	Unstable	Controllable
Task difficulty	External	Stable	Uncontrollable
Luck	External	Unstable	Uncontrollable

taken from Hashemi, 2011 p. 955

Antecedents of Attributions/Attributional Factors

Weiner (1974) states that people make causal judgments mainly based on the specific information such as past success history, social norms, patterns of performance, time spent at the task and so on. For example, ability is based primarily on past experiences. Repeated success or failure forms the perception of ability. If one succeeds at a given task, he/she believes that he/she has the ability to achieve at a similar task in the future. If he/she fails at a task he/she may believe that she/he is not able to accomplish similar tasks in the future. It can be determined by social norms as well. For instance, if one succeeds

at a task when others fail, then he or she is most probably regarded as being very able (Weiner, 1974).

Effort is stated to arise from a number of observables such as time spent at a task, patterns of performance, perceived muscular tension and social norms. People who succeed perceive themselves and are judged by others as having tried harder (Frieze & Weiner, 1971; Weiner & Kukla, 1970; Weiner1974).

Task difficulty, on the other hand, most often is formed from social norms and from objective task characteristics such as steepness of a mountain about to be climbed, or the length of puzzle (Weiner, 1974. p. 53). If many people succeeded at a task, the task is perceived as easy. On the other hand, if only few people succeed at a task it is considered difficult.

The last causal attribution, added by Weiner to Heider's initial three, luck comes from the lack of personal control over the situation or the outcome. Weiner gives the example of a task when subjects are required to say whether 0 or 1 is the next number in a digit series. Here the outcome is entirely determined by good or bad luck. However, subjects evaluate their performance as successful and unsuccessful and attribute their outcome to luck, effort, task difficulty or skill/ability. He concludes that it totally depends on individual's perception. Similarly, a number rolled on a die may be explained by chance. At the same time, he states that a repeated appearance of the same number indicates the personal control over the outcome and would be associated with ability/skill (Weiner, 1972; 1974).

Another important factor that influences the causal ascriptions is learners' need for achievement, which is learners' achievement motivation. People high in achievement motivation see themselves more able compared to those with low motivation; the former group of people attributes their success to high ability and effort; failure to lack of effort. On the contrary, the low motive group people tend not to believe that success is influenced by effort rather they believe that their failures arise from their lack of ability (Weiner & Kukla, 1970).

These are the initial and most salient causal attributions for success and failure. Frieze's study (1976) supported Weiner's original categories of attribution. He stated that 85% of his participants mentioned the above-mentioned causes in explaining their outcome. However, Roberts & Pascuzzi (1979) reported that Weiner's four original causes were cited by only 45% of 349 undergraduate sports students. Little (1985) determined 18

different causes reported by children to explain their academic outcome (Little 1985 in Williams & Burden, 1999). Intelligence, interest, desire, effort, habits, knowledge, help, bias, teaching, difficulty and luck were identified the most salient 10 causes for success and failure (Elig & Frieze, 1979; Weiner, 1979, 1986).

Later, Lloyd, Walsh, & Yailagh (2005) investigated the differences in mathematic achievement in relation to gender difference and explained the differences in terms of girls' and boys' differing achievement related beliefs (attribution and self-efficacy). In this study, they found 6 types of attributions – effort, ability, task ease, strategy, help from teacher, and help from others. Forsyth, Story, Kellen, & McMillian (2009) asked 1040 introductory psychology class students to write down the causes they thought affected their test performance. Over all, they collected 175 different causes such as *book is unclear, misunderstood teacher, studied wrong things, unfair test, not interested, bad mood* as reasons for failure and *knew what to study, book is clear, took good notes, fate, feeling relaxed etc.* as reasons for a successful outcome. Using these causal attributions in the next step they asked the students to rate the importance of those factors. As a result of factor analysis two major factors remained containing 14 causal attributions: *Inhibiting factors* – low effort, low motivation, low ability, poor teaching, bad test, bad book, and personal problems; and *facilitating factors* – high effort, high motivation, good preparation, high ability, good teaching, good test, good book, relaxed.

In the field of language learning, Williams & Burden (1999) investigated 10-15-year-old French learners' ascriptions for success and failure. It was found that differing attributions across different age groups such as *(not) listening and concentrating, trying hard, (lack of) interest and enjoyment, (poor) teaching, (lack of) ability, ease of work/too hard work, help from others/distractions by other, practicing/not practicing circumstances, mood, experience, materials, liking, strategy and so on.*

Similarly, Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, (2001) studied 25 Bahraini English EFL learners' causes for success and failure. They found 11 positive and 18 negative attributions for success and failure in learning English. *Practice, support from family and teachers, a positive attitude and exposure to the language* were most frequently referred to as causes for success. On the other hand, *inadequate teaching methods, lack of support from family and teachers, poor comprehension, and a negative attitude* were cited as the most common negative attributions.

A bilateral study was carried out by Peacock (2009) in which he focuses not only on students' perceived causal attributions, but also teachers' explanations about the reasons why their students do well or poorly in language learning. First, they interviewed 60 students, mixed by gender and academic disciplines, and asked to what they attribute their success and failure in learning English. 15 casual attributions for success and 11 attributions for failure were obtained from the interview. Second, a questionnaire comprising these 26 causes was developed using a 5-point- Likert-scale. The questionnaire was applied to 505 university students. The results of the questionnaires, then, was compared with their 1st year overall results (listening comprehension, speaking, writing and reading, 25% each). Next, using the same items 40 university EFL teachers were asked to what they attribute their students' success and failure.

The comparison of the results of students' and teachers' opinions about student attribution showed 15 statistically significant differences. Teachers strongly attributed student success to effort, while students did not. Effort included classroom-based and outside class activities such as reading a lot, watching TV and listening to songs, revising hard for tests, paying attention in the class, competing hard with the classmates, themselves and previous results, and working hard in the class. Teachers related both success and failures to students' love of / interest in English, but the students did not mention interest in their explanations. In teachers' opinion, failure was explained by anxiety and lack of confidence. Lastly, students tended to attribute both success and failure more to luck than did teachers. Most of these attributions are internal, unstable, and controllable.

Peacock (2009) also found that attributions differed by genders. According to the results, female students were found to attribute the success to internal, unstable, and controllable factors like *attention (I paid attention in the class), interest (I loved/was interested in English), effort (I competed hard with my classmates, I revised a lot etc.)* more frequently than male students did.

Dimensionality of Attributions

A number of studies have analyzed the *dimensions* (locus of control, stability and controllability) of causal attributions. Russell (1982) developed a 9-item Causal Dimension Scale (later extended as Causal dimension scale II (1992) to measure how the attributor perceives the causes he or she has stated for an event. This scale assessed

causal perceptions in terms of the locus of causality, stability, and controllability dimensions described by Weiner.

Gobel & Mori (2007) investigated causal attribution of 233 Japanese learners of English. One of his research questions was whether the causal dimensions proposed by Weiner (1986) will be valid in a foreign language classroom setting. Using a 12-item questionnaire prepared by the authors based on the questionnaire created by Austin & Vispoel (1995), they investigated whether attributional responses in an EFL setting will differ depending on success or failure at the task, and the kind of activity undertaken. To investigate the dimensionality of the attributional responses, they used a principal components analysis.

As a result of the analysis the bipolar dimensions of locus (internal-external) and control (controllable-uncontrollable) has been confirmed. Also, in both success and failure groups, effort and preparation which are both internal/unstable/controllable attributions, loaded on one factor; external/ uncontrollable attributions such as luck, classroom atmosphere, teacher influence and level composed another factor; ability and interest which are internal and stable constituted the last factor. Thus, the results of principal component analysis and other studies have supported Weiner's dimensions (Elig & Frieze, 1979; Gobel, 2011; Gobel, Tang, Sidhu, Oon, & Chan, 2013; Russell 1982; Van Overwalle, 1989).

Attributions in Foreign Language Learning

Despite the fact that attribution theory is widely investigated in an academic setting including second and foreign language learning, the research regarding the relationship between attribution and foreign language achievement is scarce. Many focused on eliciting the causal attributions (Peacock, 2009; Gobel & Mori, 2007), others analyzed the relationship between attribution and gender differences in language learning (e.g. Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016; Pishghadam & Modarresi, 2008) others researched cultural influence on attributions for language learning (Williams, et al. 2008; Gobel & Mori, 2011; Gonzalez, 2011).

One of the first noteworthy studies into learners' attributions for success and failure in learning a foreign language was done by Williams & Burden (1999), who suggested a constructive framework in the investigation of attributions. They investigated how learners of different ages constructed different types of attributions for success and failure

in learning a foreign language, what factors underlie their attributions and whether different proficiency learners have different patterns of attributions. They conducted interviews with students from 10 to 15 years of age who were learning French and found that age groups differed in terms of their constructions of success and in the range of attributions they provided for success and failure. Most of the learners tended to see their success as a result of external factors such as teacher approval, marks or grades.

Contradictious findings were found in the investigation of attributions of English learners of French in UK by Williams, Burden, Poulet and Maun (2004). The results showed that effort was the most common factor to which the most successful learners attributed their achievement to and teacher was the most common factor for unsuccessful students.

Gobel & Mori (2007), using a questionnaire, investigated perceived reasons for successes and failure in English speaking and reading classes, looking at how first-year Japanese university students judge their successes and failures. Findings revealed that students who reported performing poorly attributed poor performance to a lack of ability and lack of effort. On the other hand, students who reported performing well attributed their performance to teachers and the classroom atmosphere. In another study, Gobel, Mori, Thang, Kan and Lee (2011) investigated how successful and unsuccessful students in foreign and second language classes make attributions differently and how different attributions may relate to cultural norms. They compared the attributions of Thai, Japanese and Malaysian learners' attributions for success and failure in learning English as a first or second language. Unlike the findings in western studies (e.g. Burden, et al., 2004) they found that students in all three groups seemed to see external factors, teacher influence in particular, as a source of their success and ascribe their failures to internal factors such as lack of ability, effort, preparation, and wrong strategy use (Gobel et al., 2011).

Pishghadam & Zabihi (2011) examined the relationship between EFL learners' attributions for success and failure in language learning and their achievement in foreign language classes. Attributions were measured by using dimensions of attributions and asking about actual reasons for a real outcome. Specific causal attributions (ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, and teacher) and their dimensions were compared with learners' language achievement. The results indicated that learners who attributed their test results to effort received higher grades on the final exam.

Lei & Qin (2009) investigated success and failure attributions in Chinese tertiary EFL context and its relationship to English language achievement. First, they developed a questionnaire scale to measure success and failure of EFL learners in Chinese Tertiary Education. 355 self-reported successful and 594 unsuccessful EFL learners participated in this study. Their College English Test (CET 4), a large scale standardized English test, scores were used as English language achievement criteria. Effort, teacher, and practical use were found to be the most frequent attributions for success and failure was attributed to lack of confidence, lack of effort, test-oriented learning, lack of practical use and lack of external help. They claim that lack of practical use and confidence were not reported in previous research and interpret it as culture or environment specific. They found that successful students are confident in learning English since they perceive EFL tasks as achievable and engage in them willingly. On the other hand, unsuccessful students stated that EFL tasks are rather difficult and they lack the ability for learning English and avoid practising English. The results suggest that effort, confidence, and learning English for practical use, which are internal and controllable factors, as well as teacher, which is an external factor, guide to success.

Hsieh & Schallert (2008) looked into interrelationships among attribution, self-efficacy belief and achievement in foreign language learners. Results showed that learners' self-efficacy levels have influenced attributions differently for successful and unsuccessful students. Self-efficacious learners attributed their test results to internal and controllable factors more than less-efficacious students. When they had poor outcomes, or failed, low efficacy level students seemed to have less control over poor performance whereas higher self-efficacy students ascribed failure to factors under their control (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). The relationship of self-efficacy and attribution to achievement was also found in their previous work when 500 undergraduate learners of Spanish, German and French were asked to provide the attributions for their perceived success and failure and self-efficacy ratings upon receiving grades (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). The results indicated that self-efficacy, supplemented by ability attribution, was the strongest predictor of achievement.

The studies overviewed above showed the role of attributions and self-efficacy in foreign language achievement. As described, students' interpretations of their performance (success or failure) affect their subsequent/ future performances, but it can be the other

way around, that is performance can affect the beliefs as well. Following section will illustrate it in detail.

Academic Achievement and its Relationship with Attributions and Self-Efficacy

Studies on the relationship among attributions, self-efficacy academic achievement showed that these beliefs have significant impact on academic achievement (Noel, Forsyth, & Kelley, 1987; Van Overwalle & De Metsenaere, 1990; Zimmerman, B. J., Bandura, A., & Ponz, M. M., 1992; Chemers et al., 2001). Research on self-efficacy belief showed that self-efficacy has consistently predicted academic achievement in various academic contexts over and above other motivational constructs and affected academic achievement in various ways (Mills, 2014). Besides, studies on attributional retraining demonstrated that shifting students' attributions can improve academic outcome (e.g. Noel et al. (1987). In this section, the mechanism of how these two concepts influence achievement will be described in detail.

Self-Efficacy and Achievement

According to a social cognitive theory of human behavior, people's system of self-beliefs allows them to exercise control over their thoughts, feelings and actions (Mills, 2014). In other words, how people interpret their successful performances informs and changes their environments and their self-beliefs, which in turn, alters subsequent performances. Bandura calls this mutual interplay ***triadic reciprocality*** and illustrates it as follows:

Figure 3. Reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1986)

Personal factors such as cognition, affect, physiological processes, behavior; and environmental influences create a reciprocal interaction. Since humans function within

sociocultural influences, individuals are viewed as both producers and products of their own environment (Bandura, 1997).

As mentioned previously, individuals may direct their functioning through five capabilities existing in themselves: *symbolizing, forethought, vicarious learning, self- regulation,* and *self-reflection.* Among these capabilities, Bandura emphasizes the role of self-reflection in human agency. He states that through self-reflection people analyze their experiences, engage in self-evaluation and may change their own thinking and their subsequent behavior. Therefore, self-reflection has great importance in academic settings, since students' self-examined beliefs play a vital role in their academic successes or failures (Mills, 2014).

According to Bandura (1987) self-efficacy beliefs are stated the most central mechanism of self-reflection (Bandura, 1987). Self –efficacy beliefs influence academic success by choice of activities, level of effort, and persistence (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2008). Students engage in tasks they feel competent and confident about or avoid them if they feel negative. Hence, the higher the efficacy level, the greater the effort, persistence and resilience. Self-efficacy also affects psychological states. For example, less self-efficacious students believe that a task is difficult, so experience stress and depression about how to solve the problems. For these reasons, Bandura (1986) characterized self-efficacy as a mediating mechanism of personal agency— mediating between the prior influences that are the sources of its creation and subsequent behavior.

A meta-analysis of self-efficacy studies between 1977 and 1988 conducted by Multon, Brown & Lent (1991) revealed positive and statistically significant relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance and persistence outcomes across a wide variety of subjects, experimental designs, and assessment methods. It was found that self-efficacy accounted for 14% of the variance in academic performance and 12% of the variance in academic persistence. A number of studies have described relations between self-efficacy for specific academic subjects and college success and academic persistence (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984; Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991).

Schunk (1987) investigated the acquisition of cognitive skills in young children and found that self-efficacy plays a role in children's motivation. He claimed that children develop efficacy and outcome expectancies based on their aptitudes and past experiences. These expectancies are believed to influence students' motivation (effort expenditure and

persistence), which in turn, helps to determine performance outcomes. Performance feedback then feeds subsequent efficacy and outcome expectancy. These processes take place within a continuous feedback cycle. Studies conducted on elementary school children have generally supported the hypothesized cyclical link between motivation, efficacy and performance (Schunk, 1987).

In the analysis of mathematics self-efficacy, students' sense of efficacy-beliefs was found to be a strong predictor of mathematic performance (Schunk, 1981, 1984; Hackett, 1985; Pajares & Miller, 1994). In his study Schunk (1984) demonstrated that mathematics self-efficacy influenced mathematic performance directly (beta = 0.46). Also, researchers reported that mathematics self-efficacy is a good predictor of mathematics interest and choice of mathematics-related courses (Lent, Lopez, & Bieschke, 1993; Pajares & Miller, 1994).

Studies on the effect of self-efficacy in different areas have confirmed the impact of self-efficacy on learning achievement. For example, Hsu (2000) discovered a positive correlation between college students' self-efficacy on the subject of biology and learning outcomes.

Klassen (2002) reviewed first language writing self-efficacy of secondary school students. He considered attributes/factors such as learning disabilities, grade levels, gender, self-efficacy and performance measures, specificity of task and correspondence with measures. In the findings, students with learning disabilities were found to over-estimate their ability to complete specific writing tasks. Several studies found gender differences, with boys rating their confidence higher than girls, although actual performance did not differ. Although there were found to be grade-level differences in perceived efficacy for writing in some studies, overall findings supported the primary role of self-efficacy in predicting student writing performance.

Pajares (2003) also conducted a review on the studies of self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing. The results confirmed the hypothesis that self-efficacy plays a mediational role in the creation of writing outcomes. Writing self-efficacy was even found to be the strongest predictor of writing outcomes compared to writing aptitude or previous writing performance. Effect sizes between writing self-efficacy and achievement in writing have ranged from .19 to .40.

The impact of self-efficacy was studied in college success and academic persistence (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984; Chemers et al. 2001), in career choice and development (Hackett, 1995; Matsui, Ikeda & Ohnishi, 1989; Matsui & Tsukamoto, 1991), in physics and chemistry (Lee, 2002), in mechanical engineering (Jeng & Shin, 2008), and in accounting (Cheng & Chiou, 2010) departments. Almost all of the above-mentioned studies found that self-efficacy beliefs play a great role in students' academic decisions and performance. For example, Chemers and his colleagues (2001) found that of the many variables that may influence students' college success such as students' past performance, optimism, and self-efficacy, self-efficacy was significantly and directly related to academic performance. However, Cheng & Chiou (2010), analyzing the impact of self-efficacy, goal settings, and attribution on accounting all together, found that self-efficacy alone did not account for academic success. The analysis indicated that favorable attribution (ascribing success to personal factors and failure to situations) was more strongly related to a higher mean score on accounting self-efficacy. Students with higher self-efficacy received high scores in proficiency tests. Those students with higher self-efficacy also set higher goals for subsequent achievement tests. Besides, students who set higher achievement goals performed better. Goal setting mediated the relation of initial self-efficacy with subsequent test performance. However, the amount of variance accounted for by self-efficacy was found to be insignificant. Hence, favorable attributions were found to increase the performance in accounting, leading to higher goals and ultimately better test performance.

In sports, coaches using their credibility provided inspirational messages, structure activities that lead to success, and avoid placing the participants prematurely in situations that are likely to bring repeated failures (Bandura, 1997). Other studies used cognitive enactment to raise efficacy and performance. Imagining oneself winning or other mental rehearsal strategies have been shown to enhance competition efficacy beliefs and competitive performance (Feltz & Riessinger, 1990; Garza and Feltz, 1998).

Some studies have investigated the relationship between performance and self-efficacy and found a recursive relationship between them. However, performance variables such as previous success, training history, playing experience were found to be stronger predictors of performance than self-efficacy was of performance (George, 1994; Haney & Long, 1995; Kane et al, 1996).

Zimmerman (2000) reviewed the mechanism of how self-efficacy influences key elements of academic motivation such as choice of activities, level of effort, persistence, and emotional reactions. Findings from Bandura and Schunk (1981) support how self-efficacy affects *choice of activities.* They revealed that students' mathematical self-efficacy belief was predictive of their choice in engaging subtraction problems: the higher the children's sense of efficacy, the greater their choice of the arithmetic activity. In terms of *effort*, Zimmerman (2000) states that self-efficacy beliefs are predictive of two measures of students' effort: rate of performance and expenditure of energy (p.86). For example, Schunk and colleagues found that perceived self-efficacy for learning correlates positively with students' rate of solution of arithmetic problems (Schunk & Hanson, 1985; Schunk, Hanson, & Cox, 1987). Yang (1989) suggested that self-efficacy regulates how much effort one would like to exert to have an impact on the job performance.

The effects of self-efficacy on *persistence* have been illustrated in the studies of Schunk (1981). It was shown that self-efficacy influences students' skill acquisition both directly and indirectly by increasing their persistence. In studies on science and engineering college students (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984), high self-efficacy has been demonstrated to influence the academic persistence necessary to maintain high academic achievement.

Self-efficacy can also help students to overcome challenging tasks *emotionally* by alleviating anxiety, decreasing stress and depression. Dysfunctional anxiety and avoidant behavior have been suggested as often being the direct result of low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Williams, 1995). People with a high sense of self-efficacy to perform and manage potentially difficult situations will approach those situations calmly and will not be disrupted by difficulties.

Attributional Styles and Achievement

Researchers have distinguished between ***positive*** and ***negative*** attribution styles (Peterson, Buchaman & Seligman, 1995); ***self-serving/ self-enhancing*** and ***self-protecting*** attribution styles (Zuckerman, 1979); ***optimistic, pessimistic,*** and ***hostile*** attribution styles (Harvey & Martinko, 2009); and ***functional*** and ***dysfunctional*** (Higgins & LaPonte; 2012) attributional styles regarding their effects on achievement motivation and expectancy of future success.

Attributional style was introduced by Seligman (Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, & Von Baeyer, 1979). Seligman and his colleagues studied the relation between attribution and

mental health and they proposed a distinction between ***pessimistic*** and ***optimistic*** attributional styles. The first style refers to ascribing negative events to internal factors, which, in turn, leads to depression; the latter refers to ascribing positive events to internal factors which follows happiness. Seligman added a globality dimension, in which global or general causes would generalize many life situations of the individual but specific causes relate to only one or a few situations. Thus, he categorized attributions under internal/ external, stable/unstable, and global/specific dimensions.

Harvey & Martinko (2009) distinguished three types of attribution styles. The first type, ***optimistic attribution style,*** is a self-serving attribution style when negative outcomes are attributed to external factors and positive outcomes to internal factors. Second, attribution style, called ***pessimistic attribution style***, shows the opposite tendency. People who have pessimistic attribution style often tend to attribute undesirable outcomes to internal and stable factors such as lack of intelligence or ability, while attributing desirable factors to external and unstable factors such as luck. Consequently, people who hold this type of attribution style seem lack confident in themselves. A third type is a ***hostile attribution style.*** In this style, similarly to optimistic attribution style, undesirable outcomes are attributed to external factors. But the difference is that these external attributions are stable. Douglas & Martineko (2001) stated that the stability of these attributions may arouse anger towards external people such as manager or teacher and may increase aggressive responses.

Higgins & LanPronte (2012) defined ***functional*** attribution style as attributing a negative outcome to internal, controllable, and unstable factors. Since these causal attributions bring about higher expectations of future success, higher hope and higher level of persistence. On the contrary, ascribing negative outcomes to external, uncontrollable, and stable factors is called ***dysfunctional***, because these attributions lead to lower expectations of future success, higher hope and higher level of persistence. For example, effort attributions, which are personally controllable and unstable, for the failure in a test such as “I did not work hard”, “I paid less attention in the class” generate guilt and subsequently greater effort and persistence in that field. In contrast, personally uncontrollable, stable attributions (“I am not good at learning languages”) cause shame, reduce attempts and persistence (Weiner, 1985, 1986, 1992).

Because of the effects of attributional styles on people's subsequent actions, researchers explored the relation of attributional styles to achievement in different domains. Number of studies has substantiated the link between a tendency to make pessimistic attributions and low achievement in academic settings (e.g. Gibb, B. E., Zhu, L., Alloy, L. B., & Abramson, L. Y., 2002; Perry, Nathan, Hall, & Ruthig, 2003; and Peterson & Barret, 1987) and in athletic settings (e.g. Gorgon, 2008; Le Foll, Rascle & Higgins, 2006). Optimistic attributions were found to be related to higher grades (e.g. Martinez & Sewell, 2000; Peterson & Barrett, 1987; Yates & Yates, 1995) and better sport performance (e.g. Seligman, Nolen-Hoeksema, Thornton, & Thornton, 1990). However, there are other studies obtained contradicting results (e.g. LaForge & Cantrell, 2003) or failed to reveal any significant correlations (Bridges, 2001; Hales, 1993) between attributional styles and achievement.

In their study, Higgins & LanPronte (2012) checked if a dysfunctional attributional style - attributing a failure to uncontrollable and stable factors- was linked to lower success expectations, hope and persistence in a difficult academic task. The task was typing in a computer. For this, at first, they applied the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire to 108 students taking psychology courses at a Canadian university. Then they chose participants in the top 15% and bottom15% attributional style score who were classified into functional and dysfunctional attributional style groups. Then, these students participated in the experimental study which involved several typing trials of 4 minutes each and with specific goals provided by the experimenter. The results showed that a dysfunctional attributional style, predictably, was associated with lower expectation of success, lower hope and persistence during repeated failure. Although all participants' expectations of success decreased from trial 1 to trial 4, participants holding a functional attributional style showed higher success expectations overall than those who had a dysfunctional style, having more optimistic approach to the challenge they faced. The findings supported the predicted tendency of the individuals with dysfunctional attributional style to fail/ give up in the face of difficulties (Weiner, 1985**).** Since they attribute failure to personally uncontrollable and unchangeable (stable) factors, participants with dysfunctional attributions tend to believe that they cannot enhance their performance despite trying harder.

Results of another corroborative study carried in an athletic achievement setting showed that athletes repeatedly assign bad events to stable and global causes and assign good

events to unstable and specific causes had lower expectations of success, increased anxiety and poorer achievement (Martin-Krumm, Sarrazin, Peterson, & Famose, 2003).

Investigation of the relationship between negative or dysfunctional attributions and achievement has been prolific; however, there are few studies which focused on the link between positive attributions and achievement. For example, Bempechat et al. (1996) explored the relationship between attributions and mathematics achievement. They found that high achievement was correlated with attributing success to internal and stable factors, such as ability, and not attributing failure to lack of ability.

Reciprocal Relationships between Self-Efficacy and Attribution

Many studies in the past found mutual influence between self-efficacy and attributions (e.g. Bempechat, Ginsburg, Nakkula, & Wu, 1996; McAuley, 1991; Schunk, 1982, 1984; Schunk & Cox, 1986; Schunk & Gunn, 1986; Stajkovic & Sommer, 2000). The relationship between attribution and self-efficacy is reciprocal. People's self-efficacy can be influenced by how they explain the outcome of task performance, similarly attributions for an outcome can also be affected by the level of confidence one has for a given task (Bandura, 1986).

Stajkovic & Sommer (2000) investigated the interrelationship between self-efficacy and attributions. Mainly they focused on whether (1) self-efficacy provides information from which attributions are made (2) attributions, in turn, contribute to the formation of subsequent self-efficacy, and (3) attribution and subsequently formed self-efficacy influence subsequent performance. They developed a model of hypothesized relationships and tested those relationships empirically. In the following figure, you can see the mechanism of this relationship more clearly:

Figure 4. Model of hypothesized relationship among self-efficacy, attribution and achievement **(**Stajkovic & Sommer, 2000. p. 710).

The first set of hypotheses (1-5) focuses on the direct link, and the second set of hypotheses (5-8) examine the reciprocal link between self-efficacy and attributions. It can be said that the impact of the initial self-efficacy level (high-low) on the types of attributions (internal-external) forms the direct links between self-efficacy and attributions. As it was found in a number of previous studies (e.g. Bempechat et al., 1996; Schunk, 1982, 1984; Schunk & Cox, 1986; Schunk & Gunn, 1986) highly self-efficacious learners tended to attribute successful performance to internal factors. In that vein, when they failed they mostly made external attributions (Ross & Fletcher, 1985; Bandura, 1986).

This finding is supported by Schunk & Cox (1986) when children received effort attributional feedback, their self-efficacy level increased in problem solving tasks, since when people believe, or are persuaded, that increased effort will produce success, they persist longer at the task and thus they may increase their level of performance (Weiner, 1977, 1979). Being the most influential source of self-efficacy, successful performance at

the task, in turn, increases people's self-efficacy level for subsequent performance (Bandura 1997).

The findings of the research carried out by Stajkovic & Sommel (2000) showed that low self-efficacious learners attributed their success to internal factors. At the same time failure was also ascribed to internal factors as people with low self-efficacy since low self-efficacious learners do not receive positive feedback or do not possess any other antecedent of self-efficacy, their initial level of efficacy might be perceived as having a strong link with the negative performance feedback (as lack of ability or effort). The results of the study support the existence of direct and reciprocal links between self-efficacy and attributions. Also, they found interactive effects among self-efficacy and attributions, and mediating effects of attributions on formation of subsequent self-efficacy belief. Attributions and subsequent self-efficacy levels are also influenced the subsequent task performance (Stajkovic & Sommel, 2000).

Silver, Mitchell, & Gist (1995) also substantiated this link suggesting that high or low self-efficacy beliefs result in different performance attributions, which, in turn, influence the subsequent performance and create a circle. They compared how people with high and low self-efficacy beliefs differ in interpreting causes of their performance and how it relates to subsequent behavior. In the first part, students' self-efficacy levels and attributions for successful and unsuccessful performance were tested. It was revealed that people with high self-efficacy made "self-serving" (external) attributions for unsuccessful performance, while those with low self-efficacy made "self-effacing" (internal) attributions for unsuccessful performance. In the second part, the role of past performance and attributions as determinants of subsequent self-efficacy was focused on. The results show that successful performance that is attributed to internal factors increases self-efficacy, but unsuccessful performance attributed to internal and stable factors decreases self-efficacy.

Hsieh & Kang (2010) examined the interrelationship among self-efficacy, attribution and achievement in a Korean EFL context. They tested the predictive power of self-efficacy and attributions on their achievements in EFL classrooms. Firstly, they checked the predictive effect of self-efficacy alone and found that self-efficacy was significantly related to achievement. Then attributions were added to multiple regression analysis and

were found to be significantly related to achievement. Among attributions, personal control was revealed to be strongly related to achievement.

Successful and unsuccessful learners differ in attributions as predicted in previous studies. Successful learners endorsed a high level of ability as a cause of their success while unsuccessful learners did not attribute their failure to lack of ability. Furthermore, successful learners referred to effort as a reason for their success more than did the unsuccessful learners. This shows that successful learners tend to attribute the achievement more to factors within their control (high ability), than unsuccessful learners who did not believe lack of ability was the reason for their low grade. Lastly, they looked into the interaction between self-efficacy and attribution. Findings show that learners with higher self-efficacy attributed their outcome to more internal and controllable factors than those with lower self-efficacy. Those with higher self-efficacy made more controllable attributions than learners with lower self-efficacy (Hsieh & Kang, 2010).

Attributions, Academic Achievement, Self-Efficacy and Gender

Gender has also been a focus of self-efficacy research in other academic domains. Gender differences in self-efficacy have been consistently identified in particular domains. For example, male students tend to have higher self-efficacy in maths, science (Pajares, 2002c; Tenaw, 2013) and sports (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002); whereas girls typically have higher self-efficacy in language arts (Pajares and Valiante, 2001; Pajares, Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006).

Pajares & Valiante (2001) investigated whether gender differences in the writing motivation and achievement of middle school students are a function of gender-stereotypic beliefs rather than of gender. Girls tended to have stronger writing self-efficacy, writing self-concept, self-efficacy for self-regulation, value of writing, and task goals, and they received higher grades in language arts. Pajares & Valiante (2001) entered all variables into a regression equation and the results of the regression analysis revealed that femininity added a significant proportion of the variance for each of the motivation variables beyond what was accounted for by the model that included gender and masculinity ($R2$ increase of .08 for self-efficacy, .11 for self-concept, .13 for self-efficacy for self-regulation, .16 for value, .17 for task goal orientation, and .07 for performance-approach goal orientation). On the other hand, inclusion of masculinity into a model with gender and femininity resulted in no increases for self-concept and negligible increases for self-efficacy (.01), self-

efficacy for self-regulation (.01), value (.02), task-goal orientation (.02), and performance-approach goal orientation (.02). In this model, only femininity showed a significant, though a moderate (b = .125) association with writing self-efficacy, writing self-concept, and writing achievement (Pajares and Valiante, 2001).

Mills, Pajares & Herron (2006) studied the relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety, and French proficiency in reading and listening. Results showed that students' reading self-efficacy in French was positively related to reading proficiency, whereas reading anxiety was not related. Listening self-efficacy was positively associated with listening proficiency only for the female participants, and listening anxiety was positively related to the listening proficiency of both males and females.

However, some studies did not find any relationship between gender and self-efficacy. Naseri & Zaferanieh (2012) investigated the relationship between reading self-efficacy and reading strategies used by Iranian EFL students and found their self-efficacy level was not different regarding gender (significance level = 0.075). Also, Tenaw (2013) investigated the link between gender and self-efficacy and achievement of chemistry students and found that students' level of self-efficacy was medium (50.08), and there was no significant difference in self-efficacy between sexes ($t(98) = 0.161$, $p > 0.1$), but there was a statistically significant difference in achievement between sexes ($t(98) = 0.68$, $p < 0.1$) and also a significant relationship existed between self-efficacy and achievement ($r=0.385$).

As for attributional factors, Siegle, Rubenstein, Pollard, & Romey (2010) investigated the perceptions of the students in a university honors' program about their skills in 15 talent areas. In addition, this study explored the relationship of interests and ability and effort attributions with self-efficacy and investigated gender differences in these perceptions. Siegle et al. (2010) found that male attribution of -the role of ability contributing to high levels of verbal talent performance was higher than that of females. Females reported higher effort attributions for high level of performance in logical/reasoning skills, leadership skills, and overall academic skills.

Schunk & Lilly (1984) explored the hypothesis that explicit performance feedback would moderate sex differences in performance expectations (self-efficacy) and attributions. Although girls reported lower self-efficacy for learning how to solve problems (new mathematical tasks) than boys, no sex differences were obtained in students'

demonstrated skills or in their attributions for their problem-solving progress after the treatment.

Zohri (2011) investigated Moroccan EFL students' attributions for failure and found similar results for both sexes. However, significant differences were found in ranking two factors: ability and task difficulty. Female learners attribute failure to ability (38%) and difficulty of school subject (41%) more than males (ability 23%, difficulty of school subject 26%).

Gamgoz & Tektas (2008) studied the relationships among academic attributional style, self-efficacy, gender and culture. Their findings showed that women are more internal, global and stable for negative academic outcomes. Especially, female students in a Turkish context were found to have a higher tendency to attribute negative outcomes to more internal, global and stable factors than males.

This finding is in line with a large amount of research in the literature, studying gender differences in learning and achievement, that frequently revealed that women are more likely than men to demonstrate maladaptive (i.e. pessimistic, Harvey & Martinko, 2009) patterns of attributing success to external causes and failure to internal and stable causes (Dweck, Mangels, and Good, 2004) and to hold lower expectancies and perceptions of their competence (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). The results of attributions Beyer (1999) found that while men make internal and stable attributions for success, women engage in more self-defeating internal and stable attributions for failure.

The direct application of the results to a foreign language learning context, such as the Turkish EFL context, is necessary in order to understand the full picture of how foreign language self-efficacy and achievement are acquired.

Attribution and Self-Efficacy Research in the Turkish EFL Context

Attribution Research

In the last three decades learners' self-beliefs as well as attributions have received considerable attention in different academic setting including foreign/ second language learning. In this section I will outline studies carried out within the field of teaching English as a foreign language in a Turkish context. A number of thesis studies as well as scientific articles have been conducted on attributions especially in the last ten years.

Satıcılar (2006) investigated achievement attributions of English language learners of different ages, focusing on differences in achievement attributions such as gender, grade, the outside help they get while learning English and their studying habits. Eighty 6th grade students of equal gender distribution (40 male an 40 female) and the same number of students (40 male and 40 female) of 9th grade participated in the study. The results of the study showed that learners tend to ascribe their success and failure to internal attributions. Effort attributions were found to be the most common factor in explaining their success and failure by the learners. However, there was a gender difference in causal attributions. While females attributed their success to effort more frequently than the male learners did, males reported that ability was the important cause for their success. In terms of age, no significant differences were displayed between 6th graders and 9th graders according to the questionnaire results. However, interview results indicated that 9th graders tend to attribute their failure to effort attributions more than the 6th graders. It shows that 9th graders believe that they can be more successful in English when they make an effort.

Another similar study has been carried out by Taşkıran (2010). This study explored the dimensional differences between successful and unsuccessful learners' causal attributions. The results showed that the number of the students who perceive themselves as unsuccessful was slightly more than those who perceive themselves successful. Successful students referred to more internal, controllable and relatively stable factors than unsuccessful learners. Among the causes reported for failure, the school/program/system, which is an external and uncontrollable factor, was found to be the most common reason (31%) for the failure. However, many of them believed that lack of effort (21%) served as another major reason for their bad performance in learning English. Only a few of them (7%) stated that lack of ability related to their failure (Taşkıran, 2010).

Özkardeş (2011) conducted an analogous study at Pamukkale University, in which she elicited the attributions of prep-school learners of English. Both questionnaire and interviewing technique were used to obtain the data. Three top attributions of achievement – having a successful teacher, enjoyment, and self-confidence - were identified during the study. On the other hand, unsuccessful learners most frequently reported lack of vocabulary as the main cause of their failure followed by exam difficulty,

shortage of time to learn English, and lack of background education. This study shows that self-confidence, a type of self-belief, may also affect the attributions.

Furthermore, an experimental study (Semiz, 2011) combining attributional, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs and student effort and achievement under retraining program. The study looked into the effects of training program which is designed to change motivationally at risk learners' "maladaptive"- uncontrollable attributions for failure and thus enhance their self-efficacy, success and effort. Another aim of the study was to investigate the relationship among attributions, self-efficacy and language learning beliefs. There were significant differences between successful students and unsuccessful students' attributions. The findings also support the results of previous research. Successful learners tended to report more internal and controllable attributions (e.g. strategy) than unsuccessful learners. No gender differences were found in terms of attributions. Pre- and post-test comparisons revealed significant correlations in attributional beliefs, control of learning beliefs and class attendance.

A skill-based research on attributions was conducted by Yılmaz (2012). He investigated Turkish EFL students' attributions in reading comprehension. Participants were asked to write their test scores in reading and the reasons for "doing well" and for "not doing well" at reading comprehension. In the next step, the modified version of the same questionnaire was administered to 17 EFL teachers and asked to what teachers attribute student success and failure in reading comprehension. Students' questionnaire results identified 13 attributions. Those factors were compared to teachers' replies and 10 outstanding factors were listed in a ranked order. For doing well, *good strategies* were reported by the majority of both teachers (94%) and students (84%), followed by positive *mood, interest in reading* (sts-80%; t.- 81%), *good feedback* provided by teachers (sts-72%; t.- 68%), *having cultural background* (sts-72%; t.- 68%), *positive environment* (sts-71%; t.- 18%), *sense of achievement* (sts-62%; t.- 31%), *and intellectual ability* (sts-56%; t.- 62%).

For "not doing well", 12 attributions were identified. The most referred causes for the "not doing well" are as follows: *lack of interest in reading* (sts-71%; t.- 94%), *lack of time* (sts-70%; t.- 87%), *negative mood* (sts-60%; t.- 44%), *don't try very much* (sts-55%; t.- 69%), *negative environment* (sts-57%; t.- 18%); *poor strategies* (sts-15%; t.- 75%).

As seen from the findings of success and failure attributions there are agreements and disagreements between teacher and students replies. Both teachers' and students' attributions for "doing well" corresponded in *good strategies, interest in reading, and having cultural background.* As for the attribution for "not doing well" the top two factors – lack of interest and lack of time- of both students and teachers matched. However, their opinions diverge in interpreting the influence of strategies, and *cultural background* as the causes of the performance (Yılmaz, 2012).

A recent work of Erten (2015) explored age related gender differences in attributions. A total of 578 English learners from five different cities in Turkey participated in the study. Among them 262 students were from 6th grade and the remaining 313 were 10th grade students. The aim of the study was to shed light on how female and male learners of English tend to explain their achievement in English classes and to find out whether their explanations differ according to gender. The findings revealed that students generally attributed their performance on the task to *teacher's input, their interest* and *ability*. Also, attributions are likely to change over time, except for *interest attributions*, 10th graders displayed lower scores on all other attribution items. In terms of gender differences, females tended to ascribe their performance to interest, effort and family attributions more than male students. Finally, the relationship between attributions and age group was analyzed and showed significant results: female students displayed much sharper declines in the attributions between grade 6 and grade 10 compared to males. Considerable decreases can be seen in *teacher, situational effort, effort and family,* and *luck attributions*. The researcher interpreted this decline in the attributions of female learners as puberty effect.

Şahinkarakaş (2011) has expanded attributional study to young learners of English. She analyzed the explanations of 52 learners aged 9-10 for their success and failure in English class. According to the findings, 35 of them perceived themselves as successful while 17 believed that they are not successful in learning English. They tended to ascribe their success as well as failure to internal, unstable, and controllable factors. Items related to effort were *listening to the teacher* and *doing their homework* followed by further explanations including "I study hard and my teacher always appreciates this", "I study hard because I love my teacher", or "my mom is happy because I study hard". Also, few students mentioned *help from others* and *personal interest* factors, *ability, task difficulty* or *luck attributions,* which constituted Weiner's (1986) original attributional factors, but

were not referred to in the study. Among failure attributions we can see again that many of the learners considered themselves responsible for their bad performance referring to lack of listening, not doing homework or not participating to the lessons. Further, some students mentioned anxiety, *fear of making mistakes* and *embarrassment*, for not doing well in English. Then, some students blamed environmental factors such as *previous education*, and *distraction* for their failure whereas a small number of students attributed failure to lack of interest, *dislike*, and ability.

Self-Efficacy Research

In the last decade studies on self-beliefs has proliferated in a Turkish EFL context. Some studies explored the self-efficacy level of EFL students, some focused on the sources of self-efficacy and their impact on achievement, and some explored the relationship of self-efficacy, and other concepts such as motivation, problem solving skills, achievement or academic self-efficacy.

Cinkara (2009) investigated the self-efficacy level of preparatory school students' (N= 175) language learning self-efficacy levels and the sources of their self-efficacy. He analyzed the difference in self-efficacy level in terms of the proficiency level of the students. He focused on the link between the sources of self-efficacy and the level of self-efficacy. Also, the impact of variables such as gender, age or English background on the level of self-efficacy is dealt with. The findings established a significant relationship between mastery experiences and verbal persuasions and the students' self-efficacy level in English. No significant relationship was found between demographic variables and level of self-efficacy. Furthermore, the study pointed out how the level of self-efficacy rises hand in hand with the proficiency level of the students, that is mean differences are significant between upper-intermediate and pre-intermediate (-33.6378, sig. = .000) and intermediate and pre-intermediate (-22.1288, sig. = .041). Moreover, a positive significant correlation was found between the students' scores on Language Learning Self-Efficacy questionnaire and their end of year GPAs ($r = .375$, $p < .01$).

Uçar (2012) studied the relationships among pre-service English teachers' (N=186) teaching self-efficacy beliefs, goal orientations and participation in online learning environments. The results showed that the participants perceived themselves as highly efficacious. There was a positive and significant correlation between self-efficacy and

mastery goal orientations. However, no statistically significant relationship existed between self-efficacy level of the students and their participation in online learning.

Uygur (2010) analyzed the self-efficacy of English Department students regarding teaching English. The Self-Efficacy Belief Scale for English Language Teaching developed by Güven (2005) was used to test the level of the self-efficacy level of the students. Participants were the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade students at the English Language Teaching department in Mersin University. The study analyzed the self-efficacy beliefs of the pre-service teachers of English according to different variables: gender, type of school they graduated from, schooling time, level of classes, and the time the senior students spent on the practicum. The scale was conducted three times: in the beginning, in the middle and in the end of the Practicum. The results revealed no significant correlations between the demographic variables and self-efficacy level of the students. Yet, a statistically significant difference was found in terms of the grades and the practicum class. Findings showed that there was a positive relationship between the grade and the time spent in practicum and the level of self-efficacy in teaching English. The highest possible point obtained from the self-efficacy scale was 136. The means of the self-efficacy scale by grades were as follows: 108.64 (4th grade); 103.30 (3rd grade); 93.60; and 79.84.

Erşanlı (2015) examined the link between academic self-efficacy and language learning motivation of secondary school (8th graders, N=257) students from different schools in Turkey. To assess the students' academic self-efficacy, she used the adapted version (Öncü, 2012) of Children's Perceived Academic Self-Efficacy Scale' by Jinks & Morgan (1999). The results showed a low-level negative correlation between English learning motivation and academic self-efficacy beliefs of students. Gender difference was also analyzed and no significant difference was found in students' academic self-efficacy beliefs.

Another study by Behjoo (2013) focused on the relationships among (college) self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, problem solving skill and foreign language achievement. College Self-Efficacy Scale consisted of three subscales – course efficacy, roommate efficacy, and social efficacy. For academic self-efficacy, College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, developed by Owen & Froman (1988), was used. It is also composed of three subscales – social, cognitive, and technical self-efficacy items. The study revealed a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy beliefs and foreign language achievement. Additionally, it

sought the relationship between problem solving skills and foreign language achievement foreign language acquisition of prospective English teachers. The findings established a statistically significant correlation between foreign language acquisition and the above-mentioned independent variables. Findings showed that gender was not a predictor for self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy and problem solving skills. Finally, no significant difference was found between high successful and low successful students in relation to their SE, ASE and PSS.

As can be seen, both constructs have been individually investigated extensively. Some studies addressed/scrutinized self-efficacy beliefs of language learners alone, some handled it in conjunction with other constructs such as motivation, problem-solving skills or achievement. Moreover, as observed, learners' self-efficacy belief regarding learning English was dealt with in only one study (Cinkara 2009). The rest focused on either on teaching self-efficacy or academic/college self-efficacy of the students. Accordingly, in this study, language learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, attributions and achievement of prep school EFL learners were combined.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Mixed methods research design was adopted in this study. The purpose of applying mixed methods is that both qualitative and quantitative research, in combination provide a comprehensive analysis of a research problem than either approach alone. More precisely, triangulation design was used. Triangulation design is used to combine the advantages of quantitative with qualitative data (Creswell, 2009; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

The purpose of mixed methods study is to better understand a research problem by converging both quantitative and qualitative data. In this approach, Language Learning Self-Efficacy Scale, Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, and Attribution Scale will be used to measure the relationship between the self-efficacy, attribution and achievement in English preparatory class. At the same time in the study, the attributions and students' self-efficacy will be explored using a structured, open-ended interview questions with randomly selected participants. Findings of both methods, then will be integrated in the interpretation of the overall results. Results of the two types of data are given equal importance, but also the researcher may embed one smaller form of data within another larger data (Creswell, 2009; Terrel, 2012). Two different methods are used to "confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study", it seeks convergence among the results (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

Research Questions

Research questions are as follows:

Research question 1: What is the language learning self-efficacy level of tertiary prep-school students in Turkey?

Research question 2: What is the academic self-efficacy level of tertiary prep-school students in Turkey?

Research question 3: What are the attribution styles of tertiary prep-school students in Turkey?

Research question 4: What is the achievement level of tertiary prep-school students in Turkey?

Research question 5: Is there a relationship between language learning self –efficacy and achievement?

Research question 6: Is there a relationship between academic self –efficacy and achievement?

Research question 7: Is there a relationship between attributions and achievement?

Research question 8: Is there a relationship among academic-self-efficacy, language learning self-efficacy and attributions?

Research question 9: Is there a relationship between academic-self-efficacy and language learning self-efficacy?

Research question 10: Do the results vary according to gender?

Research question 11: How well do foreign language learners' self-efficacy and attributions predict their achievement?

Participants

Participants were chosen from a tertiary level preparatory school in Istanbul, Turkey. Since the study consists of two measurements, one in the beginning and one at the end of the academic year, and also because of the characteristics of the instruments data had to be collected in four stages. Self-efficacy scales should be applied before students perform a given task (Bandura, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). On the contrary, attribution questionnaire should be filled out after the task is completed and students learn their grades. Accordingly, the study started with 344 students in the first step, but there occurred attrition in number of students after each measurement for various reasons. First of all, the researcher was given specific dates to apply the scales in order not to disrupt their lessons. So, not all the students participated in the first application were present on those dates. Secondly, the students who completed B2 level were able to pass to their

departments and continue their study there. Therefore, at the end of year, many of the participants were not available in the prep school. Thirdly, those who failed in all examinations and still were at A1 level (those students comprised a majority of those in the study) by the end of the academic year were reported by their instructors to be hopeless and occasionally attended the classes and thereby they did not participate in the second application. Thus, after the first assessment the number of participants reduced from 344 to 264; after the second assessment, again the number dropped. As a result, a total of 141 students comprise the sampling of the research.

Data Collection Instruments

The data were collected using three different scales adapted from previous studies. Students' achievement was based on their overall results in the modules (one academic year is divided into four modules).

Attribution Scale

Attribution Scale was adapted from Gobel (2011) & Peacock (2009). The reliability of the original version of Gobel's attributions scale for the Attribution Success Questionnaire (ASQ) was .78; and for the Attribution for Failure Questionnaire (AFQ) was .82. The level of reliability of the student questionnaire for the second scale (Peacock, 2009) was .76. The adapted questionnaire was piloted twice, in the first piloting there was a language problem in some of the items. Those deficiencies were corrected and the reliability reached .817 in the re-test. Then, an exploratory analysis was conducted. The analysis is given below:

Table 4.

Factor Analysis (Barlett's Test)

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,772
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1033,216
	df	105
	Sig.	,000

Table 5.

Communalities (Factor Analysis)

	Initial	Extraction
Attr.3	1,000	,394
Attr.4	1,000	,676
Attr.6	1,000	,508
Attr.7	1,000	,647
Attr.8	1,000	,750
Attr.10	1,000	,512
Attr.11	1,000	,559
Attr.12	1,000	,730
Attr.13	1,000	,588
Attr.15	1,000	,619
Attr.17	1,000	,305
Attr.18	1,000	,572
Attr.19	1,000	,716
Attr.20	1,000	,659
Attr.9	1,000	,357

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 6.

Total Variance Explained (Factor Analysis)

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,068	27,121	27,121	4,068	27,121	27,121	2,789	18,594	18,594
2	1,910	12,734	39,855	1,910	12,734	39,855	2,023	13,487	32,082
3	1,340	8,932	48,787	1,340	8,932	48,787	2,000	13,333	45,415
4	1,273	8,488	57,275	1,273	8,488	57,275	1,779	11,861	57,275
5	,947	6,316	63,592						
6	,849	5,661	69,253						
7	,754	5,026	74,279						
8	,668	4,450	78,729						
9	,593	3,955	82,684						
10	,569	3,794	86,478						
11	,540	3,598	90,076						
12	,449	2,992	93,067						
13	,399	2,661	95,729						
14	,359	2,394	98,123						
15	,282	1,877	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7. *Scree Plot*

Table 8.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Attr.19	,837			
Attr.20	,786			
Attr.15	,640			
Attr.6	,594			
Attr.3	,506			
Attr.4		,797		
Attr.18		,665		
Attr.10		,497		
Attr.17		,417		
Attr.12			,831	
Attr.13			,687	
Attr.11			,621	
Attr.8				,851
Attr.7				,761
Attr.9				,431

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Initially twenty questions related to causal attributions regarding learning English were factor analyzed using the principal component analysis method. An exploratory factor analysis is used in this study, confirmatory analysis was not utilized. Secondly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .772, above the recommended value of .6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant 1033.21, $p < .05$. These values indicate that the sampling is appropriate and sufficient for factor analysis (Büyüköztürk, 2008). Communalities of the items were all above .30, except one which was found close to .30. Finally, explained total variance was %57, which was expected by the researcher.

Four criteria were used to determine the number of factors to rotate: a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0, the scree test, a minimum loading of .41, and the interpretability of the factor solution. Based on these criteria, four factors were rotated using Varimax rotation procedure. The rotated solution, as shown in Table 12, yielded four interpretable factors, an *ability/interest* attribution (items 19, 20, 15, 6, 3), a *psychological-state* attribution

(items 4,18,10,17), *effort attribution* (items 12,13,11), and *external-factors* (items 8, 7, 9). In the end, a 15-item scale was developed.

Language Learning Self-Efficacy (LLSE)

To measure self-efficacy, The *Self-Efficacy Scale for Language Learners in Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (*Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991) was used. This questionnaire measures students' motivational orientations and use of learning strategies by college students. There are 81 items divided into two categories, the motivation and learning strategies. The motivation category is divided again into three subcategories: value, expectancy, and affective component. The 8 items in the expectancy component that target self-efficacy for learning and performance were used in the study. Students rated themselves on a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Pintrich et al. (1991) reported the Alpha coefficients for subscales for self-efficacy was .93. This instrument was used across many studies and showed a high validity. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was 0.88-0.90 (Mills & Pajares, 2007; Hsieh, 2004; Cheng, 2002). Cronbach Alpha coefficient in this study was calculated and it was .84, which is a high coefficient.

Table 9.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,849	8

Academic Self-Efficacy (ASE)

For academic self-efficacy, an adapted version of the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Owen & Froman (1988) was used. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Ekici (2012). The scale is composed of 33 items. It consists of three sub-dimensions of social status, cognitive applications and technical skills. Reliability coefficient for the total of the adapted scale was found to be .86 with changing validity for each sub-dimension as .88, .82 and .90 respectively. The results proved that the scale can be used in a Turkish context (Ekici, 2012). At the recommendation of the specialists and advisors, three items (22, 24, and 28) were excluded from the original version of the scale since they were not practiced by the students in preparatory classes of English (they were

related to math courses and laboratory sessions). The reliability of the scale in this study was calculated to be .87.

The Process of Translation and Adaptation of Instruments

Both attribution and self-efficacy scales have been gone through back translation procedure to achieve a version that is conceptually equivalent in Turkish language and academic settings. To put it in another way, the instrument should be equally natural and acceptable and should practically be performed in the same way. The most common and genuine way of achieving this goal is to use forward-translation and back-translation. So, all scales used in this study, except ASE, were translated into Turkish by two different specialists and their translations were translated back to English by an independent specialist. This process helped the researcher to identify any confusion, ambiguities or errors that may arise from the nuances of language. Final versions were developed as a result of all of above –mentioned iterations.

Achievement

The instruction/education in the preparatory school is divided into four modules (levels). In each module, there are three achievement exams and an Exit exam. A total module grade is formed by summing 40% of Exit result and 20% of each achievement test (I, II, III) results. Then, according to the total grades students pass into the next level, or, if they fail, they repeat the same level. Since, the study covered the first and the last modules, achievement of the students was based on the Exit exam scores and the overall results in the first module and the fourth modules.

Data Collection Procedure

After getting permission from the rector and the head of the department, the data collecting procedure was started. The timeline of the data collection can be seen in the table below:

Since the Exit results form/represent a large percentage of a total module grade, it was decided to apply the assessments before and after the exit exams. Thus, the first assessment/measurement took place, i.e. demographic questions, English and Academic

Self- Efficacy Scales were distributed to the students, before the Exit I in the fall semester of 2014-2015 academic year. Students were informed both orally and in a written way that the information would be kept confidential. Then, after their grades were announced, students were asked to report the reasons behind their success or failure by filling out the Attribution Scale. The same procedure was repeated before and after the Exit IV in the Spring semester. Following the attribution scale, 30 randomly selected participants were asked open-ended questions. Participants' achievement data were collected from the instructors of each group. Since the study examined the students' achievement in preparatory English classes and their beliefs related to whether or not they will succeed in passing the prep-school data collection process should have covered the whole academic year. Thus, data collection process lasted for about 7 months from October, 2014 to May, 2015.

Table 10.

Timeline of the study

Beginning of module I	**Academic Self-Efficacy 1** **Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1** ↓
End of module I	**Attribution Scale 1** **Exam Result 1 (Exit 40%)** **Module Average 1 (Achievement exams (60%) + Exit (40%))** ↓
Beginning of module IV	**Academic Self-Efficacy 2** **Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2** ↓
End of module IV	**Attribution Scale 2** **Exam Result 2 (Exit %40)** **Module Average 2 (Achievement exams (60%) + Exit (40%))** **Open-ended questions**

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

In data analysis, before deciding which tests to use, a data processing has been conducted. It checked for whether (or not) the data was normally distributed and for outliers. Accordingly, participants coded as 232 and 312 were excluded from the study. The normality tests carried out afterwards showed that the data was normally distributed. Kurtosis and Skewness coefficients are shown below:

Table 11.

Normality Test

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 1	-,309	,204	,297	,406
Academic Self-Efficacy Social 1	-,382	,204	,842	,406
Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 1	-,344	,205	,209	,407
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1	-,362	,206	,614	,410
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1	-,239	,204	,448	,406
Ability Interest 1	-,328	,204	,127	,406
Psychological State 1	-,142	,204	,099	,406
Effort 1	-,041	,204	-,321	,406
External Factors 1	-,341	,204	,340	,406
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2	-,428	,206	,015	,408
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2	-,316	,206	,663	,408
Ability Interest 2	-,322	,206	,784	,408
Psychological State 2	-,179	,206	,759	,408
External Factors 2	-,428	,206	-,054	,408
Effort 2	,176	,206	-,478	,408

Parametric tests were used after determining that the data was normally distributed. Pearson correlation was used for the relationship between variables, dependent (paired sample t-test) and independent sample t-tests were used for the paired groups. Also,

factor analysis has been tested for the adapted attribution scale. In order to identify which independent variables best predict the dependent variable, a structural stepwise regression analysis was conducted. For the analysis, SPSS 21 was used and the significant level was 0.05 (%95 confidence interval).

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through open ended questions were analyzed to elaborate participants' beliefs. The participants were asked open-ended questions related to their (a) proficiency/achievement in English; (b) self-efficacy in learning English; (c) the reasons (attributions) of their performance at prep school; (d) their interest in learning English and (e) and their efficacy level in completing prep school successfully.

Data obtained from open-ended structural questionnaires were scanned and coded by the researcher. A directed content analysis approach, that is, the data were analyzed under above-mentioned pre-determined categories, but different sub-groups have emerged during the coding process. These codes, then, were grouped by categories. The first step was to read the transcript and highlight all text that on first impression appears to represent the self-efficacy level, attributions and the level of students' interest in English. Next, all highlighted passages were coded. The aim of a directed approach to content analysis is to validate or extend theoretical framework. In this study, regarding the reasons of their improvement in proficiency level, four categories appeared after a thorough scanning of the responds. They relate the improvement in proficiency level to (1) interest; (2) hard work; (3) teacher and quality instruction; and (4) classes and course books. The application of the obtained results will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the findings of the analysis of the quantitative data. The data including students' demographic information, Pearson correlation analyses, paired sample T-test results and the findings of stepwise regression analysis are given in the chapter. The findings of the qualitative data are also included to corroborate the quantitative results.

Participants' Background Information

The vast majority (87.9%) of the participants were beginner (A1) level, followed by 11.3 % elementary (A2) and only 0.7% upper-intermediate level students (see Table 12).

Table 12.

Descriptive Statistics for Level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
A-1	124	87,9	87,9	87,9
A-2	16	11,3	11,3	99,3
B-2	1	,7	,7	100,0
Total	141	100,0	100,0	

Gender distribution was dominated by 62, 4% female and 37,6 % male. The age of the participants varied from 17 to 26 (see Table 13).

Table 13.

Descriptive Statistics for Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	53	37,6	37,6	37,6
Female	88	62,4	62,4	100,0
Total	141	100,0	100,0	

Table 14.

Descriptive Statistics for Age

Age				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
17-20	124	87,9	87,9	87,9
21-25	15	10,6	10,6	98,6
26+	2	1,4	1,4	100,0
Total	141	100,0	100,0	

The overwhelming majority (87, 9) of the students aged 17-20, the number of students aged between 20-25 constitutes 10 % of the participants and only 2 participants are over 26 years old.

Table 15.

Descriptive statistics for Types of School

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Private	35	24,8	24,8	24,8
State	102	72,3	72,3	97,2
Foreign	4	2,8	2,8	100,0
Total	141	100,0	100,0	

The greater number of the participants (72%) is graduates of state high schools, the rest are graduates of private high schools (24%) including a small minority of foreigners (2,8%).

Interpretation of Quantitative Results and Discussion

In this section, the findings of the quantitative data are analyzed; all the research questions are addressed and answered one by one. Each of them is discussed with regard to the findings of the previous studies.

Research question 1: What is the language learning self-efficacy level of tertiary prep school students in Turkey?

Regarding the first research question, the language learning self-efficacy (further referred as LLSE) level of the tertiary prep school students was examined. The participants gave scores 1-5 in the 8-item LLSE scale. The possible maximum score for the LLSE is 40. As can be seen in the table below the means for the ESE, in the first assessment of the study, was found to be 30, 04 which can be considered as a high level. However, in the second measurement it dropped to 23, 42 which cannot be evaluated as high.

Research question 2: What is the academic self-efficacy level of tertiary prep school students in Turkey?

The ASE scale consists of 30 questions with three sub-dimensions: 17 items were related to the cognitive dimension, 10 items tested the social dimension and 5 items were related to the technical self-efficacy dimension. Accordingly, the highest possible score for the ASE total is 150. Of these 85 points are for the cognitive dimension, 50 points are for the social dimension, and 15 are for the technical dimension. According to table 4.1 the average of academic self-efficacy (cognitive dimension) is 60,28; academic self-efficacy (social dimension) is 37,55; academic self-efficacy (technical) is 11,56; and the total average academic self-efficacy level of the participants is 109,38 in the first measurement. However, the average of ASE-cognitive (M= 57,60), ASE-social (M= 35,97), ASE-technical (M= 10,64) and ASE-total (M= 23,42) of participants decreased in the second measurement.

Research question 3: What are the attribution styles of tertiary prep school students in Turkey?

In the Language Learning Attribution Scale, there are 4 factors. The ability/interest factor includes 5 items, the psychological state factor has 4 items, 3 items cover the effort attribution, and the external factors include 3 items. Accordingly, the highest possible score for the ability/interest attribution is 25; for the psychological state factor, it is 20;

for the effort attribution it is 15; and for external factors it is 15 points. The highest score in one of the factors means that the students tend to attribute their performances (success or failure) to this attributional factor, hence it shows the attributional tendency or style of the participants (i.e. do students attribute their performance to internal factors such as ability or effort, or do they find external factors such as teacher or classroom atmosphere as the reasons for their outcome). According to table 16 it seems that the ability/interest factor was the most endorsed (M=17, 10) followed by psychological state (M=12,99) and external factors (M=11,73). The effort attribution was the least preferred (M=8, 77) attributional factor in the first assessment. However, the averages of attributions (ability interest, psychological state and effort) slightly declined in the second measurement.

Research question 4: What is the achievement level of tertiary prep school students in Turkey?

Achievement test scores are based on a 100-point assessment. Based on the averages of the test scores it can be concluded that the achievement level of the participants is moderate (M=66, 04) in the first measurement.

Tables 16 and 17 give us descriptive statistics, means for ASE, LLSE, attributions and achievement in the first and second measurements.

Table 16.

Descriptive Statistics of ASE, LLSE and Attributions in the First Measurement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 1	141	60,28	9,58
Academic Self-Efficacy Social 1	141	37,55	5,60
Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 1	141	11,56	2,17
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1	138	30,04	5,11
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1	141	109,38	14,76
Ability Interest 1	141	17,10	4,23
Psychological State 1	141	12,99	3,34
Effort 1	141	8,77	2,93
External Factors 1	141	11,73	2,55
Exam Result I	141	66,04	17,734

However, the means of all variables had changed in the second measurement. The average achievement score declined to (M= 53, 18) (see Table 17).

Table 17.

Descriptive Statistics of ASE, LLSE and Attributions in the Second Measurement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 2	141	57,60	9,82
Academic Self-Efficacy Social 2	141	35,97	7,03
Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 2	141	10,64	2,03
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2	139	23,42	5,24
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2	139	100,88	16,42
Ability Interest 2	139	17,16	3,43
Psychological State 2	139	13,29	2,37
Effort 2	139	8,16	2,98
External Factors 2	139	11,40	2,28
Exam Result II	141	53,18	15,884

In order to check the significance of the differences between the first and the second measurements, a Paired Samples t-test was conducted. All variables are given in Table 18.

Table 18.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Exam Result 1 - Exam Result 2	12,85	19,85	1,67	9,55	16,16	7,68	140	,000
Pair 2	Module Average 1 - Module Average 2	7,00	12,61	1,06	4,89	9,10	6,58	140	,000
Pair 3	Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 1 - Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 2	2,66	10,81	,91	,86	4,46	2,92	140	,004
Pair 4	Academic Self-Efficacy Social 1 - Academic Self-Efficacy Social 2	1,56	7,08	,59	,38	2,74	2,62	140	,010
Pair 5	Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 1 - Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 2	,91	2,69	,22	,46	1,36	4,03	140	,000
Pair 6	Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1 - Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2	6,71	5,65	,48	5,75	7,67	13,83	135	,000
Pair 7	Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1 - Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2	8,51	17,96	1,52	5,50	11,53	5,59	138	,000
Pair 8	Ability Interest 1 - Ability Interest 2	,00	3,99	,33	-,66	,67	,021	138	,983
Pair 9	Psychological State 1 - Psychological State 2	-,28	3,97	,33	-,94	,38	-,83	138	,407
Pair 10	Effort 1 - Effort 2	,66	3,46	,29	,08	1,24	2,25	138	,026
Pair 11	External Factors 1 - External Factors 2	,33	3,02	,25	-,17	,83	1,29	138	,199

According to Table 18 there was a significant positive difference between exam results in the first measurement (exam results I) and those in the second measurement (exam results II) ($p<0.01$). Since the difference is positive we can conclude that the means of the first exam (M= 66.04) is higher than the mean of the second exam (M= 53.18).

When we consider the average of modules (the 1st module and 3rd module results) again we obtain a positive significant difference. It shows that their achievement level in the first quarter is higher than their achievement level in the last quarter ($p<0.01$).

Average points of all dimensions (cognitive, social and technical) of academic self-efficacy and total points in the first measurement are statistically higher than the second measurement ($p<0.01$). Also, it is the same for language learning self-efficacy points ($p<0.01$).

On the other hand, among attribution factors only the effort attribution showed a difference between the first and second measurements ($p<0.05$). The averages of ability/interest, psychological state and external factors did not show any difference.

Research question 5: Is there a relationship between language learning self –efficacy and achievement?

This research question focuses primarily on the correlations between language learning self-efficacy and exam results. The correlation analysis is given in the Table 19.

Table 19.

Correlations between Language Learning Self-Efficacy and Achievement (First Assessment)

		Exam Result 1 (%40)	Module Average 1	Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1
Exam Result 1 (%40)	Pearson Correlation	1		
Module Average 1	Pearson Correlation	,932**	1	
Language Learning Self-Efficacy1	Pearson Correlation	,496**	,502**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the first Pearson correlation analysis, the level of language learning self-efficacy beliefs and exam results (I) of the students were significantly related (r=.49,

p<0.01) in the first measurement. Similarly, the average of the first module (achievement) and language learning self-efficacy were strongly and positively correlated (r=.50, p<0.01).

A positive, medium-level and significant correlation was found between exam results and language learning self-efficacy level (r=.36, p<0.01). A rather strong correlation was found between the module average and language learning self-efficacy levels (r=.41, p<0.01) (see Table 19).

Table 20.

Correlations between Language Learning Self-Efficacy and Achievement (Second Assessment)

		Exam Result 2	Module Average 2	Language Learning Self-Efficacy
Exam Result 2	Pearson Correlation	1		
Module Average 2	Pearson Correlation	,694**	1	
Language Learning Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	,365**	,414**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

The hypothesis that self-efficacy would be positively related to language achievement has been tested and repeatedly confirmed in different previous studies (Abedini & Rahimi, 2009; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006, 2007; Pajares, Miller, & Johnson, 1999; Shell, Bruning & Colvin, 1995; Tilfarlıoğlu & Çiftçi, 2011; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). A strongly significant relationship was found in a study conducted by Rahemi (2007) who investigated the relationship between the self-efficacy level of Iranian high school students of humanities and their EFL achievement. The Pearson-product correlation coefficient was found to be .84, which strongly supports the findings of the current study. Moreover, she found that humanity students had very low English self-efficacy and were uncertain about their academic ability as foreign language learners. Along with the English self-efficacy level of humanity students Rahimi examined how the level of English self-efficacy affected students' achievement in English. Content analysis of teacher responses and researcher observations showed that they did not exert

much effort and persistence for achieving well. Besides they did not participate in the class actively, had no motivation to do group work and were reluctant to do extra homework. Also, they were observed to give up immediately in the face of difficulties. Tilfarlıoğlu & Çiftçi (2011) also found a significant correlation between the end-of-year grades of EFL students and their self-efficacy beliefs. They found a quite close correlation coefficient (r=.37) to the coefficient of the present study.

Other studies showed that among other variables self-efficacy strongly predicted the achievement (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006; Pajares, 2003). Hsieh & Schallert (2008) used self-efficacy and different attributions as predictors of achievement in language learning, and found that self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of achievement in language learning. Regression analyses showed that self-efficacy and ability accounted for 42% of the final grade, with self-efficacy as the overall strongest contributor. We have viewed the predictive power of all the variables of the present study in table 30 later in this section.

Research question 6: Is there a relationship between academic self –efficacy and achievement?

The following tables show the correlations between ASE and achievement in the beginning of the year.

Table 21.

Correlations between Academic Self-Efficacy and Achievement (First Assessment)

		Exam Result 1 (%40)	Module Average 1	Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 1	Academic Self-Efficacy Social 1	Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 1	Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1
Exam Result 1 (%40)	Pearson Correlation	1					
Module Average 1	Pearson Correlation	,932**	1				
Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 1	Pearson Correlation	,264**	,234**	1			
Academic Self-Efficacy Social 1	Pearson Correlation	-,053	-,087	,515**	1		
Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 1	Pearson Correlation	-,121	-,082	,542**	,494**	1	
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1	Pearson Correlation	,133	,107	,924**	,787**	,687**	1

A positive, low level and significant correlation was found between exam results and academic self-efficacy–cognitive dimension (r=.26, p<0.01) in the first measurement. Between the module average and academic self-efficacy-cognitive dimension there was a positive, low-level and significant correlation (r=.23, p<0.01) (see Table 21).

The results differ in the second measurement. Table 22 illustrates the relationship between ASE and achievement in the second measurement. According to Pearson's correlation in the second measurement, a positive, medium level and significant correlation exists between exam results and academic self-efficacy-cognitive dimension (r=.30, p<0.01). There is a positive, low-level and significant correlation between academic self-efficacy total points and the second exam result (r=.20, p<0.05). There was a positive, low-level and significant correlation between module average 2 and academic self-efficacy–cognitive dimension (r=.25, p<0.05). Between the total points of academic-self-efficacy and the module average a positive, low-level and significant correlation was established (r=.17, p<0.05). Although correlation coefficients generally dropped compared to the results in the first measurement, we can see that the coefficient of academic self-efficacy has risen (see Table 22).

Table 22.

Correlations between Academic Self-Efficacy and Achievement (Second Assessment)

		Exam Result 2	Module Average 2	Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 2	Academic Self-Efficacy Social 2	Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 2	Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2
Exam Result 2	Pearson Correlation	1					
Module Average 2	Pearson Correlation	,694**	1				
Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 2	Pearson Correlation	,306**	,254**	1			
Academic Self-Efficacy Social 2	Pearson Correlation	,060	,045	,626**	1		
Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 2	Pearson Correlation	,122	,048	,714**	,542**	1	
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2	Pearson Correlation	,207*	,172*	,932**	,853**	,761**	1

Several studies have investigated the link between academic self-efficacy and academic performance (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1995, Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Different scales were used in those studies to measure academic self-efficacy. Among those studies Choi (2005), Galyon, Blondin, Yaw, Nalls, & William (2012), Papa

(2015), and Sarıçoban & Behjoo (2016) used the same scale that is used in the present study and they found a significant relationship between ASE and achievement. Choi (2005) found a medium level correlation of ASE with term grades (r = .22) but a stronger correlation with the course specific measure (r = .32) and class participation (r = .20).

The result of a quite recent study found a rather strong correlation (r = 60) between ASE and achievement in language learning (Sarıçoban & Behjoo, 2016). However, the findings of the present study did not establish any relationship between ASE and achievement in the first measurement. But a mild relationship was established in the second assessment (r = .20; r =.17) (see table 22).

It should be mentioned that not all the studies have revealed a strong (or any) relationship between ASE and achievement. For example, later research (Galyon et al., 2012; Papa, 2015) also found that ASE was significantly correlated with achievement, and class participation. But when it was entered into a regression equation together with the other variables, it was found that the true predictive power of ASE was not as strong as the other variables. Student participation (β = .34) surpassed ASE (β = .18) in terms of the impact on student achievement in the course (Papa, 2015). Therefore, the true power of ASE on academic outcome should be further investigated.

Research question 7: Is there a relationship between attribution and achievement?

The following table shows the correlations between attribution and achievement at the beginning of the academic year. According to the Table 23, a positive, medium-level and significant correlation between exam results and ability/interest attributions (r=.33, p<0.01) was found. Also, there was a medium-level, significant relationship between exam results and psychological state attribution (r=.32, p<0.01).

A medium-level, significant relationship was established between module 1 average (achievement) and ability/interest attribution (r=.33, p<0.01). Furthermore, module average 1 and psychological state attribution showed a positive, medium-level relationship (r=.31, p<0.01).

However, effort and external factors were not related to exam results. In the same way, there was no significant relationship among effort, external factors and module average (p>0.05). (see Table 23)

Table 23.

Correlations between Attribution and Achievement (First Assessment)

		Exam Result 1 (%40)	Module Average 1	Ability Interest 1	Psychological State 1	Effort 1	External Factors 1
Exam Result 1 (%40)	Pearson Correlation	1					
Module Average 1	Pearson Correlation	,932**	1				
Ability Interest 1	Pearson Correlation	,335**	,328**	1			
Psychological State 1	Pearson Correlation	,317**	,307**	,404**	1		
Effort 1	Pearson Correlation	,153	,133	,261**	,142	1	
External Factors 1	Pearson Correlation	,076	,102	,216*	,159	-,024	1

In the second measurement, a positive, low-level and significant relationship was found between exam results and ability/interest attribution (r=.26, p<0.01). Also, exam results and psychological state attribution were positively correlated (r=.25, p<0.01). The overall module result and ability/interest were mildly and positively correlated (r=.31, p<0.01). A low-level significant correlation was found between psychological state and module results (r=.18, p<0.05). No significant correlation exists among effort attribution, external factors and exam results. Similarly, effort attribution, external factors and module average did not show a significant correlation (p>0.05) (See Table 24).

Table 24.

Correlations between Attributions and Achievement (Second Assessment)

		Exam Result 2	Module Average 2	Ability Interest 2	Psychological State 2	Effort 2	External Factors 2
Exam Result 2	Pearson Correlation	1					
Module Average 2	Pearson Correlation	,694**	1				
Ability Interest 2	Pearson Correlation	,258**	,310**	1			
Psychological State 2	Pearson Correlation	,255**	,184*	,200*	1		
Effort 2	Pearson Correlation	,117	,165	-,126	,225**	1	
External Factors 2	Pearson Correlation	-,002	-,162	,215*	,087	-,197*	1

Our finding that ability and interest correlated with English language achievement is in line with several studies in the literature (Hashemi & Zahibi, 2011; Hsieh, 2004; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Hsieh & Schallert (2008) and Hashemi & Zahibi (2011) found significant correlations between ability attribution (r=.40) and language proficiency. However, a stronger correlation was found between language proficiency and effort attribution (r = .55) followed by ability (r = .40), internal locus of causality (r = .39) and task difficulty (r =. 35) attribution (Hashemi & Zahibi, 2011).

Interestingly, contrary to several previous studies (Lei & Qin, 2009; Pishdhadam & Zahibi, 2011), effort attribution was not correlated with achievement in this study. This issue will be addressed in the qualitative data analysis section.

Since there is no factor named psychological state attribution in the literature, it can be interpreted as anxiety, mood and students' health during the exam. In previous studies, no relationship was found between mood and language achievement (Hashemi and Zahibi, 2011; Hsieh & Schallert; 2008). Likewise, Peacock (2009) investigated attributional factors of language learners. He elicited attributions for student success and failure from teachers and the students themselves. While teachers strongly attributed student failure to anxiety (and lack of confidence), students did not.

The findings in the table above show that psychological state significantly related to achievement (r= .31; r = .25). As it is explained in the open-ended questionnaire results, generally, as it was reported by the teachers in Peacock (2009), the students who failed the exam referred to psychological state attribution as bad mood, anxiety and stress (see qualitative data results).

Research question 8: Is there a relationship among academic-self-efficacy, language learning self-efficacy and attribution?

The relationship of LLSE, ASE and attributions in the first measurement is given in the Table 25. In the first measurement, there was a significant, positive, and medium-level correlation between language learning self-efficacy level and ability/interest attributions (r=.38, p<0.01). Language learning self-efficacy and psychological state attributions display a positive, low level and significant relationship (r=.28, p<0.01). Finally, language learning self-efficacy and effort attribution established a positive, low-level and significant correlation (r=.23, p<0.01). Besides these, no significant relationship was

found among language learning self -efficacy and external factors (p>0.01). Also, there was no significant relationship among academic self-efficacy and attribution (none of the factors – ability-interest, psychological state, effort and external factors) (p>0.01) (see Table 25).

Table 25.

Correlations among Language Learning Self-Efficacy and Academic Self-Efficacy and Attribution (First Assessment)

		Ability Interest 1	Psychological State 1	Effort 1	External Factors 1	Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1	Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1
Ability Interest 1	Pearson Correlation	1					
Psychological State 1	Pearson Correlation	,404**	1				
Effort 1	Pearson Correlation	,261**	,142	1			
External Factors 1	Pearson Correlation	,216*	,159	-,024	1		
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1	Pearson Correlation	,379**	,279**	,227**	,034	1	
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1	Pearson Correlation	,080	,034	,254**	-,125	,533**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

In this question, the interplay between language learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy and attributional factors has been addressed. In the present study, language learning self-efficacy was strongly correlated with academic self-efficacy and with all the attributional factors, except external factors in the first measurement. On the other hand, academic self-efficacy was correlated only with effort attribution in the first measurement. However, in the second measurement, effort attribution was not correlated with any of the self-efficacy dimensions. Again, ability/interest, psychological state and external factors were correlated with language learning self-efficacy. But academic-self efficacy showed a significant relationship with external factors. At the same time, it can be seen that the correlation coefficients in the variables slightly dropped in the second measurement. The strongest correlation, in both times of measurements, was found to be between language learning self-efficacy and ability/interest attributions which is consistent with the previous studies.

Table 26.

Correlations among Language Learning Self-Efficacy and Academic Self-Efficacy and Attributions (Second Assessment)

		Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2	Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2	Ability Interest 2	Psychological State 2	External Factors 2	Effort 2
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2	Pearson Correlation	1					
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2	Pearson Correlation	,513**	1				
Ability Interest 2	Pearson Correlation	,341**	,214*	1			
Psychological State 2	Pearson Correlation	,174*	,131	,200*	1		
External Factors 2	Pearson Correlation	,196*	,219**	,215*	,087	1	
Effort 2	Pearson Correlation	-,073	,098	-,126	,225**	-,197*	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Hsieh & Schallert (2008) used self-efficacy as the criterion variable and entered several attributional factors as predictors. According to their findings, ability attribution was shown to be a significant predictor of self-efficacy which is the case in the present study, too (r= 34; r= 21 see Table 26). Students who believed that attribution played an important role in their test results reported lower self-efficacy ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$). It was found that ability attribution was a stronger predictor of self-efficacy for unsuccessful students ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$) than for successful students ($\beta =12.01$, $p = .12$). Stajkovic &Sommer (2000) also found that students with higher self-efficacy attributed success to internal factors and failures to external factors. On the other hand, students with lower self-efficacy made internal attributions for both success and failure.

Another significant predictor of self-efficacy in Hsieh & Schallert (2008) was effort attribution ($\beta =- 23, 20$, $p<.001$). The results showed that for students who perceived themselves as unsuccessful, those with low effort attribution, in other words, who believed that effort doesn't play any role in the test outcome had significantly lower self-efficacy scores than those who believed that lack of effort plays a role in the test outcome. They concluded that if students attribute failure to factors that are not within their control, their self-efficacy suffers.

Further, Hsieh & Kang (2010) found similar results but also with some differences which may lead to different interpretations. In a Korean EFL context, students with higher self-efficacy also tended to attribute test results more strongly to internal and personal control factors than those with lower self-efficacy. Besides, learners with lower self-efficacy tended to attribute test results more strongly to external factors, which may lead to an assumption that, not believing in their ability, they may have low expectations of future outcomes and such a belief could possibly lead to learned helplessness (Hsieh & Kang, 2010).

As for effort attribution, it may be assumed that it is linked to the general drop in the figures or coefficients displayed in the second measurement (see Table 18 paired sample T-test results). The average of the exam scores in the first assessment (M= 66.04) significantly declined in the second assessment (M=53.18) (t (140) = -7, 68, p = 0.000). Bandura (1997) stated that repeated failure can also affect people's belief and self-efficacy. It can be interpreted that because of their repeated failure students might think and believe that they cannot control their learning outcome and thus they do not attribute their achievement to effort believing that effort does not play a role in their test outcomes.

Research question 9: Is there a relationship between academic-self-efficacy and language learning self-efficacy?

Table 27.

Correlations between Language Learning Self-Efficacy and Academic Self-Efficacy (First Assessment)

		Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 1	Academic Self-Efficacy Social 1	Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 1	Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1	Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1
Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 1	Pearson Correlation	1				
Academic Self-Efficacy Social 1	Pearson Correlation	,515**	1			
Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 1	Pearson Correlation	,542**	,494**	1		
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1	Pearson Correlation	,598**	,291**	,239**	1	
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1	Pearson Correlation	,924**	,787**	,687**	,533**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Correlations between LLSE and ASE are given in the tables 27 and 28. In the first assessment, there was a significant, positive, and high-level correlation between language learning self-efficacy level and academic self-efficacy level (r=.53, p<0.01). Especially, the cognitive dimension of academic self-efficacy was greatly correlated with language learning self-efficacy (r=.59, p<0.01), followed by social (r=.29, p<0.01) and technical dimensions (r=.23, p<0.01) (see Table 27).

In the second assessment, the correlation between academic self-efficacy and language learning self-efficacy slightly decreased, yet there was a significant, positive, and high-level correlation between language learning self-efficacy level and academic self-efficacy level (r=.51, p<0.01). Again, the cognitive dimension of academic self-efficacy was highly correlated with language learning self-efficacy (r=.54, p<0.01), followed by social (r=.37, p<0.01) and technical dimensions (r=.39, p<0.01). It can be noticed that the correlations of the latter two dimensions rose in the second assessment.

Table 28.

Correlations between Language Learning Self-Efficacy and Academic Self-Efficacy (Second Assessment)

		Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 2	Academic Self-Efficacy Social 2	Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 2	Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2	Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2
Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 2	Pearson Correlation	1				
Academic Self-Efficacy Social 2	Pearson Correlation	,626**	1			
Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 2	Pearson Correlation	,714**	,542**	1		
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2	Pearson Correlation	,540**	,376**	,395**	1	
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2	Pearson Correlation	,932**	,853**	,761**	,513**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

It is suggested that self-efficacy can vary along the dimensions of level, generality, and strength (Bandura, 1986; Zimmerman, 1995). The aim of this research question was to examine whether academic self-efficacy and language learning self-efficacy display some generality or do they vary. Little research can be found in the literature on the generality

of academic self-efficacy (Bong, 1997; Zimmerman & Ringle, 1981). Bong (1997) studied 588 high school students' self-efficacy beliefs across six different school subjects (English, Spanish, U.S. history and algebra, geometry, chemistry) and showed that students hold more or less generalized perceptions of their academic capability beyond the boundary of a specific problem, and also school subjects, albeit to a lesser degree (Bong, 1997). Moreover, it is stated that the more the similarity between the tasks the higher the generality of academic self-efficacy between them.

Similarly, the present results show that there are significant positive correlations among academic self-efficacy and language learning self-efficacy. Also, the strong correlation between language learning self-efficacy and the cognitive dimension of academic self-efficacy can be explained on the basis of a similarity factor mentioned previously. Since most of the items on the Language Learning Self-Efficacy Scale require cognitive skills (e.g. *I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course*) a high correlation might be expected.

Research question 10: Do the results vary according to Gender?

In the present study, in the first measurement, (that is, at the beginning of the year) there was a difference in academic self-efficacy level (M=61.82 for females; 57.80 for males) (t (139) =2,465, $p<0.05$) as well as language learning self-efficacy of female (M= 30.75) and male (M= 28.91) students favoring the female students (t (136) =2,089, $p<0.05$). In terms of achievement, no significant difference was found between the achievement level of the female and male students (see Table 29).

However, in the second measurement, no relationship was established in the second measurement of the present study between self-efficacy and gender, which is in accord with the previous findings of Tenaw (2013) and Naseri & Zaferanieh (2012).

In contrast to previous research (Gamgöz & Tektaş, 2008; Harvey & Martinenko, 2009; (Dweck, Mangels, & Good, 2004) the findings of attributions of the current do not support the idea that females are more internal in their attributions. The findings show that females (M: 11.80) are more likely to make more external attributions than males (M: 10.71) (t (137) =2.794, $p<0.05$). Yet, it doesn't give a clear picture for successful or unsuccessful performances. It means that in the present study girls tended to see external factors as reasons for their academic outcomes, whatever the outcome is. For further research, it is highly suggested that the findings should be separated and analyzed in

terms of success and failure groups to see whether females hold more optimistic or pessimistic attributional styles.

Table 29.

Descriptive Statistics and t-test results of LLSE, ASE and Attributions for Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Academic Self-Efficacy Cognitive 1	Male	54	57,80	10,823	-2,465	139	0,015
	Female	87	61,82	8,428			
Academic Self-Efficacy Social 1	Male	54	37,94	5,948	0,663	139	0,508
	Female	87	37,30	5,407			
Academic Self-Efficacy Technical 1	Male	54	11,37	2,350	-0,814	139	0,417
	Female	87	11,68	2,071			
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 1	Male	54	107,11	16,760	-1,445	139	0,151
	Female	87	110,79	13,290			
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 1	Male	53	28,91	5,884	-2,089	136	0,039
	Female	85	30,75	4,461			
Ability Interest 1	Male	54	17,46	4,836	0,803	139	0,424
	Female	87	16,87	3,824			
Psychological State 1	Male	54	12,54	3,684	-1,259	139	0,210
	Female	87	13,26	3,101			
Effort 1	Male	54	8,26	2,850	-1,647	139	0,102
	Female	87	9,09	2,960			
External Factors 1	Male	54	11,39	2,595	-1,255	139	0,212
	Female	87	11,94	2,517			
Module average 1	Male	54	71,76	13,333	-1,902	139	0,059
	Female	87	76,20	13,543			
Module average 2	Male	54	65,94	11,344	-1,178	139	0,241
	Female	87	68,46	12,890			
Language Learning Self-Efficacy 2	Male	52	23,35	5,701	-0,136	137	0,892
	Female	87	23,47	4,990			
Academic Self-Efficacy Total 2	Male	52	99,90	22,260	-0,539	137	0,591
	Female	87	101,46	11,755			
Ability Interest 2	Male	52	17,40	3,917	0,651	137	0,516
	Female	87	17,01	3,120			
Psychological State 2	Male	52	13,23	2,438	-0,246	137	0,806
	Female	87	13,33	2,341			
External Factors 2	Male	52	10,71	2,363	-2,794	137	0,006
	Female	87	11,80	2,150			
Effort 2	Male	52	8,31	2,941	0,455	137	0,65
	Female	87	8,07	3,026			

Research question 11: How well do foreign language learners' language learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy and attributions predict their achievement?

According the analysis there were significant correlations between language learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy and achievement (r = .50 in the first measurement; r = .49 in the second measurement); ASE and achievement (r = .23 in the first measurement; r = .17 in the second measurement); and between attributions and achievement (ability/interest (r=.32); psychological state (r = .30 in the first measurement and ability/ interest (r =.31); psychological state (r=.18) in the second measurement).

Figure 5. Relationships among language learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, attributions, and achievement.

To further analyze the data and find out the predicting power of these variables a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted. In table 30, all attributional factors (ability / interest, external factors, effort, psychological state), language learning self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy were entered to the equation to predict models.

The first model predicting module average included only language learning self-efficacy. According to the table, language learning self-efficacy predicts 17% of the variance and the model has been found to be significant ($p<0.01$).

The second model predicting module average included language learning self-efficacy and external factors variables. These variables predict 23% of module average variance and the model has been found significant (p<0.01).

The third model predicting module average included language learning self-efficacy, external factors and ability interest variables. These variables predict 28% of module average variance and the model has been found significant (p<0.01).

The fourth and the last model predicting module average included language learning self-efficacy, external factors, and ability interest and effort variables. These variables predict 31% of module average variance and the model has been found significant (p<0.01).

Table 30.

Stepwise Regression Analysis for Module Average II

Model	Predictors	*b*	*SE*	B	t	p
a.	Language Learning Self-Efficacy	.414	.180	.960	5.328	.00
b	Language Learning Self-Efficacy	.464	.177	1.075	6.058	.00
	External Factors	.253	.407	1.345	3.303	.00
c.	Language Learning Self-Efficacy	.390	.181	.903	4.977	.00
	External Factors	.290	.401	1,541	3,845	,00
	Ability Interest	.239	.278	.847	3,042	,03
d.	Language Learning Self-Efficacy	.391	.178	.906	5.083	.00
	External Factors	.259	.400	1.376	3.441	.00
	Ability Interest	.254	.275	.899	3.274	.00
	Effort	.175	.299	.711	2.379	.02

a: R^2=.17, F(1,137) =28,384, p<.01

b: R^2=.23, F(2,136) =20,674, p<.01

c: R^2=.28, F(3,135) =17,703, p<.01

d: R^2=.31, F(4,134) =15,151, p<.01

According to the Table 30 among these variables language learning self-efficacy was found to be the best predictor of language achievement, successfully predicting 17% of the total variance on its own R^2=.17, F (1,137) =28,384, p<.01. On the other hand, academic self-efficacy turned out to have no significance in predicting language achievement. It is possibly because of the nature of the measurement of academic self-efficacy. As Bandura suggests, self-efficacy is task and context (domain) specific. He asserts that decontextualized general self-efficacy is generally measured by vaguely

worded items that may tap other constructs than self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Similarly, Bigley et al. (2003) and Choi (2005) suggest that course specific self-efficacy is a better predictor of achievement than general/academic self-efficacy.

The other models (see Table 30) include language learning self-efficacy and (or plus) external factors, ability/interest, and effort with the predicting power in a descending order. This is consistent with the findings of Hsieh (2004). In her research, she found that language learning self-efficacy of the students was the best predictor of the language achievement with the highest effect (β =. 25), followed by ability attribution (β = .19) and stable (dimensional) attribution (β=.12).

The last model of predicting language achievement in this study includes language learning self-efficacy and three types of attributions (external factors, and ability interest and effort) excluding psychological factor from the model.

Effort attribution, in this study, seems to have the least effect in predicting academic achievement (β=.17). However, previous studies (Hashemi & Zahibi, 2011; Lei & Qin, 2009; Pishdhadam & Zahibi, 2011) reported that effort had a strong relationship with achievement. For example, Hashemi & Zahibi (2011) reported that effort and task difficulty successfully predicted total proficiency test scores (R= .61) by explaining 36% of the total variance (Adjusted R^2 = 0.36, p <.05). They stated that effort attribution was the best predictor (Adjusted R^2 = 0.28, p <.05) of achievement indicating that those students who attributed their test outcome to effort received higher scores, and task difficulty was the best predictor of lower grades on the placement tests.

In conclusion, even though the effort attribution was not found to be strongly related to achievement, it should be recognized that effort is as important as having ability in learning a language.

Interpretation of Qualitative Results and Discussions

To consolidate the findings of quantitative research, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to the students. The qualitative data obtained by the questionnaire is given in this section.

The findings of the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed item by item, that is what the respondents said about their (a) improvement in English; (b) proficiency level and its reasons; (c) level of interest in learning English and (d) their self-efficacy level in completing prep school successfully.

Improvement in English

The responses regarding the level of proficiency varied. Many (84%) mentioned that their level increased, some (16%) stated that only in some areas they felt they are more proficient, or they were unsure about their improvement. Some of them specified in which skills they improved, others mentioned the reason for their improvements.

For example,

"I don't think it has improved much. I have learnt new vocabulary and grammar knowledge." (St.1)

"Yes, I've gained confidence in speaking. I've learnt more words. Now I can read, write and speak very simple sentences though." (St.20)

"Yes, now I'm changed. I am more relaxed when I answer the questions and when I meet a tourist I do not hesitate to speak any longer." (St.19)

"Yes, now I comprehend better and know how to study." (St.13)

"Yes, I have learnt many new words. Now I comprehend and understand the conversations better." (St.4)

When we analyze the qualitative and quantitative data of the students who reported above we can see that the two set of data go hand in hand most of the time. In other words, what students stated in the open-ended questionnaire supports their results in the quantitative data. The exam results of the students who reported the above statements did change in the second measurement. In the beginning of the year their results were 51 (St.1), 68 (St4), 50 (St.13), 60 (St.19), and 39 (St.20). In the second measurement, they went up to 65 (St.1),

82 (St4), 72 (St.13), 47 (St.19), and 59 (St.20). Especially, the development of student 13 attracts attention.

As seen above, the students said that they made progress in vocabulary and grammar and they gained confidence in speaking. For example, student 19 stated that s/he is no longer as hesitant as s/he was before. S/he stated that s/he is relaxed when s/he responds to or when s/he meets a tourist s/he is not hesitating to speak. Another student (No: 4) mentioned that s/he has learnt lots of new words and now s/he started to comprehend and understand better than before.

After the detailed scanning of the responds there appeared four categories of reasons of proficiency development.

Reasons related to interest:

The reasons students attributed their improvements varied. Some related their improvement to their interest and attitude towards the lessons.

"Yes, because I love foreign languages, especially English. Also, I come to school every day (St. 3)."

"Yes. I took prep school seriously to improve my English to academic level. And thus, I improved my English." (St.10)

"Yes, because I am learning a completely new language which I've never known before. (St. 4.)."

In the quantitative results the ability-interest factor was found to be the most endorsed factor (M=17, 10) (see Table 16). Similarly, the distribution of the scores in the Attribution Scale of the above-mentioned students shows that the highest scores, among four factors, clustered under the ability/interest attribution (i.e. they rated ability/interest attribution most highly).

Reasons related to hard work:

Some respondents related their improvement to *revision* and *study*, in *class study, listening to the teachers, asking questions* when necessary and *individual effective study* during the lessons.

Yes (it improved). Attendance and study (St.7).

A further explanation was as follows:

Of course, (it improved). We spent a long term in which we intensively were exposed to English and did necessary exercises and activities." (St. 25)

Yet another student related the achievement to the following reasons:

"Yes (it improved). It is because of listening to the teachers during the classes; asking questions when I did not understand; studying hard individually during the lessons." (St.22)

Reasons related to quality of instruction and teachers:

Most of them mentioned the teachers and the quality of the education as the reasons for their progress in English. They stated that the passing mark is 70, which they found high, and thereby their English improved. Besides, they acknowledge their teachers support.

"Yes (it improved) because of teachers in prep school and the instruction." (St.2).

"Yes (it improved) because of quality instruction and since the passing grade was 70 therefore we indispensably made progress." (St.21)

"Yes (it improved) because of good instruction and teachers. Moreover, the topics were clear and comprehensible." (St. 12).

Yes (it improved because of) quality instruction (St. 23).

Reasons related to classes and course books:

Few mentioned the effect of the course books as a reason for their proficiency improvement.

"Yes (it improved). My English level was very low. Due to the course books my learning skills as well as English skills have improved." (St. 9)

In general, the majority of the respondents (84%) stated that their English improved during the year. A small minority (16%) was not sure about their improvement yet they thought that their level slightly improved. The students in the first group who were certain of their progress ascribed this to *teachers* (16%); *course boo*ks and *lessons* (16%); *attendance* (12%); the *quality of instruction* (12%); *interest* in languages (8%); *strategy use* (4%); *asking questions to the teachers* (4%); *listening to teachers carefully during the classes* (4%); *hard work* (4%) and *good attitude* towards the lesson (4%).

Almost all of the above-mentioned attributions were reported in previous studies as well: teacher (Erten, 2015; Özkardeş, 2011; Peacock, 2009), interest/ enjoyment, good strategy (Gobel, 2009; Yılmaz, 2012; Peacock, 2009); quality of instruction (Forsyth et al., 2009); hard work (effort) (Satıcılar, 2006), asking questions, listening to the teachers (Peacock, 2009).

Proficiency Level; Reasons for Their Success and Failure

Students were asked whether they feel or believe that they are more proficient in English or not. Then they were asked to give factors that affected their proficiency or performance in general. For the proficiency, most of them responded positively, some stated they were not sure, and the others stated that they did not believe they got more proficient.

As for the reasons, many of them, i.e. students numbered 1, 2, 6, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 reported "*not studying enough"* as a primary factor that affected their performance in the exams. They mentioned other factors as well. All the factors are given below:

"***not studying enough****, anxiety and studying style" (St.1);*

*"**not studying enough** and the difficulty of the exams (St.6)";*

*"**not studying enough**, studying style, and difficulty of some exams (St.12; St.17)";*

*"**not studying regularly** (St. 16)";*

*"Definitely **not studying enough** because what have been taught can easily be forgotten if they are not revised. Just listening in the class is not enough. Therefore, we should also study outside the class, read books and repeat (St.14)."*

*"**Studying less**, lack of working hours, occasional loss of motivation (St. 15)."*

We can assume that the above-mentioned sentences are the reasons of those students who are not satisfied with their results, or rather they might be considered as reasons for failure. In similar vein, the successful students showed effort, not lack of effort, as the reasons for their success.

*"**Self-study**, listening to the teacher, studying style and environment" (St.21)*

*"**Effective study**, learning well during the lessons (St. 22)*

*"The reason for success is .... and **hard work**" (St. 10)*

Others referred to different factors:

"It is the studying style that affects the performance in the exam most. Of course, the other factor is the difficulty of the exam" (St. 25).

"Lack of study period and distraction" (St24)

"I am an anxious person and this affects my achievement adversely" (St.8)

"I attend classes regularly; listen to the teacher during the classes and look up for new word from the dictionary" (St.3)

"I am a hardworking student, but as I am stressed during the exams my grades are affected negatively." (St. 19)

We can see that teachers' attitudes (during the exam or in general) can also affect student's performance.

A rather interesting respond came from a student numbered 11:

"I believe that when I study hard I can get the grade I want, and I did study hard for the last exam. But because of the attitude of my teacher during the exam, I lost concentration."

"My success in the exam is closely related to the lessons: when the lessons are enjoyable, I can succeed easily in the exams, but with the oppressive teachers I have difficulties and therefore I fail." (St. 4)

Only one student mentioned ability in particular language aptitude.

"The reasons of success are language aptitude and hard work. The reason for failure is belief, if a person sees and limits herself or himself as incompetent of learning s/he cannot learn." (St.10).

In sum, students attributed their performance in the exams to different factors. The most reported factors were found to be effort, which is not studying enough (48%), task difficulty (20%) and studying style (20%). Other reasons are: argument with teachers during the exam, anxiety, time limit, language aptitude, interest, repetition, teachers' teaching methods, reading outside the classroom, motivation, stress during the exams, teacher support, and distraction.

A quite interesting finding was that the quantitative data could not establish a relationship between effort and language achievement (see Tables 23; 23) whereas in the qualitative data effort attribution was the most mentioned reason for achievement. Almost the half of

the respondents (48%) referred to effort attribution in open-ended questionnaire. However, the stepwise regression analysis for achievement revealed that effort attribution separately could account for only %3 of the overall achievement (see Table 30).

Level of Interest in Learning English

Almost all of the students stated that their interest in learning English increased, only a few of them claimed the opposite. They related interest in learning English to their teachers, the sense of achievement and understanding the nature of English. In other words, they defined it as *"as I saw I was succeeding I started to like it more*". Some stated that they understood that actually the structure or nature of English is not as complicated as it seemed to be. Those who reported their interest did not increase stated that they felt as if they were studying only for the exams and their continuous failure in the exams made them de-motivated.

The answers fall under three groups.

Group 1: The first group of answers state that they did not internalize English; they stated that they studied just to pass the exams.

"No, because I feel as if I study only for the exams." (St. 1)

"Since I have difficulties (in English) *I do not think my interest increased much. I feel as if I study only for the exams." (St. 17)*

It seems like these students did not enjoy learning, instead they reported that they had test-oriented learning. Lei & Qin (2009) also found that lack of confidence, lack of practical use and test-oriented learning accounted significantly for the variance of English language achievement.

Group 2: Answers in this group are generally about self-efficacy and interest since they report that as they understood they were able to succeed, they started to like English more.

"Yes, as I saw I succeeded, I liked English more." (St.6)

"As I began to know more, I wanted to learn more." (St.9)

"The joy of learning a new language" (St.13)

"I understood that English is not as difficult and complex as it is thought to be."(St.15)

"As my knowledge of English increased, my desire for learning it increased gradually" (St.20)

"Because it is a new language." (St. 24)

According to the findings of the quantitative results the efficacy levels, both English and academic self-efficacy scores, showed a decline at the end of the year. Accordingly, the above-mentioned responds contradict with the results of the quantitative results in general. What is more, when we analyze the data of each respondent separately, their quantitative data and qualitative data do not correspond with each other except student 24 whose language learning self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy scores had both increased by the end of the year (LLSE1=18 – LLSE2=23; ASE1=106 - ASE2=117). However, students 15 and 20 also showed an increase in ASE scores (St.15: 95-100; St. 20: 105-112). Similar attributions were reported in Yılmaz (2012). The participants mentioned that sense of achievement made them more successful stating that "Feeling successful in reading adds to my interest in reading" and "grades influence the way I read."

Group 3: *Intrinsic motivation/ importance of English*

The role of intrinsic motivation has long been emphasized (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 2000; Skehan, 1989). The participants related their belief about the value learning English to the practical use in daily life.

"I have become more aware of the importance of English in business life." (St.8)

"It (my interest) increased due to other circumstances I faced outside the school" (St.11)

"The admiration of the people who don't know English when I talk to a tourist proved how English is useful." (St. 18)

Self-Efficacy Level in Completing Prep School Successfully

In response to the question regarding their completion of the course, all of the students, except those who stated that they felt as if they were studying only for the exam answered positively. They believed that they would be successful in prep school.

Based on the overall results of the qualitative data, we can conclude that those students who reported their dissatisfaction with their grades (Sts. 13, 5, 17) and those who were not interested in learning English indicated low self-efficacy (Sts. 1 and 17) in

completing the course successfully. All these students failed at the end of the year and had to take summer courses. This, in turn, can refer to the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Overview of the Study

The objective of the present study was to investigate the relationship among three self-beliefs – attribution, language learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy - and achievement in a Turkish EFL context. It also aimed to examine how well the students' self-beliefs can predict their achievement. The participants were learners of English as a foreign language at a tertiary level preparatory school of different majors in a Turkish university in Istanbul.

The data collection procedure started before the first exit exam which students took in the first semester and lasted a whole academic year. The academic year of the prep school is divided into four modules (levels). In the end of each module students take an exit exam which comprises 40% of their overall grade for that module. The rest 60% is generated from the three achievement exams which they take every two weeks. So, the most important exams in terms of contribution to their success are the exit exams. Therefore, it was decided to carry out the measurement before and after the exit exam. Since self-efficacy belief needs to be measured before the target task (in this case before the exam) (Bandura, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000), the students filled out the self-efficacy scales before the first exit exam. On the other hand, attribution scales should be filled out after the task is completed and students have learnt their grades. Accordingly, the second measurement was conducted at the end of the year before and after the fourth exit exam.

Thus, the Language Learning Self-Efficacy Scale (adapted from the MSLQ of Pintrich et al., 1991) and The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (adapted from Owen & Froman, 1988) were distributed before the first exit exam. After the results were announced to the students, they filled out The Attribution Scale (developed from Peacock (2009) and Gobel (2011). The same procedure was repeated at the end of the year before and after the fourth exit exam. So, the data was collected in four stages. The study started with 344 students

and in each stage, there was attrition in the number of participants due to several reasons explained previously in Chapter III (Data Collection Procedure). Finally, a total of 141 students formed the participants of the study.

At the end of the year, in order to gain insight into the beliefs of the students and to get more data, a structured open-ended questionnaire was distributed to 25 randomly-selected students.

The findings of the quantitative and qualitative data were used to test out the main hypotheses put forward in the beginning of the research. The hypotheses predicted that there would be positive correlations among language-learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, attributions and achievement. The main hypotheses of the study were (a) language learning self-efficacy would be positively related to language achievement (b) academic self-efficacy would be positively related to language achievement (c) language learning self-efficacy would have a stronger relationship with achievement than academic self-efficacy (d) personal and controllable attributions would be positively related to language achievement (e) all variables would show difference depending on gender. Based on these hypotheses, research questions were developed respectively and were answered. It also checked the predictive power of students' self-beliefs, i.e. how well they can predict the language learning achievement.

The analysis of the relevant research questions will be outlined in this section one by one. First of all, to check the relationship between language learning self–efficacy and achievement, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted and a positive significant correlation was found between self-efficacy belief and students' achievement in the first module ($r=.50$, $p<0.01$) and the correlation was maintained in the end of the year ($r=.41$, $p<0.01$) though it slightly declined.

Next, the level of the correlation between academic self-efficacy and achievement was checked. Contrary to many previous studies (Bandura, 1997; Behjoo & Sarıçoban, 2016; Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1995; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994), no relationship was found in the beginning of the year. Only in the second measurement, a low-level significant correlation was found ($r=.17$, $p<0.05$) between academic self-efficacy and achievement. This verifies the hypothesis (c) which suggested that language self-efficacy would have stronger correlation with achievement. This is because self-efficacy is task and domain specific (Bandura, 1997). Together with other self- beliefs (self-concept) Choi (2005)

examined the relationship of three types of self-efficacy (general self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy and course specific self-efficacy) and achievement and found that only the course specific-self efficacy had a significant relationship (r = .32) with achievement.

The findings of the study related to attribution and achievement were in line with the previous studies which also stated that ability was strongly related to achievement (Hashemi & Zahibi, 2011; Hsieh, 2004; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Language learning achievement in this study was mildly and positively correlated with ability/interest (r=.31, p<0.01). Another attribution factor which was related to achievement was psychological state (r=.18, p<0.05).

Contrary to expectation, the mostly reported factor as having strong relationship with achievement – effort- had no correlation with achievement in the Pearson correlation analysis. But the results of the qualitative data showed that most of the students attributed their test results to effort, which means that students were aware of the importance of effort. The effort attribution was described as *hard work* and *not studying enough/lack of* effort which means that both success and failure were ascribed to effort.

Concerning the relationship among three variables, it can be concluded that language learning self-efficacy was closely related to all attributional factors. Among them the ability/interest attribution was strongly correlated with language learning self-efficacy (r = .37 in the first time; r = .34) which is consistent with the previous studies. But academic-self efficacy showed a correlation only with one factor each time, which was effort attribution in the first measurement and external factors in the second measurement.

Research question 10 examined the difference in terms of the gender variable. The t-test results (see Table 29) indicated that girls' language learning self-efficacy as well as academic self-efficacy levels were higher than boys' self-efficacy levels. However, the current study does not support the data that females are more internal. The findings showed that females (M= 11.80) are more likely to make more external attributions than males (M= 10.71) (t (137) =2.794, p<0.05). Still, in order to make it clear, it should be clarified whether they attributed success or failure to external factors. In terms of achievement, no significant difference was found between the achievement level of the female and male students.

The last question focused on the predictive power of the above-mentioned three self-beliefs. Among those variables, language learning self-efficacy was found to be the best

predictor of language achievement, successfully predicting 17% of the total variance on its own R^2=.17, F (1,137) =28,384, p<.01. Academic self-efficacy was found to have no predicting power in language learning achievement. It is because of the nature of the measurement of academic self-efficacy

The models of predicting language learning achievement included language learning self-efficacy, external factors, ability/interest and effort. Language learning self-efficacy was the strongest predictor (β= .41) and the effort attribution was the weakest predictor (β=.17) of language achievement.

However, in the open-ended questionnaire, students attributed their performance in the exams to different factors. The most reported factors were lack of effort that is not studying enough (48%), task difficulty (20%), and studying style (20%). Other reasons are: argument with teachers during the exam, anxiety, time limit, language aptitude, interest, repetition, teachers' teaching methods, reading outside the classroom, motivation, stress during the exams, teacher support, test-oriented learning and distraction.

Pedagogical Implications

It can be said that the essential contribution of the present study is that it is the first study in a Turkish EFL context which examined the relationship among language learning self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, attribution, and achievement. In the previous Turkish research, each of the self-beliefs have been studied separately. But this is the first research which dealt with the three self-beliefs all together.

Since self-efficacy is one of the most influential factors in learning a foreign language, and it was found to be the strongest predictor of achievement in the present study, it is very important for the teachers to help students to develop their self-efficacy. Teachers can enhance the level of self-efficacy by several ways. As personal accomplishment or mastery experience is the most influential source of self-efficacy (Bandura 1997) to develop students' performance accomplishment is one way of increasing self-efficacy. By giving students tasks that they can perform provides them opportunity to build successful experiences (Dörnyei, 2001). A sense of success leads to achievement as reported by students in the present study that the sense of success made them more interested in the subject and achieve more.

Another way of boosting students' self-efficacy level is by verbal persuasion, which is one of the four sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Positive feedback and encouragement can enhance students' self-efficacy. Pajares (1997) describes teachers as important persuaders who cultivate beliefs in their capabilities, and at the same time persuading that the success is attainable by exerting more effort. Similarly, Littlewood (1999) states that teachers should make students aware that innate ability does not determine how much success a person can achieve, with effort and self-discipline, everyone can achieve his or her goals, and failure can be retrieved by making more effort.

In addition, how students make attributions for their performance (success or failure) may influence how they approach future tasks. If the failure is attributed to lack of effort rather than lack of ability, student's self-efficacy does not suffer (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008).

Weiner (1992) suggests that once attributions are identified, they can be modified. These modifications may affect the action-behavior. Dörnyei (2001) recommends encouraging students' effort attributions and diminishing or (de–emphasizing) ability attributions, adding that everyone has an equal chance with the former but not the latter. He suggests giving effort feedback and modelling the connection between effort and outcome. Bruning et al. (2004) suggest discussing the effects of different attributions with students, pointing out that success and failure have alternative causes, and helping students focus on controllable attributions (p. 125). Besides, teachers may provide special educational interventions (e.g. treatment sessions towards low achievers) to change students' attributions. Noel et al. (1987) posit that attributional retraining programs that shift attributions away from self-serving attributions, (i.e. external and uncontrollable attributions) to performance-facilitation attributions (such as effort, ability, or interest) may improve achievement.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

The data collected in the study is limited to the size of the sample group. Therefore, it may not represent the entire Turkish EFL context. The number of institutions can be increased in future studies. Also, teacher's views about the attributions of the students can be combined with students' replies. Finally, I believe that more in-depth students' interviews would give an insight into self-beliefs.

The study has also highlighted many possibilities and fields of further research. A comprehensive follow-up study could be carried out by dividing students into successful and unsuccessful groups.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Language Learning Self-Efficacy Scale
Dear Participant,

The following questionnaire has been designed to determine your self-efficacy level regarding learning English. Please read each item carefully and answer each of them. Your responses will not be graded and your information will be kept confidential. Thank you.

A. Demographic Information

1. Name, surname: _____

2. Gender: Male Female 3. Age: a) 17-20 b) 21-25 c) 26+

4. Major (department):_____

5. Level: _____ (e.g. A1, A2, B1 or B2)

B. Please, read each item carefully and indicate the extent to which the statement describes you in the column provided next to each statement: **(1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.** **Mark EACH of the ITEMS**		**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
1.	I believe I will receive an excellent end-of-year grade in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I'm confident I can learn the basic concepts taught in this course.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor in this course.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this course.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I expect to pass this class.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Considering the difficulty of this course, the teacher, and my skills, I think I will be successful in this class.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2: Academic Self-Efficacy Scale

Dear Participant, **how much confidence do you have about doing each of the behaviors** listed below? Read each item carefully and circle the number that best represents you. ***(1)Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree*** **Mark EACH of the ITEMS**		**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
1.	Taking well-organized notes during a lecture.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Participating in a class discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Answering a question in a large class.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Answering a question in a small class.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Taking "objective" tests (multiple-choice, T-F, matching)	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Taking essay tests.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Writing a high quality term paper.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Listening carefully during a lecture on a difficult topic.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Tutoring another student.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Explaining a concept to another student.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Asking a professor in class to review a concept you don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Earning good marks in most courses.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Studying enough to understand content thoroughly.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Running for student government office.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Participating in extracurricular events (sports, clubs).	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Making professors respect you.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Attending class regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Attending class consistently in a dull course.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Making a professor think you're paying attention in class.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Understanding most ideas you read in your texts.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Understanding most ideas presented in class.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Using a computer.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Talking to a professor privately to get to know him or her.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Relating course content to material in other courses.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Challenging a professor's opinion in class.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Making good use of the library.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Getting good grades.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Spreading out studying instead of cramming*.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Understanding difficult passages in textbooks.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Mastering content in a course you're not interested in.	1	2	3	4	5

***to cram-** learn a lot of of facts in a short time, especially for examination: cram for a chemistry test

Appendix 3: Language Learning Attribution Scale

The items below concern your opinion of the causes of your performance. For each of the items give a rating what degree you agree or disagree with the items.

1. What is your Achievement II (held on May 15) exam result?

a) 0-50 b) 50-59 c) 60-69 d) 70-79 e) 80-89 f) 90 -100

2. Are you satisfied with your grade? Yes ☐ No ☐

	The grade I got on this exam was high/low because (Mark EACH of the ITEMS)	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
1.	I focused on English outside school					
2.	I was anxious during the exam					
3.	I did not enjoy English					
4.	My teacher was a good teacher					
5.	My teacher was biased against me					
6.	I competed hard with my classmates					
7.	I was confident during the exam					
8.	My exam strategies were poor					
9.	I did not study hard					
10.	I revised a lot for the exam					
11.	I am not good at English					
12.	My health was not good.					
13.	I was careless during the exam					
14.	I have a talent for languages					
15.	I was highly motivated.					

Appendix 4: Turkish Version of Language Learning Self-Efficacy Scale

İngilizce Dersi Öz-Yeterlilik Ölçeği

Değerli katılımcı,

Aşağıdaki anket İngilizce öğrenme konusundaki öz-yeterliliğinizi belirlemek üzere geliştirilmiştir. Lütfen her bir maddeyi dikkatlice okuyup cevap veriniz. Cevaplarınız herhangi bir şekilde notlandırılmayacaktır ve bilgileriniz gizli kalacaktır. Katkılarınızdan dolayı teşekkür ederim.

Öğr. Gör. Jiydegul ALYMIDIN KYZY

A. Kişisel Bilgiler

1. **Adı / Soyadı**: _____
2. **Cinsiyet:** Erkek ☐ Bayan ☐ **3. Yaş: a) 17-20 b)21-25 c)26+**
4. **Bölümünüz:**_____
5. **İngilizce Seviyeniz**: _____ (örnek; A1, A2, B1 or B2)
6. **Önceden İngilizce dersleri aldınız mı?** Evet ☐ Hayır ☐
7. **Cevabınız "Evet" ise, kaç yıldır İngilizce dersleri alıyorsunuz** _____
8. **Mezun olduğunuz lise türü: Özel** ☐ **Devlet** ☐

a) Düz b) Anadolu d) Fen e) Meslek d) Diğer_____

B. Sayın Katılımcı, her bir maddeyi okuyun ve sizi en iyi tanımlayan ifadeyi seçerek işaretleyiniz: (1) hiç katılmıyorum, (2) katılmıyorum, (3) kararsızım, (4) katılıyorum, (5) tamamen katılıyorum.		**Hiç katılmıyorum**	**Katılmıyorum**	**Kararsızım**	**Katılıyorum**	**Tamamen Katılıyorum**
1	Hazırlık sınıfında sene sonunda çok iyi bir not alacağıma inanıyorum.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2	İngilizce metinlerden, en zor olanını anlayacağımdan eminim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3	İngilizcedeki temel kavramları öğrenebileceğimden eminim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4	İngilizcedeki en karmaşık konuyu anlayabileceğimden eminim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5	Ödevlerde ve sınavlarda başarılı olacağımdan eminim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6	Hazırlık sınıfını geçeceğimi düşünüyorum.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7	İngilizce dersinde öğretilen becerileri tam olarak öğrenebileceğimden eminim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8	İngilizcenin zorluğunu, öğretmenini ve kendi becerilerimi dikkate alarak, bu derste başarılı olacağımı düşünüyorum.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Appendix 5: Turkish Version of Academic Self-Efficacy Scale

Akademik Öz-Yeterlik Ölçeği

A. Adınız, soyadınız: _____ **B. Sınıf/Seviyeniz: _____**

Sayın Katılımcı, aşağıdaki verilen ifadelere katılma durumuna göre; (1) hiç katılmıyorum, (2) katılmıyorum, (3) kararsızım, (4) katılıyorum, (5) tamamen katılıyorum seçenekleri arasından size uygun olanını seçerek işaretleyiniz.		**Hiç katılmıyorum**	**Katılmıyorum**	**Kararsızım**	**Katılıyorum**	**Tamamen Katılıyorum**
1.	Ders sırasında düzenli not tutarım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2.	Sınıf tartışmalarına katılırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3.	Kalabalık bir sınıfta bir soruyu cevaplayabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4.	Az öğrencinin olduğu bir sınıfta bir soruyu cevaplayabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5.	Objektif testler (çoktan seçmeli, doğru-yanlış, karşılaştırmalı vb.) çözerim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6.	Deneme soruları çözerim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7.	Yüksek nitelikli bir dönem ödevi yazabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8.	Ders esnasında zor bir konuyu dikkatlice dinleyebilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9.	Bir başka öğrenciye ders verebilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10	Bir kavramı diğer bir öğrenciye anlatabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11	Sınıfta anlamadığım bir kavramı öğretim elemanından tekrar anlatılmasını isteyebilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12.	Birçok dersten çok iyi notları alırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13.	İçeriği tamamen anlamak için yeterince çalışırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14.	Öğrenci derneğinde görev alırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
15.	Ders dışı faaliyetlerde (spor, kulüpler vb.) yer alırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16.	Öğretim elemanlarının bana saygı duymalarını sağlarım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17.	Derslere düzenli olarak katılırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
18.	Sıkıcı derslerde sürekli olarak derse katılabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
19.	Bir öğretim elemanının derse dikkat ettiğimi düşünmesini sağlayabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
20.	Metinde okuduğum fikirlerin çoğunu anlayabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
21.	Sınıfta sunulan fikirlerin çoğunu anlayabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
22.	Bilgisayar kullanabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
23.	Bir öğretim elemanını tanımak için onunla özel olarak konuşabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
24.	Ders içeriğini diğer derslerin materyalleriyle ilişkilendirebilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
25.	Sınıfta bir öğretim elemanının düşüncesini yargılayabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
26.	Kütüphaneyi güzel kullanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
27.	Sınavlardan güzel notlar alırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
28.	Dersleri yoğun bir şekilde işlemek yerine yayarak çalışırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
29.	Metin kitaplarındaki zor parçaları anlayabilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
30	İlgilenmediğim bir dersin de içeriğine hâkim olurum.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Appendix 6: English Version of Language Learning Attribution Scale
Dil Öğrenme Nedensellik Yükleme Anketi

Aşağıda sınav sonucunuzu etkileyen nedenler verilmiştir. Bu nedenlere ne derece katılıp katılmadığınızı değerlendiriniz. Lütfen **HER BİR maddeyi** işaretleyiniz.

1. 15 Mayıs'ta girdiğiniz Achievement II sınav sonucunuz nedir? _____

a) 0-50 b) 50-59 c) 60-69 d) 70-79 e)80-89 f) 90 -100

3. Sınav sonucunuzdan memnun musunuz? Evet ☐ Hayır ☐

	Sınavda aldığım not aşağıdaki nedenlere bağlıdır.	**Kesinlikle katılmıyorum**	**Katılmıyorum**	**Kararsızım**	**Katılıyorum**	**Kesinlikle katılıyorum**
1.	Ders dışında da İngilizceye odaklandım.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Sınavda gergindim.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	İngilizceyi sevmiyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Öğretmenim iyiydi.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Öğretmenim bana karşı önyargılıydı.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Sınıf arkadaşlarımla rekabet içindeydim.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Sınav esnasında kendimden emindim.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Çalışma stratejilerim yetersizdi.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Az çalıştım.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Sınav için çok tekrar yaptım.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	İngilizcede iyi değilim.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Sağlığım iyi değildi.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Sınavda dikkatsizdim.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Dil öğrenmeye yeteneğim var.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	İngilizceye karşı motivasyonum yüksekti.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 7: Open-Ended Questionnaire
(Turkish version)

Ad, soyad: **Sınıf:**

Soru 1. Hazırlık okuluna ilk geldiğinizden bu yana İngilizce becerileriniz geliştiğiniz düşünüyor musunuz?

_____
_____

Evet ise, bunun nedenleri sizce nelerdir? Açıklayınız:

_____
_____

Hayır ise nedenlerini açıklayınız:

_____
_____

Soru 2. Kendinizi İngilizcede daha yeterli buluyor musunuz? _____

Buna nelerin katkı sağladığını düşünüyorsunuz? Açıklayınız:

_____
_____

Soru 3: Sınavdaki/İngilizcedeki başarı veya başarısızlığınız etkileyen nedenler sizce nelerdir? (Mesela, Çok çalışma/yeterince çalışamama, çalışma stiliniz, sınavın zor/kolay olması, Öğretmen desteği, kitabı anlamama vs….)

_____
_____

Soru 4: İngilizceye olan ilginiz arttı mı? _____

Bunun nedenleri nelerdir?

_____
_____

Soru 5: Hazırlığı başarılı şekilde tamamlayacağınıza inanıyor musunuz? _____

Appendix 8: Open-Ended Questionnaire

Name, surname: **Group:**

Question 1. Do you think your English now has improved compared to the beginning of the year?

_____

_____

If yes, what do you think the reasons are for this? Please explain:

_____

_____

If not, explain he reasons:

_____

_____

Question 2. Do you find yourself efficacious in English? _____

What do you think contributed to this? Please explain:

_____

_____

Question 3: What do you think the causes that affect your success or failure in English (in the English exams)? (E.g. studying a lot/not studying enough, studying style, difficulty of tests, teacher support, and difficulty of course books etc.)

_____

_____

Question 4: Has your interest in English improved? _____

What do you think the reasons are?

_____

_____

Question 5: Do you believe that you will complete prep school successfully? _____