



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' FAILURE
ATTRIBUTIONS AND METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS IN AN
EFL CONTEXT**

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ÖZ

İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerinin devlet okullarında seneler boyunca verilen dil eğitimine rağmen dil yeterliliklerini geliştirmek konusunda zorlandıkları belirlenmiştir. Başarısızlıklarına anlam vermeye çalışan öğrencilerin ise başarı atıflarında bulundukları görülmektedir. Başarı atıfları öğrencinin başarı beklentisi, devamlılık, his ve motivasyonunu belirlediği için eğitim süreci içerisinde önemli yer tutmaktadır. Dil öğrenim sürecini etkileyen ve başarıyı tetikleyen bir diğer etken üstbilişsel farkındalık düzeyidir. Söz konusu vaka çalışması devlet okullarında İngilizce öğrenen 218 Türk lise öğrencisi ile yabancı dil öğrencilerinin başarısızlık atıflarını, üstbilişsel farkındalık düzeylerini ve bu iki etken arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek amacıyla yürütülmüştür. Karma yöntem araştırması kapsamında Schraw ve Dennison’un (1994) oluşturduğu Üstbilişsel Farkındalık Envanteri ve Lefcourt, Von Bayer, Ware ve Cox (1979) tarafından geliştirilen Çok Boyutlu Nedensel Yükleme Ölçeği Türkçeye uyarlandıktan sonra uygulanmıştır. Ayrıca incelenen vaka içerisinden belirlenen 24 öğrenci ile Türk devlet okullarında verilen İngilizce öğretimi hakkında yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde tek-yönlü ANOVA, t-testi ve Pearson korelasyon testinin yanı

sıra, betimsel istatistiklerden faydalanılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar doğrultusunda Türk öğrencilerinin üstbilişsel farkındalık düzeylerinin yüksek olduğu ve dil öğrenimindeki başarısızlıklarını geleneksel öğretim yöntemleri ve İngilizcenin Türkiye’deki kısıtlı kullanım alanından kaynaklanan motivasyon eksikliğinin doğurduğu emek sarf etmeme eğilimiyle açıkladıkları belirlenmiştir. Üstbilişsel farkındalık düzeyleri ve başarı atıfları arasında ters orantılı zayıf bir ilişki gözlemlenmiştir.



Anahtar Kelimeler : Nedensellik Yükleme Kuramı, Üstbilişsel Farkındalık, İngilizce Öğretimi, Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce

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(M.A. Thesis)

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ABSTRACT

Language learners in Turkey fail in learning English and struggle to improve their language proficiency despite the many years of language instruction in state schools. The attempt to make sense of failure leads language learners to make achievement attributions. Attributions take an important place in the educational context, as they determine future expectancy for success, emotions, task persistence, and motivation in the language learning process. Another component which exerts an impact on successful learning is metacognitive awareness which is an acknowledged prerequisite for language performance. This case study among 218 Turkish EFL learners in an upper secondary state school aims to reveal language learners failure attributions, their metacognitive awareness levels and the relation between both concepts. In the scope of the mixed-method design, Schraw and Dennison's (1994) Metacognitive Awareness Inventory and Lefcourt, Von Baeyer, Ware and Cox's Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale (1979) were translated into and applied in Turkish. In addition, semi-structured interviews about learning English in Turkish state schools were conducted among 24 learners of English within the same state school. Descriptive statistics, t-test, one-Way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were run for data analysis. Research results indicate that Turkish language learners have high metacognitive awareness levels and explain their failure in

learning English with their lack of effort which arises from their low motivation to engage with a foreign language in an EFL context and the traditional language classroom in state schools. A weak negative correlation was identified among achievement attributions and metacognitive awareness levels.



Keywords : Attribution Theory, Metacognitive Awareness, English Language Teaching, English as a Foreign Language

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Supervisor : Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kemal Sinan ÖZMEN

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALES	Akademik Personel ve Lisansüstü Eğitimi Giriş Sınavı (Graduate Education Entrance Examination)
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AYT	Alan Yeterlilik Sınavı
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELP	European Language Portfolio
EPI	English Proficiency Index
ESL	English as a Second Language
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CoHe	Council of Higher Education (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu)
KPSS	Kamu Personali Seçme Sınavı (Public Personnel Selection Examination)
LYS	Lisans Yerleştirme Sınavı (Undergraduate Placement Exam)
MoNE	Ministry of Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ÖSYM	Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi (Evaluation, Selection and Placement Center)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TEOG	Temel Eğitimden Ortaöğretime Geçiş (Transition from Primary to Secondary Education)
TEPAV	Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey)
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TSI	Turkish Statistical Institute
TYT	Temel Yeterlilik Testi
YDS	Yabancı Dil Bilgisi Seviye Tespit Sınavı (Language Proficiency Test)
YGS	Yükseköğretime Geçiş Sınavı (Higher Education Exam)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Language classrooms can be the stage for two occurrences: success or failure. Students can either leave the classroom with high or low grades, and a sense of achievement or with a sense of dissatisfaction. The common ground of both success and failure is that they might be seen as indicators for whether learning has taken place or not. Learning results on the other hand is amongst others influenced by attributions and metacognition (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Weiner, 1986). What is important in this context is not only the results students get in terms of grades; what really matters is how students make sense of their experiences in the classroom and how they explain achievement or the lack of it. Schunk, Meece, and Pintrich (2014) emphasize that individuals are in a search to understand both their environment and themselves. In other words, people strive to uncover why certain events occurred and why people behaved the way they did. Thus, the same is valid for the classroom context, and the students' quest to make sense of their achievement situation. This is of primary importance because as Weiner (1986) states, attributions determine individuals' motivation and expectancy of goal attainment. Success or failure can be explained by each individual differently. The causes they attribute their performance to can vary. However, causes individuals attribute their success and failure to dominate their feeling of control or helplessness (Eiser, 1980; Weiner, 1986). As Weiner (1986) summarizes, students have different perceptions of the reasons for their success and failure. Depending on which reason they attribute their achievement to, students' expectancy for success and failure is determined which on the other hand influences the learning behavior of students. This shows that

attributions influence motivation, performance in the future tasks and the emotions related to these. In other words, if an individual believes that a success situation can be described with effort, it is most likely that success will be anticipated in another attempt to master the task in question. On the other hand, if a failure experience is attributed to the lack of ability, individuals might tend not to attempt the same task again. Therefore attributions are ascribed an essential impact on motivation in language learning (Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001). As Schunk, Meece and Pintrich (2014) put it, motivation is prevalent in all types of student activities. Only if students are motivated they show interest, work attentively, feel more self-confident, and show high persistence and demonstrate a good performance. Motivation determines which behavior is chosen to be demonstrated, the latency of behavior or in other words the time which passes until an activity is initiated, and the intensity and persistence of behavior (Graham & Weiner, 1996). In order to get students to succeed and to work toward their goals, it is necessary to establish and maintain students' motivation. This is also valid for second and foreign languages (Dörnyei, 2003). Motivation is accepted as the initiator of language learning, which is also required to sustain the learning process. In addition, motivation also determines the range of learning methods used and effort invested which is also related to metacognitive awareness (Schunk et al., 2014). To conclude, attributions influence learning results in form of facilitating or impeding improvement in relation to the preferred explanations for previous success or failure outcomes.

The history of attribution theory goes back to the study of person perception in social psychology. In this vocational field, the focus is on what people think of and which traits they attribute to each other. By doing so, people are trying to explain their social environment by understanding the reason of other's behaviors. In literature, this is also referred to as naïve psychology (Heider, 1958). The idea behind this concept is that people are the creators of their own theories which they then make use of to understand the causes of human behavior. Heider (1958) introduced a change in focus by indicating that people strive to make sense of their surrounding world by understanding the causes of events distancing oneself from explaining other's behaviors. In this context, he emphasizes that people can either attempt to explain the underlying causes of the events in their environment by ascribing these to the

performer of an action or to external sources which performers have no influence on. Thus, he distinguishes between internal and external factors. According to Heider, people's perceptions of events are more decisive on human behavior than the events themselves (Gray, 2005). In other words, how students experience and perceive events, such as achievement outcomes plays an essential role.

Based on Heider's ideas, theories like that of Jones and Davis (1965) and Kelley (1973) which tried to explain others behaviors emerged. Rotter (1966) also contributed to this field by accentuating that the expectancy of reinforcement changes in terms of whether individuals identify their actions as emerging from their behavior or from factors not within their control. With the categorization of individuals into internals and externals, research in terms of the structure of causality increased (Weiner, 1986). It was Weiner who provided attribution theory with its current shape. His work in this field showed that individuals attribute different causes to the events in their lives, so that nowadays attribution theory is concerned with individuals' perceptions about the causes of their own behavior. Weiner paved the way for research on attributions for success and failure in achievement behavior. Later on, Weiner stated ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck as the achievement attributions for success and failure. Over time, he approached these attributions in terms of having different causal dimensions which are three in total: locus of control, stability, and controllability. Thus, the attributions of failure and success are explained along these causal dimensions. Williams, Burden, Poulet, and Maun (2004) point out that it was Weiner's categorization of causes into dimensions that led to systematic research in the field of attributions. Graham (1991) who surveyed the contents of the Journal of Educational Psychology encompassing the timespan from 1979 to 1988 concludes that it is Weiner's attribution theory which has established itself in the field of educational research. To summarize, as Weiner (1972) puts it, attribution theory carries significant importance within education. In achievement-related tasks, attributions impact the decision to initiate an action, the intensity of performance, and task persistence. As a whole, attributions and their implications determine success or failure experiences in educational contexts.

Qualitative studies conducted on possible causes for success or failure extended the range of explanations for achievement introduced by Weiner which centered around

ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. Williams and Burden (1999, Williams et al., 2004) were the leading figures in terms of revealing additional attributions for success and failure, while emphasizing the limited range of attributions proposed by Weiner (Williams et al., 2001). Tse (2000), and Gobel and Mori (2007) are also among the researchers whose early studies are referred to in attribution research. Other researchers also focused on attributional responses; so that in addition to the attributions introduced by Weiner, teacher and family support, peers, positive classroom environment, interest, poor teaching, positive/negative attitude, (insufficient) motivation to learn, (lack of) revision/practice, strategy, inadequate teaching methods, poor comprehension, distraction and mixed level-classes (Tse, 2000; Williams & Burden, 1999; Williams et al., 2001; Williams et al., 2004) were identified as possible attributions for both failure and success. In Williams' (Williams et al., 2004) study the most influential causes for both success and failure were effort, strategy, ability, task, teacher, interest and peers. Thus, among the variety of attributions, there are some which seem to be stronger predictors of both success and failure. Furthermore, it can be seen that attributions to both internal and external causes are present among research outcomes.

What Mori (2009) criticizes about qualitative studies on attributions is that although they portray the high quantity of possible attributions, results are not consistent so that concrete implications cannot be formulated. In other words, Mori emphasizes the need to conduct quantitative studies in order to have the opportunity to compare the results of the studies related to attributions. One of the early studies conducted by Vispoel and Austin (1991) showed that students' attributions of success and failure to ability, effort, strategy, interest, task difficulty, luck, family influence, and teacher influence change based on the subjects and even the task to be mastered within one subject. This strengthens the need to conduct research which focuses on predetermined categories of attributions in order to be able to compare attributions among subjects and tasks more effectively. The shift in attribution research was from identifying attributions only to relating them to other variables.

The concept of metacognition which was first coined by Flavell in 1976 was immediately linked to learning. Thus, Brown (1987) describes the aim of metacognition as directing and controlling learning (as cited in Larkin, 2009). This is

not surprising considering the components and ascribed role of metacognition. Brown enlarged Flavell's concept of metacognition by emphasizing that next to metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive regulation is also an essential component of metacognition (Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, & Campione, 1982). This attempt was welcomed by many researchers (Schraw, 1998; Schraw & Moshman, 1995). Over time, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, the components of metacognition were elaborated on and different theoretical models of metacognition emerged. Thus, metacognitive knowledge which represents people's knowledge of themselves was subdivided into declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge (Schraw, 1998; Schraw & Moshman, 1995). According to Larkin (2009), this component of metacognition suffices to link this concept with theories of knowledge, in other words with learning. Metacognitive regulation on the other hand consists of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the learning process (Schraw & Moshman, 1995). Studies conducted prove that metacognitive knowledge and regulation are interrelated and facilitate student's self-regulation (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Young & Fry, 2008).

Research in the field of metacognition first focused on metamemory following Flavell's call. Later on, metacognition was included in many research studies covering different school subjects, the field of health, law, social relationships, and different age groups (Larkin, 2009). As research results indicated that both components of metacognition are positively related with course grades (Young & Fry, 2008), metacognition was accepted as an essential factor for and feature of successful learning (Noushad, 2008). In line with the insight that learners who are metacognitively aware are better performers (Schraw & Dennison, 1994), focus shifted to increase learners' awareness and to help and teach them to control their own thinking (Livingston, 1997; Noushad, 2008).

The need to work on students' awareness of their weaknesses and strengths in the learning process and their knowledge was addressed by Victori and Lockhart (1995). They emphasized that students with lacking skills or unconstructive ideas about their skills and knowledge to master learning may become poor learners who as a consequence might perform poorly, demonstrate anxiety and lack autonomy. A study conducted by Sperling, Howard, Staley, and DuBois (2004) showed that

metacognitive awareness was related with strategy use, in that learners who had high awareness level also reported high strategy use. High strategy use on the other hand is a feature which is used to characterize good language learners (O'Malley, Chamot, & Kupper, 1989). In this context, the effects of the use of learning and metacognitive strategies on achievement with regard to different skills of language were generally examined in several studies (Al-Alwan, Asassfeh, & Al-Shboul, 2013; Hong-Nam, 2014; Hong-Nam & Page, 2015; Kállay, 2012; Ruan, 2014; Schraw, Crippen, & Hartley, 2006; Wang, 2015). As a result, the need to train students in strategy use and to help them become learners who are aware of their learning process was addressed in those studies (Forbes & Fisher, 2015). To sum up, metacognition is regarded as being central to learning a language.

In relation with metacognitive awareness and strategy use, the motivation construct cannot be neglected. Motivation is accepted as having an impact on what students decide to learn and how they put into practice the skills, strategies and behaviors they had acquired (Schunk et al., 2014). Zimmermann (2000) states that motivation influences what, when and how students learn. Those who are motivated to succeed and learn are more likely to organize and rehearse material, take notes, monitor their understanding, ask others for help, value the process of learning and believe in their competence to learn. In contrast, unmotivated students lack the abovementioned qualities and as a result cannot attend the learning process systematically and effectively. In long term, the probability that motivated students who engage in effective learning strategies reach their goals is higher. Once goals are met, students experience a feeling of confirmation with regard to their learning capabilities. This on the other hand increases students' motivation for the upcoming learning processes. Metacognitive awareness was also quite often linked with self-regulated learning. This arises from the fact that self-regulated learning has established itself as a construct which consists of motivational, cognitive and also metacognitive components which as a whole are considered to promote successful learning (Händel & Fritzsche, 2016; Schraw et al., 2006). In this context, Schraw et al. (2006) support the idea that the metacognitive component is of most importance. Metacognitive awareness was labeled as necessary to learn to self-direct learning (Williams & Burden, 1997). Larkin (2009) points out that nowadays letting students take

responsibility for their learning process and making students internalize this process should be favored over the teaching of subjects only.

As Efklides and Misailidi (2010) summarize metacognition research conducted in the field of education so far, first the components and the functioning of metacognition was addressed, then it was linked to and examined in terms of successful and self-regulated learning, following attempts to incorporate metacognitive training into instruction to increase educational achievement and to foster autonomy. In line with these developments, it was accepted that metacognition on its own cannot explain academic achievement. Thus, the role of affect on learning is not denied (Hartman, 2001). Affect on the other hand covers motivation, self-concept, affective self-regulation and attributions. While pointing to the fact that the conception of metacognition was widened through the inclusion of psychological factors, Papaleontiou-Louca (2008, p. xiii) asserts that:

the definition of metacognition has been broadened and includes, not only “thoughts about thoughts” as it was before considered, but the following notions as well: knowledge of one’s knowledge, processes, and cognitive and affective states; and the ability to consciously and deliberately monitor and regulate one’s knowledge, processes, and cognitive and affective states.

Hartman (2001) emphasizes that even though students might have acquired knowledge and skills to succeed in learning, they might not always make use of or apply these. Thus, some occurrences seem to impede the natural learning process. One element could be students’ achievement attributions. Students’ attempts to make sense of the world and consequently the way they approach a task might guide their behavior in the learning process. Although studies that address the topics of achievement attribution and metacognitive awareness exist, research combining both is rare in spite of their probable relationship impeding or fostering learning. Having this in mind, this study attempts to shed light on language learners’ attributions for failure in learning English, their level of metacognitive awareness and the relationship of both.

Statement of Problem

English has established itself as an international language which is used both among native and non-native speakers. As pointed out by the Economic Policy Research

Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) (TR: Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı) and the British Council (2013), English is a lingua franca and one of the most frequently used languages all around the world which appears in various fields and contexts such as tourism, trade, job market; and most importantly it is used for communication. Thus, one can encounter English almost everywhere. In relation with the various contexts in which English is used and its high frequency of usage, the need to be a competent speaker of English emerges. Considering the fact that nowadays English is being taught from grade 2 and onwards in Turkey, one can say that the importance of English has also been acknowledged in this country. As the only obligatory second language in state schools, English is taught until the end of upper secondary school. In other words, Turkish students have English lessons for a time period of 11 years in state schools. One assumption which could be made having this long period in mind could be that students leave school with a high English proficiency. But the national needs assessment of state schools conducted by TEPAV and the British Council (2013) proved the opposite. The findings indicate that the overall English proficiency is low, while the majority of students who learn English in state schools are not even able to communicate using English in its simplest form. In the needs assessment conducted, it was also emphasized that most of the students overestimate their real English proficiency level. Although students consider English as essential, they demonstrate a lack of motivation to learn. It is interesting to see that motivation decreases with continued English instruction over the years. Thus, next to the low English proficiency, the problem of low learner motivation is apparent. While demotivation increases with grade level, students' perception of their English proficiency is the lowest in Vocational High Schools compared to other types of high schools. In addition, Vocational High School students' perception of English as being necessary is also the lowest among primary, secondary and upper secondary students.

Of importance is the fact that the portrayed situation in terms of learning English in state schools is the case despite the qualifications of the teachers and despite students' potential to speak English competently and to at least reach the intermediate level in English (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). As pointed out earlier, the experiences related to achievement of failure can have an impact on the

future learning experience of students. Thus, the failure of students in learning English is a problem of great concern. Although there are attempts to explain this failure by taking into account the heavy application of the Grammar Translation Method in the language classroom, exams which test grammar knowledge only, a physical classroom setting which does not foster communication, the missing quality of course books in addressing students' needs and levels, the recycling of the same course content over the years, and the pressure on teachers to implement the curriculum set (TEPAV & British Council, 2013); little attention has been paid to gain insights about the present problem of low English proficiency from students' point of view although this viewpoint could render additional perspectives about how to intervene and to possibly solve the problem addressed. For this purpose, students' attributions of failure, in other words the perceived causes of failure, could be a starting point to shed light on this problem.

As previously addressed, the reasons students attribute their failure to have an impact on whether students attempt the tasks in which they have failed. Thus, students form ideas about their ability to perform the task of concern. In this context, Covington's (1987) classification of failure subtypes shows how misattributions can distort the learning process. He claims that students who invest a high amount of effort to master a task but nevertheless experience failure tend to consider themselves as having low ability (as cited in Short & Weissberg-Benchell, 1989) which decreases the probability to invest in the same task despite the possibility that the ability attributions might be wrongful due to the students' inability to select appropriate strategies. Thus, it is possible that students fail in a task because they lack the awareness of the metacognitive processes going on during their learning process, and that as a result of this deficiency they make misattributions which hinder their learning and thereby create a vicious circle promoting failure experiences. Maladaptive attributional beliefs which make learners attribute their success to luck only and their failure to the lack of ability are negatively related to achievement, and strategy knowledge and use. What is important here is that these negatively loaded attributions may intensify over the years and make students experience learned helplessness in high school age. This on the other hand is the starting point for upcoming failure experiences (Chan & Moore, 2006).

In short, poor learners hold unconstructive beliefs about learning including their own capacities and the tasks. That is why misconceptions and misattributions about learning have to be worked on by increasing students' metacognitive awareness and making them see themselves as the ones responsible for their achievement outcomes (Victori & Lockhart, 1995). Only if students attribute achievement outcomes to internal causes within their control, they can improve (El-Hindi & Childers, 1996). El-Hindi and Childers (1996) pointed out to the link between increased metacognitive awareness and attributions to controllable causes in achievement situations. In other words, it is important to prevent students from accepting failure by blaming uncontrollable factors they cannot change for their performance outcomes but to make students assume control over their learning by fostering their awareness of learning processes and their metacognition and thereby help them locate the real causes behind failure experiences. In other words, the danger that students' misattributions for their failure experiences might decrease their motivation to attempt a task is prevalent although such misattributions could have been avoided if metacognitive awareness had been high. Thus, it seems important to shed light on the relationship between attributions and metacognitive awareness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the causes that students attribute their failure experiences in learning English in state schools, to measure students' level of metacognitive awareness and to examine the relationship between these two concepts.

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. Which causes do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools attribute their failure in learning English in an EFL context?
 - 1.1. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' attributions of failure in learning English vary with regards to gender?
 - 1.2. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' attributions of failure in learning English vary with regards to grade level?

- 1.3. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' attributions of failure in learning English vary with regards to vocational field?
- 1.4. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' attributions of failure in learning English vary with regards to achievement outcomes?
- 1.5. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' attributions of failure in learning English vary with regards to socioeconomic level?
- 1.6. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' attributions of failure in learning English vary with regards to parents' educational level?
2. What is the level of metacognitive awareness of Turkish upper secondary students in state schools in terms of learning English in an EFL context?
 - 2.1. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' levels of metacognitive awareness in learning English vary with regards to gender?
 - 2.2. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' levels of metacognitive awareness in learning English vary with regards to grade level?
 - 2.3. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' levels of metacognitive awareness in learning English vary with regards to vocational field?
 - 2.4. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' levels of metacognitive awareness in learning English vary with regards to achievement outcomes?
 - 2.5. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' levels of metacognitive awareness in learning English vary with regards to socioeconomic level?
 - 2.6. Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' levels of metacognitive awareness in learning English vary with regards to parents' educational level?
3. Does metacognitive awareness of the learners interact with attribution of failure in learning English in an EFL context?
4. How does metacognitive awareness of the learners exert an impact on attribution to failure in learning English in an EFL context?

5. How does metacognitive awareness of low-proficiency learners influence their attribution to failure?
6. How does metacognitive awareness of high-proficiency learners influence their attribution to failure?

In general, it is expected that students make maladaptive failure attributions and have low metacognitive awareness due to their continuous struggle in language learning and the lack of improvement despite the many years of language instruction. In addition, it is anticipated that students have maladaptive attributions due to their low metacognitive awareness levels.

Importance of the Study

Attribution theory is concerned with making sense of outcomes. Having the problem of Turkish students in learning English in mind, this theory can be made use of to understand the reasons behind students' failure. As researchers agree on the point that attributions impact students' future motivation and behavior, having access to students' attributions of failure gains more importance. Wong and Weiner (1981) proved that students are more likely to search for explanations for either unexpected or failure outcomes rather than expected or success outcomes. They also concluded that expected failure is more of a stressful experience in comparison to unexpected failure; and that it guides students to escape or avoidance behavior related to the task failed in, rather than the generation of strategies to cope with the failure experience in future attempts, as it is the case in unexpected failure. This indicates that expecting failure is a greater burden for students. Moreover, Weiner (1980) pointed out that there are four affect-attributions for failure which he states as ability–incompetence; effort-guilt and shame; others-anger; and luck-surprise and frustration. This indicates that depending on the cause one ascribes failure to, different emotions are triggered. In addition, Weiner's affect-attributions for failure also include the effects of the dimensions (internal/external, stable/unstable, controllable/uncontrollable) of the ascribed causes. According to Weiner, internal explanations of failure evoke guilt while external ones do so for anger or surprise. Internal and stable explanations may lead to depression and resignation; stable and uncontrollable explanations may lead

to helplessness. This concept indicates that students experience different emotions based on their achievement outcomes and their explanations of those. Considering the emotions students might experience, it is apparent that these are negative ones in the context of failure experiences. Thus, failure experiences in general might have an unbearable effect on students, while the dimensions of achievement attributions might increase or decrease this effect. That is why it is necessary to gather information related to failure attributions. In addition, negative emotions following the attributions made to explain failure might influence students' motivation which is accepted as one of the leading forces for successful learning. If students lose their motivation, their academic performance might suffer (Schunk et al., 2014). Schunk and colleagues (Schunk et al., 2014) also note that students' attributions of their success or failure experiences might not be the actual cause. This means that students might interpret failure experiences wrongly and thereby push themselves to experience negative emotions. By revealing students' attribution to failure, it might be possible to help students to cope with their failure experience and the related feelings or to correct their causal explanations in order to help students change their attributions of failure. In this context, Williams et al. (2001) indicate the need to make students ascribe the outcomes of their learning experiences to internal and controllable reasons. In this context, Peacock (2010) emphasizes that teachers need to be aware of students' attributions, as he suggests that attributions are modifiable. Thus, he claims that after the identification of attributions relevant changes can be initiated. Vispoel and Austin (1995) add that it is important to train students not to attribute their failure to ability but to controllable factors and to avoid implications about students' low ability.

It is possible to say that attributions and attribution theory are linked with achievement outcomes. But as Jegede, Taplin, Fan, Chan, and Yum (1999) point out metacognition is a concept which is not investigated much in relation to attribution theory, although studies reveal some conformity among learners with learning difficulties' achievement attributions and awareness of learning processes (Chan, 1994). Thus, these learners make maladaptive attributions and at the same time perceive themselves as cognitively less competent and strategically less knowledgeable which as a whole end in low achievement outcomes. As Larkin

(2009) states, attributions and metacognition overlap as people engage in metacognitive activities when they reconsider how they think about certain events. This indicates that if students hold misattributions about their low performance outcomes, thinking over these misattributions might make them locate and monitor those. Hence, the importance of metacognitive awareness which has an improving effect on performance (Schraw & Dennison, 1994) emerges again. Of significance is also that metacognitive awareness is teachable and modifiable just like attributions (Schraw, 1998).

Next to the significance of the present study in terms of revealing students' attributions of failure and metacognitive awareness levels, it will also fill a gap in attribution research in the field of foreign language learning. Researchers agree that little research has been conducted in the field of Second Language Acquisition (henceforth: SLA) and learning English as a foreign language (Mori, 2009; Peacock, 2010; Tse, 2000; Yılmaz, 2012), although attributions encountered in the classroom are a valuable source of information. Vispoel and Austin's study (1991) showed that it is necessary to deal with attributions in different school subjects separately, as attributions demonstrate differences among subjects. This calls for the investigation of attributions in the language classroom. Williams et al. (2001) suggest a shift in research on attributions from Western to non-Western countries because the number of studies located in the non-Western context is limited. Having this in mind, the context of Turkey appears to be more interesting as it bridges Europe and Asia and represents both the Western and non-Western contexts. Furthermore, despite the problematic situation in Turkey, research about students' attributions in the context of Turkey is also scarce (Erten & Burden, 2014; Sahinkarakas, 2011; Yılmaz, 2012). To the knowledge of the author, there is not any research conducted which links attributions and metacognitive awareness to each other in the Turkish context. Most of the studies either measure the awareness levels or the achievement attributions of students (Bedel, 2012; Hart & Memnun, 2015; Jaleel, 2016; Kiremitçi, 2013; Sarıcoban, 2015; Şendurur, Şendurur, Mutlu, & Baser, 2011). The studies related to achievement attributions conducted in Turkey either involved college students, primary-school students or young learners. High schools did not get the attention they should have, although demotivation increases with increasing grade level of

students in Turkey (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). Turkish students' motivation and perception of their English proficiency is the lowest in Vocational High Schools among other types of high schools, so that it can be assumed that Turkish students' attribution of failure in learning English in a Technical and Vocational High School could provide valuable insight in respect to attribution research.

Assumptions

The main assumption of this research study is that the English grades of the students will be representatives for success or failure. Thus, students with low grades will be assumed to experience failure in learning English. This assumption will help answer the proposed research questions. Yet another assumption of the present study relates to sincere responses of the participants concerned; the sampling group is assumed to respond to the research data collection instruments sincerely and honestly although there exists certain research-oriented precautions to secure the validity and reliability of the data to be yielded.

Limitations

The limitation of this research can be stated as its focus on preset attributions of failure, as it is concerned with the attribution of failure in learning English to effort, ability, luck and task difficulty only which are the prevalent attributions established by Weiner's attribution theory.

In addition, this research is limited to a single case which focuses on Technical and Vocational High School students in the Black Sea Region in Turkey, making it difficult to generalize the findings to the quantitative instruments honestly, as the major data were driven from two self-report instruments.

Definitions

The definitions of the variables in this study will be provided in this section.

Attributions

Attribution theory is concerned with “the perception of causality, or the judgment of why a particular incident occurred” (Weiner, 1972, p. 203). Cause in Weiner’s understanding on the other hand equals the terms causal perception, causal attribution or causal ascription (1986). Weiner distinguishes between both terms as attributions are “constructions imposed by the perceiver (either an actor or an observer) to account for the relation between an action and an outcome” and as they indicate “why an *outcome* has occurred, as opposed to why an *action* has taken place” (1986, p. 22). The function of specifically failure attributions is to “terminate or prevent a negative state of affairs” (p. 33) to be able to deal with and process failure experiences, and thereby to adapt to the current outcome.

Attributions are stated to have three dimensions which are locus, stability, and controllability while each dimension is divided among a bipolar continuum into external-internal, stable-unstable, and controllable-uncontrollable (Weiner, 1986). The attributions which emerged to explain achievement-related outcomes are ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty. Based on which factor people attribute their failure outcomes to the expectancy for future success is shaped. At the same time different cause ascriptions evoke different emotions which again have a certain impact on future behavior (Weiner, 1986).

Metacognition and Metacognitive Awareness

As Schraw and Dennison (1994) put it, “metacognition refers to the ability to reflect upon, understand, and control one’s learning” (p. 460) and it consists of knowledge about and regulation of cognition. These two subcomponents turned out to be interrelated, and to foster self-regulation of learners (Schraw & Dennison, 1994).

Knowledge about Cognition

Knowledge of cognition refers to what people know about their cognition. This knowledge is divided into three subcomponents which are declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and conditional knowledge (Schraw & Dennison, 1994).

Schraw and Dennison (1994) define the content of these subcomponents as follows: “Declarative knowledge [is the] knowledge about one’s skills, intellectual resources and abilities as a learner. Procedural knowledge [is the] knowledge about how to implement learning procedures (e.g., strategies). Conditional knowledge [is the] knowledge about when and why to use learning procedures” (p. 474).

Regulation of Cognition

Regulation of cognition covers five factors, namely planning, information management strategies, comprehension monitoring, debugging strategies and evaluation. In other words, regulation of knowledge refers to knowledge about how students plan, implement strategies, monitor, correct comprehension errors, and evaluate their learning (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). If it comes to the specific factors, Schraw and Dennison (1994) state that “Planning [covers] planning, goal setting, and allocating resources *prior* to learning. Information management strategies [refer to] skills and strategy sequences used to process information more efficiently (e.g., organizing, elaborating, summarizing, selective focusing). Comprehension monitoring [stands for the] assessment of one’s learning or strategy use. Debugging strategies [are] strategies used to correct comprehension and performance errors. Evaluation [indicates the] analysis of performance and strategy effectiveness after a learning episode” (p. 474-475).

Following Schraw and Dennison’s (1994) conception of metacognition and its subcomponents, metacognitive awareness as it is used in this study will refer to learners’ awareness of where they are in the process of learning and how they manage learning, and the awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as learners, of tasks, strategies and their use. Noushad (2008) adds that in general metacognitive awareness includes learners’ “knowledge of what needs to be done, what has been done, and what might be done in particular learning contexts or problem solving situations” (p.15).

Motivation

“Motivation is the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained” (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 5). According to this definition, a goal is the trigger of motivation to perform or avoid a certain action or behavior. To achieve the goal set, activities both physical and mental in nature have to be performed. Effort and persistence can be stated among the physical ones, while planning, organizing, decision making, problem solving and progress assessment are some of the mental activities. In addition, to be fully labeled as motivated, activities undertaken must be present in long-term and not decrease with regard to difficulties faced or challenging situations. Motivation is also accepted to influence the learning behavior of students (Zimmermann, 2000).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, the status of English within and without Turkey, the education system of Turkey, and foreign language learning and teaching with respect to English will be addressed. Research studies related to achievement attributions and metacognition will be presented subsequently.

The Status of English

The reasons why English is considered to be important worldwide and how it gained the ascribed importance will be shown in the following parts. In addition, the role English plays within the Turkish context will be portrayed.

English as a Global Language

All around the globe English is without doubt encountered almost everywhere. In today's society English plays an essential role as it influences many fields of life such as tourism, trade, entertainment or education. The spread of English which is not limited to the mentioned fields goes along with the emergence of English as a global language. Thus, English has surpassed to be the language of native speakers only. Nowadays English is also spoken as a second or foreign language and used for different purposes in various contexts by numerous non-native speakers. Hence, it is a global language. To elaborate on this term, as Crystal (2003) points out a language becomes global if other countries appreciate its special role and place. Within a

certain community, this can happen in form of a language becoming an official language or gaining popularity among other non-native languages, which are also referred to as second or foreign language respectively. In other words, if next to the native language a non-native language emerges as an essentiality to survive in a certain community, as the language is used in official places like the government or the court, one speaks of a second language. On the other hand, a non-native language which dominates the education system as it is taught most frequently or with which people come largely across in their daily lives is termed a foreign language. Kachru's (1985) classification of English into a three circle model perfectly fits into this context. Thus, Kachru claims that English consists of an Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle is formed out of native speakers of English whose mother tongue or first language is English. The English used in this circle is regarded to be norm providing. This circle covers countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. If it comes to the Outer Circle, English is integrated into the community and used as a tool for communication in addition to the mother tongue. In other words, the Inner Circle can be described as a multilingual place. Such places can be named as India, Nigeria or Singapore which are at the same time mostly former colonies of countries forming the Inner Circle. The Expanding Circle consists of countries in which English is predominantly taught as a foreign language and is not essentially used for communicative purposes outside school. Turkey, Germany, Russia, Spain, Greece and China are some of the countries located within the Expanding Circle. In this context, Crystal (2003) emphasizes that English has outnumbered languages such as French, German or Arabic with regard to its official use in non-native countries, has displaced other popular foreign languages in the process of rising up to the most popular one itself, and is the most widespread language used among both native and non-native speakers worldwide.

The question why English and not another language holds the status of a global language can be easily answered following historical developments up to this date. The first point to consider in light of these developments is the fact that the main determinant of language spread is not the number of speakers of a language but how powerful and therefore influential those speakers are (Crystal, 2003). As Crystal

(2003) puts it “Language has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. [...] When they succeed, on the international stage, their language succeeds. When they fail, their language fails” (p. 7). The international stage as stated here refers to political, military and economical power which are also interrelated. Thus, each form of these powers is helpful to ensure and maintain the other.

Antecedent to the global spread of English was colonialism especially at the end of the nineteenth century. The expansion of Britain to places all over the world was additionally accompanied by the transfer of English as a means of communication to those places (Graddol, 1998). With this expansion English was transported to America, Asia, Africa and the Pacific where English has established itself in the following years. In addition, in the beginning of the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution started in Britain through which Britain became a leading figure in trade and industry. This was followed by the urge to learn English in order to be able to follow innovations and technical advancements (Crystal, 2003). In short, combined with colonial expansion this was the first milestone in the geographical spread of English. The second major incident which dates back to the twentieth century was the rise of the United States’ economic power. The American economy to that time was continuously and rapidly growing. The economical power of a country whose native language is English contributed to the importance of that language (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1998). To sum up, Britain established English around the world, while the United States prevented the decline of the importance of English. In line with the States superpower, the language of world institutions which were founded especially after World War II also became English. Following the dominance of English in technology, economy and politics, consumer culture was also influenced (Crystal, 2003). With the spread of radio and television, mass entertainment under the influence of American culture flourished. At this point, Crystal’s (2003) explanation of English being the global language of today is interesting. He claims that throughout time, English just was “in the right place at the right time” (p. 78). Crystal thereby among others refers to the Industrial Revolution taking place in Britain and the resulting dominance of English in industry; the consequent dominance in related fields such as press, transport or communication; or the

production of the computer and the emergence of the internet in the United States and the spread of English in line with the huge impact of the computer and the internet on society.

Having portrayed the emergence of English as a global language, the next question is why the need for a global language prevails in today's society. This can shortly be answered with English being the lingua franca of today. It is used as a means of communication among people from all over the world for major international affairs. English is the working language of international organizations, scientific publication, international banking, economic affairs and trade, advertising for global brands, audio-visual cultural products like films or music, international tourism, tertiary education, international safety, international law, technology transfer, and internet communication (Graddol, 1998). Thus, in today's world, there is a need for a language which combines each and everyone among everywhere, as the world is interconnected and mobile. In this context, English has just been the most appealing language to get adapted for this purpose considering its prevalent position in the daily and official lives of people.

English as a Foreign Language in the Turkish Context

Guiding attention to the specific context of Turkey and the role and status of English in it requires one to look at the historical roots of that language in this foreign language context. As previously indicated in relation to Kachru's model, Turkey is part of the Expanding Circle in which English is used as a foreign language. Again, this indicates that English is limited to specific contexts and it is not the language of communication among Turkish people. It is mainly used for communication on an international basis with native or non-native speakers of English, or it is encountered as the most popular foreign language taught at educational institutions in Turkey. To comprehend the present place of English in the Turkish society calls for a short survey of the history of foreign languages in the Turkish context. Throughout time, different foreign languages gained popularity whereby English turned out as the foreign language per se. Having this in mind, the first languages which gained priority were Arabic and Persian as the Ottoman Empire initiated a good relationship

with both Arabs and Persians especially after the conversion of the Turks to Islam (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). Both languages enjoyed a prestigious position within different domains. Arabic was valued as the language of the Koran and in addition it was the leading language in scientific textbooks. Persian on the other hand occupied an important place within literature. Having command over those languages was an indication of reputation. Later on, a tendency towards Westernization emerged in the Ottoman Empire (Atay & Ece, 2009; Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). This trend was the result of incidents such as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment or the Industrial Revolution through which western countries entered a modernization process and flourished in different domains. Contrary to the developments in Western society, the Ottoman Empire could not catch up with advancements and consequently fell behind the West. With the acknowledgement of the urgent need for progress, the Ottoman Empire came closer with France. This contact initiated the integration of Western culture, ideas and thoughts into the non-Western community whereby French diminished the influence of Arabic and Persian (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). After ties with Germany were established following both political and commercial interests, German as a foreign language also entered the ground of the Ottoman Empire while it largely established itself in the field of military. In line with this, the German culture and language managed to become the favorite of the elite. It has to be noted that the European foreign languages were mainly accessible for the elites', diplomats' or minorities' children among the country whereas those languages were not taught by trained teachers (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004).

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, there was a wider interest in the modernization process of Turkey. Following the 1950s, in line with the rise of the United States to a superpower the focus shifted especially to English as a foreign language (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998) although institutions such as the Robert College which provided education via English as the medium of instruction were founded back in 1863 (Kırkgöz, 2007). Changes in educational policy, which will be addressed in more detail later on, together with flourishing relations with Europe and the States and the dominance of English in several domains contributed to the spread of English in Turkey and its establishment within society (Atay & Ece, 2009) so that the number of students learning French as a foreign language at state schools

decreased and was surpassed by learners of English (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). Thus, nowadays Turkey is a member of different international institutions like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and uses English as a language of diplomacy. In addition, English is also highly encountered in form of different brands or new terminologies coined especially in the field of technology or advertising. Popular culture cannot be separated from the new generation of Turks who show interest in music, films or magazines in English. Furthermore, it is an accepted prerequisite for better career opportunities and standard of living, while it has also established itself as the most common language of science. As the majority of publications in academia are in English, it is a necessity to know English in order to be able to follow scientific developments or publish scientific work. Last but not least, Turkey is a tourist location and English is the unifying language of different nations to ensure communication (Atay & Ece, 2009; Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004; TEPAV & British Council, 2013). To sum up, the popularity of English and its related leading position as a foreign language is due to its dominance in politics, economy, trade, technology, youth and popular culture, tourism and travel industry, advantages in the job market, and communication. Due to these points stated, educational policies and the education system were changed to ensure quality English instruction at school and English programs at universities. The attempts and reforms made for this purpose will be addressed in the next section in detail.

National Education and Language Education in Turkey

In the following, the Turkish national education system will be portrayed with its main aspects so that a general understanding is created for the research context. In addition, the status of foreign languages specifically English within the educational context will be addressed both in terms of language learning and language teaching in order to gain an insight about the processes that led to the current difficulties experienced in achieving high English proficiency.

Education System in Turkey

The aim of the Turkish national education system is to provide the circumstances to raise individuals who are able to think, understand, investigate and solve problems; whose general knowledge and abilities meet the needs of today's society; who have internalized the values of the national culture, humanity and democracy; who are open to communicate and to share; who appreciate art; who have self-confidence and self esteem, and a sense for the right, justice and responsibility; who are diligent, creative, innovative, peaceful, healthy and happy and prepared for life (Ministry of National Education (MoNE), 2017b). The Turkish national education system is divided into formal and non-formal education. Non-formal education addresses people who were never enrolled in formal education, who continue their education in formal institutions or who quit formal education at any level of it. The aim of non-formal education is to help compensate for educational deficiencies in form of teaching how to write or read or make people acquire general world knowledge. In addition, it promotes self-growth or vocational development, while it also supports the acquisition of a profession in line with communities' needs or offers opportunities to acquire and carry out hobbies. Lastly, it fosters and protects national values and culture, and it has to follow the basic principles of national education (MoNE, 2017, 2016). Of concern for this study is formal education in Turkey which is supervised by the Ministry of National Education. Formal education takes place within a school and involves students of certain age groups while it follows a preset curriculum. In short, it is the type of education as it takes place in schools or universities. More precisely, formal education consists of pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary school and higher education institutions (MoNE, 2016, 2017). A general distinction in formal education can be made between public or state schools and private schools among each level.

Pre-primary education which is not compulsory aims at making children aged 3 to 5 develop emotionally, physically and mentally, acquire good habits and proper Turkish, preparing them for primary education by also compensating for inequalities within children from different socio-economic status before entering school (MoNE, 2016, 2017). As the 4+4+4 model of education has established itself in Turkey, a three levels model can be encountered among primary, lower and upper secondary

schools which are all compulsory. Each of these three school levels consist of four years, hence the label 4+4+4. Primary-school is the first level within this model and it is compulsory for 1st to 4th graders. The schooling ratio in primary-schools is 94.87%. The number of primary-schools is 26,552 and that of primary-school students and teachers is 5,306,703 and 302,961 (MoNE, 2016). The aim of primary and lower secondary schools is to equip students with the required knowledge, skills, behavior and habits to become good citizens who follow national norms and who are prepared for life and the upcoming education level taking their interests, talents and capabilities into consideration (Council of Higher Education (CoHE), 2014; MoNE, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). The lower secondary education comprises grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 and the schooling ratio is 94.39%. There are 17,343 lower secondary schools, 5,211,505 students and 322,680 teachers (MoNE, 2016). At the end of lower secondary schools, students are informed about upper secondary education and the possible professions they are linked with (MoNE, 2017). But it is not the student who decides which type of upper secondary school to attend, but a central examination called TEOG (TR: Temel Eğitimden Ortaöğretime Geçiş) in other words Transition from Primary to Secondary Education. According to the scores students get at the end of the mentioned examination, students select educational institutions at which they are assigned to depending on score superiority. The schooling ratio in upper secondary education is 79.79%. There are 10,550 schools, 5,807,643 students and 335,690 teachers (MoNE, 2016). The purpose of upper secondary education in Turkey is to make students acquire a common general knowledge base, to provide them with the consciousness and power to identify societal problems and find solutions, to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the country, to prepare students for higher education programs or jobs with regard to their interests, talents and abilities by trying to coordinate students wishes and abilities with the needs of society (MoNE, 2017). Institutions at this level are divided into general, and vocational and technical high schools. General secondary education prepares students for higher education and for the future taking into consideration students' interests, needs and abilities. Vocational and technical secondary education combines this with specialized education. General and vocational and technical secondary education is comprised of different programs. Thus, at this level of education there are general, vocational, science, religious, health, fine arts and sports

institutions. While graduates of each school type can attend higher education institutions, the extent to which students are prepared for the university entrance examination or better to say the foci of different school types might differ. General high schools prepare students for two of the existing university placement exams which are the Higher Education Exam (TR: Yüksek Öğretime Geçiş Sınavı (YGS)) and the Undergraduate Placement Exam (TR: Lisans Yerleştirme Sınavı (LYS)) without having a specific field in focus. Science high schools on the other hand as the name suggests train students in sciences so that science or engineering departments are aimed at for higher education. While religious high schools also prepare students for higher education, it also aims at ensuring students to take up the profession of imams or preachers. Vocational high schools are again differentiated based on the field of interest which might be among others health or tourism or technical in any kind. These types of high schools mainly succeed in sending students to higher education programs consisting of two rather than four years. Next to the mentioned high school types which are all public schools, students can also be enrolled in private schools which are not free of charge (MoNE, 2016). In 2017, the university placement exams were modified into TYT (TR: Temel Yeterlilik Testi) and AYT (TR: Alan Yeterlilik Testi), which do not deviate much from the previously conducted exams, which were YGS and LYS, in terms of their aims.

If it comes to the role of English as a foreign language within those formal institutions on a twelve years range, English is by now the most popular foreign language and the only one being taught as a compulsory subject. Apart from English, some languages can be encountered as electives in some schools, which are mainly German and French (Kırkgöz, 2007). Nevertheless, it is emphasized that Turkish which is the official language of Turkey is the only medium of instruction in formal education institutions apart from some exceptions (MoNE, 1983). Up until 2012, English was taught from grade 4 onwards until high school graduation but in line with the so called “4+4+4” education reform which divided the education system into primary, lower and upper secondary school each consisting of four years, English started to be taught from grade 2 onwards. Thus, students in Turkey start to learn English by the age of seven and continue this process until they reach the age of eighteen. In this context, the advantages to start English as early as possible to

facilitate its acquisition are always emphasized (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). In grade 2, 3 and 4 English is taught for two teaching hours which makes 80 minutes per week. In upper secondary schools, grades 5 and 6 receive three and grades 7 and 8 four teaching hours of English per week, which sums up to 120 or rather 160 minutes. In high school, there is no uniformity among different high school types in relation to the distribution of English lessons. The time allocated to English lessons is minimum two and maximum six teaching hours a week. Apart from formal assessment within English lessons, students' knowledge of English among other subject knowledge is also assessed on a national level within TEOG which is the examination to enter upper secondary education. Another central examination related to English which can be taken as part of the university entrance exam if one wishes to get enrolled in departments in which English is of relevance is the language test incorporated in the university entrance exam. While each student's English knowledge is assessed in the TEOG exam, the English component of the Undergraduate Placement Exam is taken voluntarily.

Once students succeed in the university entrance exam upon high school graduation, they are accepted to higher education institutions. The criteria future university students have to meet to get accepted is that the scores they receive from the university entrance exam which is centrally administered by the Evaluation, Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) (TR: Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi) and their high school GPA are high enough compared to other undergraduate candidates. In terms of the university entrance exam it has to be noted that students have to first take and get a passing score of at least 150 out of 500 in the first of the two university entrance exams to gain the right of higher education. In addition, only the scores of the students who succeed in doing so will be calculated in the second exam which is designed to assess students in specific domains. Students only answer the test items which are relevant for their aspired higher education departments. Once students succeed in getting the required scores, they are accepted to the programs of their interest. Thus, university entrance is determined on the basis of norm-referenced assessment.

Higher education institutions and universities are all under the supervision of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) which is responsible for carrying out duties

such as planning, coordinating, and exerting administrative functions under the consideration of both the Higher Education Law and the Constitution of Turkey (CoHE, 2014). The aims of higher education institutions are stated in the Basic Law of National Education as raising students in accordance to their interests, abilities and talents, and the national science policy to meet the demands of the societies' labor force; providing scientific education at different levels, doing research on and finding solutions for scientific, technical and cultural problems; cooperating with the government and related institutions to help the country flourish by focusing on societal problems; making publications about research results which contribute to the development of science; informing the Turkish society about enlightening scientific data to increase general knowledge and providing non-formal education. The institutions which are expected to render these services can be grouped into universities, institutes of high technology, post-secondary vocational schools and other higher education institutions such as military or police academies. In addition, a distinction can be made between state universities and non-profit universities. Next to different groupings of higher education institutions, these also show differences in terms of their duration. Thus, higher education has to take two years at least, at the end of which students receive an associate degree. The institutions which offer a two year education are mainly post-secondary vocational schools. In order to get a bachelor's degree students have to attend institutions which offer at least four years of higher education. However, in programs such as medicine which require specialization the number constitutes five or six years. Upon getting a bachelor's degree, students can profit of graduate and post-graduate programs whereby master's programs last for two and doctoral programs for four years. The requirements to get admitted to graduate programs are determined by the higher education institutions themselves while the average scores of the undergraduate GPA, the centrally administered Graduate Education Entrance Examination (TR: Akademik Personel ve Lisansüstü Eğitimi Giriş , (ALES)), Language Proficiency Test (TR: Yabancı Dil Bilgisi Seviye Tespit Sınavı, (YDS)), and interview scores are calculated and decisive. In both programs, students are required to reach the necessary course credits and to write a thesis or dissertation and defend it in front of a jury thereafter, while doctorate students also need to pass the doctoral qualifying exam beforehand (CoHE, 2014). As of January 2017, there are 183 universities in Turkey in total,

whereas 112 of these are state universities, 65 foundation universities and 6 foundation vocational training schools. There are 1,622 faculties, 467 schools of higher education, 845 vocational schools of higher education, 572 institutes, 2,881 research and application centers, 17,155 departments, 25,832 programs, 27,501 main branches, 8,041 branches, 12,092 master's programs, 5,245 PhD programs and 120 master of fine arts programs, while the total number of students enrolled in higher education is 6,689,185 (CoHE, 2017).

When it comes to the place English inherits within higher education, English is used as the medium of instruction in some institutions like the Middle East Technical University or Bosphorus University but in the majority of higher education institutions Turkish is the medium of instructions. In these universities General English courses are compulsory, as to provide students with basic English skills with regard to its increasing importance in today's world. In addition, there are compulsory preparatory schools in universities with English as the medium of instruction. The aim is to prepare students for the upcoming years of higher education so that they do not encounter problems in their departments. At the end of preparatory school students have to take a final examination and get the agreed upon minimum points to start their education in their departments in the upcoming semester. Students who do not want to attend preparatory classes can take the required exams to skip preparatory school (CoHE, 2014; Solak & Bayar, 2015). In addition, in some universities like Hacettepe University, specific faculties offer English medium instruction as an alternative to students. There are also private universities such as Bilkent University which focus on English medium instruction considering its central role today. On the other hand, if the medium of instruction of the university attended is Turkish, obligatory English lessons are integrated within the curriculum of mainly the first year. Those who want to work on their English proficiency outside of the higher education context have further the chance to get enrolled in private language schools (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004).

The next section will deal with educational reforms which have provided the national education system and the higher education institutions with their current shapes with special focus on the development of English as a foreign language in formal

education, on the departments of education and foreign language education programs.

Reforms in the Turkish National Education System

The current Turkish national education system is the result of several educational reforms implemented throughout several years. The main intention behind educational reform is to improve education and its effectiveness (Aksit, 2007). The main reforms which shaped today's education system in Turkey from year 1923 onwards will be illustrated shortly. In 1923 the Republic of Turkey was founded and the immediate need was seen in initiating a modernization process in several domains including education, whereas this field was particularly valued as education level was considered to be the underlying condition for any kind of reforms. By the end of the Ottoman Empire education did not show any uniformity. Hence, the first attempt to improve education was to give it a centralized character with the Act of Unification of Education in 1924. With the implementation of this law the numerous educational institutions were assembled under the Ministry of Education. Different school types ranging from schools attended by minorities and Islamic schools at various levels were gathered together. As a result, a single authority charged with implementing education policy, taking administrative decisions, recruiting school personnel, preparing a curriculum to be implemented nationwide and designing or selecting appropriate textbooks and materials in line with the curriculum emerged (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004).

At the early years of the Turkish Republic the structure of the educational system consisted of a five-year primary education and a six year secondary education which was divided into two stages: the first stage covering grades six to eight and the second stage lasting to grade eleven (Yüksel, 2012). This structure changed with the National Education Basic Act in 1973. The structure of primary education was extended from five to eight years with grades one to five as its first stage and grades six to eight as lower secondary education. Secondary education consisted of four years ending at grade eleven, while an optional preparatory class was inserted into the system. With the expansion of compulsory education from five to eight years in

1997, the education structure changed again. Compulsory education was intended to take place in form of eight-year primary education and primary-schools and lower secondary schools were united in primary education. The structure of secondary education did not change at that time but its duration was increased to four years in 2005, so that secondary education now ends after the twelfth grade (Aksit, 2007; Yüksel, 2012). A curricular reform was also initiated that year. Amongst others the objectives were to abandon teacher centered teaching, to favor authentic assessment, to start language teaching in primary-schools and to enrich education via information and communication technology (Aksit, 2007; Şahin, 2011).

The History of English as a Foreign Language in Turkey

The history of teaching English as a foreign language as part of the national education system was unsurprisingly also shaped by the abovementioned reforms while specific reform to improve the circumstances for teaching and learning English were also made. National education in Turkey went through several phases in the process of integrating English into the education system and teaching it in a planned manner. The changes were mainly initiated because of political and socioeconomic influences in line with globalization (Kırkgöz, 2007). These reforms and advancements will be discussed while portraying the journey of English in Turkish schools and higher education. Because of the advantages of knowing a foreign language in Turkey, teaching of foreign languages have been given priority by both public and private schools and the Turkish education system has undergone some changes by means of trial and error throughout time. In general, the evolvement of English in schools can be arranged into three phases. The first phase covers educational changes up to the educational reforms of 1997, the second phase initiated by these reforms ends in 2005, and the third and last phase was introduced by additional reforms with regard to the process to become a member of the European Union from 2005 onwards (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004; Kırkgöz, 2007).

To start with the first phase and the early roots of English instruction in Turkish schools, foreign languages were implemented in secondary schools after the Act of Unification of Education was passed in 1924. In general, the first phase mainly

centers on the spread of English in the Turkish education system while English surpassed both German and French as a foreign language later on. The first years of foreign language education in general was defined by a focus on reading and translations (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). Thus, the communicative aspect of foreign languages was mainly neglected. Access to foreign language was no longer a privilege but dissatisfaction with the foreign language education outcomes was voiced. That is why in the 1980s, the so called Anatolian high schools were established as a form of vocational training schools to compensate for the inequalities which aroused because of the differences in the effectiveness of foreign language education among private and state schools. Private schools prioritized foreign language teaching and therefore a high amount of time was allocated to English instruction. As private schools are not free of charge, classroom equipment and teaching material shortage did not constitute a problem in these institutions, while qualified native and non-native language teachers were more likely to be employed. In other words, the four year Anatolian high schools were mainly attended by students who could not afford to go to private schools but who nevertheless wanted to improve their English proficiency. Preparatory English classes were integrated into these schools and more enriched English courses were offered until graduation. In addition, the medium of instruction in science courses was determined as English, so that students were provided with additional language input (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2001; Kırkgöz, 2007). Following the first Anatolian high schools, several others were incorporated into the education system as the wish for quality English increased in society. But the augmentation of Anatolian high schools and the admission of several students into these schools were accompanied by some problems. Classes were overcrowded, and there were not enough teachers to meet the demand. Another problem which was encountered was the lack of teachers to teach science in English. Next, there was the fact that the university entrance exam was administered in Turkish, so that students who were familiarized with specific terminologies in English struggled in the university entrance exam (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2001; Kırkgöz, 2007). As a result, the Ministry of Education decided that Math and science lessons should be taught in Turkish in 2002 if unless specifically desired otherwise (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kızıltepe, 2005).

With the education reform in 1997, compulsory education was increased from five to eight years and changes in the ELT (English Language Teaching) curriculum were made as English was introduced into elementary schools. Students at the fourth grade had to start learning a foreign language along which English was preferred by parents. Hence, students were confronted with English at a much younger age (Kırkgöz, 2007). With the transition to the 4+4+4 education system in 2013, English language learning started to be taught from grade two onwards, so that the age of English learners was decreased to seven. Curricular changes aimed at improving students' low proficiency levels in English which was considered as the result of insufficient time allocated to English language teaching, overcrowded classes and ineffective teaching methods employed by teachers (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004).

Other curricular reforms followed after 2005 mainly because Turkey wanted to join the European Union through which the need to provide English language teaching with a standard framework to approximate European standards came up (Kırkgöz, 2007). The latest form of the English curriculum is structured around the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for language learning (Mirici, 2015). Following the CEFR, English is approached as a language rather than a lesson, so that the communicative nature of the language is stressed. Students on the other hand are expected to be autonomous and active learners who can assess themselves. In this context, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is encouraged to be used for self-assessment. The same trend is followed in higher education institutions.

In terms of higher education, English can be encountered as a medium of instruction which contributes to the language proficiency of students or it can be incorporated into higher education in form of an obligatory course (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). Students who enter English medium universities might have difficulties in adapting to or learning English if the procedure followed to get accepted by a university is taken into consideration. Students take the university entrance examination which is divided into different components covering different subject areas. While students who are interested in becoming English teachers, translators or who want to study English or American literature are required to take the language component of the entrance exam, students who are not interested in professions directly related with that language do not have to do so. But these students are required to know and speak

English if they are accepted by an English medium university. Thus, they have to compensate for their language deficiencies within preparatory school at university in order to be able to survive in their relevant departments. The struggle former high school students who have specifically prepared for the language component of the university exam face are also huge (Yıldırım, 2010). These problems are related to the discrepancy between the structure of the English exam taken and the real-life requirements to use English. The exam in question consists of multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks items related to grammar and vocabulary knowledge, translations, reading comprehension questions and dialogue and sentence completion. This indicates that the three skills of speaking, listening and writing are not assessed in this exam. An evaluation of this situation illustrates that students who cannot express themselves in English might become future language teacher candidates. The students affected by these circumstances voice that they do not consider themselves as prepared for higher education (Yıldırım, 2010). Thus, it is up to the higher education institutions to compensate for present deficiencies and to train qualified language teachers. In this context, it might be useful to recall reforms implemented to improve teacher education and teacher training in general with a specific focus on English language teaching in the context of Turkey.

Teacher Education in Turkey

A brief look at the current teacher education system shows that nowadays the Council of Higher Education supervises universities which on the other hand are responsible for teacher education and training. This training takes place in the relevant departments within universities. Among those departments is also the English language teacher education department which is particularly specialized in training English language teachers. Along with the changing needs of society and the circumstances in foreign language learning and teacher training in Turkey, the structure and curriculum of these departments also altered. Changes and reforms were not limited to the foreign language departments, as problems such as the insufficient number of teachers with regard to population increase, inefficient teacher education which could not meet the demands of society and the lack of a standardized path in preparing future teachers for their career influenced the

approach to teacher education and training in Turkey in general (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003).

In the early years of the Turkish Republic there were two routes students could take to become teachers. As the circumstances, needs and the societal profiles were different in the rural and urban areas of Turkey, two teacher education schools emerged. One of these schools prepared primary teachers for urban areas, while the other was responsible to train teacher for the rural areas. Here, it has to be stated that none of these schools were on a higher education level but that they constituted secondary schools. In the 1940s the Village Institutes came into existence and became the showcase for the education of village teachers (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). Next to the improvement of people's education level in the rural places, the graduates of the Village Institutes were also trained in fields like agriculture in order to contribute to the progress of the villages. In 1946 these institutes were closed due to controversial assertions about the institutes discrediting the traditions and values of the Republic. In short, political discordance led to the abolishment of these institutes (Toköz Göktepe, 2015). In line with these developments, teacher training colleges in urban cities such as Istanbul and Ankara emerged. Gazi Teacher School in Ankara was the main artery to provide the country with teachers. With regard to the increasing importance of and interest in foreign languages which resulted in a demand for more qualified teachers of foreign languages, in 1938 these colleges founded their own foreign language departments including English, French and German, the three popular foreign languages at that time (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). Afterwards, Gazi Teacher School founded the Gazi Institute of Education in 1946 which holds the title of the first teacher education institute (Nergis, 2011). Within this institute foreign language teachers of French started to be trained in 1941, while English and German departments were added in 1944 and 1947 respectively. Over the years the duration of the teacher education provided countrywide was increased to three and later to four years by 1978 (Ulum, 2015). Later on, the aforementioned institute was transformed into what is known as today's Gazi University and within Gazi University the Faculty of Education was founded in 1982 (Nergis, 2011). Such an evolvment was not exclusive to this single incident, as teacher education improved continuously with regard to the duration of education and its quality. Thus,

nationwide education faculties replaced teaching departments (Küçükahmet, 1986; Ulum, 2015).

The advancement in teacher education stands in close relation with reforms implemented in 1973, 1982, 1997 and 2005 (Yüksel, 2012; Ulum, 2015). As Yüksel (2012) points out the changes in the national education system had a direct impact on the teacher education as provided by higher education. This effect is proven as correct if one considers the match in the years reforms were introduced to the national education system and the changes made in teacher education. Thus, the Basic Law for National Education was accepted in 1973 and within the same year teacher education was increased to higher education level and earning a higher education degree became a requirement to become a teacher (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003; Yüksel, 2012). Beforehand, numerous institutions assumed an obligation in training teachers. Previously teacher education took place right after primary education within teacher training and higher teacher training schools which lasted from grade six to twelve and which therefore resembled secondary schools, or in institutes of education which could be attended upon high school graduation and took two or three years to graduate from (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003, Küçükahmet, 1986; Seferoğlu, 2004).

After teacher education has been transferred to higher education level, the whole responsibility of teacher education and training was conferred to universities in 1982 with the Higher Education Law. Thus, the Ministry of National Education was no longer in charge and universities became autonomous (Küçükahmet, 1986; Yüksel, 2012). In addition, all of the different types of teacher education institutions were gathered and unified under the higher education system and two year or four year faculties of education were founded depending on whether they trained elementary or branch teachers. It was in 1989 when all types of teacher education were raised to four years (Altan, 1988; Yüksel, 2012). In 1997, compulsory education was increased to eight years. This asked for more teachers to be recruited at schools, and for more competent teachers. Consequently, to increase the quality of teacher training, teacher education programs were altered (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003; Ulum, 2015; Yüksel, 2012). In this context the Council of Higher Education and the World Bank run the Development of National Education Project (Çakıroğlu &

Çakıroğlu, 2003; Toköz Göktepe, 2015). The main aims were to restructure education faculties in order to facilitate teacher training, and to provide education programs with a standard curriculum which emphasizes methodology courses and practice teaching, so that graduate teachers are able to meet the demands at schools, while in the following years focus shifted to improving pre-service teacher education. For this purpose, books and other materials for different branches were developed, technological tools were financed for education faculties, the content of courses were revised, focus on teaching methodology was increased, and graduate students were sent abroad to pursue their doctoral or master's studies to compensate for staff shortage within the scope of this project. Moreover, next to focusing on methodology courses, teaching practice which was also considered as neglected in previous years was moved to a more central status within the programs. To ensure that the future teachers are fully prepared for their professions, additional courses like Classroom Management, Instructional Planning, and Computer and Instructional Technology were included into the programs (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003; Grossman, Onkol, & Sands, 2007; Toköz Göktepe, 2015). Thus, the number of the courses aiming to prepare student teachers for the profession was increased in 2005.

The departments of foreign languages flourished under the influence of the aforementioned reforms. Foreign language teachers used to be graduates of upper secondary school or individuals who were able to speak a foreign language as they came from abroad up to the 1930s (Köksal & Şahin, 2012). But due to teacher shortage, graduates of different fields which were not in direct relation to foreign languages worked as foreign language teachers. Thus, graduates of foreign schools, or language, history or geography faculties were given pedagogic formation and considered foreign language teachers (Ulum, 2015). Later, the importance to train informed and qualified foreign language teachers was recognized so that a more systematic approach to foreign language teacher education was preferred. Later on, two year Foreign Languages High Schools were set up in 1938 to prepare students as foreign language high school teachers. Gazi Education Institute opened relevant foreign language departments, while the English department followed in 1944. In 1962 the foreign language departments were decided to end in three years, while in 1978 they were increased to four years. With the reforms of 1982, education faculties

replaced teaching departments. In 1997 and 2006 changes in the curriculum of the English Language Teaching program were made and the ELT programs within Education Faculties gained their current shape. The need to change was due to the increase of compulsory education in 1997 which asked for more language teachers and the decision to start English teaching starting from grade two onwards by 2005 which meant that teachers had to be able to deal with and teach English to young learners. As a result, each and every ELT department has to implement a preset four year program which consists of compulsory and elective courses, while the departments have freedom of choice if it comes to the course books, materials, elective courses to be offered or type of assessment used within the program (Ulum, 2015).

In general, the curriculum includes courses related to general knowledge, linguistic and pedagogical competence, and teaching practice. To follow the routes an English teacher candidate has to take until graduation, freshmen are required to take courses which aim to improve each language skill. Courses such as Oral Communication Skills, Contextual Grammar, Advanced Reading and Writing, and Listening and Pronunciation are put in the center to increase language competence at the beginning years. As sophomores, varying courses such as Approaches to ELT, Language Acquisition, Linguistics, Research Methods, ELT Methodology, and Literature courses are offered. Juniors have to take additional ELT methodology courses, including Teaching English to Young Learners and Teaching Language Skills. In the senior year courses like Translation, Material Adaptation, Development or Testing and Evaluation are offered but the main emphasis is given to practice teaching. Practice teaching takes place within schools so that teacher candidates have the chance to 'rehearse' teaching among real students within a real classroom and observe different dynamics related to teaching (CoHE, 2007). The restructured teacher education program consists of 50-60% of content knowledge and skills, 25-30% of pedagogic formation and 15-20% of general culture. Courses which aim to prepare teacher candidates in pedagogic terms cover courses such as Introduction to Education, Educational Psychology, Classroom Management or Counseling. The courses related to providing general culture are amongst others Written and Oral Turkish, Computer and Instructional Technology, History or Second Foreign

Language courses (CoHE, 2006). In short, the reforms also provided the departments of foreign languages with a uniform curriculum, whereas future English teachers had the chance to enter their workplaces having acquired more experience in teaching (Seferoğlu, 2006). By the 2006-2007 educational year, the ELT departments' programs consisted of four years made up of both compulsory and elective courses. While the universities have to follow the curriculum set by the Council of Higher Education, they still have the freedom to determine how to implement the curriculum.

Current Problems in ELT in Turkey

Despite the improvements and development with regard to teacher training and the teacher training programs some problems could not be solved and remained while new ones also emerged. Thus, research based on English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) with regard to its curriculum and interviews conducted with program directors and student admission test scores to the faculty clearly showed that shortcomings with respect to language, culture, instruction, assessment and professionalism exist when it comes to meeting international standards and expectations (Mahalingappa & Polat, 2013). Thus, further improvements and reforms are required to increase the quality of education especially in these fields. In addition, the quality of faculty members is also questioned. It turned out that the number of qualified faculty members is limited anyway and that in addition unqualified members have already ensured their workplace in faculty (Mahalingappa & Polat, 2013). Mahalingappa and Polat (2013) also managed to carve out the view of program directors in relation to different components of faculty. Thus, directors consider their programs as sufficient to train teachers but at the same time they refer to problematic aspects such as instructors teaching courses which are not within their field of expertise. Furthermore, they mentioned that the students who get enrolled in the program are not fully prepared for it as they demonstrate a rather limited proficiency level of English and consequently face difficulties in managing courses.

In relation with this point, another implementation which turns out to be problematic in long term when it comes to prepare proficient language teacher candidates for the

language teaching program is that people who majored in an unrelated field to ELT have amongst others the chance to work as language teachers. Thus, the Ministry of Education allows graduates of letters to get a teaching certificate by taking pedagogical courses in the faculties of education. The origin of the dilemma to enroll non ELT graduates as English teachers in schools goes back to the under-supply of teachers to meet the increasing demand for English in line with its increasing importance. Thus, with the increase in the number of years the faculty of education consists of, the demand for teachers increased automatically and the English teacher certification was provided out of necessity (Seferoğlu, 2004). In this context, another dilemma exists, as English is one of the branches with a high demand for teachers but still graduates of different departments can be encountered as language teachers (Aydın & Başkan, 2005). Also, graduates of departments which do not have any link to ELT were appointed as English teachers just because they were students of an English-medium university. As a whole, alternative ways to meet the demands were taken whereas priority was given to quantity over quality (Seferoğlu, 2004). Thus, in some way the need to provide students with qualified and well-trained teachers was neglected. Seferoğlu (2004) portrayed the perception of Turkish teacher candidates of English on English language teachers who were alternatively certified as such. Her study shows that these teachers are considered to be incompetent and expected to encounter problems while teaching which is explained by the quality and shorter time span of the training they receive and the lacking in-service training at schools which renders valuable experience.

Another reason why instruction quality suffers in Turkey might be related to the way English teachers are appointed to state schools. In this context the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) (TR: Kamu Personel Seçme Sınavı) which takes place once a year and which was designed to select state civil servants in general comes into play. Starting from the year 1999 onwards, this exam was also used to appoint teachers who also hold the status of civil servants in Turkey. Thus, graduate students firstly have to take this examination and try to get a high score on it while 100 is the top score to get. A high score is important as those on the top ranks among participants are given priority in the process of enrollment. The problem mentioned in this procedure is related to the content of the examination. Up until 2013, the

examination consisted of two different parts. The first part is used to assess the general knowledge and general skills of future teachers. This means that 120 multiple choice questions about Turkish, Maths, Geography, Turkish Culture and Civilizations, Atatürk's Principles and Revolutions, Citizenship Knowledge and current issues both in Turkey and all around the world are asked. The second part consists of 80 questions in total which aim to measure participants' knowledge about educational sciences. Thus, for many years English teachers were appointed based on their general and educational knowledge, while there was no attempt to measure whether the person who has a high general educational or general knowledge is in fact competent in his or her field of teaching. To compensate for this problem, a third part was added to the KPSS in 2013. This part consists of 50 questions which assess teachers' branch knowledge which is divided into the components of Grammar, Linguistics and Literature. In this context, it has to be mentioned that language skills such as listening, speaking and writing are not assessed, just as it is the case in the university entrance exam (ÖSYM, 2012, 2016)

Getting a high score on this examination and being appointed does not guarantee a permanent position as a teacher. Thus, during the first year in the profession one is labeled as a teacher candidate and has to master a probation period. Once the first year is mastered successfully, teacher candidates can get the title of a regular teacher. Up until 2014, teacher candidates were required to take probationary teacher education out of working hours which was divided into basic education, preparatory education and applied education and which was regarded to be passed if one was successful in the final examination taken following the education. The main aim of this education was to familiarize teacher candidates with the obligations of and regulations related to being a civil servant, and to help them settle into their profession (Yüksel, 2012).

Later on, this education was not considered a necessity. Thus, starting from 2014 graduates have to first take the KPSS, get appointed as a teacher candidate, master one year of probation successfully and pass only one examination which measures teacher candidates knowledge about aspects such as regulations within the Ministry of Education or educational sciences (TR: Asli Öğretmenliğe Geçiş Sınavı) to fully qualify as a teacher. Most recently, teacher candidates who were appointed after the

year of 2014 are interviewed to qualify as a permanent teacher in state schools. It is stated that the purpose of these interviews is to assess teacher candidates' abilities to comprehend, summarize, express and reason; communication skills, self-confidence and persuasion skills; readiness to accept scientific and technological progress, and teaching qualities and representational skills in public. To assess teacher candidates with regard to the criteria listed the MoNE forms a committee. Teacher candidates who get a mean score of 60 following the examination and interview can call themselves permanent teachers (Official Gazette, 2015). In 2016, a high score on the KPSS became only a requirement to be invited to interviews which now are the only instrument to decide whether a graduate has the abilities and skills to become a teacher in his or her field. What strikes attention is that, throughout the years a final system on how to recruit teachers has not been established since now, so that changes over changes are implemented in the shortest time periods.

Recent Problems in the Turkish National Education System

In line with the presented problematic aspects related to the process of student teachers' acceptance to universities and teacher preparation in universities, education policies and inequalities in living conditions generated some problems in language education and the education system in general. To address some criticism with regard to the education policy in Turkey, Şahin (2011) reminds of the fact that most of the changes which aimed to improve the education system from the 90s onwards were implemented in short term without detailed consideration of each and every decisive component. In addition, he points out to the lack of a unified, strong and up-to-date education philosophy. In short, he claims that most of the attempted reforms did not succeed in addressing and solving the main problems and challenges confronted within the education system.

To provide a general understanding of the current state of the outcomes of the Turkish education system, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores can be made use of. PISA launched by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) assesses 15 years old students from all of the 35 OECD countries and 37 partner countries. The PISA Test measures reading,

mathematical, and scientific literacy, while the main aim is to assess whether students have acquired necessary knowledge and skills to master everyday life towards the end of their compulsory education (OECD, 2015). The mean score in science literacy among all countries in 2015 is 493. In the case of Turkey, the mean is 425 and Turkey ranks 52nd among 72 countries. Considering the regions of Turkey and the scores they got, it can be seen that Western Marmara (448), Aegean (443) and Eastern Marmara Region (438) are at the top, while Eastern Black Sea Region (413) where this current study will be conducted, South-eastern Anatolia (387), and Middle-eastern Anatolia (382) scored the lowest. If the scores different high school types got is analyzed, Science (534), Social Sciences (518) and Anatolian High Schools (461) are the most successful. Technical and Vocational High Schools on the other hand which will be examined in this study are among the unsuccessful ones with a mean score of 392.

In terms of reading literacy, Turkey ranks 50th with a mean score of 428, compared to the global mean score of 460. Again two of the most successful regions are Western Marmara (458), and the Aegean Region (446), closely followed by Istanbul (443) and Western Anatolia (441). And again Eastern Black Sea (404) and South-eastern Anatolia (390) and Middle-eastern Anatolia (384) are at the bottom ranks. Again, the rank of high school types does not show any change in terms of reading literacy. Science High Schools (524) are followed by Social Sciences (523) and Anatolian High Schools (463), while Technical and Vocational High Schools (396) occupy one of the low ranks.

Lastly, in terms of mathematical literacy Turkey ranks 50th with a mean score of 420 in comparison to a global mean score of 461. The leading region is the Aegean Region (442), while the bottom ranks are again occupied by the Eastern Black Sea (399), South-eastern Anatolian (385), and Middle-eastern Anatolian (370) Regions. The mean score of Science, Social Sciences, Anatolian and Technical and Vocational High Schools are 537, 504, 454 and 391 respectively (General Directorate of Assessment, Evaluation and Examination Services, 2016, TR: Ölçme, Değerlendirme ve Sınav Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü).

In general, it can be said that Turkey does not score as good as other countries while this outcome is stable since 2006. Furthermore, it can be seen that regions located in

the western part of Turkey are more likely to reach the global mean score and that Science and Social Sciences High Schools manage to pass the global mean scores, compared to for example Vocational and Technical High Schools or regions located in the Eastern part of Turkey. A gap seems to exist within regions and high school types. Thus, Vocational High Schools in the eastern part of Turkey seem to be more disadvantaged.

The same pattern can be observed with regard to EFL. As Doğançay-Aktuna and Kızıltepe (2005) point out urbanization plays a major role in terms of education and language education outcomes. There is a gap among English proficiency in urbanized and rural areas, while at the same time a distinction exists between wealthier and poorer urban areas. Doğançay-Aktuna and Kızıltepe explain this situation with schools being better equipped in urban areas and with higher motivation to master English as a result of factors such as tourism. They conclude that English has not reached all socioeconomic and geographical groups in Turkey due to inequalities related to English instruction. Thus, in respect to language learning, the main problem is the insufficient language proficiency among language learners. As already discussed, the needs assessment conducted by TEPAV and the British Council (2013) demonstrates that the English proficiency of Turkish students is low compared to other countries and that most of the Turkish students lack the skill to somehow communicate in proper English despite being confronted with English from primary education on. The needs assessment also shows that in line with the non-increasing language proficiency, students' motivation also drops. To investigate the language proficiency of Turks, the English Proficiency Index (EPI) can be taken into account. This index provides the progressing language proficiency of adult speakers of English over time (EPI, 2016c). EPI is assumed to be the world's largest ranking of countries as it includes different regions which are Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa and 72 countries in total. In this ranking Turkey is placed among European countries which are 26 in total. According to the EPI of 2016, Turkey is ranked 51st among all of the 72 countries, while it is ranked 25th among the 26 European countries (EPI, 2016d).

The proficiency level of Turks is categorized as very low among possible bands such as very high, high, moderate, low and very low. Thus, Turkey is one of the countries

with the worst language proficiency with an EPI score of 47.89 out of 100. In this context, the very low proficiency level corresponds to CEFR level A2. Some of the skills assigned to countries with very low proficiency are introducing oneself simply, understanding simple signs and giving basic directions to a foreign visitor (EPI, 2016a).

It has to be mentioned that Turkey and Azerbaijan are the only European countries with very low language proficiency, while Russia and Ukraine are the two countries with low language proficiency. If it comes to the countries with very low language proficiency in general, Turkey ranks third among 24 low language proficiency countries. The two countries with low language proficiency which are on top of Turkey are Colombia and Panama in respective order, while Turkey is followed by Tunisia and Guatemala. Other countries which demonstrate a low English proficiency are amongst others Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, Iraq or Venezuela.

If it comes to the progress over time, it can be seen that in 2011 language proficiency was very low, that it increased to low in 2012 and 2013, while following 2014 the proficiency dropped to very low again (EPI, 2016b). Thus, it is not possible to claim that the proficiency level has changed and increased drastically in any way in a 6 year period. The EPI also illustrates regional differences among Turkey. While the English proficiency in Central Anatolia and the Aegean Region is low, it is very low in the Mediterranean, Marmara and Black Sea Region (EPI, 2016d). The former two regions are above the countries average EPI score, while the latter three are under this score. With a score of 49.94 females score better than males (48.28) but nevertheless both sides cannot score as high as the global or European average. Possible reasons for this outcome are stated to be language instruction in the mother tongue, focus on memorizing rules rather than communication, and non-standardized curricula. This situation is contrasted with the language policies implemented in Europe especially in the Nordic countries which are at the top of the ranking demonstrating very high proficiency. Countries such as Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland are the leading ones.

European and the Nordic countries are seen to be more successful in terms of learning English because of the promoted multilingualism. Especially European countries which implement effective language education policies and implement

English into the daily life reach successful outcomes. It is emphasized that the education system does not focus on grammar but on communication, and that exposure to English outside the classroom is held high by the means of English-language media (EPI, 2016b). The countries which follow Nordic countries with high proficiency are amongst others Austria, Germany and Poland. Moderate language proficiency is measured in countries like Slovakia, India, Italy, France and Spain. Some of the low proficiency countries on the other hand are Russia, Japan, China and Mexico.

The scores Turkish learners of English get in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) can also be used to display the general level of language proficiency among the ones taking the test. The TOEFL Test is a measure of academic English proficiency and it consists of four components covering the four language skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening. Each of these components are 30 points each, so that the maximal points to get is 120. The Test and Score Data of 2015 shows that the mean score in the reading, listening, and speaking sections is 19, while the mean in the writing section is 20. Thus, 77 points turns out to be the mean score among the Turks who participated in the TOEFL Test. Among the scores of other European countries, only Armenians scored lower than Turks with an average score of 76, while it has to be mentioned that a direct comparison of countries based on the TOEFL scores might not be appropriate (TOEFL, 2016).

To turn back to the reasons for the located low English proficiency, Turkey is located within the Expanding Circle in which English is not frequently encountered outside of the classroom walls. English is mainly limited to social media and English songs or movies. In addition, disparities in educational chances contribute to the varying language proficiency among urban and rural areas. In this context, private schools also widen this gap. Students who attend private schools are enrolled in more English lessons per week. Büyükkantarcıoğlu (2004) also claims that compared to state schools, private schools use more qualified course books as they have the opportunity to abandon course books dictated by the MoNE, recruit more qualified teachers, provide a wide range of teaching materials to choose from, use more motivating and effective teaching methods, and do not arrange overcrowded classes.

Following these circumstances, a needs assessment survey conducted by TEPAV and the British Council (2013) indicates that 11% of the Turkish students do not consider English instruction at school as effective enough, so that they take private lessons to improve their English. The fact that students whose families' income levels are high are more likely to take private lessons strikes attention. This indicates that the socioeconomic status of the students also influences the English proficiency level by providing some students with a higher chance for improvement. Only 7% of families who earn a minimum wage or less send their children to private lessons, while 23% of high earning families also do so.

Apart from the presented reasons, problems located within language education itself also leads to low English proficiency. Grammar-based lessons and classroom layouts which do not foster communication, special focus on skills and subskills which are going to be tested on formal and standardized tests only which contributes to the neglect of communicative skills, a repetitive curriculum which diminishes students motivation, coursebooks and curricula which are criticized by language teachers as they do not take into account students' different needs and levels, but which are teacher-centered and grammar-based, teachers limited and little control and power over the practice of English teaching, and the lack of a smooth transition from grade to grade are the main problems located (TEPAV & British Council, 2013).

As a result, at the end of the language education received in state schools, students learn to give correct answers to teacher questions, they can master grammar exercises but they fail in speaking the language. This happens despite the fact that the majority of English teachers are qualified to make students leave high school with an intermediate proficiency level of English covering all language skills (TEPAV & British Council, 2013).

Looking at the problem of Turkish students' low English proficiency from the perspectives of English teachers provides valuable insights. Firstly, it has to be considered that about 80% of the teachers who were involved in the needs assessment conducted by TEPAV and the British Council (2013) possess the required competence and language proficiency to work as language teachers. At the same time, the same percentage of teachers regards themselves as having an advanced level of English proficiency, whereas it was assessed as lower but still

sufficient for the profession of language teaching. Despite this potential it turned out that English is rather taught as a subject rather than a means of communication. The reasons for such an outcome are listed as the duty to train students to master grammar focused national exams, the tendency to avoid group or pair work to prevent students from speaking Turkish and making noise, unqualified and depersonalized textbooks, the instilled urge to cover all aspects in the coursebook on time, and teachers' incompetence with regard to implementing the favoured communicative approach in the language classroom. Thus, due to various reasons, students end up answering questions, choosing the correct option or completing exercises but as a consequence they are not able to put into practice the content taught by teachers to express themselves in English. The teachers themselves state that they prefer technological tools such as smartboards, videos or the internet over the coursebooks prepared by the MoNE. In addition, the teachers voice that it is mostly the teaching experience which makes them form their unique teaching method next to workshops related to the teaching profession and material preparation based on the internet. It is important to mention that English language teachers consider the pre-service training they received among the least influential and effective factors with regard to being a teacher. In addition, they do not believe that they were trained on how to use and implement dictated coursebooks effectively. Thus, this is another point teachers struggle with (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). The language teachers are not fully satisfied with students' progress. Only 8% indicate to be satisfied, while the majority is partially satisfied with a percentage of almost 62%, and about 30% are not satisfied, at all. Among the reasons for language students to be unmotivated and show only small progress, they place the few chances to encounter and speak to native speakers as the first one, followed by inadequate time for study, inadequate practice in speaking and listening, poor resources for learning, lack of interest in English and unsuitable coursebooks mainly. The areas teachers claim they need to get help in to improve students' progress at most, are methods or ways to encourage students to use the English language; making students use English in the language classroom, fostering pair and groupwork in class, teaching crowded classes, using technological devices for teaching purposes and teaching young learners.

Attribution Research

The first step taken in relation to attribution research was to establish an attribution theory. Among others, especially Lewin (1935), Atkinson (1957), Heider (1958), Jones and Davis (1965), Rotter (1966), Kelley (1973; Kelley et al., 1980) and Weiner (1986) contributed to the establishment of attribution theory with their valuable ideas. These researchers concentrated on identifying antecedents, consequences, and ways of changing attributions.

Theories of Attribution

Students who did not succeed in a course, people who struggle to solve any task or sport athletes who managed to improve their performance all wonder how each event occurred and what the reasons behind these occurrences were. In each of the demonstrated cases curiosity is not the sole reason to do so. By searching for the origin of events people try to create and obtain a stable environment in which they are in charge and in control. This means that while incidents can be regarded as facts, the explanations and assumed causes underlying them are considered a necessity in order to be able to make sense of and live with these facts. In other words, if desired outcomes are achieved, knowing the causes of these provide us with the chance to make pleasant experiences again, while knowing the reasons behind unwanted outcomes allows us to avoid its recurrence (Heider, 1958). Thus, attributions made to explain a daily event are a central part of our lives. At early times, attribution theory and related research was located within social psychology and aimed at explaining other's behavior by taking into consideration perceived causes (Hewstone, 1989). In this context, Fritz Heider is acknowledged the status of being the founder of attribution theory; as his ideas were taken up and worked on by other researchers in order to generate new models of attributions and to introduce alternative routes to approach attributions. Following Heider, researchers such as Jones and Davis, and Harold Kelley added to the field of attribution theory, whereas Bernard Weiner provided attribution theory with its current shape. To demonstrate how Weiner's attribution theory, which established itself as the most applied theory on attribution

(Graham, 1991) emerged throughout the years, a historical description follows starting with Heider's contributions.

In the 1920s, Fritz Heider first focused on a theory aiming to explain object perception. This theory, firstly described in his dissertation, tries to explain the interaction among real objects and sensory information and how as a consequence objects are perceived the way they are (Malle, 2011). In other words, he asks the question why people see what they see while in fact it is only the sunlight which enters the eye. Heider describes objects as "real, solid objects with properties of shape and color, things placed in particular positions in real space, having functional properties making them fit or interfere with our purposes, and in general defining their place in the space of means-end relations" (Heider, 1958, p. 21). At the same time, he emphasizes that objects in contrast to persons, are not able to act upon the perceiver in a positive or negative manner. Thus, although objects can be regarded as neutral representations in our mind which do not affect people in a specific way, people are able to make sense of certain qualities of them. Depending on factors such as light reflections and sense organs, people form attributions which in this context stands for "a process that generates inferences of the relatively invariant qualities of things from the characteristic variance patterns they cause in their media" (Malle, 2011, p. 73). In other words, the sensory information people get, help them perceive and make sense of the objects and their functions.

Following his model of attribution for object perception, Heider later developed his model of person perception grounding it on his former ideas. Now, his focus was on explaining how people locate intentions of others although their specific thoughts which led to an action are not observable. In his latter model, Heider (1958) examined the place of attributions within interpersonal relations while pointing out that studies regarding interpersonal relations have mainly centered around personality traits and personality structure so far. That is why he suggests focusing on the relation itself. As the term implies and as Heider puts it, interpersonal relations focus on at least two people and how these perceive each other, what they expect from each other or how they make sense of and react to each other's actions. As it was the case in object perception, attribution is also ascribed a central role in person perception, whereas the varying nature of objects and persons is emphasized

and portrayed by Heider. Heider underlines that besides having certain static qualities such as color or shape, persons in contrast to objects also can act pursuing specific intentions or aims, they have abilities, feelings, desires, beliefs, and they can interact with their environment (Heider, 1958). This indicates that in an interpersonal relation, people have to consider the other person's assumed feelings, thoughts and perceptions in line with the actual behavior demonstrated. A reaction follows after the behavior and the situation in which it was demonstrated is analyzed under the consideration of the stated aspects. In short, the presented features show that person perception consists of a much more complex process, as the number of influential variables and the behavioral input provided by the interaction partner is higher. In line with this increase, the amount of possible attributions to explain the behavior of another person also rises.

In an experiment conducted by Heider and Simmel (1944) participants were shown a moving picture-film in which three different geometric shapes and a rectangle whose door could be opened and closed were presented. During this film, the geometric shapes moved in and around the rectangle at varying speed. When asked to write down what happened in the film, only one of the 34 participants explained the film while referring to the specific names of the geometric shapes. The rest of the participants considered the geometric shapes to be persons or rarely birds. Thus, in contrast to telling that a triangle approached the rectangle, participants stated that a person was moving towards the room. This shows that people tend to assume that the objects observed have intentions and motives. This assumption or attribution on the other hand indicates people's urge to comment on and explain what they see. In this context, the term Heider (1958) refers to as naïve or in other words common sense psychology is of importance. According to him, naïve psychology is concerned with what our intuitions and reflections tell us at first in a given situation. Thus, based on our initial efforts to make sense of an incident, we try to understand our social environment and chose the appropriate reaction to give. The importance of naïve psychology in interpersonal relations is prevalent as each and every person automatically gets involved in developing ideas to understand people and contexts in everyday life. As a result, these ideas guide our future actions and understanding of other people which facilitate the process of predicting what to expect from people in

long term. What Heider (1958) emphasizes is that naïve psychology provides us with “unformulated or half-formulated knowledge of interpersonal relations” (p. 4) and that scientific studies building upon this intuitive knowledge can shed light on and help to theorize interpersonal relations by proving the common-sense explanations made by individuals. In short, Heider assumes people to be naïve psychologists who want to make sense of and be able to control their social environment by locating possible causes of every kind of life experience. Thus, hypotheses about other people’s behaviors are formulated and tested for this purpose. As Heider (1958) puts it:

It is an important principle of common-sense psychology, as it is of scientific theory in general, that man grasps reality, and can predict and control it, by referring transient and variable behavior and events to relatively unchanging underlying conditions, the so-called dispositional properties of his world (p. 79).

The concept of naïve psychology brings along the idea that each individual is shaped by certain characteristics which as a whole are referred to and help us in the process of understanding people in our surrounding and reacting to them accordingly. One of the mentioned characteristics which influence the individual is life space which connotes to one’s knowledge about the environment and the events taking place in it. Affect is another factor. As people are affected by their environment as a whole, they judge outcomes as either being positive or negative and later try to locate the cause behind the experienced situation. This leads us to the process of attributing causal explanations to events. In this context, the concepts such as can, try, want or ought come into play. Discussing whether an outcome such as success or failure has or has not occurred depends on whether the people involved were or were not able to perform a specific action, whether they have or have not tried to change or achieve an outcome, whether one was or was not motivated, and whether the outcome was intended or not (Heider, 1958). To refer to the concept of can as explained by Heider (1958), it is regarded as a stable trait of a person. A person will perform an action if he or she can do so. Can in this context correlates to ability. What is emphasized is that it is also necessary to try in other words to invest effort. Thus, if a person can but does not try to perform an action; the potential of can has no influence at all.

Heider (1958) points out that while trying to explain incidents, both unchanging properties of persons such as abilities and character and also variable personal aspects such as emotions or wishes play a role. Based on whether the properties or

aspects of incidents or behaviors are attributed to a person or not, the person is either held responsible for, blamed for, or pitied because of an event and its outcomes. This is mainly based on the perception and interpretation of whether the causes for an occurred event are located within a person or the environment itself. In addition, the judgment of events varies based on the correlation of perceived causes. Thus, if one considers a person as able to perform a certain action, this indicates that the main determinant is the person itself. If it is the case that a person is regarded as able because he or she has managed a certain task but that at the same time the task to be mastered was easy in nature, the person is not seen as the main contributor. Thus, perceptions might change based on the interplay of possible attributions for outcomes. Next to task difficulty as an environmental property, the role of luck also changes attribution processes. This indicates that if a person succeeds once in a specific task, the tendency to explain it with luck is higher and more plausible than when a person demonstrates permanent success. In short, there are three possibilities to explain an incident. The first one is to relate an outcome to a person, the second one is to look for the cause in the environment, and the last one is to see both the person and the environment as the trigger of an action. Finally, based on the preferred explanations reactions may also vary.

To sum up, in line with the outcomes of actions people feel the urge to attribute causes to these and to make sense of why people behaved the way they did or how they ended up with experiencing success or failure. While trying to satisfy this urge, attributions are formed following a certain procedure. Thereby, the individual firstly addresses what the source of an action was, what role chance played within the process, and whether the event was controllable or not. If the reason is located within a person, new directions to make sense of a situation emerge. Thus, questions related to the real intention of the person arise. Once the intention is agreed upon, the motives the person whom one is interacting with are investigated and possible answers are considered. The actions of people are judged based on the interpretation of stated factors such as these people's abilities, luck, or task difficulty. At the end of the day, it is this sequence of thoughts and ideas that are used to make sense of actions experienced, to predict future actions, or to guide people's and one's own actions.

The main influence of Heider's ideas in the field of research was the differentiation between internal and external attributions which researchers took up and focused on later on. In the process of explaining other's behaviors we might see internal causes such as personality traits, beliefs or motives; or external causes which are not directly related to the actor as the main trigger of an action. Heider's differentiation between difficulty, luck, trying, being able, and wanting to do something is considered to be influential for the development of Weiner's later attribution theory on success and failure (Hewstone, 1989).

Heider himself did not develop a theory of his own but other researches took up his contributions and ideas and came up with their own theories. Jones and Davis (1965) for example formulated their own explanation of the origination and functioning of attributions related to intentional behavior of others and developed the so-called Correspondent Inference Theory. Among the concepts of internal and external attributions, Jones and Davis put emphasis on internal or in other words dispositional attributions in their theory. This is in relation with the fact that their theory favors the idea that there is a match between an observed person's behavior and his or her personality characteristics. In other words, if a person is perceived to be rude this personality trait ascribed to the person makes it easier to predict future actions of this person. Thus, if a rude behavior is demonstrated by the same person, a correspondence between rudeness as a stable personality trait and the following rude behavior is made. David and Jones state that a personality trait is a reason enough to make people stop looking for further explanations for another person's behavior. Knowing that a person acts rude because he is rude, and that the actual behavior was intentional and can be observed in various setting is a satisfying explanation. The information used to establish a correspondence between personality and behavior are labeled as choice, social desirability, intention and non-common effects. A behavior is perceived as the result of internal factors if it reflects the choice of the actors themselves. Social desirability concerns whether a person acts according to the rules and norms of society. People want to be accepted in society and normally conform to the norms; therefore, a person who does not do so is seen to present one of his or her personality traits. Thus, in contrast to normal behavior, behavior that is undesirable reveals more about a person. A possible link between personality and behavior is

also created based on whether an action was intended or not. If a behavior is intentional, it is more likely to relate to the personality rather than external circumstances. In the process of determining intention non-common effects play a role. The behavior of a person trying to decide among two actions which are similar to each other in terms of their common effects, and a person facing two options which exhibit distinct and unique effects and consequences are judged differently. People are considered to act intentionally, if less non-common effects are involved (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley & Michela, 1980). At the end, the Correspondence Inference Theory focuses on explaining internal attributions made following intentional actions, while it is concerned with how people make sense of other people and their behavior.

It was Kelley who carried on working in the field of attributions and who at the end developed the Covariation Model in 1967. This model is concerned with figuring out whether an observed action occurred due to internal or external circumstances. According to Kelley, there are different types of evidence which have to be considered to draw a final conclusion. These are consensus, distinctiveness and consistency. Consensus provides information whether a reaction is performed by a single person or by a group of people. If a behavior is limited to one person only, there is low consensus and the action can be attributed to the person itself. Distinctiveness concerns whether a certain behavior occurs in various or specific situations. If an individual deviates from a common and frequent behavior in a particular situation; the behavior cannot be attributed to the person but to environmental circumstances. Thus, it answers the question whether a person's behavior in a specific situation shows differences in other situations. Lastly, consistency provides information about whether a behavior is performed frequently or rarely. A polite behavior of a person being polite all the time is explained by the politeness of that person (Kelley, 1973; Kelley & Michela, 1980). Next to the types of evidence, it is required to base one's judgment on numerous observations made at different points in time and under varying circumstances. So that the attributions made are a result of processing the covariation of all the observations made over time related to an action. In the process of judging the motives behind a behavior multiple necessary causes or multiple sufficient causes are taken into account. Multiple

necessary causes imply that more than one reason leads to make an action happen. Thus, for example in order to be good at speaking a language, both language aptitude and effort are influential. Multiple sufficient causes imply that a single cause among possible alternatives might suffice to explain a behavior. The only reason for a person failing an exam might be the lack of effort (Kelley & Michela, 1980). At the end, actions are attributed to personal, environmental or circumstantial causes. This happens after the information types which were consistency, consensus and distinctiveness are assigned as either low or high. An action which is analyzed to be composed of high consistency, low consensus and low distinctiveness is attributed a personal cause, while the combination of high consistency, high consensus and high distinctiveness relates to environmental, and low consistency, low consensus and high distinctiveness to circumstantial causes. In short, Covariation Theory is an attempt to explain how information is processed to arrive at a certain cause on an intrapersonal basis.

The ideas of Heider, Jones and Davis and Kelley helped theories of causal attribution to flourish. All of the theories portrayed so far are concerned with the types of information people have access to, possible causes behavior is attributed to, and the processes undergone to arrive from information to explanation. What all have in common is the urge to come up with common sense answers to why-questions (Hewstone, 1989). As mentioned before, Weiner's attribution theory which is of importance for this current study followed these early attempts. Before dealing with Weiner in detail, theories in the field of motivation will be addressed, as Weiner's attribution theory is concerned with both explanations of behavior and the resulting motivation to perform or neglect a certain behavior.

Theories of Motivation

Weiner's attribution theory links attributions for behavior with motivational factors. Therefore, trends which emerged in the field of theories of motivation so far will be discussed briefly at first. Motivation is one of the prerequisites for successful learning (Schunk et al., 2014). Once students are motivated the urge to succeed in all types of learning activities lead students to make use of varying learning strategies

and methods. Furthermore, an increase in persistence on a task, effort invested, systematicity in the learning process, and performance and productivity can be observed due to motivation, as motivated students strive to achieve their goals set. Dörnyei (1998) emphasizes that students of high ability will struggle to achieve preset goals if they lack motivation. In this context, external factors such as a qualified teacher or a relevant curriculum are not sufficient on their own. Vice versa high motivation has the power to compensate for language deficiencies. Most importantly, motivation induces and guides behavior.

To start with Freud's theory of motivation, it can be stated that this theory considers motivation as a form of physical energy originating from peoples' id. An individual embodying a closed energy system was assumed to take action when needs emerged, as the source of the physical energy was regarded as needs. People feel the urge to release the energy build up within them, in order to experience the following pleasure of need reduction (Schunk et al., 2014). This theory was seen as insufficient to explain both cognitive and environmental elements, so that theories rooting in behaviorism, such as Thorndike's connectionism, Pavlov's classical conditioning and Skinner's operant conditioning emerged following the early 20ies. What all of these behaviorist theories have in common is that motivation is evaluated in terms of how frequent an event occurs, the responses given in certain situations, the results achieved, and the link between stimulus and response. Another essential point in behaviorist theories is the focus on observable phenomena. Thus, motivation is not perceived to be related with or stimulated by feelings and thoughts in any respect. But as motivation itself cannot be observed and is more of an internal state, mental processes are given priority in cognitive theories which emerged opposing behaviorist ones. As a result, cognitive theories of motivation are centered on attributions, affects, perceptions, values, goals and also social comparisons. In this respect, it becomes clear that attributions are the outcomes of cognitive processes, and attribution theory is located within cognitive theories. Next to these, arousal theories which combine cognitive and behaviorist elements do also exist. Thus, motivation to demonstrate a behavior is seen as the outcome of affect and emotions. The influence of affects on motivation is not neglected (Schunk et al., 2014). Current motivation theories on the other hand agree on some general themes. Motivation is

agreed upon to generate behavior whereas the processes involved are explained differently. In addition, motivation is seen as being shaped by cognitions, behavior and affect. Motivational beliefs such as attributions, interest, goals, and self-efficacy are constructed by the learners themselves. It influences and is shaped by learning outcomes, achievement, and self-regulation. In other words, motivation is closely linked with achievement-related outcomes and academic study. Another aspect is the dependence of motivation on different variables. Although motivation is a universal concept, it varies based on peoples' characteristics and the circumstances they live in. Peoples' gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture, and also ability level form their understanding of motivation. In short, motivation is constructed under the influence of personal, social, and contextual variables (Schunk et al., 2014). To summarize the role motivation plays within the classroom, it is the guiding and leading power for the learning of new behavior and it is the factor which determines the performance in previously learned behavior. While it facilitates new learning, learning outcomes achieved through motivation can also make individuals attempt upcoming learning tasks with higher achievement motivation (Schunk et al., 2014).

Expectancy-Value Theories

Another perspective to approach motivation is to dwell on the expectancy of success or failure and the value ascribed to the aimed outcome following a certain action. It is likely that each and every person evaluates how vital or necessary a specific outcome is for themselves and whether they have the qualities and skills to perform a required behavior or action. In this process, two concepts namely expectancy and value are considered before taking the decision to attempt an action or to resign from the early beginning. If individuals believe in their capabilities and expect to be successful, they are more likely to attempt a task; the reverse applies when the individual expects to fail. If at the same time the task is valued next to the expectancy to succeed motivation increases to a greater extent. If a task is valued but success is not expected due to repeated failure, motivation decreases. These examples show that expectancies and values shape engagement and persistence in a task or behavior, achievement outcomes, and future choices. In short, motivation is the result of the

balance between expectancy and value, and it is explained from a cognitive point of view (Schunk et al., 2014).

Among expectancy-value theories, Lewin's level of aspiration (1935) and Atkinson's achievement motivation (1957) have drawn the most attention so far. Lewin named the process of evaluating both expectancies and values to decide whether to perform an action as level of aspiration. In particular, level of aspiration is used to refer to the goals set under the consideration of previous experiences and interplay between expectancies and values. Success experiences contribute to an increase in the level of aspiration to demonstrate a certain performance, while the opposite is to be expected facing failures. Atkinson's achievement motivation concentrates around three components: motive, expectancy and value. According to Atkinson (1957) motive refers to a person's "disposition to strive for a certain kind of satisfaction" (p. 360). In this context, a differentiation between two types of motives is made. The first one is the motive to approach success to maximize satisfaction; the second one covers the motive to avoid failure so that pain is minimized. Both of the motive types aim to experience positive feelings such as pride in accomplishment or the avoidance to feel ashamed or humiliated. If the first type of motive applies, the urge to engage in achievement tasks increases, while in the latter the opposite applies. The expectancy component stands for one's belief about how likely the occurrence of a particular consequence, like success or failure is. This belief is assumed to be influenced by external factors such as task difficulty, the performance of others or current circumstances. Lastly incentive refers to promised reward or punishment at the end of performing or neglecting to perform a certain action (Atkinson, 1957; Atkinson & Feather, 1966). To summarize, if the expectancy for success is greater than for failure, achievement motivation increases and a task is more likely to be attempted and vice versa. In Atkinson's achievement motivation the strength of the motive, the value of the incentive and the expectancy to achieve a certain incentive as a whole determine the strength of motivation. Behavior is considered the result of an approach-avoidance conflict. According to this theory, a person who considers having a certain ability to perform a task but who at the same time does not value the task itself, will not be that motivated to engage in the task. The same is valid for tasks which are valued but for which the appropriate ability lacks. Task difficulty

also influences motivation. Success in difficult tasks is more valued than in easy tasks. It also turned out that achievement motivation is the highest in tasks of intermediate difficulty. Atkinson contributed to the field of attribution research as his theory started to focus on cognitions and beliefs, so that the cognitive paradigm was fostered in favor of the behaviorist one (Schunk et al., 2014). Following Atkinson, Eccles and his colleague Wigfield (Eccles, 2005; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992) revised his model. They approached achievement motivation with a focus on students' expectancies for success, their perceptions of ability, and the value ascribed to an academic task. Thus, they upgraded the cognitive model to a socio-cognitive one and thereby adapted it according to the current trend of considering the concept of motivation from two perspectives (Schunk et al., 2014). Rotter (1966) also shared his ideas on expectancies and following outcomes with relation to reinforcements. In social learning theory, a reinforcement which followed a specific action increases the expectancy for this action-reinforcement sequence to occur again. The more often this sequence is realized, the stronger becomes the expectancy, while the opposite occurs when the sequence fails to apply. The degree to which a person considers to have influenced the occurrence of an outcome affects the strength of expectancies. The explanations of outcomes on an internal or external basis determine the perception of whether reinforcement or punishment was experienced due to personal characteristics or factors which are not under one's control. Thus, getting reinforcement does not suffice to guarantee that a particular behavior is repeated. The individual has also to believe that there was a relationship between one's volition and the reward. According to Rotter's classification, ability and effort as causes for achievement outcomes would be internal, and task difficulty and luck external causes. If a person sees herself or himself as responsible for an outcome and the following reinforcement, the expectancy for the reoccurrence of this sequence rises and expectancy shifts can be observed, while people who believe that external factors led to an outcome are less likely to expect shifts. Someone who believes to have received reinforcement for an outcome which was achieved by luck is more likely to expect to encounter the same outcomes, while a person who sees ability as the source for an outcome believes in the possibility to elicit different outcomes. Hence, the expectancy of reinforcement changes in terms of whether individuals identify their

actions as emerging from their own behavior or from factors out of their control. At the end, the expectancies people hold, dictate which behavior to carry out or not.

Weiner's Attribution Theory

Following the insight given into the field of motivation, Weiner's attribution theory which also counts as an expectancy-value theory (Graham & Weiner, 1996) can be addressed. To summarize the historical development of attribution theory portrayed so far, it can be said that based on Heider's ideas, theories which tried to explain others behaviors like that of Jones and Davis (1965), Rotter (1966) and Kelley (1973) emerged. With the categorization of individuals into internals and externals, research in terms of the structure of causality increased (Weiner, 1985). At the end, it was Weiner who provided attribution theory with its current shape. His work in this field showed that individuals attribute different causes to the events in their lives, so that nowadays attribution theory is concerned with individuals' perceptions about the causes of their own behavior. Weiner's contribution was that in addition to asking the 'why' question, the answer to the 'so what' question started to gain importance (Weiner, 2006). Better to say, once the causes for outcomes are identified with the 'why' question, it is required to think about how exactly these causes impact future behavior and what they trigger in terms of future outcomes. In this respect, it was Weiner who paved the way for research on attributions for success and failure in achievement behavior. In the following part, the ideas behind Weiner's theory and its components will be discussed in detail.

The first reason why Weiner considered an attribution theory as necessary lies within this sentence. The first and most valid reason is people's urge to ask "why" questions. Why did I fail the exam? Why was I successful in the course this time but not the previous times? Why could not I run faster? Why do I need an attribution theory? Why did Weiner consider attribution theory to be necessary? By doing so people want to find answers to make sense and understand their environment. Secondly, attributions help in the process to attempt future actions. Having found a cause for a previous outcome can determine how we will or will not proceed in future. Thus, we might choose to continue a behavior, if a positive outcome was

provoked, while undesired outcomes might lead to make required adjustments. In this context, Weiner (1986) emphasizes that the distinction between positive or negative, or desired and undesired outcomes, and the causes allocated to these outcomes can just and only be made by the individual herself or himself, while these judgements can at the same time vary within single incidents. In addition, he points out to prior theories' unsufficiencies in some respects. Thus, according to Weiner (1986), a theory of motivation should take into account all cognitive processes. While Lewin's, Atkinson's and Rotter's theories shifted away from behaviorism, they mainly focused on the expectancy of goal attainment and thereby neglected other mental processes. With respect to the conception of motivation, Weiner (1974) criticized the focus on the motivation-cognition linkage which is concerned with how motivation triggers learning behavior. He claims that the cognition-motivation linkage is too strong to be neglected. Here, the focus is on individual's thoughts and how these thoughts affect and shape motivation. In other words, he emphasizes amongst others the importance of attributions on motivation. This on the other hand is the reason why previous theories are not perceived as authorized to judge over human conduct by Weiner (1986). Furthermore, he emphasizes that motivation within attribution theory should not be limited to a power which evokes or prevents action, but that it should be considered as a force which also acts upon thoughts and feelings. What Weiner promotes is a theory that deals with the most common, usual and frequent behaviors such as accomplishments. In addition, Weiner is a supporter of the idea that the full range of emotions have to be considered within a theory. In this context, Atkinson's theory can be mentioned. This theory is centered around the emotions of pride and shame, which make people eager to achieve or avoid something. Although Atkinson addressess emotions, his distinction requires to be improved in order to present the full range of emotions which can be encountered in achievement settings. Weiner puts the main emphasis on a theory which sheds light on the relations between thinking, feeling, and acting. Both thoughts and feelings play an important role in the attribution process.

A study conducted by Wong and Weiner (1981) revealed that people are more likely to search for explanations and causes when faced with failure or unexpected outcomes. In this study, university students who were enrolled in an introductory

psychology course were provided with four different scenarios covering the combinations: expected failure, expected success, unexpected failure, or unexpected success in a midterm test. Participants were then asked, if they would ask any questions to themselves after receiving their midterm score and what questions these would be. This experiment aimed not only to reveal that people do engage in attributional search but especially when they do so. It turned out that failure experiences and unexpected results were those which raised more “why” questions and therefore instigated attributional search. In other words, students are likely to scrutinize why they receive low grades in an English course or an English exam or why they can not achieve an adequate level of English proficiency.

Having clarified that spontaneous attributional search does indeed take place, the question of which explanations are provided to failure experiences arises. Although causes for outcomes might be infinite in nature, some of these might be teacher and family support, peers, positive classroom environment, interest, poor teaching, attitude, motivation to learn, revision/practice, strategy, inadequate teaching methods, poor comprehension, distraction and mixed level-classes (Tse, 2000; Williams & Burden, 1999; Williams et al., 2001; Williams et al., 2004). Anyhow, ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck turn out to be the most stated answers in the attribution process for outcomes. Weiner (2010b) states ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck as the achievement attributions for success and failure, and describes the process of the emergence of possible causes in his theory as follows:

Heider and Rotter did not cite one another, although both were concerned with the perceived causes of success and failure and their locus or location. Rotter acknowledged one internal and one external cause, respectively, skill (ability) and luck (chance), whereas Heider intuited three causes (ability, effort, and task difficulty). I combined these two lists and proposed four main perceived causes of achievement outcomes - ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck. Two of these are internal to the person (ability and effort) and two are external (task difficulty and luck) (p. 30).

Despite the fact that the range of possible explanations for achievement outcomes might be wide, both in studies with preset causes or free-response procedure these four causes dominate. Within these four, ability and effort hold a more salient position as they are stated as causes more frequently (Frieze & Weiner, 1971; Weiner, 1986). Weiner (1986) states that in order to allow for comparisons among causes a system of classification is required. Thus, he searched for what ability,

effort, task difficulty, and luck have in common and what differentiated them. In this context, the terms locus, stability, and controllability which represent the causal dimensions in Weiner's attribution theory are of importance.

Causal Dimensions of Weiner's Attribution Theory

Weiner categorized attributions among three different dimensions. In the following these dimensions will be presented.

Locus

It was Heider (1958) who introduced the distinction between the person and environment by stating that an outcome might be the result of either factors lying within the person or factors within the environment. In this respect, Heider is also acknowledged the role of the originator of attributional thinking (Weiner, 1986). Rotter (1966) on the other hand was the one who secured the distinction between internality and externality in terms of causal beliefs. He claimed that an outcome can be explained by making use of internal or external causes. The located causes determine how a person reacts to rewards or reinforcements and what to expect from the future. He also supported the idea that a person can be categorized into being either an external or an internal. This distinction is crucial in terms of whether a person sees himself or herself as in control over occurrences. As a whole, with the categorization of individuals into internals and externals, research in terms of the structure of causality increased (Weiner, 1986). Weiner (1986) supports the idea that there are not two distinct categories of internality and externality to which people are strictly allocated to but that people's explanations might be internal or external in nature, so that the distinction should be perceived as being located on a continuum which provides an idea about the degree of internality and externality. In this context, ability and effort are perceived to be internal, while luck and task difficulty are interpreted as external factors. Bart-Tal and Bar-Zohar (1977) point out that internals are more frequently high achievers in academic setting than are externals. This can be explained with the positive impact of people's locus on motivational and cognitive processes. If people believe that they have the power to control and

manipulate their surrounding and that it is up to them to succeed they will be more motivated to exert effort and benefit from its consequences. The need to facilitate comparisons among causes asked for a more specific distinction between causes. So that later on, the dimension of stability was added next to the locus dimension.

Stability

Weiner and colleagues (Weiner, Frieze, Kukla, Reed, Rest, & Rosenbaum, 1971) voiced the need to introduce a second dimension of causality as one dimension did not suffice to provide the required information about the characteristics of causes. In other words, while ability and effort both share the characteristic of being internal, they do differ in other terms. Ability, for example, is considered a fixed capability of a person, while the effort a person invests in a task might vary based on some circumstances such as the task to be mastered or the amount of student motivation. Thus, the two presented causes share the dimension of internality, but they differ in terms of being constant or variable. This property is referred to as stability. Stability refers to the perceived duration of the cause. It answers the question whether a cause is perceived to have the potential to be changed or eliminated over time. When ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck are classified along the two introduced dimensions, it turns out that ability is both internal and stable, effort is internal and unstable, task difficulty is external and stable, and finally luck is external and unstable (Weiner et al., 1971). Such a categorization displays with which respect causes are similar or different, so that the comparison between outcomes and ascribed causes is facilitated.

Controllability

The third and last dimension of causality which constitutes Weiner's attribution theory is that of controllability. Following the same thought of achieving a clearer distinction between causes, this dimension was considered necessary. While both effort and fatigue are internal and unstable causes, the amount of effort can be altered by the individual. Fatigue on the other hand does not underlie the control of a person. It is not up to the person to control some causes although he or she might feel in

control if it comes to other causes. Although Rosenbaum was the initiator of this dimension, it was Weiner (1979) who labeled this dimension as controllability. Weiner (1986) states that with the introduction of the last dimension the question of whether a cause which is external and thereby is not initiated by the individual can in fact be controllable arises. He overrules this objection by pointing out that an external cause can be controlled by others. Thus, causes do not necessarily have to be controlled by the individual involved. Following this, Weiner's attribution theory refers to controllability as controllable by anyone.

Additional Dimensions

Weiner (1986) mentions that different types of evidence received from factor analytic studies, multidimensional scaling research, and concept formation all support the introduction of the labeled dimensions while in some cases the dimensions of intentionality and globality are also addressed. Intentionality is considered in relation with controllability. The necessity for this dimension emerged because some of the attributions which shared the same dimensions still were different. To put forward, effort and mood, are both internal and unstable in nature although mood is regarded as unintentional, while effort is intentional (Weiner, 1976). Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that failure explained by the lack of effort implies that failure was intended. On the other hand, if a person fails because of strategy use, it would be wrong to assume that poor strategy was applied intentionally, as nobody engages in a task with the desire to fail. Weiner (1976, 1986) responded to this dilemma by stating that rather than intentionality the missing dimension to differentiate specific causes from each other more clearly is that of control. In his theory, Weiner refers to both intention and control as controllability. Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale (1978) were the ones who addressed the globality dimension, claiming a cause is either global or specific. The idea behind this distinction is that some causes can be generalized for different settings, while some remain context specific and context bound. If a student explains failure in an English test with his or her lack of ability in English, this cause is specific as it can not be used to make sense of failure in Mathematics or any other subject. If a student claims to fail because of his or her intelligence, it is more likely that this cause will

be used to account for failure experiences among various contexts and situations. Weiner (1986) does not accept this feature as one dimension in his theory, as he stresses the missing evidence for globality to represent a dimension. In addition, he criticizes those who treat globality as a new feature on its own. He believes that globality can be classified into the dimension of stability and that the dimensions of locus, stability, and controllability suffice to differentiate between the structures of causes.

To summarize, the ideas behind Weiner's attribution theory, attributional search follows an outcome. The possibility that such a search is initiated rises if the outcome is unexpected, negative or important. At the end, causal thinking and its result in form of perceived causes are mainly accepted to have three dimensions only, namely locus, stability and controllability which provide the causes with a meaning. Among the causes for achievement-related outcomes ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck are listed. Each cause is external or internal, stable or unstable, and controllable or uncontrollable. To provide some examples, low aptitude is internal, stable and uncontrollable; permanent lack of study is internal, stable and controllable; bad luck is external, unstable and uncontrollable; and lack of effort is internal, unstable and controllable. Aspects such as previous experiences, hedonic biases, the involvement in an outcome as an actor or observer, and causal rules influence the final cause identified by the individual (Weiner, 1986). Social comparison also influences attributions we make. Frieze and Weiner (1971) provided participants with situations of success and failure and asked them to attribute outcomes to ability, effort, luck or task difficulty. In the situations, the information about past success or failure and other's success and failure were given. Basing attributions on social comparisons, participants were more likely to explain achievements with ability, effort, and luck if an inconsistency between outcomes and other's performances existed. In terms of consistency, attributions to task difficulty were preferred. Information about past performance centers on whether an outcome was achieved consistently or inconsistently. Consistency fosters attributions to ability and task difficulty, while the role of luck diminishes.

Attributional Thinking and (Goal) Expectancy

An introduction to goal expectancy was made in relation to expectancy-value theories beforehand. Although differences within their theories exist, Lewin, Rotter, and Atkinson all share the belief that the expectancy people hold to realize a goal guides the decision to perform an action. To add Heider's (1958) view on expectancies, he states that the perceived ability and the assumed task difficulty determine the amount of effort invested to achieve an outcome. Thus, the combination of beliefs in ability, effort, and task difficulty form the final goal expectancies in relation to achievement.

Level of Aspiration and Expectancy

Level of aspiration refers to an individual's expected effort and performance to be displayed in an upcoming task, based on the past experience about one's performance in a task (Frank, 1935). This definition correlates with Weiner's (1986) observations on research outcomes. Weiner points out that success is accompanied by an increase in the level of aspiration, while failure triggers a decrease, what Lewin's ideas on level of aspiration also support. This indicates that outcomes are strong enough to form expectancies about future performances. Once failure experiences lower expectations to succeed, aspiration level is lowered consequently. This is called typical expectancy shift and is mainly encountered in tasks requiring skills. In tasks in which chance is assumed to play a role, for example like gambling, atypical shifts can also be expected. Hence, future performance is not pulled together with past performance.

Causal Dimensions of Attributions and Expectancy

Social learning theorists claimed that expectancies and expectancy shifts were mainly determined by the cause's dimension of locus (Rotter, 1966). To shed light on this issue from the perspective of attribution theory, Weiner, Nierenberg, and Goldstein (1976) conducted a study in which participants were provided with successive success experiences in a task, and were then asked for perceived causes of success which differed in stability and locus, and expectations for success. Research

outcomes (Weiner, 1974; Weiner & Sierad, 1975) disproved social learning theorists, as they showed that it was stability rather than locus which impacts expectancy and expectancy shifts.

To portray the link between the dimensions of causes and future success experiences, Weiner (1986) conducted a meta-analysis among correlational studies. This analysis allowed for the conclusion that ability attributions following failure experiences decrease success expectancies in the future, while effort or even luck as the perceived cause for failure initiates more positive feelings towards future success experiences. What strikes attention is that effort and ability are both internal causes but that they differ in terms of stability: ability is perceived to be stable while effort is not. Similar results were encountered in Pancer's (1978) study among university students attending a psychology course. In this study which was conducted approaching the end of the semester, students were asked the number of psychology courses they would take in future, and they were asked about the estimated effect of ability and effort on their course performance. Results showed a correlation between the number of courses intended to be taken and the attributions for course performance. If success in a course is explained with ability, this leads to an increase in the number of courses students want to take. Failure explained with low ability decreases the intention to attend further courses. If failure is explained by unstable and success by stable causes, the trend to take additional course in the future can be observed. Weiner (1986) adds to the discussion that stable causes for failure experiences at the same time foster the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. An outcome which is judged as being unchangeable creates helplessness for the future.

Following Fishbein and Ajzen's (1977) statement that behavior is in fact influenced by expectations about future performance, Weiner (1986) concludes that attributions have also an impact on future performance. Thus, causes together with their dimensional features are considered an important factor in relation to forming or changing expectations. Expectations on the other hand, determine the likelihood to perform a task, in other words the demonstration of a certain behavior.

Conclusive Principle of Weiner's Attribution Theory

The general law or fundamental principle Weiner (1986) formulates based on the demonstrated evidence is that the perceived stability of a cause held responsible for a certain outcome designates perceptions of and changes in expectancy for future success or failure. He draws three implications out of this principle. Firstly, outcomes explained by stable causes increase the expectancy of the outcome to be repeated. Secondly, if unstable causes are located, expectancy beliefs do not change or different outcomes are expected in the future. Lastly, outcomes resulting from causes perceived as stable are more likely to reoccur than those which are unstable in nature.

What is of importance is that the causes ascribed for outcomes and the dimensions which are perceived to be dominant may vary due to several reasons. Some of these are culture and cultural difference. Based on culture, one and the same outcome can be interpreted as a success or failure experience. The evaluation of a B in an exam or in a course can be both perceived as a failure or success outcome. In addition, in some cultures people tend to see themselves as responsible for an outcome by searching for internal causes rather than external ones (Weiner, 2006). While Weiner (2006) voices these circumstances, he also emphasizes that his theory is not required to be changed but that the portrayed differences have to be taken into account when aiming to compare different cultures or ethnic groups. Next to variations among cultures, individuals within the same culture also vary on many characteristics such as motivation, personal history, and trait. Weiner and Kukla (1970) state that people high in achievement motivation more commonly explain their success with internal causes than those low in achievement motivation. In other words, success is perceived to be related to ability or effort by the first group, while the second group resorts to external causes such as luck. Failure experiences are explained by the lack of effort by those with high achievement motivation, while those who hold low achievement motivation prefer lack of ability attributions. Thus, high and low achievement motivation influences which attributions are made. Based on the different attributions among both of the groups due to variances in achievement motivation, the initiation of upcoming tasks and persistence of behavior are influenced (Weiner et al., 1971.)

Attributions and Emotions

The contributions of causal attributions for outcomes to the expectancy of goal achievement, and the power of expectancies to initiate or avoid actions have been widely discussed. Weiner (1986) states and criticizes that most theories neglect the role of emotions within this context. Thus, goal expectancies on their own do not shape future behavior and actions. In this regard, the need to consider goal incentives next to goal expectancies arises. Goal incentives are formed out of one's personal needs, the attractiveness of the goal and the likelihood of goal achievement. This indicates that an outcome which is not desired or not appealing does not trigger a behavior. The link to emotions is established as different outcomes or goal incentives are going to elicit different emotions. Once a desired and attractive outcome is achieved, satisfaction will be experienced. If an unwanted result is faced, anger could arise. This indicates that the features ascribed to a goal or outcome designates certain emotional reactions. At the same time the attributions used to explain why a certain outcome has indeed occurred also affect which specific emotion is experienced. A good grade which is perceived to be the result of luck fosters the feeling of surprise, but effort is likely to encourage pride for the grade.

To turn back from general ideas on emotions and goals to Weiner's (1985, 1986) specific ideas on emotions, the three assumptions he formulates in the scope of his attribution theory have to be addressed. First, thoughts shape emotions. This indicates that the thoughts or better to say the explanations made about an outcome shape the resulting emotional responses. In other words, cognition shapes emotions. Second, emotions are composed of interacting factors. Emotions are either positive or negative and the intensity in which they are experienced can vary. These two features depend on the evaluation of the whole circumstances leading to an outcome. At the end, the evaluation of a situation and the resulting emotion pave the way for the upcoming behavior to be exhibited. Third, he claims that a theory that acknowledges the role of emotions should center on everyday emotions which are frequently experienced. Within his attribution theory he locates pride, guilt and shame, anger and pity, and hopelessness as the central ones.

These claims are based on his study which aimed to investigate the cognition-emotion process in achievement-related contexts (Weiner, Russell, & Lerman, 1979).

In this study, students were provided with stories of success or failure and were contributed with a list of about 250 emotive reactions which were likely to be given to success or failure experiences. The stories of success and failure also included the specific cause why a student failed or succeeded. After having read the stories, the participants had to choose and rate the intensity of the affect they thought they would experience in the given scenarios. It turned out that outcomes, specific attributions, and the dimensions of the attributions impact how people feel in achievement-related contexts.

Weiner (1986; Weiner et al., 1979) differentiates between emotions triggered by primary appraisal and by causal attributions. It is obvious that success leads to happiness and failure to sadness. The emotions which come to light based on outcomes only result from primary appraisal and require a superficial analysis. What follows is the search for a cause why the specific outcome occurred, while the strength of this search is higher when the outcomes are negative or unexpected. Then, the identified attribution creates a more specific emotion. To illustrate, the first reaction to success is happiness, explaining success with luck creates the feeling of surprise. While happiness in this example is outcome dependent, surprise is attribution dependent. The more cognitive work is invested, the more complex emotions follow. General positive or negative emotions oppose distinct emotions. It was already mentioned that success evokes happiness, and failure sadness or frustration. The question what the determinant of the distinct emotion to be experienced is lies within the causal dimensions of attributions. Thus, not the cause itself but its locus, stability, and controllability decide over which specific emotion dominates.

Locus and Emotions

The specific emotion which is generated by the locus of an attribution is that of pride or in other words self-esteem and self-worth (Weiner, 1986). If reasons such as ability or effort which have an internal locus are used to explain success, this fosters pride. In the same situation, external causes such as luck or task difficulty would minimize the feeling of pride. Luck also instigates surprise. In the case of failure,

causes identified within oneself decrease and external causes increase self-esteem. In this context, the tendency to blame external factors for failure and welcome internal causes for success outcomes is not rare. By doing so, the individual sustains self-esteem and self-worth and prevents a decrease in his or her perceived value. This process is referred to as the hedonic or in other words self-serving attributional bias (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 2010a). Thus, if a student who claims to be intelligent fails in a task and decides to explain the failure outcome by blaming the teacher to be biased, he or she tries to protect and maintain his or her self-esteem. In this context, Lefcourt (1982) also states that while some external attributions might reflect the truth, in some incidents attributing outcomes to external factors has a functional value for the individual. Another factor which creates different perceptions of the locus of an action is the actor-observer distinction. Heider (1958) pointed out that one's own actions and reactions are more likely to be perceived as being shaped by the outer world, while an observer would explain a specific behavior of a person as the reflection of his or her personal characteristics. Jones and Nisbett (1971) state that "There is a pervasive tendency for actors to attribute their actions to situational requirements whereas observers tend to attribute the action to stable dispositions" (p. 80). This indicates that actors perceive external factors, and observers see internal and stable factors as the force which triggers behavior.

Controllability and Emotions

The dimension of controllability of a cause is linked with anger and pity (Averil, 1983; Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982). In Averil's study, participants shared situations in which they felt anger. The analysis of the provided situations and their specific features clarified that anger follows an attribution of blame. If one fails in a task which is controllable, the one to be blamed is oneself and the resulting feeling is guilt or anger directed towards oneself.

Hamilton (1980) states that failure which could have been prevented and controlled by oneself nevertheless is experienced because of causes controlled by an exterior observer, again anger is generated while the direction might differ. This anger is not necessarily directed towards oneself but the one who caused the failure experience. If

it comes to uncontrollable causes, pity is evoked. While pity in this terms is used as an umbrella term which also covers sympathy and compassion (Weiner, 1986). Weiner and Kukla (1970) examined the emotions of anger and pity in an achievement-related context. Students were provided with different scenarios and were asked to evaluate success or failure outcomes as if they were teachers. In these scenarios, success and failure were explained either by high and low effort or high and low ability. It should be emphasized that effort is controllable, while ability is uncontrollable. It turned out that participants value high effort independent of outcomes. High effort leading to success was highly rewarded, while failure despite of high effort was punished less. While lack of effort as a contributor to failure was punished, lack of effort in combination with high ability created the most anger and led to punishment, as it was up to the student to make use of his or her own ability. Weiner (2000) states that the preferred attributions and evoked emotions vary based on whether the individual is an observer of or an active participant in an action. He refers to this distinction as interpersonal and intrapersonal processes respectively, and emphasizes the impact of perspective on attributions. Interpersonal attributions concentrate on social motivation which influences how we react to others, while intrapersonal attributions are shaped by personal motivation which guides one's individual thoughts and reactions (Weiner, 1994).

In this context, Weiner (2006) uses a metaphor to describe an observer. He claims that the person is a judge. By doing so, he refers to the qualities of a judge such as evaluating the components which led to a specific outcome and drawing conclusions about another person's responsibility for the outcome accordingly. The judge's evaluations trigger some emotions which determine how to act towards the person of interest. If this metaphor is transferred to the classroom, it is mainly the teacher who acts as a judge. They decide whether students are successful, deserve to be pitied or be angry at based on the outcome attributions made, and whether students should be rewarded or punished. Another metaphor Weiner (2003) introduces is that of the classroom as a courtroom. This metaphor correlates with the metaphor of the person as a judge. The classroom is a courtroom as students' performance is evaluated and the reasons behind performance outcomes are judged, and consequently an appropriate emotional response is provided to communicate reward or punishment.

Thus, teachers are the ones who attribute causes to students' failure or success based on social motivation (Weiner, 1994).

Juvonen and Weiner (1994) point out that it is even possible to manipulate other's responses to one's achievement outcomes. Thus, individuals know which attributions create which emotions within observers of an outcome (Carprara, Pastorelli, & Weiner, 1997) and they can influence which causes others believe to be responsible for one's success or failure by making use of attributional knowledge so that unwanted responses such as anger are avoided. This indicates that students have the power to shape teachers' perceptions about students and their performance outcome.

Weiner (1986) also distinguishes self-generated and other-generated emotions for lack of effort and ability. As Weiner and Kukla's (1970) study design suggests, anger and pity or sympathy are classified under other-generated emotions. If an individual evaluates his or her own failure outcomes, the emotions which are more likely to be referred to are guilt and shame. Shame is generated by uncontrollable, guilt by controllable factors. The feeling of shame leads to performance decrease, and guilt motivates to improve performance (Weiner, 1994). In other words, lack of ability leads to shame, and lack of effort to guilt (Weiner, 1986). The fact that both causes are also internal should not be neglected. Failure ascribed to internal causes was identified as harming one's pride and self-esteem. Thus, it is not surprising that the combination of internal and controllable or internal and uncontrollable causes again make people experience negative emotions.

Stability and Emotions

Weiner (1986) points out to the lack of research related to the effects of the stability dimension on the formation of emotions. For his theory, he picks up the role stability played in goal expectancies and expectancy shifts and concludes that this dimension determines emotions related to the future. Hence, stability determines whether possible goal attainments in the future are approach with fear or hope. Here, success following a stable cause makes the individual feel hopeful. Logically, failure due to stable causes, which are considered not to change, initiates fear. At the end, thoughts evoke emotions which as a whole pave the way for a specific action of an individual.

The emotions of helplessness or hopefulness are mainly linked with depression. Among theories which focus on depression, Abramson's (Abramson et al., 1978) theory has established itself. This theory claims that, once a person feels helpless, the search for the cause of this feeling is initiated. The causal attributions made and the ascribed dimensions which according to this theory are locus, stability, and globality influence the extent and duration of the feeling of helplessness and act on the individual's self-esteem. People lose their motivation to demonstrate a certain behavior, if previous attempts to achieve an outcome were not successful. Thus, the feeling of helplessness is created as effort is considered useless and failure inevitable. Weiner (1986) claims that his attribution theory facilitates the comprehension of nonclinical depression.

Concluding Remarks on the Attribution Process

To summarize the attribution process and its consequences, it is the outcome following an action which triggers the whole process. This outcome first creates an outcome dependent affect which is either sadness and frustration or happiness. If the outcome leads to a failure experience or was unexpected, the search for causes to explain the outcome starts. Here, past experiences and information and other causal antecedents act upon the specification of the cause among achievement-related causes such as ability, effort, luck or task difficulty. If the specific cause is determined, it has to be examined in terms of its dimensional composition like locus, stability, and controllability. These dimensions ascertain psychological consequences which can be divided into cognitive and affective consequences. Affective consequences are again subdivided into self-directed and other directed. Self-directed emotions are experienced by the person involved in an outcome himself or herself, while other directed emotions are generated from an exterior perspective judging another person. In this context, pride, and self-esteem and hopelessness and hopefulness are self-directed, while shame and guilt, and anger and pity are other directed. Which of these emotions emerge depend on the causal dimensions of the causes. The dimension of controllability fosters anger and pity, the dimension of locus pride and self-esteem, and the dimension of stability hopelessness and hopefulness. Before triggering affective consequences, the stability dimension

influences individual's cognition. It has an effect on the expectancy for future success or failure outcomes. This cognitive judgment on the other hand leads to a hopeful or hopeless attitude for future outcomes. As a whole expectancies and emotions shape which future actions to attempt and thereby determine behavior (Weiner et al., 1979; Weiner, 1986). In short, the first step in the attribution process is the evaluation of whether an outcome is favorable or not. In the second step, a specific cause is attributed for the outcome. Thirdly, the attribution made triggers affective reactions. Lastly a behavioral response is given under the consideration of the first three processes. Thus, the attribution process covers past events but impacts future achievement strivings. The decision about avoiding, or continuing behavior, the intensity of future performance, and the persistence in a behavior are guided by the final outcome attributions. These attributions also influence tasks of which difficulty level are attended in future. Here, students who explain failure by the lack of effort decide to persist in a task, while those who believe in their lack of ability as the cause of failure, decide to quit. Students of high motivation prefer tasks of intermediate difficulty, while those having low achievement motivation either select easy or difficult tasks (Weiner et al., 1971).

Attribution Training

As noted earlier, the dimensions of causes generate emotions which shape future behavior and performance. Thus, negative emotions evoked by the preferred attributions for failure experiences have an effect on students' motivation. If students' motivation decreases, the likelihood to succeed in future also decreases (Schunk et al., 2014). Students who believe that they failed an academic task due to stable cause such as ability do not believe in succeeding in future and lose their motivation. But it is possible that students make use of misattributions in the process of explaining failure. Hence, the real cause for an outcome might not be the lack of ability although perceived as such. This indicates that students unnecessarily push themselves into a negative mood about their future behavior. In this context, it is important to reveal students attribution of failure, as attributions are accepted to be modifiable (Peacock, 2010). For this purpose, attributional therapy programs are applied to change misattributions or dysfunctional attributions (Weiner, 1986;

Weiner, 1988). Dysfunctional attributions are those which lower future expectancy for success or decrease motivation. That is why it is suggested to make students ascribe causes to internal and controllable reasons rather than stable an external ones, so that the belief to be in control over future performance is maintained. In general, the trend is to turn attributions of lack of ability into attributions of lack of effort (Schunk, 1981, 1982, 1983; Weiner, 1988). This correlates with the fact that failure experiences are considered to be the result of lack of ability fosters a decrease in performance, while lack of effort attributions lead to an increase (Weiner, 1994). Following this, what all attribution change programs have in common is the assumption that lack of ability attributions are maladaptive, as they are perceived to be uncontrollable. On the other hand, lack of effort is labeled as adaptive as it is up to the individual to invest effort and therefore control future outcomes (Weiner, 1986). To summarize, the main aim is to help students cope with and change disadvantageous attributions or misattributions. In some instances, misattributions are generated because of the attitudes of teachers towards students' outcomes and the students themselves (Weiner, 2006). Teacher's erroneous explanation for a student outcome might lead them to provide inappropriate feedback. Examples for such instances might be rewarding students' success at easy tasks, or showing sympathy for failure at easy tasks. Teachers might also blame students' lack of effort for failure, although the student has tried hard; or they might believe that students do not have the required ability to master a task although students are just too lazy. These misattributions are dangerous as students who have high ability might be communicated low ability, or students who do not study might be influenced to believe they invested enough effort in a task. These erroneous attributions can again be changed by attributional training, so that future performance is not influenced negatively. Nevertheless, as Weiner states the attempt to change attributions can only end with success, if the individual is willing to succeed. The initiation of help for a person who does not show any interest in succeeding in any kind of task despite facing failure might end unfruitful (Siegel & Shaughnessy, 1996).

Attribution Theory in Research

Attribution theory was applied in both achievement-related and non-achievement-related contexts. Thus, attributions have been considered in relation with alcoholism (Edwards, Brown, Duckitt, Oppenheimer, Sheehan & Taylor, 1987; Maisto, O'Farrell, Connors, McKay & Pelcovits, 1988), crime and parole decisions (Carroll & Burke, 1980), depression (Abramson et al., 1978), deprivation (Mark, 1985), loneliness (Michela, Peplau, & Weeks, 1982), need of help (Reisenzein, 1986), rape and pregnancy (Dunn, Goldbach, Lasker, & Toedter, 1991; Janoff-Bulman, 1979), cigarette smoking (Eiser, Van der Pligt, Raw, & Sutton, 1985; Harackiewicz, Sansone, Blair, Epstein, & Manderlink, 1987), social interactions (Juvonen & Weiner, 1993) and battered woman (O'Neill, 2000). In these studies, the focus was mainly on determining causes and locating their dimensions and the following effects on expectations, feelings, and attended or avoided actions. The fact that attribution theory is made use of in both achievement-related and non-related contexts somehow explains its longevity (Weiner, 2006). Weiner (2006) emphasized that attribution theory will not lose its value, as the search for causes will not find an end in any field.

The following literature review will display research outcomes related to attributions about academic achievement as these are of concern within the present study. In addition, recently there is growing interest in the investigation of students' perspectives about attribution of both success and failure. But as this study focuses on attributions of failure, the following review will mainly address the outcomes related to failure attributions only. To start with a broader view on the field of attributions, Vispoel and Austin's (1991) study about attributions across different subjects at school (English, Mathematics, Physical Education and General Music) has to be mentioned. The aim of this study was to shed light on the possible change of attributional responses with regard to achievement outcome, school subject and type of task. The researchers conducted their study with preset attributions which were ability, effort, strategy, interest, task difficulty, luck, family influence, and teacher influence. Results show that students' attributions differed not only in terms of school subject, but also in terms of which specific task in the provided school subjects was addressed. In addition, students did not accuse others of their failure,

but instead they tended to value the contributions of others in their success outcome. Furthermore, the perceived causes for failure in English turned out to be lack of interest and task difficulty, while most of the participants reported to experience failure in giving speeches or writing essays in English most frequently. Interestingly, failure attributions showed more variation among subjects than success attributions. At this point, one can conclude that failure attribution processes seem to be more complex. Williams and Burden (1999) conclude that the process of forming attributions of both success and failure are under the influence of feelings, social context, external influences and the age of students. Their study which focused on students learning French in England showed that students' attribution range for their perceived success and failure outcome increased with age. Whereas success was attributed to internal factors, failure was explained with external factors, while the notion of ascribing failure to lack of ability emerged with increasing age. A further study by Williams et al. (2001) among students learning English in Bahrain revealed the tendency of students to explain their failure mostly with inadequate teaching methods and lack of support from teachers and family. Thus, external ascriptions were preferred over internal ones, while the opposite applied to success attributions. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that a wide range of internal attributions were also made including factors such as poor comprehension and negative attitude. Another important insight this study provided was related to the difference in attributions among students and their teachers, as teachers explained student's success as the result of the teaching materials and methods used in class. Such a discrepancy between teacher and student attribution was also observed in non-Western contexts (Peacock, 2010). In Zohri's (2011) study, Moroccan university students again explained failure with external factors mainly, such as teachers' attitude, unfair grading or pressure, next to factors such as effort or interest.

In contrast to the study outcomes reported so far, foreign language students in the UK attributed their failure to internal reasons at first place (Williams et al., 2004). In this qualitative study, secondary students' attributions for both their success and failure in learning foreign languages were investigated, while English was not included among these. Among the sixteen categories that emerged for failure attributions, lack of effort which is an internal factor was the main cause mentioned,

while it was followed by a perceived lack of ability, lack of interest, misbehavior, aspects related to the quality and characteristics of the teacher in respective order. Williams et al. (2004) emphasize the varying frequency in attributing some factors to failure compared to success. These factors were identified as strategy and the task to be performed. Mood on the other hand emerged as being more influential in terms of failure attributions rather than success. Another study in which failure attributions turned out to be internal was that of Tse (2000). This qualitative study was conducted among university students and it revealed that the majority of the participants perceived themselves as being unsuccessful and that they explained this situation with their study habits, as they neither invested enough effort in language learning nor practiced in general. The participants of this study took responsibility for their perceived failure. Further explanations of failure were lack of motivation, the teacher and the teaching methods. Some participants also indicated their problems with the composition of students in the language classroom in terms of involving students of different language proficiencies. This study signals the influence of the teacher, the classroom interaction and environment on students' attributions. The fact that students name context-related causes for their perceived failure indicates that teachers may have an impact on students' attributions in many respects as teachers are the ones who can alter classroom conditions and practice. Another study in which failure was attributed to internal rather than external factors was that of Gobel and Mori (2007). The sample of the study consisted of first-year Japanese university students enrolled in speaking and reading classes in English in Japan. The participants were asked to answer open-ended questions which were developed based on Weiner's attribution model focusing on preset attributions (ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck). Failure was explained by lack of ability, effort and preparation, while success was linked to classroom atmosphere and teacher influence. As Gobel and Mori (2007) conclude, this outcome proves that students take responsibility for their failure and do not demonstrate a self-enhancement or self-protective bias, which would indicate that students either take responsibility for their success rather than failure or that they deny responsibility for failure. Furthermore, different activities to be mastered in the language class did not turn out to have an effect on the attribution ratings in terms of failure but success. Thus, attributions for failure did not change based on reading or speaking tasks. The explanation provided for internal attributions

for failure over external ones in some studies was stated to possibly be related to the culture (Gobel & Mori, 2007). Mori's (2009) study conducted in the Japanese context revealed similar results to the study conducted in 2007 (Gobel & Mori, 2007). In this case, students were asked to consider their perceived improvement or lack of improvement in learning English and to decide on possible causes. Failure was again ascribed to internal (effort and preparation) and at the same time stable and uncontrollable; and success to external causes (teacher influence, class atmosphere and class level), so that the self-enhancement or the self-protective bias was not observed in this study either. Non-Western countries do not seem to demonstrate this behavior in cause ascription. Bar-Tal and Efraim's (1979) study outcome also supports this claim, as elementary school students in Tel-Aviv attributed success to external and failure to internal causes. Good instruction and home conditions and the ease of materials and exams were listed among reasons for success, while lack of preparation, ability or effort were included among failure explanations.

Mori, Thang, Nor, Suppiah, and Oon (2011) examined university students' attributions for both failure and success experiences in English (ability, effort, strategy, interest in the activity, luck, teacher influence, task difficulty, class atmosphere, grades, preparation, enjoyment of studying English, and levels of the class) in the context of Malaysia, another non-Western country, while they also paid attention to a possible difference in attributions in terms of actual and perceived proficiency. It turned out that students with high language proficiency or one which is perceived as such were more likely to attribute their success to internal and controllable factors such as ability, effort, practice or strategy; and their failure to external factors such as classroom atmosphere. Students with a low or a perceived low proficiency held opposite attributions. Those students explained their failure with lack of ability and effort, and therefore internally. These findings indicate that attributions are expected to vary based on students' language proficiency. At the same time, it shows that with increasing language proficiency students tend to explain their success with internal and their failure with external factors, thus the attempt to take responsibility for failure decreases. However, in contrast to this finding, another study conducted in Malaysia points out that students with low

language achievement attribute failure to internal factors such as lack of ability or effort compared to students with high achievement outcomes (Gobel, Thang, Sidhu, Oon, & Chan, 2013). A study conducted among university students in Hong Kong (Peacock, 2010) showed that while failure attributions are internal, unstable and controllable, students lacking proficiency attribute failure to factors they cannot control. The opposite trend was identified in Gobel et al.'s (2013) study among high achievers, as uncontrollable rather than controllable factors were chosen as explanations for failure. Language proficiency determines failure attributions. To return to the relationship between attributions and culture, cultural influences on attributions were again present in Mori et al.'s study (2011) mentioned earlier. The occurrence of students attributing success to the task being easy and attributing failure to lack of ability was explained with Malaysian modesty.

There are studies which focus on students from Western and non-Western cultures' attributions for social failure and success in general but not in relation to specific subjects. The outcomes support the assumption that culture impacts attributions. As such, compared to American students Koreans attribute their failure to lack of effort, while Americans blame bad luck (Armbrister, McCallum, & Lee, 2002). Again, the tendency to stand up for one's failure is eminent in a non-Western culture. At the same time, American students tended to praise themselves for their abilities which they regarded as the source for their success. Despite the presence of some studies which take the cultural aspect into account, Williams et al. (2001) point out to their scarcity.

If it comes to the Turkish context, some studies about students' attributions can be reported. Erten and Burden (2014) investigated 6th graders attributions and found out that success was mainly connected with the teacher, which is an external factor, followed by ability, interest and effort invested. The higher student achievement was, the more frequent an internal explanation of success was used. But nevertheless even for high achievement outcomes, external explanations were more dominant. These results correspond to the Western – non-Western distinction, as success is explained externally. Besimoğlu, Serdar and Yavuz's study (2010) among university preparatory school students indicates that students attribute both success and failure to internal reasons while the lack of or use of strategy emerged as the major motive.

The findings show that students take responsibility for both success and failure experiences. Other attributions for failure in this study were lack of revision, interest, effort and ability. Young learners turned out to attribute both success and failure to internal factors (effort mainly). They perceived themselves as being responsible for both possible outcomes (Sahinkarakas, 2011). What needs to be emphasized is again the role of the teachers, as they were regarded as role models.

A further study in the Malaysian context of learning English examined the differences in success and failure attributions among rural and urban students, whereas a difference was proven to exist (Gobel et al., 2013). The students learning English in an urban context demonstrated a greater confidence in their skills as they attributed success to their ability, study skills and effort compared to the other group of students. In terms of failure attributions a significant difference could not be identified. One aspect related to the difference in failure attributions which strikes attention is that students in the rural group are more likely to attribute failure to the task to be mastered. It is possible to say that this study is an indication for attributions not to only change based on culture in terms of being categorized into Western or non-Western but also in terms of being rural an urban within a particular culture or context.

Another determinant of variation within students' attributional responses is gender and grade or better to say age. Several studies pointed out to the influence of age (Williams & Burden, 1999; Williams et al., 2004). Those studies showed that with increasing age, students consider more factors as possible attributions for failure which actually can be explained with students' cognitive development over the years. Lack of ability attributions which turned out to be one of the most prevalent attributions in studies conducted so far emerges as a possible explanation of failure in students' later ages. William et al. (2004) were concerned with the variation in attributions based on age and gender. It turned out that girls are more likely to attribute failure to internal factors such as either lack of effort or lack of ability; boys on the other hand mostly stated poor behavior as an internal attribution for failure. In the attempt to explain failure with external factors, boys addressed poor teaching, lack of interest or the environment more frequently than girls did. In general, girls tended to explain their failure with internal factors in contrast to boys. There were

not any differences in success attributions in terms of the gender variable. Zohri (2011) reports similar causes for both males and females' failure ascriptions. Some differences could be seen in terms of ability, task difficulty and effort, as more females stated lack of ability and the difficulty of the task as a reason of failure, while more males related their failure to lack of effort. Holschuh, Nist, and Olejnik's study (2001) pointed out to the effect of gender on the perceived emotions following failure experiences. Thus, females link the feeling of shame most frequently to failure related to lack of effort and they are more optimistic in terms of improving in an unsuccessful course. Although there might be no consistency among study outcomes in terms of specific cause ascriptions, it can be concluded that attributions in general differ based on gender. In short, attributions were often examined with regard to achievement outcomes and several variables which might have an influence on those.

Metacognition Research

Metacognition which is an umbrella term for the knowledge and regulation of cognition is a popular research topic especially with regard to learning and related fields. It is considered to be a bridge between various areas such as learning and motivation, or learning and cognitive growth (Nelson & Narens, 1994). Before referring to specific research studies, a brief overview will be given about the definition and components of metacognition and its historical journey over time. In this regard, John Flavell who is accepted as the father of metacognition has to be mentioned. He was the one who first referred to metacognition in 1976. Following Flavell, researchers generated their own definitions, concepts and models of metacognition. In the scope of this review Flavell's, Brown's and Schraw's ideas on how metacognition works will be presented, as these form general and popular models of metacognition.

Models of Metacognition

Flavell was one of the researchers who showed interest in children's cognitive and metacognitive development (Flavell, 1971a; Flavell, 1982). Initiating his work based

on this focus, he formulated how metacognition works. In Flavell, Friedrichs, and Hoyt's study (1970) children had to study a set of pre-given items and were free to decide when to stop. Once the children consisting of preschool and elementary school students thought they were ready, they were required to recall the items. Both groups performed differently, elementary school students were able to recall the items while preschoolers were not despite having claimed they have studied for enough. This can be accepted as a proof that younger children lack the skill of metacognition, as they do not seem to be able to judge their cognitive processes accurately. The work of other researchers (Brown, 1978; Flavell & Wellmann, 1975; Kreutzer, Leonard, Flavell, & Hagen, 1975) also supports that children struggle with metacognition and at the same time demonstrate some incompetencies in monitoring their own memory or comprehension.

Flavell (1979) poses the question what knowledge or competencies children have to acquire to be considered metacognitively competent. According to Flavell's (1979) model of cognitive monitoring, metacognition is formed out of metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experience, goals, and actions, whereas these stand in an interactive relation to each other. Metacognitive knowledge represents one's ideas about cognitive abilities and one's world knowledge which is more specifically categorized into person, task, and strategy knowledge.

Person knowledge encompasses the evaluation of other people's and one's own cognitive beliefs and skills. Thus, an individual holds certain beliefs about how he or she learns, memorizes or recalls more effectively. Thus, it is concerned with knowing how people learn and process information, and how the learning process itself evolves. Knowing that you are more likely to learn effectively if you are not distracted or knowing that you are better in reading than speaking English are some examples of the person category. Knowledge about how people's mind works, what its capacity is, where its limits are and how it can fail also belongs to this category (Flavell, 1979; Flavell, Miller, & Miller, 2002).

Task knowledge refers to the knowledge about the nature of a task, which information is available or necessary to master a task, and the demands of a task. Thus, there is a huge difference among stating the gist of a text or analyzing metaphors in a text. Both of the tasks vary in terms of difficulty, the time to be

invested, the types of information needed, and the processes which have to be initiated to master the task. In addition, the nature of information might also play a role here. The type of activities to be undertaken will show differences if information is perceived to be complex or unreliable or easy and reliable. The knowledge that information and tasks differ and have to be attempted accordingly equals task knowledge (Flavell, 1979; Flavell et al., 2002).

As its name suggests, strategy knowledge refers to knowing what strategies have to be used while mastering specific tasks in certain contexts. Hence, in addition to the knowledge of different strategies, strategy knowledge asks for calculating which of these strategies are the most useful and effective ones if it comes to attempting tasks of a certain kind. For example, different strategies have to be used to memorize or to comprehend information. In this context, the difference between cognitive and metacognitive strategies can be addressed. Rereading a text to recall information is a cognitive strategy while asking oneself questions about the content of the same text is a metacognitive strategy. In the first case you try to acquire knowledge, in the second one you test and challenge your acquired knowledge. As Flavell (1979) puts it “cognitive strategies are invoked to *make* cognitive progress, metacognitive strategies to *monitor* it” (p. 909).

Metacognitive experience is a term which covers the emerging thoughts and feelings before, after, or in the process of cognitive work. These experiences provide some sort of information about competence and knowledge. If a person is feeling under pressure while solving a task, this experience might be interpreted as lacking knowledge or competence. If a person is not able to understand what a text tries to say, this experience signals the need to compensate for this occurrence. In other words, metacognitive experience communicates how one manages a task and provides the chance to reflect about and regulate one’s cognition. Here, the link between metacognitive knowledge and experience crystallizes. The implementation of metacognitive knowledge leads to metacognitive experience. Metacognitive experience leads people to add, change or delete metacognitive knowledge (Flavell, 1979). Last but not least goals and actions need to be mentioned. Goals or in other words tasks present the objective behind a cognitive process; action or strategies imply ways of how to achieve these goals.

This model can be used to explain cognitive development. As Flavell (1979) states, in order for children to acquire metacognitive competence, they have to improve their metacognitive knowledge and regulation skills in qualitative and quantitative terms. He also supports the idea that from an educational point of view, this model can help to assist cognitive development, so that comprehension and learning in educational contexts is facilitated.

Brown (Brown et al., 1982) enlarged and added more detail to Flavell's metacognition by emphasizing that next to metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive regulation is also an essential component of metacognition. Thus, according to Brown metacognition refers to one's knowledge and control of the domain cognition. So that as a consequence the learning process is directed and controlled through metacognition. Brown labels the attempt to regard metacognition as either knowledge or regulation of cognition only, as nothing but an oversimplification. To start with Brown's model of metacognition, it can be said that the first component of this model, namely the knowledge about cognition does not differ from that of Flavell's. Just like Flavell, Brown considers knowledge about cognition to be stable, storable, often fallible and late-developing. Thus, the information we hold about ourselves' and others' cognition is relatively permanent, open to discussion, flawed, and requires time to be formed. Brown ascribes the second component of metacognition a guiding role in the cognitive process of learning. Regulation of cognition covers planning before attempting an activity, monitoring them in the process of execution, and finally considering task outcomes. Planning amongst others includes reviewing possible strategies, predicting outcomes, breaking the task into smaller pieces. Monitoring stands for the revision of strategies if necessary, the questioning of thoughts and ideas, or testing answers and solutions. Checking requires judging and evaluating the achieved outcomes and comparing them with the intended ones with respect to efficiency and effectiveness. Compared to knowledge of cognition, regulation of cognition is accepted as unstable, not always storable, mainly age-independent but task and situation dependent. Flavell's cognitive experience can also be categorized under regulation of cognition but it does not suffice to cover the complexity of the processes involved in regulation as a whole. Thus, while cognitive experience equals the awareness about comprehension or the

task performed, it neglects processes such as strategy selection or evaluation of outcomes. Brown's portrayal and introduction of regulation is more complex and detailed in that respect (Lai, 2011).

Over time, the components of metacognition were elaborated on and different theoretical models of metacognition emerged. In short, some researchers focused on knowledge of cognition only (Kuhn & Dean, 2004), while others emphasized regulation of cognition (Whitebeard, Coltman, Pasternak, Sangster, Grau, Bingham, Almeqdad, & Demetriou, 2009). At the end, the division of knowledge and regulation of cognition to account for metacognition altogether was welcomed by many researchers (Paris & Winograd, 1990; Schraw, 1998; Schraw & Moshman, 1995; Schraw et al., 2006). What all of the emerging concepts specify are the components of metacognition. Thus, following the content of the previous models of metacognition (Kuhn & Dean, 2004; Paris & Winograd, 1990; Schraw, 1998; Schraw & Moshman, 1995; Schraw et al., 2006; Whitebeard et al., 2009), types of metacognitive knowledge and regulation emerged. While existing types of cognitive knowledge can be classified as knowledge about oneself as a learner and factors affecting cognition; awareness and management of cognition; and knowledge about why and when to use a given strategy, only the terminologies which are used to explain these types differ among each model although slight differences in content also exist (Lai, 2011). Knowledge about oneself as a learner for example, is called person and task knowledge by Flavell (1979), self-appraisal by Paris and Winograd (1990), epistemological understanding by Kuhn and Dean (2004) and declarative knowledge by Schraw and his colleagues (Schraw, 1998; Schraw & Moshman, 1995; Schraw et al., 2006). If it comes to cognitive regulation, identification and selection of appropriate strategies and allocation of resources; attending to and being aware of comprehension and task performance; and assessing the process and products of one's learning, and revisiting and revising learning goals can be labeled as its components (Lai, 2011). Compared to cognitive knowledge, researchers agree on the terminologies to be used for each component. Planning, monitoring/regulating and evaluating are the labels in respective order (Paris & Winograd, 1990; Schraw & Moshman, 1995; Schraw et al., 2006; Whitebeard et al., 2009). It was only Flavell (1979) who preferred the term cognitive experience over monitoring in his attempt to

explain how metacognition works. The comparison of all the models shows that Schraw and his colleagues' explanation of metacognition is the one which covers all of the stated types of cognitive knowledge and regulation. That is why Schraw and his colleagues' perspective on metacognition will be addressed in detail.

Schraw supports the distinction between knowledge and regulation of cognition. Metacognitive knowledge refers to the general knowledge about cognition and the specific information about one's own cognition. At the same time, it can be categorized into declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (Schraw, 1994; Schraw, 1998; Schraw & Moshman, 1995). Declarative knowledge represents the knowledge about things itself. More specifically, a learner's skills, abilities, qualities and potential in addition to general knowledge about the learning process remain within this type of knowledge. Procedural knowledge covers the knowledge about how to perform things. In other words it refers to the question how theory or better to say declarative knowledge is put into practice. Lastly, conditional knowledge is referred to as the knowledge about why and when to make use of certain qualities and processes. Thus, it answers questions such as when to initiate a certain process to succeed a certain task or activity. To exemplify, knowing about a certain reading strategy such as scanning in reading equals declarative knowledge. Looking for capital letters only if proper names are aimed to be located is a demonstration of procedural knowledge. Knowing that one has to scan when finding specific pieces of information within a text is intended within a limited time period shows that one also has the required conditional knowledge. As Bruning and colleagues (Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning, 2004) note most learning combines these three types of knowledge. Declarative knowledge is the starting point whereas procedural and conditional knowledge help to put theory into practice.

According to Schraw (1994, 1998), regulation of cognition consists of five factors which are planning, information management strategies, comprehension monitoring, debugging strategies and evaluation. Cognitive regulation is concerned with how students plan the learning process, implement strategies, monitor their ongoing performance, correct comprehension errors, and evaluate their learning outcomes (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). More specifically, Schraw and Dennison (1994) state that "Planning [covers] planning, goal setting, and allocating resources *prior* to

learning. Information management strategies [refer to] skills and strategy sequences used to process information more efficiently (e.g., organizing, elaborating, summarizing, selective focusing). Comprehension monitoring [stands for the] assessment of one's learning or strategy use. Debugging strategies [are] strategies used to correct comprehension and performance errors. Evaluation [indicates the] analysis of performance and strategy effectiveness after a learning episode" (p. 474-475). It is Schraw and Dennison's portrayal of metacognition which will be referred to in the scope of this current research study.

Metacognition skills are ascribed an essential role in diverse fields which require cognitive activity. Communication of information, persuasion, perception, attention, memory, reasoning, oral and reading comprehension, writing and language acquisition are only some of these (Flavell et al., 2002). With the inclusion of metacognition within educational contexts, the way learning is perceived underwent some changes. A metacognitive approach to instruction allows students to be active learners who are eager to understand what and how they learn and who at the same time are prepared to learn. The metaphor of pouring knowledge into students should no longer exist, and instruction should center on revealing and improving students' thinking processes (National Research Council, 2000).

Early Roots of Metacognition in Metamemory

Having agreed upon the definition of metacognition within this research study, a brief historical insight about research studies related to metacognition and related fields will be provided. Metacognition was an appealing concept for research but it was up until the 1970s when its rise began especially in the scope of developmental psychology with a focus on cognitive and intellectual aspects of individuals' growth within their lifetime (Nelson, 1998). Early attempts did not suffice to generate well-established theories but this changed with the linkage of developmental, cognitive and educational psychology in the 80s and 90s to examine metacognition with the help of improved methodologies. At the end, a transition from theory to practice could be observed within research related to metacognition.

According to Flavell (1996), the guiding figure for the theories of developmental psychology was Piaget with his ideas on cognition. That is why Flavell put emphasis on introducing Piaget and spreading his ideas on cognitive development within the States. According to Flavell (1996), Piaget succeeded to generate a new field of inquiry with his theory on cognitive development. To briefly address this theory, starting from birth a child evolves in four stages of cognitive development over time, namely sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational stage. Adolescents and adults are assumed to have reached the last stage. Following these stages an individual develops from a baby who tries to form schemata to understand the world to a person who is able to think abstractly, reason, and generate and test hypotheses. Thus, each stage features qualitative cognitive differences which in line with maturation and life experience help individuals to actively change and shape cognitive processes with the help of adaptation and accommodation processes. In other words, Piaget classified children's cognitive development touching metacognitive elements. Future cognitive and metacognitive theories were an attempt to compensate for perceived shortcoming in Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Some of these are the information-processing model, cognitive neuroscience, theory theory, the dynamic system approach or the socialcultural approach which are all united under the term Neo-Piagetians. Cognitive changes, development of the brain, theory of mind, and the zone of proximal development are some concepts of interest among different branches within Neo-Piagetians (Flavell et al., 2002).

Flavell was one of the researchers who showed interest in children's cognitive and metacognitive development (Flavell, 1971a; Flavell, 1982). In this regard, he put heavy emphasis on memory and its development from the early beginning on, as he drew parallels between cognition and memory (1971b). He points out that the development the memory undergoes goes along with cognitive development itself. As Flavell (1971b) puts it:

The human mind knows more and thinks better as it grows older, and these changes in what it knows and how it thinks have powerful effects on *what* it learns and remembers, *how* it learns and remembers, and even perhaps *when* it learns and remembers. (p. 273)

In short, as the mind develops so does memory and the processes involved in acquiring, storing or retrieving memory. Thus, focusing research on how memory

works also renders insights into cognition. Flavell (1971b) calls for research to be conducted in this field so that by examining memory, details about cognitive growth are also revealed. In this context, the outcomes of a study which were addressed before can be drawn again. Flavell, Friedrichs and Hoyt's study (1970) showed that older children were more skilled in judging their memory span and estimating whether they would be able to recall memorized items without making errors. This shows that they have a better knowledge of memory and relevant processes. Flavell (1971b) himself labeled this knowledge as metamemory which he saw as knowledge about "intelligent structuring and storage of input, of intelligent search and retrieval operations, and of intelligent monitoring and knowledge of these storage and retrieval operations" (1971b, p. 277). To put it differently, metamemory represents knowledge about memory abilities and strategies. It seems that with his words Flavell indicates the importance of metacognition, as the stated components of metamemory also provide knowledge about cognition. To exemplify, knowing that three numbers are easier to remember than six, feeling that one has the knowledge to answer a question, or knowing which strategies are more effective to store specific type of information falls under the term of metamemory.

In line with his call for research in 1971, Flavell (1971b) emphasized that metamemory can in fact be generalized to metacognition, as knowledge of the mind was common ground for both. As a result, this call led to growing interest in the storage and retrieval of information, and the developmental changes to expect although some researchers (Belmont & Butterfield, 1969; Brown, 1977; Hart, 1965) had already begun to work on this new area of metamemory and metacognition beforehand. Later, Flavell (1979) labeled metacognition and cognitive monitoring as a new area of cognitive-developmental inquiry with a focus on assisting educational development instead of providing descriptions and explanations for it. Thus, he acknowledged the potential of implementing metacognition for teaching purposes to contribute to children and adult comprehension and learning in educational settings.

To measure metamemory, ease of learning (EOL) judgments, judgments of learning (JOL), and the feeling of knowing (FOK) judgments were investigated so far. EOL judgments occur before the mastery of a memory task. Thus, these judgments can be regarded as equals to performance predictions. It requires people to judge the ease

with which they think they will be able to recall items on a list presented to them with regard to their current knowledge in the field or the topic of interest (Nelson & Narens, 1994). JOL judgments are mostly made during but also shortly after the presentation of items to be remembered to indicate the predicted performance in a future test related to the presented material. Thus, it deals with the question whether an individual knows having succeeded or failed in learning specific information. Rather than JOL judgments, FOK judgments were mainly investigated in infants. In the late 19th century, James (1890) worked on the FOK which is experienced in form of the inability to come up with the answer to a question or required information in general although these are strongly assumed and believed to be known. Thus, people can judge whether they have or have not required a certain piece of information if asked for it despite the struggle to access it directly. It would not be wrong to say that it was Hart (1965) who paved the way for research on this field as it is accepted today. While dealing with how information is retrieved, he was concerned with the accuracy of this experience. He assumed that the FOK shows what is available in people's memory, and pointed out that people are more likely to recognize answers or pieces of information rather than to recall them. To prove that the FOK does indeed reflect what is stored in memory, Hart (1965) conducted a study among 22 undergraduate students in Stanford using the recall-judgment-recognition process. According to this, students were first given a test to answer. If students were able to recall the answers, they were supposed to write them down. If answers to some items could not be recalled, students had to state whether they would recognize the correct answer if they were provided with four answer choices of which three are incorrect. At the end, the same test was provided to the students in form of a multiple-choice test in which students were asked to recognize the correct answers. The main aim was to assess the accuracy of the FOK experience. The study revealed that students scored better in the recognition compared to the recall test, and that the FOK experience is accurate and can indeed be accepted as an indicator of memory storage. This phenomenon is of importance as the FOK guides the persistence behavior. If the FOK is strong, people spend more time in trying to remember. If the FOK would turn out to be inaccurate this would mean that a person who assumes to know a certain answer would try to retrieve the answer although it is not stored in his or her memory.

Koriat (2000) considers the feeling of knowing experience as a link between metacognition and consciousness. The feeling of knowing experience as a metacognitive feeling makes people conscious about their knowledge. In this respect, the tip of the tongue phenomenon is also stated as a metacognitive feeling that guides behavior. Similar in nature to the feeling of knowing, the tip of the tongue experience renders a state of almost coming up with an answer (Smith, 1994). As Brown (1991) states in more detail, in this case next to the feeling to know the answer the first letter and the number of syllables of the term on the tip of the tongue is also sensed. With regard to the tip of the tongue experience, causes for (Brown, 1991) and the denouement of it were addressed in literature (Burke, MacKay, Worthley, & Wade, 1991; Read & Bruce, 1982).

Theory of mind is another concept which was dealt with by researchers (Bretherton, Mc New, & Beeghly-Smith, 1981; Flavell, 2004). The main focus is on when and how infants start to build and understand the concepts of objects and people, and their properties to make sense of and adapt to the functioning of the world itself. To put differently, cognitive processes which are formed in early years are aimed at. Hereby, the main conclusion drawn is that the mental world of an individual is composed of numerous interrelated concepts. Thus, metacognition is formed of universally accepted truths about cognition next to individually formed beliefs about it (Wellman, 1985).

Belmont and Butterfield (1969) focused on short-term memory, in other words the quantity of recognized and recalled information just after it was presented. In their study, 6th graders and college students were first required to remember a list of 7 or 9 items consisting of consonants. The list of consonants was exposed in a horizontal line, whereby participants could see one consonant at a time. Once they believed they have memorized the single consonant, the subsequent consonant was revealed to the participant while the former consonant was not visible anymore. After the participants finished memorizing the consonants in their own tempo, they were asked to locate the position of a chosen consonant within the horizontal list. During the whole study, the time required to pass to the next consonant to be memorized and to locate the position of the consonant asked for was measured. In some instances, patterns were identified regarding the hesitation time to proceed with the next

consonant. Thus, while some spent more time after the second, forth, and sixth consonant to proceed; others hesitated after the third and sixth consonant. This is an indication for different acquisition strategies used to chunk the consonants to be remembered. Results show that the capacity of short-term memory relates to age and intelligence, as short-term increased with these variables. The explanation provided was that during the study older and more intelligent participants were able to use acquisition strategies more often and more effectively. Thus, acquisition strategies develop over time.

In another study conducted by Kreutzer and his colleagues (Kreutzer et al., 1975), 80 children in total formed out of 20 children from kindergarden, 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade levels each were asked to answer questions related to memory and metamemory or were confronted with specific situations related to storage and retrieval of information. Amongst others, participants were asked whether a student who had previously learned names of birds but forgot these or a student who never had learned these names would have less problems if they would be asked to learn the names of birds. Following the results, a distinction between kindergarden and 1st grade children, and 3rd and 5th graders was made. It turned out that the first group of children is aware that information stored in the short-term memory can fade away quickly, that it might be hard to remember information learned a long time ago, that previously encountered information is more likely to be relearned than brand new information, and that variables such as study time, familiarity, and the number of items are believed to influence retrieval performance. The study showed that 3rd and 5th graders hold the same beliefs like the children in the first group with the exception that their knowledge is more advanced. In addition, 3rd and 5th graders tend to act more organized facing problems to be solved and have a bigger repertoire of solutions to apply which might be linked with the fact that they have formed more complex self-concepts. In this context, Kuhn (1999) also points out that critical thinking skills improve over time and follow a developmental pattern.

Brown (1977) points out that in the scope of metamemory, issues such as the feeling of knowing, span estimation, recall readiness, the estimation of task difficulty, the appointment of study time and the prediction of strategic activity outcomes were addressed. Brown sees the reason behind intensifying on metamemory research as

the perceived connection between the knowledge of memory and the subsequent performance in memory related tasks.

Flavell and Wellman (1975) state that research conducted in the field of metamemory shows that cognitive growth and learning experience is responsible in developing a more complex metamemory. In addition, how memory tasks are managed seem to depend on memory variables such as the characteristics of the person involved in the task, the characteristics of the task itself, and strategies used. In fact all of these variables are interacting with each other in the face of memory processing. According to Flavell and Wellman (1975) personal attributes and strategies constitute memory ability, task demands and item characteristics on the other hand memory difficulty. At the end, both memory ability and difficulty determine the probable memory performance.

To sum, initial research effort was invested to reveal how children and people use their minds in processes of remembering and comprehending. Research on metacognition was mainly descriptive in nature and it aimed to carve out the developmental process involved in children's metamemory. As Hacker (1998) indicates, the first attempts in metacognition research focused on cognitive monitoring. In other words, individuals' own knowledge about processes related to thoughts and knowledge itself were aimed to be revealed at. In general, it turned out that knowledge monitoring is possible within a young age, while a quantitative and qualitative improvement is achieved with increased age in many respects. Recently, cognitive knowledge and monitoring and more considerably metacognitive knowledge and monitoring are of importance in the field of education because the predominating idea of theoreticians is that self-regulating learners are more effective (Butler & Winne, 1995) whereby the knowledge of one's own knowledge is considered a prerequisite for self-regulation in the learning process (Schoenfeld, 1987).

Further research investigated cognitive regulation in the scope of metacognition and metamemory. Here, the main aim was to find out about how thinking processes could be altered to succeed in different environments by making required adaptations. As Schneider (1985) points out in his review, this type of research features a design in which participants are first trained in using a strategy tailored for a certain task to be

completed. Secondly, another task to be solved is presented. Consequently, participants' way of dealing with the task and the strategies applied are observed whereby the main focus is on whether the same strategy is applied for the second task, whether it is applied with modifications, or whether a completely different strategy is preferred over the previously taught strategy. With the help of these so called transfer tasks, participants' states of metacognitive awareness of strategies and their use were assessed (Hacker, 1998; Kluwe, 1982). It turned out that strategy training allows people to apply strategies to various other situations and manage these more effectively (Cavanaugh & Borkowski, 1979; Moynahan, 1978).

Other studies attempted to examine both monitoring and regulation of information to manage a task. Most of these studies center on strategy knowledge and how this knowledge is put into practice facing specific memory tasks (Schneider, 1985; Cavanaugh & Perlmuter, 1982). Thus, interest exists in revealing whether people are able to choose and apply the most effective strategy among a pool of known ones. Pressley, Levin and Ghatala (1984) examined this ability with respect to vocabulary learning. Participants were first trained in two different vocabulary learning strategies which they were later asked to apply while learning a list of vocabulary items in Latin or Spanish. While one group of participants was provided with the chance to practice and apply the newly learned strategies on a vocabulary list, the other group was not. In addition, participants of both groups were either recommended to use one of the learned strategies by an experimenter or there was not any recommendation. The results revealed that the group lacking strategy practice tended to follow the recommendations of the experimenter, while the other group that was allowed to gain experience by practicing both strategies ended up choosing the strategy which met the requirements of the vocabulary learning task despite being told to choose the less effective strategy by the experimenter. Thus, this study shows that the knowledge and the monitoring of this knowledge allowed for regulating the following strategy use. Nevertheless, a subject group consisting of children provided different results. Children were more likely to follow the experimenter's recommendation to use the strategy which is less effective despite having practiced both strategies. Again, this shows that metacognitive awareness increases with age. In general, it is acknowledged that children are able to apply

strategies specifically if the environment is set up correctly. Thus, under known and pre-experienced conditions strategies can be used less problematically by young children. Once children age they gain a wider repertoire of strategies which they can apply in various and cognitively more demanding conditions. This improvement is mainly linked with the increasing awareness about strategies themselves and how they affect performance (McCormick, 2003; Pressley et al., 1987; Waters & Kunnmann, 2010).

To conclude, what the results of early investigations about metamemory and metacognition which were mainly descriptive and epistemological in nature show is that metacognition is mainly late developing and that skills related to metacognition improve with increasing age (Alexander et al., 1995; Butler & Winne, 1995). Metacognition is a term which was generated in the late 70s. Early years of metacognitive research was marked by metacognitive knowledge within various memory tasks. Research concerning cognitive regulation was addressed later on.

Metacognition in Education

In the following years, a sharper distinction was made between metacognitive researches conducted among different domains. Thus, while some researchers continued to rely on the developmental, and cognitive approach to metacognition, others changed course towards an educational or clinical approach to metacognition. The reason behind the formation of different independent branches of metacognitive research was the varying theoretical approaches to metacognition, the pursuit of different aims, or the focus on different subjects, and the resulting discrepancy in preferred methodology (Paris, 2002). While Flavell approached metacognition from a cognitive point of view, Bandura was the one showing interest in how the environment impacts self-regulation processes of people with a focus on self-efficacy. Although both sides did not firstly intend to work on metacognitive processes within the educational context, the concept of metacognition did enter the classroom especially through the contributions of Zimmerman and colleagues who established self-regulated learning within and for this context (Dinsmore et al., 2008).

The inclusion of the concept of metacognition into educational psychology initiated a shift from theory to practice, while the main effort was invested in revealing whether and how metacognitive processes benefit the learning process. Rather than considering metacognition as an object of study only, it was acknowledged as a means to invest in educational contexts to foster learning. The role metacognition plays in the classroom starts with making students realize their own thinking and learning processes during the acquisition of new knowledge. Metacognition also helps students to deal with and overcome problems faced in the course of learning by making them initiate or switch among strategies, monitoring the actions taken, or if required redetermining learning goals. Lastly, metacognition was welcomed in the educational context because metacognition can be instilled to students so that learning and teaching is facilitated (Paris & Winograd, 1990). From the 1980s onward self-regulated learning which includes the role metacognition plays in the educational context was a concept which was highly investigated. Thus, subsequent research studies started not to focus on monitoring, controlling, and regulating cognition only but examined these processes also with regard to other aspects which were considered to have an impact on learning, such as motivation.

Ganz and Ganz (1990) remark that metacognition paves the way for several educational goals. Some of these goals which are achieved through metacognition are to make students take responsibility for their learning processes, increase their efficacy perceptions, and lead to a decrease in experiencing learned helplessness. In this context, Paris and Winograd (1990) emphasize that student learning can be enhanced if awareness is created concerning one's own thinking in processes such as reading, writing or problem solving. An important role is ascribed to the teacher as teachers are considered the source of information related to strategies involved in the learning process, or cognitive and motivational aspects which might alter the thinking process. Paris and Winograd (1990) further point out that so far theory about metacognition addressed the impact of awareness on thinking, the role of individual differences in the process of learning, the benefits of strategic thinking, and the importance of experience in improving knowledge and abilities. As Hacker (1998) concludes these components are all relevant to promote students' awareness of the learning process and their own way of functioning in this process. As a result,

this awareness is considered a prerequisite of becoming self-regulating individuals who are in charge of their own thinking, and who as a consequence can pursue a specific goal systematically by adapting behavior (Kluwe, 1982). As Kluwe (1982) puts it, “Our thinking is not just happening, like a reflex; it is caused by the thinking person, it can be monitored and regulated deliberately, i.e., it is under the control of the thinking person” (p. 222).

Thus, the way an individual thinks about himself or herself and the amount of his or her knowledge determines his or her process of learning. Agency is an important term here. In line with drifting apart from behaviorism, students become agents of their own thinking. This means that they construct knowledge about themselves as learners and the outer world in which learning takes place, control their behaviors and thoughts in the learning process, and finally supervise the consequences of the whole process (Hacker et al., 2009). Like other researchers, Kluwe (1982) links this agency with metacognition, as metacognition allows for and facilitates self-awareness, determination and direction. If students want to be in control of their own learning, they first need to know themselves as learners, and what learning is as a whole; figure out aims, strengths and weaknesses; and come up with and apply appropriate strategies to reach one’s goals or compensate discrepancies. Thus, the focus on metacognition in learning puts students to the foreground and ascribes them the ability to manage learning.

Research proves that students with greater metacognitive knowledge are better learners (Winne & Hadwin, 1998). Both metacognitive knowledge and monitoring on the other hand determine the extent and exertion of metacognitive control. Hereby, control stands for decisions about what, how much, and how to study (Serra & Metcalfe, 2009). That is why metacognition is especially relevant for students who struggle at school because they lack some of the basic metacognitive skills (Paris & Winograd, 1990). What is of importance here is as White and Frederiksen (1998) mention that metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive skills, which are theorized to form the learning process, can be learned over time. That is why attempts are made to teach students how to learn. While White and Frederiksen (1998) prefer to incorporate raising students’ awareness about the learning process into the subject curriculum, others head for strategy training to improve learning. Strategy training in

educational context was dealt with especially in the 80s and 90s. As effective strategy use was considered a boost for academic performance at school, ways and benefits of training students to use strategies efficiently were investigated (Nelson & Narens, 1994). Thus, the ability to monitor and direct cognitive processes has to be inherited if effective learning is going to take place (Boekaerts, Pintrich, & Zeidner, 2000).

Starting from here, the metacognitive awareness of students was assessed within different learning contexts, subjects, and different academic areas such as reading, writing, goal setting or problem-solving; and attempts to link the concept of metacognition and the related awareness to other concepts such as achievement outcomes to fully understand how learning functions and how it can be enhanced were made (Baker & Brown, 1980; Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, & Campione, 1982; Forbes & Fisher, 2015; Goh, 1997; Hong-Nam, 2014; Kiremitçi, 2013; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Metcalfe & Shimamura, 1994; Paris & Winograd, 1990; Pintrich, 2002; Ridley & Ruan, 2014; Sarıcoban, 2015; Schulz, Glanz, & Weinstein, 1992; Schoenfeld, 1992; Tavakoli, 2014; Topçu & Yılmaz-Tüzün 2009; Young & Fry, 2008).

Metacognitive Awareness

The need for students to be metacognitively aware is considered to be essential for effective learning (Bruning et al., 2004). In this respect having metacognitive knowledge, having the awareness about what strength and weaknesses one carries, and putting knowledge into strategic action is facilitated by metacognitive awareness. Hartman (2001) refers to the conclusion drawn from the comparison of high and low achieving students. High achievers display higher metacognitive awareness and are more likely to demonstrate self-regulatory behavior. Awareness and self-regulation on the other hand foster cognitive growth, as the knowledge about one's own thinking can be used to regulate and guide cognitive processes involved in learning, thinking and problem-solving. Thus, metacognitive awareness helps learners to become self-directed, reflective and more strategic as the awareness over thinking and memory processes allows for better regulation (Bruning et al., 2004). Sternberg and Davidson (1983) are supporters of the idea that able or gifted students have in

fact more metacognitive awareness than other students. This comes in line with a better understanding about what is known or unknown, the knowledge about what one is capable doing of, and the insight about how to gain required knowledge.

Hartman (2001) pointed out that ineffective learners blindly carry out tasks even though they do not realize what the purpose of the task is or what they are exactly doing to perform the task. These types of students do not reflect upon their performance outcomes or the processes involved and they are highly overstrained in the face of challenging tasks. In some instances, students struggle to perform tasks despite the prerequisite knowledge and skills they actually hold. While this can be explained with lacking motivation or confidence, another cause is that students just cannot figure out that it is time to apply possessed knowledge and skills. This is an indication of lacking metacognitive awareness. Thus, students who are not metacognitively aware are more likely to be ineffective learners. Hartman (2001) farther elaborates on the processes these students might encounter problems in. In this context, she refers to aspects such as judging task difficulty, monitoring comprehension, planning ahead, estimating sufficiency of study time, considering all information at hand, and approaching tasks systematically.

In line with the insight that learners who are metacognitively aware are better performers through the advantages of planning, sequencing, and monitoring learning (Schraw & Dennison, 1994), focus shifted to increase learners awareness and to help and teach them to control their own thinking (Livingston, 1997; Noushad, 2008), so that the way was paved for studying metacognitive awareness.

Some studies attempted to measure metacognitive awareness in general only (Jaleel, 2016; Kiremitçi, 2013). Thus, Indian secondary school students' metacognitive awareness was measured and possible correlations between awareness and gender, locality and type of school management were aimed at to be uncovered (Jaleel, 2016). A metacognitive awareness inventory designed for the Indian context was used to group students into very low, low, average, high, and very high levels of awareness. An equal distribution among each level was identified among secondary school students. No significant relation was detected between metacognitive awareness and gender, the locality of the school differentiating between urban and rural schools, or the type of management within the schools of concern. In

Kiremitçi's (2013) study, the metacognitive awareness levels of Turkish university students enrolled in the school of physical education and sports was moderate in general, while differences were noted among specific departments and gender. A great deal of research studies also measures students' metacognitive awareness but do not do this in isolation as will be shown in the oncoming research studies.

Metacognitive Awareness and Achievement Outcomes

Effects of metacognitive awareness on students' general achievement have been studied by several researchers. Undergraduate and graduate education students in the United States completed the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) in Young and Fry's (2008) research study which aimed to uncover the relation between metacognitive awareness and college achievement. In order to measure academic achievement students' GPA and end course grades were taken into account. Both components of metacognition, namely knowledge and regulation of cognition were related to both GPA and end course grades which displayed the correlation between metacognitive awareness and academic achievement. Furthermore, graduate students achieved higher scores on the regulation component of cognition while differences were not detected within the knowledge factor. These outcomes indicate that students with more experience are more skilled in terms of regulation.

Kállay's (2012) study was concerned with Romanian sophomores and how influential both learning strategies and metacognitive awareness are for their learning outcomes. The research instruments used were the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI). Findings imply that about 65% of academic achievement results from learning strategies and metacognitive awareness while especially declarative knowledge, and information processing strategies and self-testing abilities turned out to be more effective.

In Peklaj and Pecjak's (2002) study which focused on secondary school students in Slovenia, the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI), the researcher developed Cognitive Strategies Awareness Questionnaire, Cognitive Awareness Questionnaire and Motivational Questionnaire were used in order to examine the relation between metacognitive awareness, motivation and cognition on academic achievement. Data

was analyzed in light of the grouping of students into high, average and low-achieving students based on their final scores in the previous school year. Data analysis revealed that next to cognitive knowledge, achievement motivation and self-efficacy, metacognitive knowledge also increased from low to high achieving students.

An attempt was also made to reveal a possible link between mobile phone use, metacognitive awareness and academic achievement (Dos, 2014). For this purpose, 209 Turkish private university students enrolled in different departments of the faculty of education were administered the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory. In addition, students' GPA and reported mobile phone and texting use were considered for this study. Mobile phone use and metacognitive awareness were reported to be high while the mean GPA turned out to be 2,91. No significant correlation was found among the stated aspects. It was only the metacognitive awareness level which had a statistically significant effect on students' GPA.

In another study, metacognition was examined in relation with epistemological beliefs and their relation with science achievement (Topçu & Yılmaz-Tüzün, 2009). 941 Turkish elementary school students in total were involved in this study. Results revealed that both metacognition and epistemological beliefs are related with science achievement but that metacognition has a bigger role to play in achievement outcomes.

In this context, Kruger and Dunning (1999) and Händel and Fritzsche (2016) approached metacognitive awareness from a different point of view. Kruger and Dunning (1999) shed light on the unskilled-and-unaware effect and pointed out that the lacking awareness about incompetence restricts the evaluation of oneself. Within their study, the researchers focused on the performance of undergraduate students of an American university in tests related to humor, grammar, and logic. Based on the scores participants gained from these tests, a categorization into performance quartiles followed. Once students completed the tests, they assessed their own performance. In some instances students were also given the chance to compare their answers provided in the tests with those of other participants. Students in the bottom score quartile mainly overestimated their test performance and their related ability. In other words, they held inadequate metacognitive skills. Peer-comparison provided

two different outcomes. Low performers continued to believe in having scored fine even after examining the answers provided by high performers, while high performers who usually tended to underestimate their performance realized the superiority of their answers in contrast to those of low achievers. The researchers address the aspect that these results show that incompetent learners fail to realize that they are in fact unskilled although being confronted with feedback that should convince them otherwise.

Following Kruger and Dunning (1999), Händel and Fritzsche (2016) went about the fact that students who are not metacognitively aware are not good performers by focusing on the conception that students with low metacognitive awareness lack the required skill to recognize their related deficiency. In other words, the so called unskilled-and-unaware effect which indicates that low-performing students are unaware of their restricted ability to estimate specific outcomes of one's performance was examined. This was of particular interest, as attempts to improve will not be made if individuals are not aware of the fact that they lack the required knowledge to successfully manage a task and to demonstrate satisfying performances. For this study, 196 undergraduate education students who were enrolled in an educational psychology course were divided into four groups depending on their performances. At the end of the study term, participants were asked to judge their performances in the final exam of the course consisting of multiple choice items. In addition to these postdictions, second order judgments (SOJ) were asked for. Hence, students had to state how many items of the final exam they believed to having solved correctly. For the second order judgments, participants rated their confidence in the previously stated postdiction about test performance. Findings portrayed that the groups with high performance on the final exam underestimated their performance while students with less success in the exam overestimated their performance. In other words, the unskilled-and-unaware effect was confirmed in this study although not situated within the language learning context. Nevertheless, results indicate that students who overestimated their performance did not show high confidence in their stated performance judgments. Fortunately, it turned out that these students were at least aware of the fact that their judgments might not relate to the actual truth. The reason why awareness about performance outcomes is essential is that anticipated success or

failure in a learning task in any kind will establish the further learning routes to be taken. Overestimating performance goes along with the idea that there is no need to work harder, while underestimation will pave the way to waste effort. In light of the stated results, it was hypothesized that low performers were least confident in their performance ratings because they experienced difficulties while solving the exam items and because they rather guessed the answer among the provided options. To sum up, lacking metacognitive awareness might inhibit future performance and generate unsatisfying achievement outcomes.

Metacognitive Awareness and Goal Setting

Ridley and colleagues (Ridley, Schulz, Glanz, & Weinstein, 1992) investigated metacognitive awareness in line with goal-setting. For this purpose, 89 undergraduates of education in total whose level of metacognitive awareness was assessed were grouped into high or low metacognitive awareness groups. Participants of both of these groups were made to participate in activities which required goal-setting or not. Thus, four experimental groups emerged. After the first intervention each group was provided with a decision-making task within a medical context which did not require content specific knowledge to solve. Being provided with the stated symptoms of patients, participants had to make decisions to heal patients whereas they had to choose among offered solutions rather than come up with their own cure. It turned out that being metacognitive aware or setting goals within a task does not guarantee success as participants with high metacognitive awareness also failed in some instances. The conclusion drawn is that if a goal is missing, success outcomes might not be reached. Thus, results show that participants who formulated clearly defined goals and who at the same time demonstrated high levels of awareness were the most successful in decision-making tasks. While goals were stated to form the base for motivation to engage in a task, awareness was considered to render required information to find the best way to engage in and deal with the task at hand. That is why Ridley and colleagues suggest fostering metacognitive awareness among students in accordance with goal-setting strategies to nourish the learning process.

Metacognitive Awareness and Problem Solving

Problem solving was another topic which was linked with metacognition. In this context, it is mainly emphasized that in order to be able to attempt to solve problems systematically, people need to have the required knowledge to do so which reflects itself in form of metacognitive knowledge about problem situations or strategies to apply (Miller, Galanter, & Pibram, 1960). Metacognitive strategies and processes are often included in research about problem solving. Metcalfe and Shimamura (1994) carved out metacognitive processes which prevailed as essential in problem solving. These are summarized as identifying the existence and the characteristic of problems, comparing each problem encountered with another, making plans about the steps to be taken, and reflecting about the progress made within the problem solving process. Thus, metacognition improves the quality of and guides problem solving while knowledge, age and intelligence are variables which determine the effectiveness of the whole process (Davidson, Deuser, & Sternberg, 1994).

Swanson (1990) was concerned with the relationship between metacognitive knowledge and aptitude, and problem solving. Students who differed in their general academic aptitude among 4th and 5th grades within four different elementary schools participated in this study. The Cognitive Ability Test and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills encompasses mathematics, social, science, science, reading and language were administered to group students into high- and low-aptitude groups. Thus, aptitude was not limited to language but covered school-related tasks in general. Both groups of students' problem solving skills were analyzed and it turned out that it was not the general aptitude but higher metacognitive knowledge that determined students' performance in problem solving. At the same time, those who have both high aptitude and high metacognitive knowledge are the most advantaged one in terms of problem solving.

Metacognitive Awareness and Learning Strategies

As Chamot (2004) puts it "Learning strategies are the thoughts and actions that individuals use to accomplish a learning goal" (p. 14). Others state that learning strategies are required to make sense of learning (Lee, 2010). Pressley, Borkowski

and Schneider (1987) summarize the qualities a good strategy user has to possess within five criteria. Thus, good strategy users need to have a broad knowledge base; knowledge about a wide range of strategies to use; conditional knowledge about when, where and why to use certain strategies; the ability to switch off any kind of physical and cognitive distraction; and automaticity in all of the mentioned criteria so that tasks can be managed with minimal burden. Metacognitive strategies are reported to hold a more central position in the learning and also language learning process (Pintrich, 2002). This indicates that metacognition plays a major role in effective strategy use and regulation of the learning process.

Cary and Reder (2002) also addressed the role of metacognition in strategy selection. They refer to the point that individual's degree of awareness in strategy use changes with the attempted tasks. Hence, easier tasks ask for less awareness in the process, while difficult tasks require more awareness about which strategies to use.

Reasons behind why learning strategies are not used were also of concern (Garner, 1990). Some of these reasons are lack of knowledge, difficulties in cognitive monitoring, or attributions that prevent strategy use. Thus, next to metacognition strategies are also linked with attributions.

Attributional retraining is considered as an element within strategy training (Garner & Alexander, 1989). If failure attributions to ability are changed and learners are rather instilled with the idea that they failed due to lacking effort or the use of inappropriate strategies, learning behavior and performance will also change. As equipping students with different strategies does not guarantee strategy use itself, students should be shown the link between strategy use and performance, so that another aspect to attribute failure to is created for the students.

Yet some studies attempted to reveal students' metacognitive awareness of learning strategies only (Okoza, Aluede, & Owens-Sogolo, 2013). 1200 Nigerian secondary students completed the Assessing Metacognitive Awareness of Learning Strategies (AMALS) instrument. Poor metacognitive awareness of learning strategies was measured while no significant differences were found among grade levels. Consequently, the need to teach metacognitively is stated so that students' learning is

enhanced. In addition, the inclusion of metacognitive teaching training within pre-service and in-service teacher training is advocated.

Metacognition and Reading

Reading was a popular topic which was investigated in relation to metacognition. Ann Leslie Brown was the one who promoted research in this field. Together with Baker, Brown (1980) dwelt on the relationship between metacognitive skills and effective reading. They emphasize that comprehension monitoring is required to successfully read for meaning, while reading to remember asks for skills such as locating main ideas, applying appropriate study strategies and arranging time correctly. Again the importance of awareness is pointed out. If the reader is aware of the activities he or she performs in the process of reading, an effective outcome is anticipated. This awareness covers knowledge about reading or remembering strategies, knowledge about text structure, or the processes to be engaged in based on the type of reading tasks (Baker & Brown, 1980; Brown, Campione, & Day, 1981). A study conducted by van Kraayenoord and Schneider (1999) proved that the reading comprehension performance of German elementary students was influenced by metacognition.

In order to help students with reading comprehension Brown and her colleagues (Brown et al., 1982) invested in training students in strategies to make use of in the process of reading. To facilitate the monitoring of reading comprehension, strategies like questioning, clarifying and summarizing were highlighted. Having this in mind, Palinscar and Brown (1984) developed an instructional intervention called reciprocal teaching to make students successfully create meaning. Thus, poor readers are considered ill-equipped concerning problem solving qualities in the face of tasks, while these are believed to be improvable with the help of metacognitive strategies.

August, Flavell, and Clift (1984) compared comprehension monitoring among readers who were classified as skilled and less skilled based on the results of a reading comprehension test administered to the participants. 32 American 5th graders were involved in this study and 16 pairs of students were formed in such a way that one skilled and one less skilled reader of similar intelligence scores were brought

together. Participants then read five stories out of which three lacked consistency on a microcomputer which recorded reading times and lookbacks on each single page. The participants were informed that some of the stories might lack some pages and that after each story they would be asked whether a page was missing in the particular stories. If the participants believed to have read a story with missing information, they were provided with cards displaying the content of the story and asked to state where exactly they would place the missing page. Skilled readers were more likely to locate inconsistencies in the stories. The number of less skilled readers who could report missing pages but who at the same time could place the missing page correctly was low.

Metacognitive Awareness in the Turkish Context

In Turkey, studies related to metacognitive awareness independent from language learning touch upon pre-service mathematics teachers' beliefs and metacognitive awareness (Hart & Memnun, 2015), pre-service ELT teachers' metacognitive awareness (Saricoban, 2015), pre-service teachers metacognitive awareness level with respect to different demographic variables (Şendurur et al., 2011), upper secondary students' chemistry efficacy and metacognitive awareness (Kirbulut, 2014), the metacognitive awareness levels of school of physical education and sport students (Kiremitçi, 2013), the metacognitive awareness of teacher candidates from different departments of the faculty of education (Cihanoglu, 2012), the relationship between upper secondary students' self-esteem and metacognitive awareness levels (Kılınç, 2013), the relationship between mobile phone use, metacognitive awareness and academic achievement (Dos, 2014), the relationship between metacognitive awareness, locus of control and epistemological beliefs (Bedel, 2012) and the relationship between metacognition, epistemological beliefs and science achievement (Topçu & Yılmaz-Tüzün, 2009).

In each of these studies results were inconsistent. In addition, the favored population appears to be university students, especially teacher candidates. The process of language learning in Turkey as a foreign language learning context was not of specific concern either. Thus, both studies concerning EFL contexts and upper

secondary students are rather rare. In addition, among the variables which were attempted to be linked with metacognition, attributions did not inherit an important place.

Metacognition and Language Learning

The incorporation of metacognition into language learning is important as it paves the way to regulate learning rather than to learn on its own (William & Burden, 1997). Moreover, metacognition is accepted to play a central role in making language learning effective and helps to distinguish good and poor language learners (Rubin, 1975; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). A review which aimed to reveal the role of metacognition within language learning was conducted by Raoofi, Chan, Mukundan and Rashid (2013). The extent to which metacognition affects second or foreign language learning and which variables have an impact on this process were of particular interest. For this purpose the researchers investigated the results of 33 research studies in total which were published within the time period from 1999 to 2013. The outcome of this review is promising as metacognitive inventions seem to promote language learning. An immense amount of studies tried to identify successful language learners by focusing on language learning strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) after Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern and Todesco focused on the good language learner in 1978. Thus, strategy taxonomies were developed whereas metacognitive and affective strategies were part of them.

Anderson (2002) points out the importance of metacognition within second language learning by formulating a model of metacognition for this language learning context. He supports the view that apart from making students learn a language, teachers should make students realize how the learning process works and proceeds, so that students are equipped with learning skills next to cognitive skills. In this process he accentuates strategy use. The steps of his model of metacognition are preparing and planning for learning, selecting and using learning strategies, monitoring strategy use, orchestrating strategies, and lastly evaluating strategy use and learning. Each of these steps is interactively related with and impacts each other. The role the teacher plays in this process is that of modeling strategies.

Metacognitive research in relation with language learning was identified to put emphasis on the effects of metacognitive instruction on learning, metacognition as a variable affecting and determining language performance, and the impact of metacognition on affect. In terms of metacognitive instruction, changes in language performance or metacognitive awareness and metacognitive strategy use were assessed (Raaofi et al., 2013). While a positive impact on language performance is stated to be observed, findings show inconsistencies with regard to metacognitive awareness and strategy use. The majority of the examined studies notify that metacognition predicts language performance (Phakiti, 2003; Pishghadam & Khajavy, 2013). Thus, if language learners make use of metacognitive resources, success is more likely to be experienced within language tasks.

Victori and Lockhart (1995) point out to the importance of autonomy within language learning. In their paper, they emphasize that teaching strategies to master language on their own do not guarantee that language learners take responsibility for their own learning. They state that teaching strategies has to be combined with working on students' metacognition so that they are aware of the role autonomy plays within language learning and how to handle it. That is why they suggest metacognition to be incorporated in learner training programs. The transmission of the knowledge about cognitive strategies is not considered sufficient. Language learners should be familiarized with metacognitive strategies and metacognitive knowledge. Transferred to the language learning context, this means that while the former initiates self-directed learning, the latter reveals learners' attitudes, knowledge, learning styles, beliefs and expectations with regard to language learning. The approach to creating autonomous learners by pouring cognitive strategy knowledge without illustrating their benefit should be questioned (Turner, 1989).

The relationship between motivation and metacognition in the language learning context was also of concern in relation to the affective domain. Vandergrift's (2005) study confirmed a significant relationship between second language motivation and metacognitive strategies. This study dealt with Canadian high school students who were learning French. In this study second language motivation turned out to be related with metacognitive strategies applied in listening.

Language proficiency was also examined to locate factors affecting metacognition. It turned out that learners with a higher language proficiency use more metacognitive knowledge in their learning process. Phakiti (2003) stated that these language learners indicated to use more metacognitive strategies than those with moderate or low language proficiency. This result was confirmed by Lai (2009) and Victori (1999). Victori had examined effective EFL writers in relation to their metacognitive strategy use. On the other hand, the findings of Hong-Nam and Leavell's (2006) study did not support the outcomes of the mentioned studies. They reported that students with moderate language proficiency reported to use more strategies than highly proficient students. This outcome was explained by referring to strategy use as being automatized and having taken the form of a habitual act so that although students with high language proficiency might be using more metacognitive strategies the process itself might be rather unconscious.

Metacognitive Awareness and Language Learning Strategy Use

Literature review about metacognition within the language learning context illustrates a heavy emphasis on the examination of the metacognitive awareness of strategy use in different language skills within the second and foreign language learning context next to the native language. Thus, metacognitive awareness of strategy use was a popular topic of interest. Next to revealing the metacognitive awareness of strategy use, this awareness was examined in light of its impact on achievement outcomes or its relation with language proficiency mainly.

Following Rubin (1975) and his attempt to describe what constitutes a good language learner and which strategies an effective language learner should have command of, language learning strategies started to be addressed in particular. Effort was invested in generating strategy taxonomies. In the context of language learning Oxford, O'Malley and Chamot were some of the leading figures (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978). O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) strategy taxonomy consisted of metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective strategies. Cognitive strategies were said to help language production. Metacognitive strategies allow coordinating the process of language learning. Affective strategies

make learners regulate emotions evoked within this process. Oxford (1990) classified strategies as direct and indirect strategies while metacognitive strategies are one of the subdivisions of indirect strategies. Both taxonomies contain metacognitive strategies. Chamot and Kupper (1989) conducted a longitudinal study among high school students learning Spanish and Russian with the aim to identify which learning strategies are preferred and used within the process of learning a foreign language, to locate the varying strategy use among effective and ineffective language learners, and to shed light on how strategies can be brought closer to language learners. They highlight that effective language learners are aware of how to profit from learning strategies to achieve goals set, while ineffective learners even struggle when it comes to choosing strategies or applying them appropriately. In order to reveal preferred learning strategies, high school students of different grades who were divided into effective, average, and ineffective language learners were interviewed about their methods used to master different types of tasks covering the language skills or subskills. Students of higher grades use more strategies, while all students in general rather used cognitive than metacognitive strategies. Among metacognitive strategies, those related to planning were mainly applied. Beginners especially preferred repetitions, translations and made use of language transfer within cognitive strategies. In addition, strategy use varied based on the language classrooms' focus. Classrooms centered on grammar evoked different strategies while classrooms stressing language proficiency evoked others. Other factors which impact strategy choice and use turned out to be prior language study, task type, task difficulty, and student motivation. Chamot (2004) points out to the importance of metacognition within the language classroom. He emphasizes that it is metacognition which makes learners consider and choose appropriate strategies. For this purpose, knowing each and every single strategy is not necessary. Language learners just have to find out and decide which strategies they have to use in what ways for specific language tasks. In this context, proficient language learners are reported to use numerous strategies more frequently (Buen, 2001; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Green & Oxford, 1995; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wharton, 2000).

Zahedi (2008) examined the link between metacognitive learning strategies and academic success among EFL master's students in distance education. The

metacognitive learning strategy section of the Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning was administered among 36 master's students and their university average scores were used as indicators of academic success. No connection could be located between metacognitive strategy use and academic success of both low and high achievers.

As the majority of research studies related to metacognitive awareness focus on specific language skills, research outcomes on the metacognitive awareness of reading, listening, speaking and writing strategy use will be presented in the following part.

Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategy Use

Tavakoli (2014) addressed awareness of reading strategy use in particular by questioning the link between reading strategy awareness and reading comprehension. 100 randomly selected Iranian EFL majors participated in this study. The Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) which consists of the global reading strategies, problem-solving strategies and support reading strategies subcategories which are all metacognitive in nature was used to assess participants' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted among randomly selected students of different language proficiencies as measured by the Michingan Test of English Language Proficiency. Results showed that majors demonstrated moderate awareness about reading strategies and that students with high language proficiency demonstrated high awareness in terms of metacognitive strategies compared to other proficiency levels. While language proficiency seems to influence strategy use and awareness, gender did not. Reading achievement was assessed with the help of a reading comprehension test developed by the researcher. Participants were required to take this test at the beginning and at the end of the term to measure reading ability. A strong and positive correlation was identified between metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and reading achievement. Those students applying more metacognitive strategies performed better in the comprehension test. As Tavakoli (2014) concludes, EFL learners have to realize that by working on, acquiring and applying reading strategies both reading ability and

academic performance can be improved. Further it is emphasized that language teachers should provide language learners with several possibilities to acquire and ameliorate strategy use. A similar study was conducted in Thailand (Chumworatayee, 2012). The aim of this study was to assess adult EFL learners' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies in terms of academic reading texts in English. In addition, metacognitive awareness was investigated in terms of how it is impacted by learners' English language proficiency. The total number of 92 participants was divided into groups of students of low, intermediate and high language proficiency. All participants took the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS). In general, a high to moderate use of reading strategies was identified following data analysis. Language proficiency turned out to play a role as anticipated. High proficiency learners scored better than the intermediate group while the intermediate group was superior to the low proficiency group in terms of reading strategy awareness, although the frequency of the use of certain strategies differed among groups. Similarly, metacognitive awareness and reading strategy use among Korean undergraduate EFL students within the Korean context was taken into consideration by Hong-Nam and Page (2014). The identification of strategy use and awareness was valued as learners can be trained in lacking strategies. Hong-Nam (2014) dealt with the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and reading proficiency within the ESL (English as Second Language) context. High school students living in the United States who were not native speakers of English and who reported the use of their L1 at home and English within their everyday life participated in this study. At the same time, those students had limited English proficiency. For this study, next to the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI), the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TASK) was implemented in order to gain information about participants' proficiency in reading. In addition, students were required to rate their perceived reading proficiency. A moderate use of reading strategies was identified while the preference for strategies was problem solving, global reading, and support reading strategies in respective order. The group of students with intermediate reading proficiency was reported to use more strategies while the differences were not statistically significant. The majority of students considered themselves to be good readers, being followed by students rating

themselves as average, poor and great readers. 4% of the students who rated themselves as great readers formed the group which also reported more strategy use.

Metacognitive awareness of reading strategies was also examined in terms of other foreign languages. Alhaqbani and Riazi (2012) addressed learners' awareness of reading strategies in Arabic. 122 non-native, male undergraduate students of different nationalities who were enrolled in a Saudi Arabian university participated in this study. The purpose of this study was to locate language learners' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, their perception of which strategies they use most, a possible link between participants' metacognitive awareness and their self-rated reading ability in Arabic, and the relationship between metacognitive awareness for reading strategies and different variables. The Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) which assesses global, problem-solving, and support reading strategies was used next to a scale ranging from 1 to 10 to assess participants' self-rating of their reading ability in Arabic. Findings indicate that the majority of strategies were used at a high rate, while none of them were rated on a low level. Problem-solving, global, and support reading strategies were favored in respective order while metacognitive awareness of these strategies also declined in the same order. As the majority of participants rated themselves as skilled readers, its relationship with metacognitive awareness could not be investigated. Furthermore, as time spent at university increased, the awareness of reading strategy use also increased especially for problem-solving strategies. Another variable which turned out to be significant was nationality as strategy preference showed differences according to this variable. African students used more global reading strategies than Asian readers.

Within the Turkish context, Ateş (2013) measured the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies within Turkish texts among 281 freshmen university students from different departments with the help of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory. Findings showed a moderate awareness about support strategies and general reading strategies and a high awareness about problem solving strategies. Women demonstrated a higher metacognitive awareness than men. Students in the department of education showed the lowest awareness among freshmen students of other departments. The need to foster the metacognitive awareness of these students was emphasized as the department of education trains students as future teachers

who on the other hand are going to assist students in their learning process. Turkish secondary students' metacognitive awareness in the process of reading academic texts in Turkish was also examined (Temur, Kargin, Bayar & Bayar, 2010). The Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory was used among 6th to 8th graders. As a result, although not statistically significant a positive correlation was located between grade level and metacognitive awareness. Türkyılmaz (2015) focused on the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies used in Turkish texts in terms of its effect on reading attitude, together with the aspects of personality, and self-regulation. The instruments used among high school students were the Attitude Scale towards Reading Attitude, the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory, the Self-regulation Scale for Adolescents, and the Adjective based Personality Scale. With regard to metacognitive awareness, findings indicated that reading strategies awareness positively correlated with reading attitude and that it was the most significant predictor of reading attitude compared to the other variables.

A study which slightly touches upon the current research study as it is located within an EFL context was conducted by Yüksel and Yüksel (2012). The aim of this study was to work out 16 Turkish EFL university students metacognitive awareness of their academic reading strategies with the help of the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS). Findings indicate that reading strategies were usually used by the participants who were often aware of the strategies.

Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Strategy Use

Next to reading strategy awareness, metacognitive listening strategy awareness was also investigated with regard to its effect on listening comprehension (Al-Awan et al., 2013). In this context, 368 Jordanian 10th graders learning English as a foreign language in a public high school were administered the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) and a self-developed listening comprehension test by the researchers to determine students' metacognitive listening strategies awareness and the correlation between this awareness and the observed listening comprehension performance. Results demonstrated that the participants hold a moderate level of metacognitive awareness with respect to listening strategies and

that there is a statistically significant correlation between awareness and listening comprehension. Following this insight, the researchers highly suggest the incorporation of metacognitive listening strategies within listening comprehension instruction. Rahimi and Katal (2012) compared the metacognitive listening strategies awareness between high school and university students within Iran as an EFL context. For this comparison the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was applied among participants. In general all participants demonstrated a moderate metacognitive awareness level while problem solving strategies reached the highest, and person knowledge the lowest level. Contrary to expectations, high school students' metacognitive listening strategy awareness level was higher than that of university students. In addition, high school students' awareness about person knowledge was also higher. In another study, Rahimi (Rahimi & Abedi, 2014) attempted to explain the controversial findings in the aforementioned study by examining the correlation between metacognitive awareness of listening strategies and listening self-efficacy. Iranian high school students learning English in an EFL context completed the English Listening Self-Efficacy Questionnaire and the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire. Results revealed an average level of awareness and as expected a significant and positive correlation between self-efficacy and metacognitive awareness of listening strategies. Other research studies were interested in improving metacognitive awareness of listening strategies and listening performance of EFL learners with the help of metacognitive strategies instruction (Rahmiridad & Shams, 2014). Control and experimental groups were formed out of female Iranian English literature students of different English proficiency. While the experimental group was instructed in metacognitive strategy use, the control group did not receive any special training. In order to measure students' awareness the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was administered, while listening modules of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) were used as pre- and posttest to assess participants' performance in terms of listening. The analysis of pre- and posttest showed that with an increase in their metacognitive awareness level the experimental group performed better than the control group.

Goh (1997) measured English as a second language learners' metacognitive awareness with the help of student diaries. Adult Chinese students who were learning English within a Singaporean language institute were required to keep a diary in which they reflected on their experiences in and perceptions about listening. Diary entries were collected every week within a ten week period. The diary entries revealed that language learners developed awareness about three aspects in particular, namely the role the language learner plays within the listening process, the demands of the listening process itself, and listening strategies. Thus, the examination of the diary entries showed that students had developed a high metacognitive awareness covering cognitive processes involved in the learning process and perceived theories about the listening process. The researcher points to the importance to integrate pre- and post-listening discussion sessions about the listening tasks and listening strategies to foster metacognitive awareness.

Metacognitive Awareness of Speaking Strategy Use

Speaking skills were also addressed with regard to metacognitive awareness of strategies. Forbes and Fischer (2015) examined language learners' metacognitive awareness and metacognitive learning strategies use and how these might impact speaking proficiency and confidence in their action research. Five British 12th graders learning French participated in this study. The students were advanced level students who achieved successful results in the language skills of listening, writing and reading but who struggled in terms of speaking. The purpose of the researcher was to assess the impact of metacognitive learning strategy instruction on speaking skills. Within this action research, a mixed method design consisting of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, strategy checklists and students' assessment results which were conducted before and after the six-week strategy instruction was used. At the end of strategy instruction, students demonstrated an improvement in their speaking confidence. It was pointed out that this improvement might not necessarily result from the intervention itself as improvement might have been achieved within this time period without a specific intervention. Yet the interviews conducted with the students revealed that they mention strategies they encountered during the strategy instruction as a factor leading to the increased

confidence. The same pattern was observed in terms of perceived speaking ability. Again the researchers emphasize that metacognitive strategies and metacognitive awareness fosters the learning process and helps students to become autonomous and successful.

Metacognitive Awareness of Writing Strategy Use

Writing as a language skill was investigated by Ruan (2014). Chine students majoring in English were interviewed about their ideas on writing in an EFL context before taking a writing course. The interview was analyzed in terms of metacognitive awareness about person, task and strategy variables. Novice EFL writers stated that influential factors within the writing process that constitute person variables are writing self-efficacy, writing anxiety and motivation for EFL writing. Task variables which were frequently named were task purpose, task constraints and cross-language task inferences. In terms of the strategy variables and writing strategies used planning, text generating, revising and redrafting were mentioned. In sum, students did not seem to have the awareness of skilled writers. Next to inappropriate task and strategy awareness, a rather negative image of the self as a writer was portrayed in the interviews.

Overall, it becomes visible that metacognitive awareness of language learning was assessed within the foreign language and second language context. It can be seen that studies which focus on specific awareness about language skills choose language learners as their sample while studies which address metacognitive awareness in general do not do so necessarily. In addition, metacognitive awareness about reading strategies appears to be the most popular among language skill strategies. In their review of metacognitive research in the context of language learning, Raaofi and his colleagues (Raaofi et al., 2004) suggest further research covering variables like gender, traits, intelligence, self-efficacy and attributions. This justifies an intense focus on metacognition and attributions altogether.

Attribution and Metacognition Research

Bruning, Schraw, Norby and Ronning (2004) accentuate the constructive role cognitive psychology plays for education, as cognitive processes touch upon almost every educational decision. At the same time, they do not ignore the fact that a cognitive approach to education does not suffice to make people understand what learning constitutes. They point out that the maturation of cognitive psychology demonstrated itself in form of the consideration of social influences on cognition, the interrelation of cognition and motivation, and self-awareness and strategy use. In this context, metacognition is no more considered sufficient for learning or achievement on its own. It is motivation which permits students to profit and make use of metacognition (Zimmerman, 1990a). That is why the common focus on cognitive and metacognitive facets to clarify learning achievements and success of students started to be replaced by a motivational-metacognitive point of view and related models of metacognition (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Leggett, 1989). As learning is not perceived as a merely cognitive process anymore, the effects of learners' performance judgments, beliefs about their self-efficacy, ability to self-regulate, beliefs about knowledge and learning, and also performance attributions on learning outcomes have started to be examined in more detail (Bandura, 1997; Duell & Schommer-Aikins, 2001; Weiner, 2000; Zimmerman, 1995a, 1995b).

This trend portrays the need to approach learning under the consideration of both cognitive and motivational factors in combination. Learning is guided and influenced by motivational factors which might explain task decisions, task persistence, or performance outcome. Paris and Winograd (1990) share this idea of learning. The ability to make plans preceding a task, adapting those while working on the task, and finally revising the plans at the end, or shortly, the ability to self-manage is dependent upon both metacognition and motivation. Motivational aspects which determine future behavior in attempting to achieve a task is equally important as cognitive aspects of learning.

Efklides (2006) points out that most of the research studies related to learning either focus on metacognition or affect only although both influence learning. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) also emphasize the gap in language learning research to link motivation with other domains of importance for learning. They claim that although

research on motivation in the context of education in general mostly dealt with cognitive components of motivation including attributions, this was not the case among studies related to modern foreign languages. With regard to motivation in modern foreign languages, motivation has been approached from a rather social psychological point of view dealing with language learners' attitudes influencing language learning, thereby ignoring cognitive aspects which in fact do also impact language learning motivation. To exemplify, while social aspects such as interest in the target language community were examined, the impact of language ability judgments which are metacognitive in nature was of less concern. This calls for research which combines both factors. In the following section, research studies which combine metacognition and motivation in general and attribution in particular will be presented.

Self-Regulated Learning

Another field of inquiry in the educational context was self-regulated learning which combines metacognition, strategy use and motivation to explain academic success (Boekaerts, et al., 2000; Bruning et al., 2004). While self-regulation covers individuals' personal thoughts, feelings, and actions which are invested into achieving a predetermined goal (Zimmerman, 2000), self-regulated learners are those who set goals, are able to decide which is the most effective strategy to use, who know which steps are required to be taken to manage a task, who can monitor the whole process involved and who can necessarily redetermine goals or regulate their level of motivation to succeed (Butler & Winne, 1995).

Self-regulated learning can be summarized as the ability of the learner to make sense and control learning environments. This ability is considered to be composed of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational components. The cognitive component covers cognitive strategies, problem solving and critical thinking skills which help learners to effectively profit from their inherited resources. Metacognition on the other hand is divided into knowledge and regulation of cognition. Self-regulated learners who are metacognitively aware are equipped with the ability to plan and set goals, and to monitor and evaluate themselves within the whole learning process

(Ghatala, 1986). Motivation determines beliefs about learning capacity (Schraw et al., 2006). In other words, motivational control paves the way for having a positive viewpoint towards oneself as a learner and learning, adjusting emotions to continue the learning process, and continuing setting goals for the upcoming learning processes (Bruning et al., 2004). Motivated self-regulated learners have positive self-efficacy, adaptive attributions, and intrinsic motivation for learning (Schunk, 1986). Thus, as motivation is also considered to be influenced by performance attributions which impact learning capacity beliefs, the relationship between metacognition and attributions appears to be more interesting. In this context, Kun and Liming (2007) label achievement attributions as one of the important cognitive motivational factors and emphasize the impact they make on self-regulated learning.

Self-regulated learning promotes to learn by oneself by taking into consideration cognitive, motivational and behavioral elements involved in learning. As Zimmerman (1989) puts it:

Self-regulated learning theories assume that students (1) can personally improve their ability to learn through selective use of metacognitive and motivational strategies; (2) can proactively select, structure, and even create advantageous learning environments; and (3) can play a significant role in choosing the form and amount of instruction they need. (p. 4)

In other words, learners who are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally involved within learning are to be labeled as self-regulated. In self-regulated learning, it is assumed that “learning is not something that happens *to* students; it is something that happens *by* students” (Zimmerman, 1989, p. 22).

As a whole, Zimmerman (1995b) stressed that metacognition does not guarantee success on its own but that next to content knowledge and metacognition, affect which amongst others covers motivation or attributions is important. Thus, within the field of motivation, it is also important that learners see themselves as competent, autonomous and self-efficacious (Zimmerman, 1990b). The majority of self-regulation theories are composed of metacognitive awareness, strategy use, and motivational control. Thus, these theories can be interpreted as an attempt to link attributions and metacognitive awareness with each other.

In an attempt to examine how language learning achievement attributions influence self-regulated language learning behavior, Kun and Liming (2007) applied the Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale (MMCS) to measure

achievement attributions and the Self-regulated Language Learning Behavior Scale among Chinese undergraduate students from different departments who were learning English as a foreign language. Results showed that success experiences in the language learning context were attributed to internal factors such as ability and effort rather than luck. Self-regulated language learning behavior was measured to be at a moderate level. At the same time, achievement attributions influenced self-regulated behavior while each attribution had a different impact on it. Thus, students who prefer internal attributions such as ability or effort turned out to be self-regulated language learners. Moreover, as internal attributions are adaptive the motivation to self-regulate increases as the whole learning process is perceived to be within one's own control. Therefore, explaining failure experiences in language learning with internal factors negatively correlates with self-regulated behavior. If lack of ability was considered to be the cause for failure, students lost confidence and became frustrated and were less likely to engage in self-regulated language learning behavior. In short, adaptive attributions foster self-regulated learning while maladaptive attributions impede it. Based on this insight, researchers suggested eliciting changes in attributional beliefs.

In terms of self-regulated learning, the relationship between students' interest, learning strategies and causal attributions for achievement outcomes was also addressed (Sorić & Palekčić, 2009). Each variable represents a different phase of self-regulated learning, namely the forethought, performance control and self-reflective phase. Three questionnaires were used among Croatian college students from the faculty of philosophy. Results implied that using effective learning strategies increases interests in study topics and thereby academic achievement. In addition, controllable attributions had a partial mediating role between academic achievement and interests. Controllable causes for achievement outcomes increased interest in study topics and thereby academic achievement.

Metacognition and Motivation

Although attributions were not addressed directly, some studies linked metacognition and motivation with each other. Sperling and colleagues (Sperling et al., 2004)

included strategy use and motivation into their research study related to metacognition while at the same time the relationship between metacognitive awareness and learning strategy use and between metacognition and achievement outcomes were investigated in two different studies. In the first study, the participants were 109 college students who were provided with the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) and the Learning Strategies Survey (LSS). Through these instruments the participants' metacognition and strategy use was revealed in general terms. A positive relationship between metacognition and strategy use was measured while the relationship between metacognition and achievement unexpectedly was not reported to be that strong. In order to determine the influence of motivation, college students attending an educational psychology course were administered the MAI and the Motivated Strategies Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) and were required to make confidence judgments about test-taking before and after each test taken. In the second study, answers were only limited to the specific psychology course participants were attending. The correlation between motivation and metacognition were not as strong as between metacognition and strategy use.

On the other hand, Chan and Moore (2006) linked failure and success attributions with strategy knowledge which is a subcomponent of metacognition. Specifically, the relationship between attributional and metacognitive factors within an educational context was investigated. As the study was longitudinal in nature, the developmental trend was aimed to be portrayed with a focus on the impact of the stated factors on achievement outcomes. Two different cohorts were followed for a three-year period within English, Mathematics and Science classes. One cohort consisted out of primary-school students covering grade 5 to 7, while the other cohort was formed out of 7th to 9th grade high school students. Each year students were required to fill in the Self-Regulated Learning Strategies Scale measuring students reported self-regulated strategy use, and the researcher developed Causal Attribution Scale. Each cohort was divided into experimental and control groups. Experimental groups participated in intervention programs applied in the second and third year of the longitudinal study. The program was designed to provide strategy lessons in English classes with a specific focus on the reading skill in the first year and writing in the second year of intervention. Next to strategy training, the

importance of strategy attributions for achievement outcomes was emphasized in the scope of the intervention program which aimed to foster strategic learning in general. English grades obtained at the end of the school year were used as achievement measures. In terms of outcome attributions, belief in personal control and self-blame for failure emerged as two variables for the primary-school students while learned helplessness was added as the third variable for high school students. Personal control represents an adaptive view on outcome attributions as success is explained by effort, ability and strategy use. Self-blame on the contrary stands for mindset that failure was experienced due to the lack of ability, effort and strategy use. Learned helplessness represents a maladaptive stance on achievement outcomes as luck is ascribed an important role in failure experiences next to lack of ability. The emergence of the learned helplessness variable in the high school cohort implies that more negative and maladaptive attributions are formed after primary-school. In addition, scores for achievement and strategy knowledge and use were formed. While the relation between achievement and strategy knowledge scores was low, both of the scores were positively related to personal control which represented adaptive attributions. A negative relation was found in terms of maladaptive attributions. It was learned helplessness which especially harmed strategic learning and achievement. Moreover, the intervention program seems to have reduced the located negative relation between maladaptive attributions and achievement and strategy knowledge. In another study, Chan's (1994) data similarly revealed that both motivation in form of attributions and strategic learning impact the results gained in educational contexts.

Learner Beliefs

Other studies linked metacognition and motivation by examining beliefs about language learning and learning in general. Graham (2003) attempted to investigate foreign language learners' metacognitive beliefs. For this purpose, a case study was conducted in which a single student in England learning French was interviewed. This student was selected out of 28 students who were interviewed concerning their beliefs about their French achievement, and the meaning, causes and value they ascribe to it. The student of concern was identified as an able learner with the help of

a questionnaire but demonstrated an opposing attitude towards continuing to learn French despite her potential. The aim was to locate the reason behind the lacking motivation in learning the language. Although the student was receiving high grades, she graded her sense of achievement with 4 out of 6. In the interview, she explained this with her concern related to her speaking skills which did not allow her to communicate seamlessly with natives. Another reason the researcher located as a cause for this dilemma was the lacking sense of achievement while learning French. The interviewee referred to the structure of the language lesson in which students are supposed to master fill in the blanks activities, which according to her does not create awareness about what exactly one was doing. Her responses also revealed that she had a low self-efficacy in the language learning process. Another interesting aspect was that the student in question was aware of her weaknesses and knew how to complement for these; and although she acknowledged the positive impact of effort in outcomes, she denied responsibility for the lack of achievement and blamed external factors. Thus, rather than feeling responsible to study and learn outside school, the school and teachers were considered responsible for teaching the required content and skills. This study showed that effective strategy use and motivation impact language learners' metacognitive knowledge and also beliefs.

Victori and Lockhart (1995) sense the danger in students' misconceptions about learning. If students develop misconceptions about their person, task or strategic knowledge, the chance that they develop learner autonomy diminishes. On the other hand, the inability of a learner implies that outcomes might be rather attributed to external factors out of their control which is not favorable according to attribution theory.

Yang (1999) linked attribution and metacognition by examining beliefs about language learning and strategy use. Chinese EFL students who were mostly freshmen were required to complete the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, and a questionnaire on learners' beliefs and their learning strategies tailored by the researchers. Self-efficacy or in other words the belief in oneself to have the ability to master specific tasks was identified as being related to strategy use. With this respect, promoting appropriate students' beliefs including their metacognitive and motivational ones concerning language

learning was labeled as important as it was ascribed the role of boosting the application of language learning strategies and language learning motivation.

By touching on metacognition by examining learning conceptions, Ferla, Valcke and Schuyten (2008) combined metacognition and attribution within their study. Specifically, the causal relationship between self-efficacy, success attributions, and conceptions of learning was examined in line with the impact of these three variables on strategies. College students from different departments who were mainly females participated in this study. The researchers developed their own questionnaires to measure students' self-efficacy, attributions and learning conceptions. Learning conceptions are either constructive or reproductive, and represent a deep or surface approach to learning and determine amongst others whether students are active in the learning process or prefer memorization over meaningful learning. These learning conceptions influenced both self-efficacy and attributions while no reverse relationship was located. Constructivist students explained their academic success with effort, while reproductive students attributed success to uncontrollable reasons. Thus, students who prefer a constructivist approach to learning make adaptive attributions which foster the learning process. At the same time, they were more self-efficacious, preferred a deep learning approach, rarely stated that their learning process lacks direction, and made use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The contrary was the case for students who were learning reproductively. At the end of the study, a distinction between sophisticated and unsophisticated students was made. Sophisticated students are those who value understanding over memorization and are better equipped to overcome obstacles in learning contexts as they make use of far more metacognitive and cognitive strategies.

Self-Efficacy

Research studies related to self-efficacy can also be considered as an attempt to combine metacognition and motivation as self-efficacy is related to one's knowledge about the self and as it turned out to be related with attributions. In this context, Bandura (1995, 1997) dealt with how self-confidence and related self-efficacy beliefs impacted academic performance and learning. He stresses that repeated success on

tasks leads to an increase in self-efficacy which is not harmed by isolated failure incidents. That portrays the meaning of self-efficacy which is a judgment about the ability to perform on a task whereas self-efficacy differs within specific domains. In short, self-efficacy and positive performance outcomes facilitate each other, as self-efficacy impacts choices and efforts of an individual and his or her persistence in a task. Self-efficacy is helpful especially while facing failure experiences or difficulties within a task (Bandura, 1995). As Pajares (1996) points out self-efficacy can also play a role in determining the engagement in challenging tasks or task persistence, next to strategy use or help seeking behavior (Bruning et al., 2004).

Self-efficacy judgments also are brought into relation with attributions for failure or success. The higher the self-efficacy level of individuals is, the more likely it is that low effort attributions are made for failure experiences, while low ability is considered as the cause for failure by those with lower self-efficacy (Bruning et al., 2004). Tremblay and Gardner (1995) emphasize that in language learning contexts attributions play an important role in self-efficacy beliefs.

Paris (2002) underscores the debilitating role metacognition might assume in relation to learning and attributions. He emphasizes that the knowledge about the self impacts attributions. If an individual does not believe in his or her competencies and abilities to master particular tasks, a failure experience is likely to be attributed to lack of ability. This attribution on the other hand, intensifies the metacognitive belief about the self. If failure is experienced in a task which is valued by the individual, severe feelings can be generated. He also points out that metacognition might hinder the initiation of actions. In other words, if metacognitive processes do not work appropriately, insecurities about how to proceed, which strategies to use, or what to attribute performance outcomes to might be experienced. As Graham (2006) remarks, self-efficacy was mainly investigated within general education but not within foreign language learning.

Metacognition, Attributions and Achievement

The study conducted by El-Hindi and Childres (1996) determined metacognitive awareness and attributions for success and failure in an educational context as its

variables. This study resembles the current study as it intends to examine the relation between both of the stated variables although differences do exist in terms of its specific focus and the instrument used. College students with reading difficulties who had a lower GPA than 2.0 and who therefore were considered at risk for completing the programs they were enrolled in were the participants of the study. These students were required to take an academic support course which aimed to make students work on their study habits and improve their strategies so that their academic success could be increased. In particular, time management, different learning styles and reading and test taking strategies were addressed in the course. In the scope of this study, metacognitive awareness of reading and writing were the main concern. To assess metacognitive awareness of reading and writing, different scenarios in which students had to solve specific reading or writing tasks were provided to the participants. Next to the scenarios, possible ways to react or strategies to apply before, while, and after reading or writing within the portrayed situations were given to students. Once they read the scenarios and the possible reactions, participants had to indicate whether they would have used the indicated strategies or not. In order to measure participants' outcome attributions, the researcher identified 12 attributions which were considered to be relevant for success or failure based on existing literature. As the main focus of this study was the dimension of controllability, these attributions were categorized either as controllable or uncontrollable. In the self-developed questionnaire, participants were asked to recall success experiences and to rate to what extent each of the attributions was the main contributor of success and state which attributions they perceived to be under their control and which not. Metacognitive awareness and attributions were measured before and after the course sessions. In general, a higher metacognitive awareness for writing than for reading was identified while metacognitive awareness turned out to increase as participants took the support course. In the initial week of the course, success was attributed to the teacher, high attendance to classes, and interesting material in respective order. In the final week, the ranking changed to teacher, taking notes, and attending classes. In terms of failure attributions, task difficulty, lack of seeking help, and lack of studying were initially stated as reasons. In the final week, lack of doing reading, lack of interest, and lack of seeking help were the most commonly stated attributions. In this context, it is interesting to see that in line with

increased metacognitive awareness students start to attribute success to controllable reasons more frequently. In addition, task difficulty which is uncontrollable in nature was replaced by a controllable cause, namely lack of reading.

In Wagner and colleagues' longitudinal study (Wagner, Spratt, Gal, & Paris, 1989) achievement attributions and metacognitive knowledge of reading skills and strategies on reading achievement was explored among two different Moroccan cohorts consisting of first and fifth graders. While for first graders metacognitive knowledge was not predictive for reading achievement, metacognitive knowledge about skilled reading and internal achievement attributions did predict reading performance. Both attributions and metacognitive knowledge impacted reading outcomes.

As can be seen, research studies which aim to explain achievement outcomes by examining students' attributions for academic achievements and their metacognitive awareness as such are rare. Furthermore, while studies which combined metacognitive and motivational factors were conducted in educational contexts, language learning contexts were rather neglected. Furthermore, it becomes visible that studies centered in Turkey as an EFL context are scarce. The current study aims to fill the existing gap in prior research by examining EFL learners' metacognitive awareness levels and their failure attributions, and the relationship between these variables to explain the assessed low English proficiency level of Turkish students.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides information about the research design, the universe and sample, the instruments used, and the processes involved in data collection and analysis.

A mixed-method design was used in order to explain the low English proficiency of Turkish students from the perspective of upper secondary students with regard to their achievement attributions and metacognitive awareness. For this purpose, the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (Schraw & Dennison, 1994) and the Multidimensional-Multiattributitional Causality Scale (MMCS) (Lefcourt, Von Baeyer, Ware, & Cox, 1979) were used. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to reveal students' thoughts about English courses as encountered in Turkish state schools. Next to shedding light on achievement attributions and metacognitive awareness, the relation of these two concepts was also of interest, as to explain their possible impact on achievement outcomes in English.

Research Design

The aim of the study was to assess students' levels of metacognitive awareness and attributions for failure in the process of learning English, and to investigate the relationship between those concepts in an EFL context. For this purpose, a single case study was conducted. Case study research is concerned with understanding "social phenomena within a single or small number of naturally occurring settings" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 27) and it is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis

of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (Merriam, 2009, p. 1). A case study was preferred to be conducted in order to be able to focus on a specific type of student profile. As vocational high school students turned out to be the least proficient, successful and motivated in terms of English (TEPAV & British Council, 2013), and as students’ failure experiences were of primary concern within this study, a vocational high school was selected as the case.

At the same time, a mixed-methods research design was used in this case study. Mixed-methods research designs exhibit characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research studies are primarily centered on numerical data which are mainly gathered through questionnaires and analyzed statistically, while qualitative research studies work with textual data (Dörnyei, 2007). In the 70s and 80s, the so called ‘paradigm war’ emerged between quantitative and qualitative research following the question which type of research was superior in the face of their strengths and weaknesses. After supporters of both research paradigms adjusted their ideas, not only were both paradigms accepted but also attempts to combine these were made. In this context, mixed-method research was initiated by the combination of qualitative and quantitative research in order to ensure triangulation. Thus, the advantage of drawing information from two different types of data sources was acknowledged and the pragmatist approach to research was born. Improved validity, the compensation for the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research, and an in-depth analysis from different perspectives are stated amongst the strengths of mixed-methods research studies (Dörnyei, 2007).

In this respect, two quantitative instruments, namely the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (Schraw & Dennison, 1994) and the Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale (Lefcourt et al., 1979) were used. Quantitative tools reveal descriptive information and correlations between variables (Mujis, 2004). Hence, the chosen instruments revealed students explanations for achievement outcomes, and their metacognitive awareness and the relationship between both concepts. In addition, semi-structured interviews, which are qualitative data collection instruments, were conducted within this study. Interviews stand for “the elicitation of research data through the questioning of respondents” (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 104).

Semi-structured interviews in specific are characterized by their “more formal, conversational character, being shaped partly by the interviewer’s pre-existing topic guide and partly by concerns that are emergent in the interview” (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 104). The aim of conducting semi-structured interviews was to gain in-depth data related to students’ perceptions about the English lessons in state schools and how they explain their achievement outcomes referring to specific characteristics of state schools. Thus, once students completed the quantitative instruments which were located within the context of Turkish state schools, students were asked to make a critical evaluation of learning English in the same context within the interviews.

Universe and Sampling

The universe of this study was Turkish upper secondary education students in an EFL context. The sample group was all the students of a Technical and Vocational High School in the Black Sea Region in Turkey. A Technical and Vocational High School was selected on purpose, as students enrolled in these types of high schools were reported to have the lowest perception about their own English proficiency and the strongest disbelief in the necessity to learn English among primary, secondary and upper secondary students (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). In addition, convenience sampling was used in the selection of the specific high school as the study was conducted at the workplace of the researcher.

In the 2016-2017 academic year, 253 students were registered in the high school of concern. All students were Turkish, as was their first language. The majority of students lived in the same district in which the high school is located while some students lived in the city center or neighboring cities within the Eastern Black Sea Region. The number of participants consisted of 218 Technical and Vocational High School students, as some of the students either did not attend school on the days of data collection, dropped out of school because of absenteeism, did not complete both of the research instruments or skipped too many items in the process of filling out the questionnaires. 136 (62.4%) participants were males and 82 (37.6%) were females. When it comes to grade level, 17.4% were 9th (N = 38), 20.2% were 10th (N = 44), 30.7% were 11th (N = 67) and 31.7% were 12th graders (N = 69). 47 students were

enrolled in the field of bookkeeping (21.6%), 22 in office management (10.1%), 34 in transportation (15.6%), and 77 in justice (35.5%), while the remaining 37 9th graders (17%) had not chosen any vocational field yet.

The Black Sea Region is the third largest among Turkey's seven regions. At the same time, this region is divided into Eastern and Western Black Sea Region. This study was conducted in a city located in the Eastern Black Sea Region. Compared to well-known and large Turkish cities with populations of up to 14 millions, the population of this city is less than 450,000 (Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI), 2014). The case which constituted a Technical and Vocational High School is located in one of this provincial town's districts. As it is mostly the case in the Eastern Black Sea Region, industry could not flourish well in this city, so that the majority of people make their living from agriculture. Beekeeping, husbandry and fishery are also widespread. A high number of people still reside in villages and the city carries the characteristics of a rural rather than an urban place (TSI, 2013).

In relation to academic outcomes in general or English in particular, the Eastern Black Sea Region is one of the regions which experiences difficulties. Thus, the Eastern Black Sea Region was reported to be less successful in the PISA test compared to other regions, while students of Technical and Vocational High Schools could not compete with students of other types of high schools (OECD, 2015). Furthermore, EPI scores revealed that the English proficiency in the Black Sea Region is very low (EPI, 2016d). Among all regions of Turkey students from the Eastern Black Sea Region were the ones who enjoyed their English lessons least with a percentage of 74 (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). The proportion of students from the Eastern Black Sea Region who were experiencing difficulty in their English lessons is 42%. This region ranks fourth in this respect. In this context, it is important to state that difficulty with English was reported to increase with decreasing level of household income (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). In short, a discrepancy between large and provincial cities crystallizes in terms of English instruction which turned out to be inconsistent and of poor quality in provincial cities (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kızıltepe, 2005).

Vocational and Technical High Schools are one of the least favored and preferred high school types among students and parents in Turkey. This is firstly due to the bad

image of this school type. Vocational and Technical High Schools are associated with a problematic student profile both in terms of academic achievement and family conditions. In addition, Vocational and Technical High Schools in Turkey are arranged to prepare students for specific vocational fields, so that the curriculum is mainly dominated by courses related to specific fields of occupation rather than those relevant for the university entrance exam. Thus, if it comes to higher education, graduates of these high schools mainly manage to attend post-secondary vocational high schools consisting of two years rather than universities consisting of a four-year education period. Students who aspire to enter established higher education institutions do not choose to enroll in Vocational and Technical High Schools, so that students who score below average in centrally administered high school entrance exams attend these high schools. Hence, students who struggle academically and who lack achievement motivation form the main student profile of these schools.

The curriculum of Vocational and Technical High Schools reveals that 9th graders do not take any vocational courses but courses like Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Turkish, Literature, and Physical Education; but that this changes in grade level 10, as at the end of the 9th grade, students have to select a vocational field among the ones offered in their schools. At the end of the 9th grade, a score for each student is calculated based on students' grade point average in grades 8 and 9. Based on these scores, students are placed among vocational fields, while choices of students with a higher average are given priority. At the end of grade 10, students who are enrolled in particular vocational fields have also to select a certain vocational branch. In this process, the grade point average at the end of the 10th grade level is of relevance. Again, the probability that students with higher average points are placed within their favored branches is higher. Starting from grade 10 onwards, the number of vocational courses increases while course hours allocated to courses which are more relevant for the university entrance exam decrease. Some of the courses which are relevant for the university entrance exam are even offered as elective courses only. In the 12th grade level, students have to do apprenticeship in an institution of interest three days a week. That is why students come to school twice a week only in grade 12. In short, based on the curriculum of Technical and Vocational High Schools it can be assumed that

students are not efficiently prepared for the university entrance exam in general but for higher education programs related to vocational fields.

The vocational fields offered by the Vocational and Technical High School of concern were transportation, bookkeeping, office management and justice. The field of justice is the most favored among students, so that students who manage to get enrolled in this field are the most successful in the school with regard to their grade point average. A great amount of students attending this high school perform poorly at school and are not motivated to improve academically or study on a regular basis. While the number of students who get accepted by a higher education institute by graduation is low, most of the students succeed in getting enrolled in post-secondary vocational schools. This can be acknowledged as an indication for students overall lacking academic success. Some of the students drop high school because they either fail classes due to absenteeism or because of a low grade point average at the end of an academic year. Students who fail classes twice have to attend informal high schools. In combination with problems experienced at home, students also demonstrate misbehavior in social relationships with both teachers and schoolmates. As a consequence, students mainly adopt an indifferent attitude towards learning and school in general. Despite this negative picture drawn about the students of the high school in question, there are also model students who succeed both academically and socially although limited in number.

Descriptive statistics about family income and parents' educational level showed that 83 students' (38.1%) socioeconomic status was low. The remaining 135 students (61.9%) were classified as having average to high family income, while the number of students with high socioeconomic status was limited to 11. In this context, low family income covered the range between 0-2000 Turkish Liras, while the range between 2000-4000 Turkish Liras was categorized as average. High family income equaled income higher than 4000 Turkish Liras. Average and high family income were unified under one category to allow for comparison. In terms of parents' educational level, a similar path was followed. There were three categories in total: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school graduate. The first category covered analphabets, literates and primary school graduates; lower secondary school graduates which was the second category was constituted of lower secondary school

graduates only, while the last category which was labeled upper secondary school graduates included upper secondary school and university graduates next to holders of a master's degree. Considering the level of education of students' fathers, 85 were primary (39%), 71 lower secondary (32.6%) and 61 upper secondary school graduates (28%). The educational level of mothers revealed that 103 were primary (47.2%), 70 were lower secondary (32.1%) and 42 were upper secondary school graduates (19.3%).

If it comes to the course hours allocated to English per week, 9th graders had six, and 10th and 11th graders four hours of English classes each week. The course hours varied among 12th graders. Students enrolled in the field of transportation, bookkeeping and office management had four hours of English per week, while students of the field of justice did not have any English classes at all.

English course grades in upper secondary schools are calculated based on at least four different grades. The final grade is formed out of at least one exam, one practice exam and two different performance scores. Exams are designed by the course teacher to assess students' mastery of the content which was covered up until the exam. It is up to the teacher's initiative to decide how to prepare and design the exam. Exams can amongst others consists of matching, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blanks items or open-ended questions which might aim to measure grammar or vocabulary knowledge. If required activities which asses speaking, writing, and reading subskills can also be incorporated. In addition, practice exams have to be administered in language classes in Turkey since the academic year of 2016-2017. The practice exam consists of four different parts, namely speaking, listening, writing and reading, and as a whole aims to measure students' proficiency in the language skills. Again, practice exams are prepared by course teachers under the consideration of students' overall capabilities and proficiency. In terms of performance scores, two different procedures are followed. One performance score results based on a teacher assigned task. This task can range from preparing presentations or videos, writing diary entries, stories or biographies, to designing posters, brochures, magazines or materials for the language classroom. These are only some possible ideas related to this assignment. If the teacher requires, quizzes can also be used to calculate a final performance score. The second performance

score is given to represent the student's performance within the classroom. Thus, aspects such as participation, note-taking, completion of homework and assigned tasks, and behavior can be taken into consideration by the teacher for the second performance grade. Next to these four grades, language teachers are allowed to increase the number of exams administered within a semester. Thus, in the case of concern for this study, course grades were formed out of 5 scores: 2 exam, 1 practice exam and 2 performance scores.

The grading system in Turkish state schools consists of five grades ranging from 1 to 5 while 1 stands for unsatisfactory and 5 for very good grades. In specific 85-100 points correlate to very good, 70-84.99 to good, 60-69.99 to average, 50-59.99 to passing and scores below 50 to failure. If it comes to the distribution of English course grades among the participants, students with grades ranging from 0-59.99 were evaluated as unsuccessful, students with a course grade between 60-69.99 as average and students with a score of 70-100 as successful within this context. Accordingly, 68 students (31.2%) were failing or scarcely passing courses, 44 students (20.2%) achieved average scores, while 106 students (48.6%) could be classified as good or very good based on their course outcomes. The number of students representing each variable of concern was high enough and evenly distributed so that comparison amongst the groups was allowed for.

Data Collection Techniques

For this study, two quantitative data collection tools, namely, the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994) and the Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale (MMCS) designed by Lefcourt, Von Baeyer, Ware, and Cox (1979) were administered in the second semester of the 2016-2017 academic year. As the participants would not be able to understand the English version of both data collection tools due to their low English proficiency, the instruments were translated into Turkish before administration. In addition, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 24 students to collect qualitative data to be used in order to elaborate on quantitative research outcomes.

In their review of metacognitive research in language learning, Raaofi and colleagues (2004) detected that among the instruments used to measure metacognition, questionnaires were the most popular and favored ones. In addition, next to language skill specific or general language learning questionnaires, questionnaires which aimed to assess general metacognition were used. One of the most frequently applied inventories was amongst others the MAI by Schraw and Dennison (1994). At the same time, the majority of instruments used in related studies originated or were directly linked with Flavell's (1979) conception of metacognition. The MAI was chosen to be used for this study, as it was developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994) whose theoretical conception of metacognition is based on the categorization of metacognition into knowledge and regulation of cognition, as it is most currently accepted in research. Schraw and Dennison's (1994) inventory was revised for the current study as it was translated into Turkish. Before addressing the modifications made, the original inventory will be presented. The MAI consists of 52 Likert-type items which aim to measure both components of metacognition, namely knowledge and regulation of cognition. Three of the eight subcomponents of this inventory are used to measure knowledge of cognition. These subcomponents are declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge. Regulation of cognition is measured with the help of the planning, information management, monitoring, debugging and evaluation subcomponents. The number of items allocated to each subcomponent varies. Procedural knowledge is measured by four, conditional knowledge by five and declarative knowledge by eight items. To assess regulation of cognition, seven items are allocated to monitoring, five to debugging, six to evaluation, ten to information management and seven to planning.

Schraw and Dennison (1994) generated this inventory to measure adolescents' and adults' metacognitive awareness levels. In this process, the researchers first addressed the question whether the conceptualization of metacognition consisting of regulation and knowledge of cognition was valid. Another concern was to investigate the statistical relationship between these two components as to see whether these are correlated and compensatory. Lastly, the convergent validity of the generated instrument was tested. The experiments conducted indicated that metacognition in fact consists of the two stated components. The internal consistency of the regulation

and knowledge of cognition scales within the MAI ranged from 0.93 to 0.88. While a statistically significant relationship between both components was found, a compensatory effect on test performance was not assessed. The scores achieved in the MAI were also accepted as being predictive for performance. As Schraw and Dennison (1994) stated, the MAI is a reliable instrument to assess metacognitive awareness and to locate students with comprehension difficulties. The MAI is a well-established instrument which is widely used to assess metacognitive awareness in many fields including education and language learning. The number of research studies which made use of the MAI is immense (Dos, 2014; Hart & Memnun, 2015; Kállay, 2012; Kauffman, 2004; Kiremitçi, 2013; Kleitman & Stankov, 2007; Magno, 2010; Peklaj & Pecjak, 2002; Saricoban, 2015; Sperling et al., 2004; Sperling, Howard, & Staley, 2004; Stewart, Cooper, & Moulding, 2007; Şendurur, Şendurur, Mutlu, & Baser, 2011; Tok, 2010; Turan, Demirel, & Sayek, 2009; Young & Fry, 2008). The reliability and validity of the MAI were confirmed (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Young & Fry, 2008).

The MMCS developed by Lefcourt, Von Baeyer, Ware, and Cox (1979) was the second tool used for this study. This scale was used as it was designed to assess achievement attributions based on the theoretical framework of Weiner's attribution theory and as it focuses on multidimensional aspects of attributions. Lefcourt et al. (1971) stated that the items in their scale represent Weiner's proposed dimensions of locus and stability. Although the dimension of controllability is not directly referred to, Hamilton and Akhter (2002) emphasize that this dimension is implicitly present within the four achievement attributions which conform to Weiner's attributions. The instrument consists of two scales of 24 Likert-type items of which each are rated on a 5-point Likert scale. One scale is concerned with achievement the other one with affiliation goals. As this study was interested in students' attributions in achievement contexts, the affiliation scale was omitted. Among the 24 items within the achievement scale, half of the items focus on success and the other half on failure experiences. Causes for success and failure experiences are assessed among four subscales which are ability, effort, luck and context whereas 6 items are allocated for each. Weiner also explained achievement outcomes with ability, effort and luck. In contrast to Lefcourt et al. (1979) whose final attribution is context, Weiner named his

fourth attribution task difficulty. Taking into consideration that the context subscale within the MMSC refers to course and test materials and the grading system, it can be seen that it also covers Weiner's conception of task difficulty. The MMSC was validated by Lefcourt et al. (1979). This scale was used among different fields including education and language learning. In addition, in research studies which were situated in educational contexts, the affiliation scale was mainly omitted and the achievement scale was administered only (Cheng, Yang, Chen, Zou, Su, & Fan, 2016; Goldstein, 2008; Gordon & Debus, 2002; Hamilton & Akhter, 2002; Li, Lan, & Ju, 2015; Powers & Rossman, 1984; Rakes, Dunn, & Rakes, 2013).

Both of the stated instruments were translated into Turkish in order to prevent complications in terms of understanding during their administration. In the translation process, three bilingual speakers of English and Turkish translated each item of the instruments into Turkish. All of the translators were English language teachers. Once the items were translated, an expert overviewed and compared the translations, judged which translations most successfully reflected the meaning of the original items, proposed changes in formulation, and decided on the final version of both instruments. In this context, it should be mentioned that Akın et al. (Akın, Abacı, & Çetin, 2007) developed a Turkish version of the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory in 2007. However, as the participants in the aforementioned process were university students, the researcher himself asked to be cautious if other student populations were of concern. In relation to this, the number of items in the original MAI was lowered to 50 within this research study because two of the original items were not culturally and contextually appropriate for the setting in which the research was conducted, as they were appealing to university students. Thus, item number 6 and 50 within the regulation of cognition subscale were omitted. Item 6 which was omitted was assessing planning, while item 50 was assessing evaluation skills. The final version as applied in this research study consists of two subscales assessing knowledge and cognition of regulation. Eight items are used to measure declarative, four items procedural and five items conditional knowledge. The regulation of cognition subscale consists of six planning, ten information management strategies, seven comprehension monitoring, five debugging strategies, and five evaluation items. Each of these items had to be responded on a 5-point Likert scale which

included the options ranging from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, to strongly disagree. Items were not omitted from the MMCS. In the MMCS, students again had to respond on a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In addition, the instructions were adapted for the language learning context. In the process of completing the instruments, participants were required to evaluate themselves as learners of English.

Validity and reliability was also tested by the researcher for both of the research instruments and their subcomponents as applied in this study. In order to measure validity, confirmatory factor analysis was administered, while the cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was calculated for each instrument and their subcomponents. In addition, assumption of normality was tested.

In the process of testing assumptions of normality different results are provided based on the sample size. That is why evaluating the mean, mode, median, and the skewness and kurtosis scores is of importance. Table 2 shows that the mean, mode and median of each instrument and the related subcomponents hold approximate values. This implies that the assumption of normality is met. Another implication for normality can be drawn from the values of skewness and kurtosis. The scores of skewness and kurtosis are between +3 and -3 which indicates that the normality assumption is fulfilled. When testing for normality, another assumption is the sample size which must be adhered to. In this respect, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy was performed, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test of Sampling Adequacy for the MMCS

KMO and Bartlett's Test for MMCS		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.748
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1121.680
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for Normality

	Statistics															
	SUM_ MMCS	SUM_ MAI	Ability_ MMCS	Effort_ MMCS	Task Difficult y_ MMCS	Luck_ MMCS	Knowledge_ MAI	Regulation_ MAI	Declarative_ Know ledge _MAI	Procedural_ Knowledge_ MAI	Contextual_ Knowledge_ MAI	Plann ing_ Reg_M AI	Informati on_ Manage ment_ Reg_MAI	Comprehen sion_ Monitoring_ Reg_MAI	Debugging_ Reg_MAI	Evaluation_ Reg_MAI
N	218	218	217	218	216	218	214	213	217	218	215	218	216	217	218	216
Mean	71,08	184,02	15,94	19,70	17,92	17,59	63,29	120,01	30,34	14,42	18,54	22,18	35,76	25,04	19,2064	17,9398
Median	71,50	181,00	16,00	20,00	18,00	18,00	63,00	119,00	30,00	14,00	19,00	22,00	36,00	25,00	19,0000	18,0000
Mode	72,00	172,00	17,00	19,00	16,00	18,00	59,00	122,00	30,00	14,00	19,00	22,00	37,00	25,00	19,00	19,00
Skewness	-,105	,063	,044	-,464	,351	,347	-,038	,092	,184	-,093	-,371	-,053	,096	-,081	-,554	,063
Kurtosis	,573	-,335	,852	,275	,078	1,223	-,195	-,544	-,420	-,116	,415	-,467	-,555	-,263	,436	-,387

Table 3.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of Sampling Adequacy for the MAI

KMO and Bartlett's Test for MAI		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,853
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4017,726
	df	1225
	Sig.	,000

Values between 0,50-0,60 are unacceptable, 0,60-0,70 are weak, 0,70-0,80 are average, 0,80-0,90 are good, and values higher than 0,90 are marvelous. As Table 2 and 3 show, the sampling turned out to be adequate in each case. Once related assumptions were met, confirmatory factor analysis was administered and the goodness of fit index was determined for the instruments, as shown in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4.

MMCS Goodness of Fit Index

Fit Index	Value	Fit Level
χ^2 / sd	2.91	Perfect fit
RMSEA	0.09	Low fit

The examination of the goodness of fit index shows that the MMCS is valid, as a high fit level indicates high validity of the research instrument. The values presented in Table 5 show that the same applies for the MAI.

Table 5.

MAI Goodness of Fit Index

Fit Index	Value	Fit Level
χ^2 / sd	1.97	Perfect fit
RMSEA	0.068	Good fit

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis for each research instruments are presented in Figure 1 and 2. In each case, t-values and thereby the instruments were meaningful.

Cronbach alpha reliability was calculated for the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory and the Multidimensional-Multiattributitional Causality Scale, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6.

Reliability Analysis for the Research Instruments

	Cronbach Alpha
<i>Multidimensional-Multiattributitional Causality Scale (MMCS)</i>	0.71
Ability	0.42
Effort	0.64
Task Difficulty/Context	0.49
Luck	0.63
<i>Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI)</i>	0.93
Metacognitive Knowledge	0.82
Metacognitive Regulation	0.90

The Cronbach alpha values of all components in both research instruments were acceptable except for the ability subcomponent in the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory. The reliability for ability was low.

In order to be able to investigate attributions and metacognitive awareness amongst some variables, demographic information related to gender, grade (grades 9-12), vocational field (bookkeeping, office management, transportation, justice), family income (high, average, low), parents educational level (literate; graduate of primary-school, secondary school, upper secondary school, university; MA, PhD degree), and students English grades at the end of the first semester of the 2016-2017 academic year were collected. Family income up to 2000 Turkish liras was categorized as low, income between 2000 and 4000 as average, and income higher than 4000 as high.

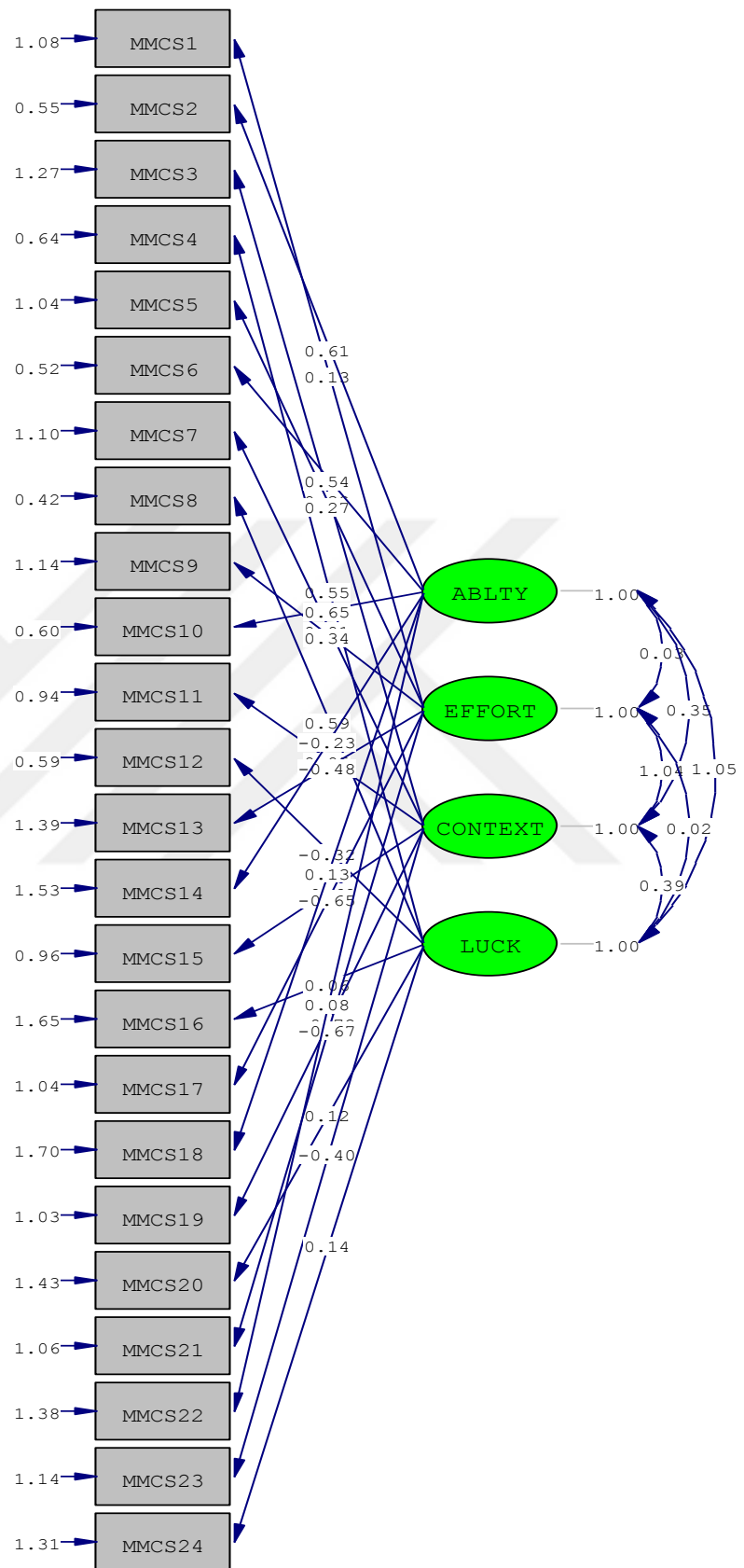


Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for MMCS

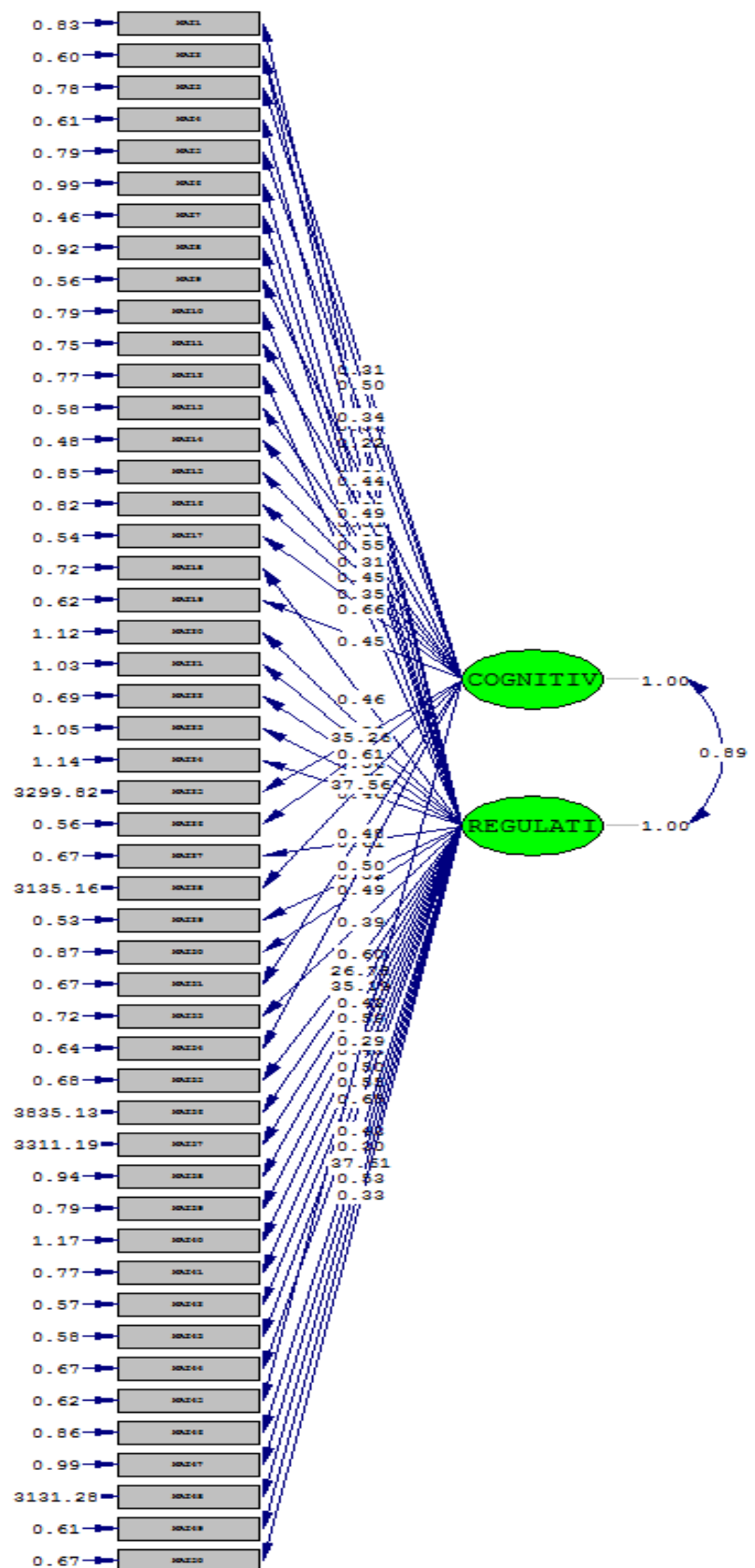


Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the MAI

Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with some of the participants who were purposefully sampled based on their first term English grades. The interviews were conducted in Turkish due the participants' low English proficiency. so that they had the chance to freely and correctly express their ideas and opinions. The main purpose of the interviews was to firstly reveal participants' general ideas about English lessons in state schools and most importantly to show whether they believed that course grades reflected real language proficiency. Secondly, attributions about English grades were aimed to be investigated in more detail with specific focus on the main achievement attributions which were ability, task difficulty/context, effort, and luck. Thus, the questions which were used in the interviews were determined based on the theoretical framework of Weiner's attribution theory. During the interviews participants were asked to compare English instruction in the language classroom with the everyday use of English in real life. As the interviews were semi-structured in nature, the number of questions asked varied from interview to interview as additional questions emerged during the interaction with the interviewees. In general, the interview consisted of 26 main questions. Of these 26 questions, five were related to the participants' overall judgment of learning English in state schools and the representativeness of course grades, six to their perceived ability in English and the role ability plays within the English language classroom, six to judgments over task difficulty in and outside of the classroom, four were related to the impact of effort on course grades and English proficiency, and finally four assessed whether, how and when luck plays a role in language learning. At the end of the interviews, students were asked to rank ability, task difficulty, effort and luck in terms of their impact on success in the English classroom.

Data Collection

Data was collected by administrating one inventory (MAI) to assess the metacognitive awareness level and one scale (MMCS) to reveal the achievement attributions of Turkish Vocational and Technical High School students who were learning English within the second semester of the 2016-2017 academic year. In

addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Students contributed to this study on voluntary basis.

Before the quantitative instruments were administered, permission was granted by the Research and Development unit of the Provincial Directorate of National Education. The researcher applied for the permission to administer the MAI and the MMSC in the Vocational and Technical High School of concern in February 2017. By March 2017 the Provincial Directorate of National Education accepted the translated versions of the two instruments and authorized the researcher to gather relevant research data. Data was collected by the researcher herself within two weeks in April. Participants had to complete the instruments either within their English classes or within other classes. As there were two English teachers in the high school, the researcher did not have the chance to reach all students by administering the instruments within her own English classes. In order to reach the rest of the students who were not enrolled in her own English classes, the researcher asked the remaining teachers for permission to administer the research instruments in their class hours.

The data collection procedure was as follows: the researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the study and explained that there would be one part related to their demographic information, and two different questionnaires they had to respond by referring to their experience in the process of learning English. Before the questionnaires were distributed, students were reminded of the importance to consult the researcher if comprehension difficulties or questions arise in the process of responding to the items. In addition, participants were told that confidentiality will be highly valued so that participants should honestly respond to the items. Providing instructions constituted 5 minutes. Once students were provided with the questionnaires, they were first asked to check whether one of the questionnaire or some pages were missing. In average, it took participants 20 to 25 minutes to complete the questionnaires. Before the researcher collected the questionnaires, participants were reminded to check whether each item was responded to and to ensure that one option was marked only.

In the second phase, interviews were conducted by the researcher among selected students. 24 students in total were interviewed while the interviews were audio-

recorded and lasted for about 20 minutes on average. An empty classroom was selected as the place to conduct the interviews. The researcher and the interviewee were the only ones in the classroom while the interviews were recorded. Interviews started to be conducted in May and were finished within a time period of two weeks. It was observed that the majority of students felt at ease while being interviewed, as the interviewer was familiar to them. The participants were selected based on their English grade at the end of the first term of the 2016-2017 academic year. In order to have access to diverse opinions, students of different grade intervals were chosen to respond to the interview questions. Students whose grades were very good, average, and unsatisfactory were selected by the researcher. The researcher determined six students from each grade level. Thus, six 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th graders and thereby 24 students in total were interviewed. Among the six students from each grade level, three were male and the other three female, so that gender differences could also be addressed. One boy and one female with very good grades, one male and female with average grades, and again one male and one female with unsatisfactory grades took part in the interviews. Participants were randomly selected within the students who qualified for the stated conditions. In some instances, students who fitted all of the three gender, grade level and achievement outcome variables could not be located. As there was not a high achieving male 10th grader among the language learners of concern, two female 10th graders with high course grades were selected to be interviewed. Yet, in some instances in which students of each gender could not be identified to represent different grade points, a different path was followed. The rationale behind this decision was that students' grade points only minimally deviated from the needed grades. To exemplify, a female with a grade point of 52 was interviewed and considered to represent students with a failing grade in English, although students with a grade point of 49.99 are considered to be failing in a course. Thus, a deviation of two points was not considered decisive. In the case of a 11th grader, 0.80 points were missing to fully categorize him as averagely scoring. Yet, the student was acknowledged to represent averagely scoring students. Moreover, a male 11th grader who was selected as the representative of failing students had a grade point of 50.40. The deviation of 0.41 points was neglected. In order to represent females failing English grades, the female student with the lowest score amongst all 11th graders was selected despite a deviation of 6 points. The same was

valid for the female representative of the 12th graders. The least successful female amongst 12th graders was interviewed. The interviewees of concern are marked by a star sign (*) in Table 7.

Table 7.

Characteristics of Interviewees (male=1, female=2)

	9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade	12 th grade
very good	1	2	1	1
(85-100)	2	2	2	2
average	1	1	1*	1
(60-69.99)	2	2	2	2
failure	1	1	1*	1
(below 50)	2	2*	2*	2*

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewees were informed about the purpose and the content of the interview. The information that the interview session would be audio-recorded was also shared with the interviewees. Next, confidentiality and anonymity was assured. Additional questions which emerged during the interviews were also posed next to the pre-determined interview questions.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data gathered through the questionnaires was analyzed with the help of statistical techniques using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were applied to demonstrate the demographic information of the participants, next to their metacognitive awareness level and their achievement attributions in learning English in Turkish state schools. In order to work out how the demographic variables of gender, grade level, vocational field, family income, parents' educational level and English course grades shaped the data, t-tests and one-way ANOVA was conducted. Correlations between metacognitive awareness and failure attributions were examined by performing a Pearson correlation test. It was aimed to reveal the direction and magnitude of the correlation.

In order to analyze the data gathered from the interviews, non-verbatim transcriptions were firstly made. Thus, nonverbal signals were not included in the process of data transcriptions. Once transcriptions were prepared and read repeatedly, passages which stroke attention were marked by the researcher. As Seidman (2013) points out this is the step in which data analysis starts as judgments about the significance of certain passages are made and initial attempts to create meaning out of the data are initiated. Afterwards, the interview content and related passages were labeled upon detailed examination so that categories were formed. Once categories emerged, connections between these were investigated. In the process of data analysis, it was detected that the researcher posed some leading questions which distracted interviewees' own responding tone. In other words, some of the questions were formulated in such a manner that the researcher's own bias was incorporated in them. These questions were excluded in the process of data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter IV presents the results of the study with regard to the research questions. Findings related to the implemented quantitative research instruments and the conducted interviews are provided.

Questionnaire Results

In this section findings related to the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory and the Multidimensional-Multiattributitional Causality Scale were addressed in relation to different demographic variables. These variables were gender, grade level, vocational field, achievement outcomes in form of English course grades, family income and parents' educational level.

Achievement Attributions

The first question of the study was: Which causes do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools attribute their failure in learning English in an EFL context? Descriptive statistics were performed in order to answer this research question. As Table 8 shows the highest mean was reached in effort attributions for achievement outcomes. In order to find out whether there was a statistically significant difference between the high score in effort attributions and the other attribution scores, a paired-sample t-test was performed. Each attribution was compared with each other individually. Related outcomes are presented in Table 9.

Table 8.

Descriptive Statistics for Achievement Attributions (MMCS)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SUM_MMCS	218	53.00	89.00	71.0826	6.06741
Ability_MMCS	217	7.00	27.00	15.9493	3.04172
Effort_MMCS	218	11.00	26.00	19.7018	2.45477
Task Difficulty_MMCS	216	9.00	29.00	17.9213	3.46119
Luck_MMCS	218	8.00	27.00	17.5963	2.77951
Valid N (listwise)	215				

Table 9.

Findings for Paired-Sample t-test among the MAI Subcomponents

		Paired Differences				
		Mean Differences	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Pair 1	Ability_MMCS - Effort_MMCS	-3.74654	3.54407	-15.572	216	.000*
Pair 2	Ability_MMCS - Difficulty_MMCS	-1.99070	4.86259	-6.003	214	.000*
Pair 3	Ability_MMCS - Luck_MMCS	-1.64977	4.14180	-5.868	216	.000*
Pair 4	Effort_MMCS - Difficulty_MMCS	1.77778	4.56750	5.720	215	.000*
Pair 5	Effort_MMCS - Luck_MMCS	2.10550	4.00033	7.771	217	.000*
Pair 6	Difficulty_MMCS - Luck_MMCS	.34722	3.65803	1.395	215	.164

* $p < 0.001$

As can be seen in Table 9, statistically significant differences were identified among five of the six comparisons. The differences in mean scores imply that students

attribute their achievement outcomes mostly to effort. Effort was followed by task difficulty and luck on an equal basis. In other words, there was no statistically significant difference between luck and task difficulty. The least favored achievement attribution was ability. In short, success was attributed to effort, task difficulty and luck, and ability in respective order. Failure on the other hand was explained with lack of effort, task difficulty and luck, and lack of ability by students.

The next question was related to whether Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' failure attributions in learning English vary with regards to gender. Table 10 demonstrates that the mean scores of the four attributions are close to each other. In order to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference among the scores, an independent sample t-test was run. Findings are presented in Table 11 and indicate that students' achievement attributions do not vary with regards to gender.

Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics for Gender

Group Statistics				
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
SUM_MMCS	1.00	136	71.2721	6.28516
	2.00	82	70.7683	5.71180
Ability_MMCS	1.00	136	16.1618	3.18148
	2.00	81	15.5926	2.77389
Effort_MMCS	1.00	136	19.6544	2.65380
	2.00	82	19.7805	2.09658
Task Difficulty_MMCS	1.00	134	17.8433	3.35798
	2.00	82	18.0488	3.64100
Luck_MMCS	1.00	136	17.7132	2.83864
	2.00	82	17.4024	2.68448

Table 11.

Results of t-test for Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale Scores for Gender

	F	Sig.	t	df	p
SUM_MMCS	.067	.795	.593	216	.554
			.607	183.697	.544
Ability_MMCS	.828	.364	1.336	215	.183
			1.383	186.590	.168
Effort_MMCS	3.906	.049	-.367	216	.714
			-.388	200.706	.698
Task Difficulty_MMCS	.953	.330	-.423	214	.673
			-.414	160.744	.679
Luck_MMCS	.163	.687	.799	216	.425
			.810	178.386	.419

$p > 0.001$

Another variable which was considered with regard to students' achievement attributions was grade level. In order to examine differences among grade levels, one-way ANOVA was conducted. Related outcomes are presented in Table 12.

Table 12 indicates that effort, task difficulty and luck show a difference among one grade level. Post-hoc (Tukey) was performed in order to identify the determinant grade level. The findings revealed that differences in the related subcomponents were triggered in upper grade levels. In other words, with increasing grade level, achievement attributions for effort, task difficulty and luck also increased.

Another research question was concerned with whether Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' attributions of failure in learning English vary with regards to their vocational field. As can be seen in Table 13, there was not a statistically significant difference in this respect.

Table 12.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Multidimensional-Multiattributinal Causality Scale According to Grade Level

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.	Favor
SUM_MMCS	Between Groups	178.024	3	59.341	1.626	.184	-
	Within Groups	7810.489	214	36.498			
	Total	7988.514	217				
Ability_MMCS	Between Groups	79.526	3	26.509	2.942	.034	-
	Within Groups	1918.917	213	9.009			
	Total	1998.442	216				
Effort_MMCS	Between Groups	78.263	3	26.088	4.541	.004*	12>11
	Within Groups	1229.357	214	5.745			
	Total	1307.619	217				
Task Difficulty_MMCS	Between Groups	131.343	3	43.781	3.797	.011*	11>10
	Within Groups	2444.319	212	11.530			
	Total	2575.662	215				
Luck_MMCS	Between Groups	95.893	3	31.964	4.328	.005**	12>11
	Within Groups	1580.584	214	7.386			
	Total	1676.477	217				

$p>0.01$ * $p<0.001$

Table 13.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Multidimensional-Multiattributinal Causality Scale According to Vocational Field

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.	Favor
SUM_MMCS	Between Groups	271.148	4	67.787	1.871	.117	-
	Within Groups	7682.188	212	36.237			
	Total	7953.336	216				
Ability_MMCS	Between Groups	108.852	4	27.213	3.046	.018	-
	Within Groups	1885.366	211	8.935			
	Total	1994.218	215				
Effort_MMCS	Between Groups	37.987	4	9.497	1.589	.178	-
	Within Groups	1266.722	212	5.975			
	Total	1304.710	216				
Task Difficulty_MMCS	Between Groups	65.715	4	16.429	1.384	.241	-
	Within Groups	2493.233	210	11.873			
	Total	2558.949	214				
Luck_MMCS	Between Groups	39.592	4	9.898	1.283	.278	-
	Within Groups	1634.906	212	7.712			
	Total	1674.498	216				

$p > 0.01$ * $p < 0.001$

Another research question was related to whether achievement outcomes trigger a change in achievement attributions. As Table 14 proved, there was a statistically significant difference between achievement outcomes and ability attributions only.

In order to figure out which achievement groups differed in the sample, post-hoc (Tukey) was used. According to its results, the higher achievement outcomes were, the greater the tendency was to explain success with ability. In other words, successful students in English courses attributed their performance to their ability, while low achievers did not attribute their failure to ability.

Table 14.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Multidimensional-Multiattributinal Causality Scale According to Achievement Outcomes

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.	Favor
SUM_MMCS	Between Groups	87.005	2	43.503	1.184	.308	-
	Within Groups	7901.508	215	36.751			
	Total	7988.514	217				
Ability_MMCS	Between Groups	82.152	2	41.076	4.587	.010*	Good>Avarage= Failure
	Within Groups	1916.290	214	8.955			
	Total	1998.442	216				
Effort_MMCS	Between Groups	28.010	2	14.005	2.353	.098	-
	Within Groups	1279.609	215	5.952			
	Total	1307.619	217				
Task Difficulty_MMCS	Between Groups	6.305	2	3.152	.261	.770	-
	Within Groups	2569.357	213	12.063			
	Total	2575.662	215				
Luck_MMCS	Between Groups	1.066	2	.533	.068	.934	-
	Within Groups	1675.411	215	7.793			
	Total	1676.477	217				

$p > 0.01$ * $p < 0.001$

Language learners' achievement attributions in English were also investigated with regards to their socioeconomic status. There was not a statistically significant difference with respect to this variable (Table 15).

Table 15.

Results of t-test for Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale Scores for Family Income

Group Statistics						
	Family Income with 2 Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Favor
SUM_ MMCS	Low	83	71.9036	4.86554	.53406	-
	Average or High	135	70.5778	6.66744	.57384	
Ability_ MMCS	Low	82	16.0854	2.81180	.31051	-
	Average or High	135	15.8667	3.18063	.27375	
Effort_ MMCS	Low	83	19.5904	2.38918	.26225	-
	Average or High	135	19.7704	2.50057	.21521	
Task Difficulty_ MMCS	Low	83	18.4578	3.29930	.36215	-
	Average or High	133	17.5865	3.52937	.30604	
Luck_ MMCS	Low	83	17.8313	2.76661	.30367	-
	Average or High	135	17.4519	2.78782	.23994	

$p > 0.01$ * $p < 0.001$

Lastly, the question whether Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' attributions of failure in learning English varied with regards to parents' educational level was addressed as a research question. There was not a statistically significant difference in relation to both fathers' and mothers' educational level as can be seen in Table 16 and 17.

Table 16.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale According to Fathers' Educational Level

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.
SUM_MMCS	Between Groups	8.985	2	4.492	.121	.886
	Within Groups	7962.785	214	37.209		
	Total	7971.770	216			
Ability_MMCS	Between Groups	29.923	2	14.961	1.620	.200
	Within Groups	1967.614	213	9.238		
	Total	1997.537	215			
Effort_MMCS	Between Groups	9.528	2	4.764	.792	.454
	Within Groups	1287.164	214	6.015		
	Total	1296.691	216			
Task Difficulty_MMCS	Between Groups	52.995	2	26.498	2.248	.108
	Within Groups	2498.335	212	11.785		
	Total	2551.330	214			
Luck_MMCS	Between Groups	8.495	2	4.248	.546	.580
	Within Groups	1665.422	214	7.782		
	Total	1673.917	216			

$p > 0.01$ * $p < 0.001$

Table 17.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Multidimensional-Multiattributitional Causality Scale According to Mothers' Educational Level

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.
SUM_MMCS	Between Groups	13.594	3	4.531	.122	.947
	Within Groups	7892.046	213	37.052		
	Total	7905.641	216			
Ability_MMCS	Between Groups	21.431	3	7.144	.772	.511
	Within Groups	1961.343	212	9.252		
	Total	1982.773	215			
Effort_MMCS	Between Groups	8.195	3	2.732	.448	.719
	Within Groups	1297.731	213	6.093		
	Total	1305.926	216			
Task Difficulty_MMCS	Between Groups	13.680	3	4.560	.379	.768
	Within Groups	2537.650	211	12.027		
	Total	2551.330	214			
Luck_MMCS	Between Groups	23.305	3	7.768	1.002	.393
	Within Groups	1650.612	213	7.749		
	Total	1673.917	216			

$p > 0.01$ * $p < 0.001$

Level of Metacognitive Awareness

The first research question related to metacognitive awareness aimed to determine the Turkish upper secondary students in states schools' metacognitive awareness levels in terms of learning English in an EFL context. The aim was to find out whether language learners' metacognitive awareness level was high, moderate or low. For this purpose, descriptive statistics were performed and related findings are presented in Table 18.

Table 18.

Descriptive Statistics for Metacognitive Awareness Level (MAI)

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Metacognitive Awareness_MAI	218	127.00	239.00	184.0229	23.64648
Knowledge_MAI	214	40.00	82.00	63.2991	8.54726
Regulation_MAI	213	83.00	160.00	120.0188	16.61835
Declarative_Knowledge_MAI	217	21.00	40.00	30.3410	3.98305
Procedural_Knowledge_MAI	218	8.00	20.00	14.4220	2.53198
Contextual_Knowledge_MAI	215	7.00	25.00	18.5488	3.24774
Planning_Reg_MAI	218	11.00	30.00	22.1835	3.88348
Information_Management_Reg_MAI	216	25.00	49.00	35.7639	5.27696
Comprehension Monitoring_Reg_MAI	217	14.00	35.00	25.0415	4.33260
Debugging_Reg_MAI	218	7.00	25.00	19.2064	3.25400
Evaluation_Reg_MAI	216	11.00	25.00	17.9398	3.06838
Valid N (listwise)	210				

The lowest possible score to get on the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory is 50, the highest score is 250. According to Table 18, students had a high metacognitive awareness level with a mean of 184.02. While students' lowest score was 127, their highest was 239 which again implied a high awareness level. When students' scores on the metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation subscales on the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory were compared (Table 19), students appeared to have greater metacognitive regulation scores, while this difference was also statistically significant.

Table 19.

Paired Samples Statistics for the Subcomponents of Metacognitive Awareness

Paired Samples Statistics		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean	Error p	Favor
Pair 1	Knowledge_ MAI	63.3857	210	8.47223	.58464	0.000	Regulation
	Regulation_ MAI	119.9000	210	16.70242	1.15258		

The next question addressed was: Do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' levels of metacognitive awareness in learning English vary with regards to gender? In order to answer this question a t-test was performed. Results are presented in Table 20.

Females reached a higher metacognitive awareness level score compared to males. The t-test also showed that this difference was statistically significant. In respect to the subcomponents of the metacognitive awareness construct, there was a statistically significant difference in terms of metacognitive regulation but not metacognitive knowledge in favor of females. Females scored higher in each subcomponent of the metacognitive regulation subscale compared to males. Again, the difference was statistically significant.

Another variable which was addressed with regard to metacognitive awareness level was grade level. One-Way ANOVA was run to examine whether metacognitive awareness levels changed based on students' grade levels. Related results are provided in Table 21.

There was a statistically significant difference among the scores of each subcomponent expect declarative knowledge for grade levels. Post-hoc (Tukey) results indicated that 11th graders constitute for the statistically significant difference. Hence, 11th graders had higher metacognitive awareness levels compared to students of other grade levels.

Table 20.

Results of t-test for Metacognitive Awareness Scores for Gender

	Gender	N	Group Statistics		p	Favor
			Mean	Std. Deviation		
Metacognitive_Awareness_MAI	Male	13	181.2279	24.28777	0.024*	Female
	Female	82	188.6585	21.90790		
Knowledge_MAI	Male	13	62.8409	8.71502	0.321	-
	Female	82	64.0366	8.26930		
Regulation_MAI	Male	13	117.5789	17.10007	0.005*	Female
	Female	80	124.0750	15.02805		
Declarative_Knowledge_MAI	Male	13	30.1926	3.93320	0.483	-
	Female	82	30.5854	4.07628		
Procedural_Knowledge_MAI	Male	13	14.4853	2.59625	0.636	-
	Female	82	14.3171	2.43370		
Contextual_Knowledge_MAI	Male	13	18.3308	3.33194	0.211	-
	Female	82	18.9024	3.09364		
Planning_Reg_MAI	Male	13	21.6618	4.12260	0.010*	Female
	Female	82	23.0488	3.29572		
Reg_Information_Managment_MAI	Male	13	35.3134	5.44752	0.109*	Female
	Female	82	36.5000	4.92975		
Reg_Comprehension	Male	13	24.3162	4.52598	0.001*	Female
	Female	81	26.2593	3.70398		
Monitoring_MAI	Male	13	18.8529	3.37865	0.039*	Female
	Female	82	19.7927	2.96372		
Debugging_Reg_MAI	Male	13	17.4963	2.93683	0.006*	Female
	Female	81	18.6790	3.15764		

$p > 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$

Table 21.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory According to Grade Level

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.	Favor
Metacognitive_Awareness - MAI	Between Groups	9830.724	3	3276.908	6.289	.000*	11rd
	Within Groups	111506.161	214	521.057			
	Total	121336.885	217				
Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	1329.852	3	443.284	6.541	.000*	11rd
	Within Groups	14231.008	210	67.767			
	Total	15560.860	213				
Regulation_MAI	Between Groups	4212.110	3	1404.037	5.401	.001*	11rd
	Within Groups	54335.814	209	259.980			
	Total	58547.925	212				
Declarative_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	273.799	3	91.266	6.166	.000*	11rd
	Within Groups	3152.966	213	14.803			
	Total	3426.765	216				
Procedural_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	99.665	3	33.222	5.505	.001*	11rd
	Within Groups	1291.509	214	6.035			
	Total	1391.174	217				
Contextual_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	81.805	3	27.268	2.645	.050	-
	Within Groups	2175.432	211	10.310			
	Total	2257.237	214				
Planning_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	189.675	3	63.225	4.389	.005*	11rd
	Within Groups	3082.986	214	14.406			
	Total	3272.661	217				
Information_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	379.219	3	126.406	4.779	.003*	11rd
	Within Groups	5607.739	212	26.452			
	Total	5986.958	215				
Comprehension_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	261.541	3	87.180	4.896	.003*	11rd
	Within Groups	3793.086	213	17.808			
	Total	4054.627	216				
Debugging_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	94.282	3	31.427	3.052	.029*	11rd
	Within Groups	2203.429	214	10.296			
	Total	2297.711	217				
Evaluation_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	110.950	3	36.983	4.098	.007*	11rd
	Within Groups	1913.267	212	9.025			
	Total	2024.218	215				

$p > 0.05$ * $p < 0.01$

One-Way ANOVA was performed in order to answer whether Turkish upper secondary students in state schools' levels of metacognitive awareness in learning English vary with regards to their vocational field. A statistically significant

difference was not detected, as metacognitive awareness levels did not change based on students' vocational field in their schools. Related results are presented in Table 22.

Students' metacognitive awareness levels in learning English in relation to achievement outcomes in English classes were also examined with the help of one-way ANOVA. As results in Table 23 clarified, students with good or very good course grades had higher metacognitive awareness scores. There was a statistically significant difference in terms of metacognitive knowledge, declarative knowledge, contextual knowledge and debugging for students with good or very good grades.

Results of the t-test performed for the metacognitive awareness scores and family income proved that students from families with average or high family income had high metacognitive awareness levels (Table 24). In order to determine whether this difference was statistically significant, a t-test was performed. A statistically significant difference was identified in terms of metacognitive awareness levels and average to high family income.

The results in Table 25 were used to answer the research question whether students' metacognitive awareness levels in learning English varied with regards to fathers' educational level. They showed that with increasing educational level of fathers, students' metacognitive awareness also increased. The results of the post-hoc test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference for the Upper Secondary School Graduate category. In particular, an increase was observed among students whose fathers had graduated from upper secondary schools, as they scored higher in the metacognitive knowledge, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and evaluation subscales.

The same procedure was followed for the variable of mothers' educational level. There was a statistically significant difference for declarative knowledge scores only (Table 26). As a whole, mothers' educational level did not lead to any change with respect to students' metacognitive awareness levels in learning English.

Table 22.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory According to Vocational Field

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.	Favor
Metacognitive Awareness_MAI	Between Groups	4052.624	4	1013.156	1.832	.124	-
	Within Groups	117234.712	212	552.994			
	Total	121287.336	216				
Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	528.435	4	132.109	1.830	.124	-
	Within Groups	15013.856	208	72.182			
	Total	15542.291	212				
Regulation_MAI	Between Groups	1250.143	4	312.536	1.129	.344	-
	Within Groups	57281.555	207	276.722			
	Total	58531.698	211				
Declarative_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	151.309	4	37.827	2.445	.048	-
	Within Groups	3264.241	211	15.470			
	Total	3415.551	215				
Procedural_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	24.703	4	6.176	.958	.431	-
	Within Groups	1366.135	212	6.444			
	Total	1390.839	216				
Contextual_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	49.956	4	12.489	1.183	.319	
	Within Groups	2207.077	209	10.560			
	Total	2257.033	213				
Planning_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	74.462	4	18.615	1.238	.296	-
	Within Groups	3188.018	212	15.038			
	Total	3262.479	216				
Information_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	181.617	4	45.404	1.642	.165	-
	Within Groups	5805.286	210	27.644			
	Total	5986.902	214				
Comprehension_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	65.856	4	16.464	.871	.482	-
	Within Groups	3988.769	211	18.904			
	Total	4054.625	215				
Debugging_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	79.035	4	19.759	1.888	.114	-
	Within Groups	2218.633	212	10.465			
	Total	2297.668	216				
Evaluation_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	74.186	4	18.547	1.998	.096	-
	Within Groups	1949.144	210	9.282			
	Total	2023.330	214				

$p > 0.05$ * $p < 0.01$

Table 23.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory According to Achievement Outcomes

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.	Favor
Metacognitive_Awareness_MAI	Between Groups	4632.679	2	2316.339	4.267	.015*	Good or Very Good
	Within Groups	116704.206	215	542.810			
	Total	121336.885	217				
Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	617.885	2	308.943	4.362	.014*	Good or Very Good
	Within Groups	14942.974	211	70.820			
	Total	15560.860	213				
Regulation_MAI	Between Groups	1252.089	2	626.045	2.295	.103	-
	Within Groups	57295.836	210	272.837			
	Total	58547.925	212				
Declarative_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	215.169	2	107.585	7.169	.001*	Good or Very Good
	Within Groups	3211.596	214	15.007			
	Total	3426.765	216				
Procedural_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	7.761	2	3.880	.603	.548	-
	Within Groups	1383.414	215	6.434			
	Total	1391.174	217				
Contextual_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	82.475	2	41.238	4.020	.019*	Good or Very Good
	Within Groups	2174.762	212	10.258			
	Total	2257.237	214				
Planning_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	15.017	2	7.508	.496	.610	-
	Within Groups	3257.644	215	15.152			
	Total	3272.661	217				
Information_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	145.398	2	72.699	2.651	.073	-
	Within Groups	5841.560	213	27.425			
	Total	5986.958	215				
Comprehension_Management_MAI	Between Groups	53.316	2	26.658	1.426	.243	-
	Within Groups	4001.311	214	18.698			
	Total	4054.627	216				
Debugging_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	89.475	2	44.738	4.356	.014*	Good or Very Good
	Within Groups	2208.236	215	10.271			
	Total	2297.711	217				
Evaluation_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	52.073	2	26.037	2.812	.062	-
	Within Groups	1972.144	213	9.259			
	Total	2024.218	215				

$p > 0.05$ * $p < 0.05$

Table 24.

Results of the t-test for Metacognitive Awareness Scores for Family Income

Group Statistics						
	Family Income with 2 Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p	Favor
Metacognitive Awareness_MAI	Low	83	178.3253	22.69636	0.005*	Average or High
	Average or High	135	187.5259	23.61786		
Knowledge_MAI	Low	82	61.4512	8.36240	0.012*	Average or High
	Average or High	132	64.4470	8.49006		
Regulation_MAI	Low	82	115.8537	15.67188	0.004*	Average or High
	Average or High	131	122.6260	16.71956		
Declarative_Knowledge_MAI	Low	82	29.3902	3.99925	0.006*	Average or High
	Average or High	135	30.9185	3.87501		
Procedural_Knowledge_MAI	Low	83	14.0361	2.62003	0.078	-
	Average or High	135	14.6593	2.45607		
Contextual_Knowledge_MAI	Low	82	18.0122	3.01230	0.057	-
	Average or High	133	18.8797	3.35306		
Planning_Reg_MAI	Low	83	21.5663	3.83562	0.066	-
	Average or High	135	22.5630	3.87800		
Information_Management_MAI	Low	83	34.5904	4.94367	0.010*	Average or High
	Average or High	133	36.4962	5.36349		
Comprehension_Management_MAI	Low	83	24.4819	4.32903	0.135	-
	Average or High	134	25.3881	4.31453		
Debugging_Reg_MAI	Low	83	18.6145	3.14228	0.035*	Average or High
	Average or High	135	19.5704	3.27938		
Evaluation_Reg_MAI	Low	82	16.9146	2.89828	0.000*	Average or High
	Average or High	134	18.5672	3.00988		

$p > 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$

Table 25.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory According to Fathers' Educational Level

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.	Favor
Metacognitive_Awareness_MAI	Between Groups	3651.259	2	1825.630	3.351	.037*	Upper Secondary
	Within Groups	116590.087	214	544.813			
	Total	120241.346	216				
Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	691.206	2	345.603	4.910	.008*	Upper Secondary
	Within Groups	14782.776	210	70.394			
	Total	15473.981	212				
Regulation_MAI	Between Groups	807.341	2	403.670	1.479	.230	-
	Within Groups	57060.414	209	273.016			
	Total	57867.755	211				
Declarative_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	200.078	2	100.039	6.627	.002*	Upper Secondary
	Within Groups	3215.473	213	15.096			
	Total	3415.551	215				
Procedural_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	44.967	2	22.484	3.580	.030*	Upper Secondary
	Within Groups	1344.175	214	6.281			
	Total	1389.143	216				
Contextual_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	51.667	2	25.834	2.474	.087	-
	Within Groups	2203.160	211	10.442			
	Total	2254.827	213				
Planning_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	48.526	2	24.263	1.624	.200	-
	Within Groups	3197.142	214	14.940			
	Total	3245.668	216				
Information_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	134.694	2	67.347	2.446	.089	-
	Within Groups	5838.031	212	27.538			
	Total	5972.726	214				
Comprehension_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	53.960	2	26.980	1.460	.235	-
	Within Groups	3935.702	213	18.477			
	Total	3989.662	215				
Debugging_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	10.017	2	5.008	.477	.622	-
	Within Groups	2248.997	214	10.509			
	Total	2259.014	216				
Evaluation_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	75.368	2	37.684	4.118	.018*	Upper Secondary
	Within Groups	1940.167	212	9.152			
	Total	2015.535	214				

$p > 0.05$ * $p < 0.05$

Table 26.

ANOVA Results Based on the Scores Received on the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory According to Mothers' Educational Level

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.	Favor
Metacognitive_Awareness_MAI	Between Groups	3027.412	3	1009.137	1.844	.140	
	Within Groups	116539.280	213	547.133			
	Total	119566.691	216				
Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	499.171	3	166.390	2.364	.072	
	Within Groups	14710.322	209	70.384			
	Total	15209.493	212				
Regulation_MAI	Between Groups	969.878	3	323.293	1.180	.318	
	Within Groups	57000.236	208	274.040			
	Total	57970.113	211				
Declarative Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	236.953	3	78.984	5.376	.001*	
	Within Groups	3114.487	212	14.691			
	Total	3351.440	215				
Procedural_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	21.533	3	7.178	1.134	.336	
	Within Groups	1348.587	213	6.331			
	Total	1370.120	216				
Contextual_Knowledge_MAI	Between Groups	21.226	3	7.075	.673	.569	
	Within Groups	2206.158	210	10.506			
	Total	2227.383	213				
Planning_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	117.478	3	39.159	2.656	.049	
	Within Groups	3140.550	213	14.744			
	Total	3258.028	216				
Information_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	82.880	3	27.627	.994	.397	
	Within Groups	5865.008	211	27.796			
	Total	5947.888	214				
Comprehension_Management_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	37.015	3	12.338	.659	.578	
	Within Groups	3968.966	212	18.722			
	Total	4005.981	215				
Debugging_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	26.341	3	8.780	.829	.479	
	Within Groups	2256.912	213	10.596			
	Total	2283.253	216				
Evaluation_Reg_MAI	Between Groups	21.878	3	7.293	.772	.511	
	Within Groups	1992.931	211	9.445			
	Total	2014.809	214				

$p > 0.05$ * $p < 0.01$

Results for Achievement Attributions and Metacognitive Awareness

Correlational statistics were performed in order to examine the relation between Turkish upper secondary students' achievement attributions for failure and their metacognitive awareness levels in learning English.

The first question of concern was related to whether metacognitive awareness of the learners interacted with their achievement attributions in English in an EFL context. A Pearson's correlation test was administered in order to find out the direction of the relation between metacognitive awareness and achievement attributions. Findings, as presented in Table 27, showed that there was a very weak negative correlation among the scores. With increasing or decreasing level of metacognitive awareness, students did not prefer particular attributions for their success or failure outcomes.

Table 27.

Correlation between Metacognitive Awareness (MAI) and Achievement Attributions (MMCS)

Correlations		SUM_MMCS	SUM_MAI
SUM_MMCS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.129
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.057
	N	218	218
SUM_MAI	Pearson Correlation	-.129	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.057	
	N	218	218

Another question was related to how metacognitive awareness of the language learners exerted an impact on attributions to failure in learning English in an EFL context. At first, metacognitive awareness level scores above 185 were classified as high and scores below 185 as low. Upcoming data analysis was based on this categorization. Descriptive statistics were run to identify achievement attributions for students with high metacognitive awareness levels. Results showed that students with high metacognitive awareness levels mainly attributed their achievements to effort

(Table 28). In other words, success was explained with effort, while failure was linked the lack of effort.

In terms of language learners with low metacognitive awareness the same pattern was observed. Students mainly explained their success with effort and their failure with the lack of it (Table 29).

Table 28.

Descriptive Statistics for High Metacognitive Awareness and Achievement Attributions

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SUM_MAI	96	186.00	239.00	205.6146	13.89083
SUM_MMCS	96	53.00	86.00	70.3854	6.14624
Ability_MMCS	96	8.00	27.00	15.1667	3.01458
Effort_MMCS	96	11.00	23.00	19.3229	2.33281
Task_Difficulty_MMCS	95	9.00	29.00	18.4421	3.63995
Luck_MMCS	96	12.00	26.00	17.4896	2.91997
Valid N (listwise)	95				

Ability attributions were the least favored among students with both low and high metacognitive awareness levels. This means that students did not attribute their success to their ability in English and they did not explain their failure with the lack of ability.

The question of how metacognitive awareness levels of high achieving language learners influenced their achievement attributions was addressed. For this purpose, successful students in English classes with high and low metacognitive awareness levels were selected in the data set, and related statistics were run accordingly (Table 30).

Table 29.

Descriptive Statistics for Low Metacognitive Awareness and Achievement Attributions

Descriptive Statistics		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SUM_MAI		122	127.00	185.00	167.0328	13.79719
SUM_MMCS		122	56.00	89.00	71.6311	5.97267
Ability_MMCS		121	7.00	26.00	16.5702	2.92924
Effort_MMCS		122	13.00	26.00	20.0000	2.51606
Task						
Difficulty_MMC		121	11.00	28.00	17.5124	3.27138
S						
Luck_MMCS		122	8.00	27.00	17.6803	2.67299
Valid N (listwise)		120				

Firstly, a t-test was administered on the categorized data set. The outcomes implied a difference in terms of ability attributions only. In other words, high-achieving students with high metacognitive awareness levels believed that ability was less likely linked with success outcomes compared to high-achieving students with low metacognitive awareness levels. Students with high metacognitive awareness levels expressed that their failure was not linked with their ability to a great extent; compared to students with low metacognitive awareness levels who tended to explain their success with their ability, and their failure with the lack of it.

The same procedure was repeated for low and averagely-achieving students in order to reveal how metacognitive awareness of low and averagely-achieving language learners influenced their achievement attributions. As can be seen in Table 31 and 32, there was not a statistically significant difference considering the metacognitive awareness levels of low and averagely-achieving students and their achievement attributions.

Table 30.

Group Statistics for Achievement Attributions of High-Achieving Students Based on their Metacognitive Awareness Levels

Group Statistics							
	MAI_Categoric	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	p	Favor
Ability_MMCS	Higher than185	55	14.5455	3.21350	.43331	0.010*	Higher than185
	Lower than185	51	16.2353	3.40933	.47740		
Effort_MMCS	Higher than185	55	19.2182	2.09665	.28271	0.353	-
	Lower than185	51	19.6275	2.41628	.33835		
Task_Difficulty_MMCS	Higher than185	55	18.6727	3.86367	.52098	0.086	-
	Lower than185	51	17.4510	3.34851	.46889		
Luck_MMCS	Higher than185	55	17.6545	3.00751	.40553	0.752	-
	Lower than185	51	17.4902	2.25719	.31607		

$p>0.05$ * $p<0.05$

Table 31.

Group Statistics for Achievement Attributions of Low-Achieving Students Based on their Metacognitive Awareness Levels

Group Statistics							
	MAI_Categoric	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	p	Favor
Ability_MMCS	Higher than185	25	16.6000	2.67706	.53541	0.718	-
	Lower than185	43	16.8372	2.56283	.39083		
Effort_MMCS	Higher than185	25	19.5600	2.06317	.41263	0.695	-
	Lower than185	43	19.8140	2.81371	.42909		
Task_Difficulty_MMCS	Higher than185	24	18.5833	3.06334	.62530	0.073	-
	Lower than185	42	17.1905	2.94865	.45499		
Luck_MMCS	Higher than185	25	17.2000	2.29129	.45826	0.248	-
	Lower than185	43	17.9767	2.83254	.43196		

$p>0.05$ * $p<0.05$

Table 32.

Group Statistics for Achievement Attributions of Averagely-Achieving Students Based on their Metacognitive Awareness Levels

Group Statistics								
	MAI_Kate gorik	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	p	Favor	
Yetenek_M MCS	185 Üstü	Puan	20	15.550 0	2.52305	.56417	0.144	-
	185 Altı	Puan	23	16.652 2	2.32787			
Emek_MM CS	185 Üstü	Puan	20	19.750 0	3.24240	.72502	0.169	-
	185 Altı	Puan	24	20.875 0	2.04966			
Bağlam_M MCS	185 Üstü	Puan	20	16.850 0	3.52846	.78899	0.089	-
	185 Altı	Puan	24	18.708 3	3.53220			
Şans_MM CS	185 Üstü	Puan	20	17.200 0	3.42744	.76640	0.584	-
	185 Altı	Puan	24	17.750 0	3.17942			

$p > 0.05$ * $p < 0.05$

Among averagely-scoring students, the most popular achievement attribution was effort regardless of metacognitive awareness levels. Metacognitive awareness levels of averagely-achieving students did not exert a statistically significant difference in terms of achievement attributions.

Interview Results

Interviews were conducted with 24 students varying in gender, grade level and English course grades in order to determine their overall perceptions about English classes in state schools and about how the course grades are formed and what they constitute. Thus, aspects such as what the main focus within English classes are, whether English classes prepare language learners for contexts outside of the classroom, whether they help to improve language proficiency and what suggestions

were made by the interviewees related to English classes were mentioned. In addition, components such as ability, effort, task difficulty and luck which were considered to be relevant with regard to the course grades were addressed in particular; while language learners' conception of what competencies are required to claim that one knows a language and language learners' perceived own competencies were also portrayed.

The 9th Graders' Perceptions on English in State Schools

In terms of the 9th graders' general ideas on English, its usefulness in foreign countries was addressed in relation to its communicative value. While one student stated that foreign languages widen one's horizon, another student stated that he sees English as a lesson only, as he was not concerned with English within summer breaks because he did not consider English as relevant in Turkey and saw little chance to travel abroad in the future. Related to this insight, the fact that students lose contact with English within summer break was labeled as a problem for language development.

Among the 9th graders, all language learners except one stated that English classes at state schools were sufficient and that they were satisfied with what they conveyed to students. These learners claimed that not only in terms of grammar knowledge but also in terms of all language skills including speaking, English classes fully prepared language learners and equipped them with the required language skills. One of these language learners pointed out that it was the language teacher who determined his categorization of English classes as sufficient or insufficient. Thus, the teachers who appeared to be incompetent in the eye of this language learner changed his view on English classes for the negative. The only student who did not consider English classes as sufficient stated that the course content is not structured appropriately and appeared to be unrelated for the EFL context, and that the materials used in the language classroom did not foster language production. He pointed out that there was almost no interaction between teachers and students in English, that speaking skills only developed in terms of increased vocabulary knowledge, and that English classes did not prepare students to use English outside of the classroom.

Turkish language learners' perceptions related to language improvement over the years of language instruction revealed three different perspectives. The majority of language learners stated to experience an improvement in their English thanks to English classes, one language learner acknowledged the potential of English classes to foster and improve language learning but pointed out to his own lack of effort which prevented progress, while another one did not experience any improvement at all. Application exams which assess language skills and are divided into speaking, reading, writing and listening are mainly considered to be helpful to improve language learning, while one student thought otherwise. With this respect, application exams were valued by language learners because they provided additional exposure to language input and because they allowed learners to get in touch with and work on the language more frequently.

The question of what English grades really measure was also answered by the interviewees. All the 9th graders stated that English grades did not reflect language learners' real language proficiency, while speaking competencies were fully neglected as a predictive factor. Thus, all agreed that English grades were formed following the assessment of grammar knowledge, why they could not be considered as indicators of students' language proficiency. Language learners emphasized that even getting 100 points, which is the highest outcome to achieve within a language course, did not mean that the language learner in question can in fact speak English. In particular, English exams were not considered to assess speaking skills or speech production in any kind but as being centered on memorization and application of the grammar rules. When asked to explain the difference between high and low grades in English classes, all the 9th graders pointed out that high grades were the result of effort invested to study for exams, paying attention and following the teacher in class, and behaving well. Low grades, on the other hand, were explained with the lack of importance attached to English and the lack of effort. One language learner stated that "Only two to three students in class know English. Even though the number of students with high English grades is high, they get these grades because they study harder". Language learners' suggestions to improve English classes were a simplification in conveying course content on the side of the language teachers; the implementation of speaking classes one to two hours a week, so that the chance to

practice speaking is given; exams which demand students to produce language output in form of writing paragraphs about a given topic; the necessity to make students come up with their own products such as preparing a language book; and English classes which do not prepare students for the global context but for the EFL context in Turkey only.

The 9th graders commonly stated that task difficulty in English courses was on average. One language learner pointed out that task difficulty was not a real determinant for the grades as she considered task difficulty as a dynamic variable whose direction changed based on the extent of effort invested. In other words, she mentioned that if students learn for English classes or listen to the teacher during classes, the level of difficulty decreased, while it increased when the opposite scenario applied. Only one student considered English classes as easy. Different opinions emerged in terms of the potential of English classes to prepare students for real-life encounters and to which extent task difficulty in English classes equaled real-life communication. Some students indicated that from time to time teachers asked easier questions or prepared easier exams in order to either boost students' course grades, make them pass English courses or to increase motivation. Two of the interviewed high achieving students stated that teachers did not decrease task difficulty on purpose, and that they were clearly against simplification within courses. In addition, all the 9th graders indicated that they feel more satisfied when they succeed in difficult rather than easy exams. At the same time, they emphasized that they did not strive for this feeling of satisfaction, as their main aim turned out to be solely getting high grades and passing the courses. In terms of ability, opinions were twofold. Two language learners believed that without English competence or ability, there is no chance to get high scores in English classes, while the rest of the four students emphasized that general academic competence compensated for low English ability, so that it was still possible to get high grades without possessing the required English ability. General academic competence was described as ranging from general characteristics such as discharging responsibilities as a student, regularly repeating course content, or motivating oneself. In other words, a good student in general terms has the chance to be considered successful in English classes even if he or she lacked the required English skills. Effort was another component

which was addressed in the interviews. All interviewees clearly agreed on the great impact of effort on course grades. The relation between effort and course grade was described as a positive one. According to the students, the more effort was invested, the higher grades were ensured and vice versa. Effort was ascribed the impact of a compensator for low ability. Thus, interviewees voiced that by taking notes and listening to the teacher success could be experienced despite lacking skills and abilities in English. No consensus could be made in terms of which language skill could be improved more easily by sole effort. Luck turned out not to be evaluated as a decisive component within the process of grading. The question which language skill was more prone to luck was answered differently. Language learners believed to be luckier in listening and reading contexts. When asked to rank effort, ability, luck, and task difficulty with regard to their impact on course grades, the majority of the 9th graders put effort first as the most influential component. Effort was followed by task difficulty and ability in respective order, while luck and again task difficulty shared the last position. One of the students brought up the role teachers play as another component impacting course outcomes. He claimed that the teacher's competence and knowledge and way of teaching decide over whether students understand course content or not. Thus, characteristics of teachers were seen as having an influence on students' outcomes.

The main competency the 9th graders considered as a prerequisite for knowing a language was the ability to form sentences and thereby related to speech production. What all students emphasized was that the mastery of grammar rules on its own was not sufficient to claim to know a language. If asked to judge their own language competencies and whether they believed to confirm to the competent language speaker they previously described, two opposing views emerged. None of the language learners claimed to know English. Three students stated they did not know English, while the others claimed they knew English to an extent that they could more or less express themselves. In this context, the ability to introduce oneself, ask for names and nationality and give directions were mentioned. Among the students who got high grades in English classes, one clearly admitted not to know English at all, while the other was not convinced of her English either.

The feeling of competence following failure and success experiences in English classes was also addressed in the interviews. The majority of the 9th graders indicated that getting low or high grades did not have an impact on their feeling of competence and that they did not perceive themselves as competent or incompetent in class with regard to grade outcomes. They mainly emphasized that the feeling of competence was determined by the extent of invested effort. Thus, failure was explained with the lack of effort and lack of time invested in learning, but not with lacking English competence or ability.

The 10th Graders' Perceptions on English in State Schools

10th graders labeled English as interesting, fun, and helpful especially in terms of travelling abroad. In particular, one low-achieving and one averagely scoring student perceived English classes in state schools as fully sufficient to promote each language skill including grammar knowledge. One of these students positively referred to teachers who according to her explained English well and in detail. One student clearly agreed on the insufficiency of English classes with their perceived focus on grammar rules only. In contrast to the low-achieving female student, the male low-achiever portrayed teachers in a negative light. He claimed that teachers do not approach students positively, that they do not appeal to students' proficiency while explaining English, and that they immediately leave the language classroom once classes finish. The rest of the students categorized English classes in state schools as both sufficient and insufficient with regard to their different characteristics. With this regard, grammar was stated to be sufficiently addressed in classes. At the same time, the repeated exposure to the same grammar points was pointed out negatively, as students were dissatisfied with the feeling of continuously dealing with the same course content. These students categorized classes as insufficient based on other language skills, especially in terms of speaking, which according to the students were not worked on within language classrooms. It was emphasized that students did not have the chance to gain experience in speaking within classes so that they would not be able to communicate with other English-speaking people.

Some 10th graders explained that English classes did not prepare them for the real use of English outside of the classroom but to master grammar and succeed in English exams. In terms of speaking skills, a high-achieving student stated that English classes had made her learn English to an extent which allows her to at least introduce herself in general terms by using some of the memorized vocabulary items and forming some sentences. A student generalized the situation in Turkey as follows: “As generally no emphasis is laid on speaking in state schools, I think that someone who would travel to other countries as a tourist would not be able to do anything. That is why English is a missing part of us. That is why Turks generally do not know how to speak.” This student further added: “English instruction should not be like that.” Thus, dissatisfaction was explicitly stated.

The improvement within English classes was again judged within separate categories. All students enumerated different aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, and grammar. As can be seen the four language skills were not mentioned within this context. The language learners who previously criticized the way English was approached and attended to be taught to students, stressed that state schools will not improve his English proficiency in any ways and that he did not learn much in school related to English. It has to be mentioned that this student explained his perceived high English ability with his contact with English outside of the classroom which he created himself. All of the students, who dealt with English outside of the classroom thought little of the improvement provided by state schools. Nevertheless, the majority agreed on the positive impact of application exams, as the confrontation and involvement with the target language increased thanks to these. As a whole, students’ utterances proved that a profoundly negative connotation of English as pervasive in state schools. Students suggested the use of language laboratories to provide the chance to work on the target language, more varied activities in the language classroom, and a focus on and more chances to work on speaking.

With regard to what course grades reflect in their essence, all students agreed upon high grades being composed of mainly grammar knowledge and effort. Exam grades were considered to determine English grades to a great extent. Taking into account that exams were mainly centered on grammar knowledge, effort to memorize

grammar was the main determinant of grades according to students. Students explicitly stated that grades did not reveal anything related to English ability, comprehension or speaking skills. The role of behavior, participation, completion of assigned tasks, and respect towards teachers was also addressed by some students. These components were seen as more influential than English competence in general terms. None of the students saw higher scoring students as having higher language proficiency, or lower scoring students as demonstrating low language proficiency. In fact, a negative relationship between scores and proficiency was also evaluated as possible. An averagely scoring student who considered himself competent in English independent from his course grades emphasized that he himself would be more able to express himself, and use and speak English compared to a student who gets top grades in English courses.

In particular, the majority of 10th graders believed that high grades could be achieved despite lacking English ability, while general academic ability was believed to compensate for the lack of it. Grades did not reflect language ability and competence according to 10th graders. Nevertheless, one student stressed the difference between classroom and real-life contexts. He claimed that it was possible to get high grades despite low ability but that passing exams and courses might still mean one could fail in real life. In this context, difficulty level of English classes can be addressed. Difficulty was mainly perceived as average, while one student referred to the negative relationship between effort and difficulty level. Thus, increasing effort meant decreasing difficulty level. In addition, the majority perceived that teachers adapted difficulty according to students' proficiency level. In this context, teachers were reported to ask overly simplified questions from time to time. Explanations provided for this tendency was the teachers' desire to increase student success and motivation, or just to balance course difficulty. Contrary opinions were evident between high and low achievers. The low achieving students expected the teacher to primarily ensure students to get high grades rather than assess language proficiency. High achievers on the other hand, strictly opposed this viewpoint and rejected the idea that teachers ask simplified questions on purpose. They stated that all students should study for and earn high grades with their own effort. All 10th graders indicated that success in more difficult exams led to greater satisfaction but at the

same time none of the students stated to prepare for exams in order to feel satisfied. Mastering the approaching exams was the main aim of students. Task difficulty was stated to have an impact on the extent of effort invested by students. Some low achieving students stated that they would completely quit studying for English if teachers would increase the difficulty level in classes although they believed that effort had an important impact on course grades. All students considered effort as an important factor for students' course grades, while they also mentioned that effort could compensate for language difficulties and inefficiencies. High achieving students believed in the value of effort to a greater extent. One of the averagely scoring students indicated that she has the potential to get a higher grade if she would learn harder. The other one also emphasized the importance of effort but did not consider it as sufficient on its own, as he reported that he could also get high grades without studying due to his language aptitude. According to the students, language skills and sub skills which could be improved with personal effort were listening, speaking and pronunciation in respective order.

Luck was not ascribed an important role in the grading process. In addition, in many cases language learners defined luck as having identified and studied for the relevant content, which actually is not directly related to luck. One student drew attention to two different types of luck. He explained the difference between these with respect to the range of previously acquired knowledge. Thus, if a student mastered an exam without any preparation or specific background knowledge, the provided answers were simple guesses; but if a student had accumulated certain knowledge and prepared for the exam, educated guesses are made. In other words, the difference lies in whether students have a reference point while making guesses and relying on their luck. Approaching the previously questioned definition of luck as having prepared for the relevant course content, this definition seems more plausible. The role luck plays in speaking exams was mostly estimated as low but one student perceived speaking to be more prone to luck compared to the other language skills. He explained this perception with the artificial context created within classrooms in the scope of application exams. Among effort, ability, difficulty and luck, effort was ranked first in terms of its impact on grades by the majority of students. For half of the students, effort was followed by ability, while no sharp distinction was made

between difficulty and luck in terms of their 3rd or 4th position in this ranking. Both of these components were not positioned as the most influential factor by anyone, while effort was not located at the last two ranks. Both of the high achieving students, ranked the components identically: effort, ability, task difficulty and luck. No consensus was found between low or averagely scoring language learners, while effort was mostly named first. Additional components which were mentioned by the interviewees apart from ability, task difficult, effort and luck were students' behavior, completion of assigned tasks and note-taking.

Knowing a language was illustrated as knowing how to speak the language and acquiring the competence in related fields such as vocabulary. In order to be able to express oneself, engage in dialogues, comprehend others and speak actively, dwelling on the language and showing interest were considered to be prerequisites. The interviewees emphasized that knowing the grammar of the target language did not suffice on its own but that it was necessary to put theory into practice by actively applying grammar knowledge. Interviewees judged themselves in terms of whether they believed that they fit this portrayal. Two responded positively, while the remaining four did not believe they occupied the enumerated qualities. None of the high achievers were among the students who believed to know English. These students indicated that they knew little English and that they knew vocabulary items but could not form sentences and communicate well with others. In contrary, they categorized their English as satisfactory in the scope of English classes. Most of the students indicated not to meet the demands within English classes and to know little English.

The impact of high and low grades on the feeling of competence was also questioned. All students agreed on the fact that low grades did not reflect language competence but the extent of effort and time invested to study. They stated that they did not consider themselves as incompetent once receiving low grades. At the same time, they did not evaluate themselves as competent in terms of English based on high scores in the language classroom. Only one student accentuated that grades either high or low did not have any impact on his feeling of competence at all, as he did not believe that grades have any informative value in terms of real language competence.

When asked what students do for their grades, only high achievers stated that they put effort into learning by listening to the teacher within the language courses, following the class, or repeating course content for the sake of learning itself. Average and low achievers indicated that they did not study for English anyway. One averagely scoring student admitted that he did not even study for exams although he considered himself skilled in English and thereby could easily get better grades by investing a little more effort. Another student voiced her struggle to invest continuous effort in English. One of the students stated that she did not invest any time to repeat problematic course content at home. At the same time, the majority of these students valued effort as the most influential factor in the process of grading.

The 11th Graders' Perceptions on English in State Schools

In general terms, the 11th graders valued language learning but one of the students questioned the dominant status of English among other foreign languages. He stated that knowing a foreign language is important in today's society but that he cannot understand why English was positioned as the compulsory foreign language offered in Turkish schools. It was also indicated that students do not need to be concerned with English because they do not have to use English in real life. Another negatively connotated aspect with regard to learning English in Turkey were the conditions in state schools. Some students criticized the Ministry of Education because of the repetitive nature of the designed curriculum which addresses the same content over several years without any increase in task difficulty. According to the interviewees, some teachers lacked competence, while others did not attach importance to teaching and immediately left the classroom once courses ended and grammar rules were explained. One student pointed out that English instruction in Turkey did not yield the same results as language instruction in ESL contexts, and that the instruction which is focused on written language does not prepare for language production, so that a high school graduate was anticipated to experience problems in speaking English.

Consequently, only one student characterized English classes at state schools as satisfactory but at the same time indicated that she did not profit from classes

because she did not try to learn English. The other students had a twofold opinion based on specific characteristics. Primarily the attempt to rate English classes as satisfactory was observed amongst many students, while negative facets came to light after some inquiry. Firstly, one student considered classes as satisfactory in each respect but later indicated that she perceived teachers as incompetent and that memorization of rules did not pay off outside of the classroom. Next to evaluating classes as satisfactory, another student also stated that he did not make any special effort to profit from English classes because he did not like English and he considered course materials such as course books insufficient. Another student indicated that grammar was addressed excessively, that the countless grammar topics aroused more confusion, and that the focus of classes was written rather than spoken English. One of the students stated that classes sufficed as she more or less learned to speak English. She expressed the extent of students' English speaking abilities as follows: "For example, a little baby can more or less express its problem. We, too, can at least express our problems that way". She added that English classes did not provide students with the competence to speak English outside of the classroom. Another student clearly emphasized that classes were problematic because students were only learning 'grammar English', and that as a result speaking competence could not be gained. In addition, he stated that despite the focus on grammar, mastery of grammar was not fully ensured as students disliked English, lacked interest and invested low effort in learning English. He explained these circumstances with the status of English in the high school of concern. There were not any language classes in this school which are designed to prepare students who aim to get enrolled in departments related to English for the university entrance exam. As none of the language learners considered English as part of their near future, low motivation was apparent. Next to this, the student asserted that teachers did not prefer students prevented language learners' failure in English classes by providing high grades to unmotivated and problematic students because they did not want to deal with them twice.

In terms of improvement, language learners' opinions were split. Students who tended to sense a lack of improvement in language classes provided different explanations. They stated that their English teachers changed almost every year so

that it was hard and time consuming to adapt to the new teachers' teaching styles, and to build rapport. According to the language learners the allocated time for speaking practice in the language classroom was low, and classes did not suffice to make students acquire the required competencies or to learn the target language. Among the students who defended the idea that classes improved students' English, one student stated that his vocabulary knowledge and grammar knowledge increased and that he struggled less in terms of forming sentences. Another student preferred a more superficial evaluation, as he considered his increased course grades as an indication for his improvement in English. Yet another student emphasized the potential of English classes to improve students' English but stated that he himself prevented improvement in his English because he did not invest any effort in the language learning process. Apart from this general judgment on improvement, students agreed upon the positive impact of application exams for language improvement. These were stated to increase students' direct encounter with the target language, provide students with opportunities to speak with the teacher one-to-one, and to practice language production and pronunciation. One student indicated that he valued the application exams because these allowed him to present his real language skills which were not asked for within class hours. Succeeding in these exams was more motivating for him compared to regular exams, as he anticipated a stronger connection between application exam outcomes and his language competence. Only one student could not detect any positive impact of application exams on language improvement.

The 11th graders also made some suggestions for the language classroom. "For example, a little child watches a film or listens to music. I had many friends who more or less learned English that way". In other words, a student suggested that English could be learned by increased exposure to it. Another student considered the possibility to increase the number of application exams as another way to improve one's English in classes. In addition, the structure of classes was recommended to be changed such that students get more chances to speak and get active rather than writing down grammar rules to learn English. In short, students expected to learn English by speaking it.

Thoughts about English course grades concentrated on the idea that grades did not reflect language competence and skills. In this respect, students stated that grades did not comply with speaking skills, were not indicating whether students know English, and did not differentiate between students who can or cannot speak English. On the contrary, grades were reported to measure students' amount of effort, extent of interest, and whether students paid attention, focused on, and listened to the English course, and whether they could at least express themselves to an extent. When asked for the difference amongst students with high and low grades in English, a low achieving student mentioned that she considered students with high or low grades to have the same level of English proficiency. It was also voiced that high achieving students might even not be able to speak English at all. Only one student claimed that grades assess and reflect real language proficiency. This low achieving student believed to deserve low grades because he did not even try to succeed in English classes. The same student was also the only one to state that students with high grades can in fact understand and speak better English than him.

All students agreed that among ability, luck, difficulty and effort which are the four of the components to shape course grades, effort was perceived to be the strongest and most relevant determinant of grades. High achieving students indicated that effort could even compensate for low ability and make one get high grades and succeed in classes. Nevertheless, one of these students also stated that effort on its own might not be sufficient, as investing effort to succeed in exams only would not guarantee any success in the process of language learning because it would rather generate short-term success.

Students mostly believed that sole effort could especially be useful to improve writing skills. This language skill was followed by speaking, as students believed that pronunciation could be easily improved with increased effort. An important remark was made related to the distinction between two different types of students: those who study hard and get high grades and those who study hard but rather fail. At the same time, the importance to rather feel satisfied even if failure was experienced despite invested effort was pointed out, as the possibility to blame one's laziness for failure and the related negative affect was suppressed. In addition, the importance of the type of motivation was addressed. The extent of success following effort was

linked with whether students feel forced to study for English or whether they are interested in and aim to improve their English. The majority of students agreed that language ability was not an absolute must for grades, as general academic ability was ascribed the potential to compensate for the lack of English ability or low language proficiency. According to the students, it was still possible to get high grades despite low ability. One high achieving student indicated that, for example, speaking ability had little impact on course grades because exams which determined course outcomes to a great extent were not productive in nature. Luck did not turn out to be considered an essential component of course grades. Students either stated that luck did not influence course outcomes or to a very low degree. Only one student perceived luck to have a greater impact on her course grades. One student considered himself lucky because of his interest in English which he took as a natural source of motivation. Luck was taken as a factor which influenced outcomes for the better mainly in listening exams.

Task difficulty was generally graded as average, while some students expressed that teachers adapted the difficulty level with regard to the low student profile especially in comparison with other school types with a successful student profile. English instruction in Turkish state schools was also evaluated to be less challenging compared to other countries, as course content was not perceived to correspond to real-life English. Every language skill including grammar was evaluated as simplified. This teacher preference was explained by the wish to increase student motivation. The interviewees also indicated that teachers might decrease task difficulty in order to make English classes more appealing for students. One of the students referred to the dependence of task difficulty on the amount of effort exerted by students. Success in exams of higher task difficulty was reported to lead to higher satisfaction by the majority of students. Nevertheless, none of these students were incited to feel satisfied in the process of learning English but to get good grades in overall. Interestingly, one student indicated that he feels more satisfied if he gets high grades in easy exams. He explained this condition with his misbelieve in his ability to get a good grade in difficult exams. It was mentioned that task difficulty in exams did not really correspond to real-life English. On the other hand, the inclusion of exam components of higher difficulty was not welcomed either in favor of ensuring

success in exams of low difficulty level. He also supported the teachers' tendency to pose simplified questions in exams. An interesting attempt to explain the necessity to balance task difficulty in English courses was made by one of the interviewees: "There is no use in increasing task difficulty as can be inferred by the saying: If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid". Here, attention is drawn to the student profile and their language proficiency, and to the necessity to consider information about the students in the process of arranging task difficulty.

The ranking of the four components showed that effort was considered the most influential factor next to ability, while luck and difficulty both were not ranked first by any student. The second most important factor was also effort if considered in total. Two students ranked it second, while the three other students all perceived ability, difficulty or luck as the second essential component. Difficulty and luck were both ranked at the third and fourth positions. What stroke attention was that effort was not ranked last, and luck and difficulty were never ranked first by any of the students. High achievers were in agreement with each other in terms of their ranking: ability, effort, luck, and difficulty. In the ranking of the averagely scoring students, effort and ability shared the first and second position, while difficulty ranked third, and luck last. Low achievers only agreed in effort being the most influential component of grades.

Knowing a language was described to comprise speech production in both written but mainly in oral form. Effort and interest were considered to be prerequisites for learning a language. When it came to their own English competence, three students stated to be incompetent and two to be competent in English classes. One student indicated he did not care whether he was competent or incompetent in classes. The two students who considered themselves competent within classes were high achievers. One of the students especially emphasized that she was competent inside classroom but not outside of it. Low achievers indicated that they did not know English; students with average scores stated that they knew English to an extent; and one high achiever stated she could more or less speak English while the other one believed to know English to a great extent.

If students received low grades in exams, they did not feel incompetent and their feeling of competence was not strongly affected, as students explained negative outcomes by their lack of effort. In terms of the question whether they feel sufficient and competent following high grades, different opinions were voiced. Some students considered themselves sufficient and competent, some insufficient, while others believed that one can never claim to be sufficient as there is no limit for learning. One student claimed to feel insufficient after receiving high grades because she explained her outcomes with her effort but not her language ability. Another student indicated that he would not consider himself competent in the face of high exam scores because he would believe in having succeeded by chance. Hence, some students appeared to be aware of their incompetence. One student considered high grades as a direct indication for her competence.

The 12th Graders' Perceptions on English in State Schools

The 12th graders' perceptions about English classes at state schools were that the curriculum was centered on grammar and neglected other language skills, that the course content appeared to be repetitive and limited to the instruction of tenses, and that English was taught by asking students to write the language rather than to speak it. One student pointed out that these characteristics of English classes did not change based on the type of high school and that none of the high school types in Turkey prepared students for speaking the target language. He also made an interesting observation: "We believe that we have to memorize language rules and chunks, in this sense we cannot realize speaking and other language skills".

English classes were classified as fully satisfactory in terms of grammar instruction, and vocabulary teaching to some extent, while English classes in general were described as unsatisfactory. This inefficacy was explained by the repetitive curriculum. As indicated by one of the students, language learners who get accustomed to the repetitive content think that they will have the chance to make up for disregarded course content in the following year of language instruction, and as a consequence decrease the amount of effort. In addition, the struggle in language production and comprehension was explained with the lack of practice in the

language classroom. Another student pushed forward that vocabulary items and expressions related to everyday language were not addressed in the language classroom which might be rooted in the designated curriculum. Dissatisfaction was also voiced in terms of pronunciation, as classes were not perceived to aim at developing speaking skills.

Positive and negative responses were provided on language improvement in state schools, while application exams in particular were pointed out positively. Suggestions on how to change or improve English classes for the better were to use different card games which foster language production, to leave the language classroom and teach English in different environments and contexts in which language has to be applied, and to spread the speaking component of the application exams into the whole educational year, so that students are required to speak in class and speaking is assessed throughout the whole year.

Interviewees stated that course grades did not reflect real English competence and ability. According to the interviewees, grades revealed whether grammar rules could be memorized and applied in exams rather than measure speaking skills. With this respect, language learners claimed that exams assess short-term memory in particular. Students stated that they prepare for exams by memorizing grammar rules mainly but that they forget these rules once English courses are passed, as they are not inclined to continuously repeat course content.

General academic ability was ascribed the power to compensate for low language ability. Thus, the amount of effort and the way of preparation were considered determinant. One high achieving student explained her high grades with her ability. At the same time, she voiced that it is possible to get high grades without English competence. Her expressions implied that students of low ability are also able to pass English classes. Other students expressed the value they ascribed to ability by indicating that language ability was an essential in getting high grades.

The interviewees agreed on the point that receiving high or low grades in English classes did not imply anything about English competence. Students with high and low grades were considered equal in terms of their abilities, especially with regard to their speaking skills. The differences in course outcomes were explained with the

extent of effort invested to prepare for exams by memorizing rules, and the success in applying the required knowledge within the exam. The scenario that a student with better speaking ability could get lower grades than those who cannot express themselves by no means was labeled as plausible within the language classroom. In some instances teachers' goodwill in grading was reported to generate higher course grades than students would deserve. In addition, the honesty of students, the fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities, and the respect they showed for teachers influenced language teachers in the grading process. Performance and project grades were also considered powerful in terms of increasing course grades.

Overall, all students agreed on English classes to be of average task difficulty. They stated that sometimes but not too often teachers decreased the level of difficulty. Among reasons to change the difficulty level, boosting students' confidence and motivation; ensuring students to get a certain amount of points in order to prevent course failure; increasing course success; and paying tribute to positive student behavior were enlisted. All concurred with each other in relation to the greater satisfaction following success in exams of high difficulty. The majority of students admitted that they did not strive for satisfaction but for passing classes. At the same time, the 12th graders did not think that task difficulty within English classes prepared students for the real-life context as task difficulty was perceived to be consistently decreased in classes. Hence, task difficulty in speaking did not comply with the demands of real-life communication. One of the students pointed out that task difficulty was manipulated in each type of high schools. He indicated that a student who got a high course grade in a Technical and Vocational High School would not be able to demonstrate the same performance if enrolled in an Anatolian High School in which task difficulty was generally considered to be higher. He added that it was required to have different task difficulties in different types of high schools due to the different student profiles.

Effort was agreed on being an influential component of grades by each student. It was stated that one could not learn any language without investing effort, and that it was the most important factor to determine success or failure. One student addressed that her own effort had low impact on her achievement outcomes although she regarded effort as an influential factor. Luck was neglected as a potential component

to influence course outcomes. There was only one student who indicated that in some instances he did not even prepare for exams because he believed in his luck to succeed. A high achieving student expressed that he did not prepare for English classes in order to acquire the ability to speak with other people but to pass classes. The ranking of the four components resulted in effort being ranked first, ability second, difficulty third and luck fourth. The highest consensus among interviewees of different grade levels was reached in the case of 12th graders. High achieving students and average scoring students were also fully consented to this ranking. No consistency was located among low achievers.

The ability to speak, produce and comprehend the language were the most frequently touched upon features of a competent language speaker. Other aspects referred to in this context were a large repertoire of vocabulary items, being confident, and being eager to speak. While judging their own competence, students' answers ranged from having the previously indicated feature of a competent language speaker, demonstrating these to an extent or not at all. Low achievers did not claim to know English, while some of the average and high achievers believed to occupy some of these abilities. Only one high achieving student estimated to possess all of the stated qualities. It was mainly the insufficient speaking skill which prevented students to regard themselves as competent language learners. When asked whether they knew English, none of the students answered yes. High achievers asserted to know English on an intermediate level. Nevertheless, the majority claimed to meet the demand in English classes. A student mentioned that he felt competent within classes as long as he was successfully managing grammar rules. At the same time, an impeding role was ascribed to an excessive focus on grammar. One student addressed that he felt the urge to conform to language rules when he tried to make use of his vocabulary knowledge in the process of producing language output. He indicated that with a focus on strictly following grammar rules, failure in speaking was inescapable.

The feeling of competence was not affected negatively if low grades were received, as students were more likely to ascribe low grades to the lack of effort. Again, high grades were not explained by competence or ability but by increased effort. Some students stated that they did not try to foster their English outside of the classroom. One of these students shared that studying did not turn out to have an impact on his

grades so that he already gave up aiming for and working towards improvement. One of the high achievers voiced her indifference in terms of grades. She indicated that she judged her English proficiency by her ability to follow and understand movies, and read in English. Furthermore, she stated that she did not study for English classes but tried to work on and improve her English by watching movies with or without English subtitles. In general, even though the majority of the 12th graders valued effort and explicitly stated to believe in their potential to be more successful in English classes by studying harder, they demonstrated the exact opposite behavior.

The Impact of Performance Outcomes on Interviewees' Perceptions on English in State Schools

High achievers mainly stated that English classes dealt with grammar to a great extent and thereby neglected communicative skills which they actually would value and prefer more. Vocabulary instruction was also mentioned to be addressed in a sufficient manner. Half of the averagely scoring students considered English classes at school as fully sufficient in every term. The other half judged English classes to be sufficient in terms of grammar instruction but criticized that other language skills were fully neglected in favor of it, so that English classes could not prepare students to use and speak English. The majority of low achievers considered English classes as sufficient to teach students English. The rest considered classes insufficient due to their repetitive content focusing on grammar.

According to high achievers, grades did not reflect students' English proficiency because they did not reveal anything related to students' ability to speak and produce or comprehend the language in general. In the eyes of high achievers, grades rather stood for whether students had the ability to implement memorized grammar rules in exams. The general tendency of students to get prepared and at least try to succeed despite the lack of English ability was ascribed the potential to help increase course grades. According to students, grades did not indicate whether a student's English is good or bad. In addition, exams were assumed not to assess real English competence, as they were perceived to be centered on measuring grammar knowledge. In general, course outcomes were linked to the amount of effort and preparation time invested in

studying for exams by low achievers. Low achievers indicated that grades did not reflect whether students could speak English but whether they had grammar knowledge. Average scoring students did not link grades to English competence but how well language rules were mastered and how much effort was put in English classes. Some students indicated that they could do better in terms of English and that they have the potential to do so but that they do not study for English and that therefore grades do not imply anything related to real language competence.

The majority of high achievers also indicated that English classes did not improve their English but their grammar and vocabulary knowledge, while application exams in which all language skills are addressed were mentioned in a positive light, as they provided students with the chance to at least get engaged with the language as a whole. Students who believed that their English improved ascribed this to their own effort and engagement with the language outside of school. According to the majority of low achievers, English classes improved or had the potential to improve students' language proficiency. Students who believed their English has not improved acknowledged that English classes offered many opportunities to improve language but that they themselves did not profit from classes because they did not invest any effort. Application exams were accentuated positively. Half of the averagely scoring students believed that English classes contributed to their language improvement, while the others did not perceive any progress in the process of language learning. The majority valued the chance application exams gave for improvement. Suggestions made in order to improve language instruction mainly dealt with the improvement of students' speaking skills by increasing the English input provided to students and by making students produce English more frequently. Suggestions for language classrooms were to expose students to more language input and to allocate more time to speaking practices.

In terms of task difficulty, some high achievers indicated that task difficulty in classes was easy while the majority perceived it to be average. Interestingly, half of the high achievers indicated that teachers did not and also should not decrease task difficulty on purpose. One of the students stated that he wants other students to also study and prepare for classes, so that he would not like teachers to ask easy questions. This goes along with another student's statement that low achievers

simply do not study for English. Luck was not considered an important factor for course outcomes. Effort was valued in form of listening to the teacher and taking notes in class. The fact that some students got high and other low grades in English classes was not explained with differences in English proficiency but with the amount of effort invested for English classes. The majority of students with average course outcomes believed that high grades could be achieved despite low English ability, as especially effort could compensate for the lack of it. Nevertheless, two students evaluated ability as a prerequisite for success. Effort was mainly valued by students. Thus, even if students do not follow classes, they can be high achievers if they make up for the course content on their own and prepare for exams. Luck was not used to explain success or failure outcomes by students. Difficulty in English classes was ranked as average, while two referred to the role effort plays within this context. They pointed out that task difficulty could be manipulated by students themselves depending on the amount of their own effort. A decrease in task difficulty implemented by teachers was rarely observed by students while its occurrence was linked to helping students pass classes. Being successful in exams of high difficulty was perceived as getting approval by one student, while others just focused on whether they pass or fail exams apart from any kind of emotions evoked. High achievers did not learn for the sake of feeling satisfied following success outcomes but in order to get passing grades only or out of responsibility. In the case of low achievers, luck was not labeled as ineffective but was more frequently used as a potential reason to explain course outcomes. Two students believed that it was hard to get high grades without language ability. Ability played a role but effort could compensate for low ability according to students. Thus, high grades were regarded as the result of effort rather than language competence. Effort in general was stated to strongly influence course outcomes. Task difficulty was perceived as moderate, while many students stated that teachers should ask easier questions, that they disliked application exams because they made it harder to get high grades, and that open-ended questions should not be included in exams.

Knowing a language constituted communicative competence according to high achievers. Hence, grammar knowledge on its own was rated as insufficient to claim that one knows English. The ability to speak and comprehend it and to have a wide

range of vocabulary knowledge was specifically favored. Knowing a language did not mean knowing the rules of the language according to students with average scores. They considered the ability to form sentences by applying the rules and expressing oneself freely were the important aspects. Even knowing fewer rules but not struggling to express oneself was considered enough by students. Vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation and confidence were also mentioned as required competencies. The ability to speak, form sentences and to express oneself were the main components of knowing a language according to low achievers. The fact that being in charge of grammar rules did not equal knowing a language was especially emphasized. Pronunciation was also mentioned in this context.

The majority of high achievers claimed to be sufficient within English classes, while two stated to perform averagely. As a whole they did not believe to have the competencies for being considered to know English, while two students indicated they carry some of these competencies. When asked whether they knew English, one student provided a positive and another one a negative answer while the rest of the students answered they knew English to an extent which allowed them to express themselves in the simplest form. Students believed to be competent in class but not to know English in general. Half of the average scorers thought they measured up for English classes, while the other half did not. One student claimed to know English, while the rest stated they could more or less express themselves in English but disagreed with having the qualities of a competent speaker of English. Again the trend was to ascribe positive or negative course outcomes to effort rather than ability. But two students indicated that low grades triggered the feeling of incompetence, while high grades did not lead to feeling competent. Failure was explained with the lack of ability, and high grades with effort. Two other students stated to feel nothing based on course grades. Low achievers mostly considered themselves as not measuring up with English classes. Two held the opposite view. One student distinguished between language comprehension and production while stating that he measured up with comprehension. Again, the majority claimed that they would not say they knew English and that they did not hold the competencies they relate with English speakers, while some of the students indicated they more or less knew English. Most of the low achievers stated they did not feel insufficient when facing

low grades and they preferably explained negative outcomes with the lack of effort, while positive outcomes were explained by increased effort or from time to time luck but not language ability or competence.

None of the averagely scoring students were studying for English classes, while the majority of low achievers also admitted this behavior. Half of the high achievers in English classes indicated they studied and prepared for English classes, which means that they invested effort. Interestingly, it turned out that students only invested effort in specific context. Thus, some students indicated that they could improve their pronunciation skills if they would work on it but that they did not do so, while they always studied for exams. Others stated that they did not study for classes but that they had English ability.

The Impact of Grade Levels on Interviewees' Perceptions on English in State Schools

In general terms, the value and advantage of knowing English in foreign contexts was acknowledged by the interviewees, while it was only perceived as a lesson within the Turkish context. While thoughts about English being interesting and fun were uttered, some of the students also voiced a strong dislike towards English as a foreign language in particular. Thus, the range of thoughts towards English was diverse.

The 9th graders were the only group of students who considered English classes as satisfactory with regard to their potential to teach English to language learners in each respect. The 10th graders indicated that classes provided quality grammar instruction but were insufficient in terms of other language skills such as speaking. In this respect, the 11th and 12th graders agreed with the 10th graders. Grammar was stated to be excessively addressed in English classes at the expense of communicative skills. Next to grammar, vocabulary instruction was also highlighted positively. There were also students in each grade level, who could not judge how efficient English instruction in state schools was, as they did not pay the required attention to English classes and therefore did not expect to improve anyway.

Students were not content about the excessive focus on grammar. Courses appeared to be dealing with the same course content and repetitive curriculum over the years, mainly fostering the memorization of rules. In addition, students were not satisfied about their limited speaking ability. According to the students, speaking was not allocated much time within the language classroom. They indicated that the interaction in the target language between students and teachers was limited, that vocabulary items and expressions related to everyday language were neglected, and that their pronunciation suffered because of lacking practice.

The general perception of English classes was in line with the perception of their sufficiency to prepare student for English. The majority of students from all grade levels agreed on the failure of state schools to make students successfully use English outside of the language classroom. Some of the most stated reasons for this perceived failure were the Ministry of Education, the EFL context and the design of English classes. The Ministry of Education was blamed for providing a repetitive curriculum which dwelled mainly on grammar. The students concluded that these were the factors which generate language learners who cannot speak English with foreigners. The EFL context was stated to limit the chance to use English outside of the classroom and apply it in real life. Classes were reported to concentrate on written rather than spoken English, teach language rules rather than language use, provide little language input, and to prepare students for English exams rather than real-life contexts.

In terms of the potential of English classes to pave the way for language improvement, students from all grade levels centered their judgment on different language skills and sub skills. According to the students, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation improved in English courses, while the aim to improve the language skills like speaking could not be reached. In total, the number of students who believed that their English did not improve was high. Among these students, some admitted that their English had not improved because they did not take advantage of the opportunities provided in English classes. As a whole, students did not feel prepared to survive in the outside world. Application exams were valued by the majority of students, as they appreciated the increased language input which the application exams provided and the increased chance to work with the language in

many respects. Students believed that these exams contributed to the improvement of their English.

In total, the majority did not consider course grades as a healthy indicator of English proficiency, skills or ability. It was rather described as a reflection of students' grammar knowledge and memorization skills. Grades were not stated to especially represent students' communicative language competence and their speaking skills. In addition, grades failed in distinguishing between good and bad language learners according to the interviewees. The majority agreed that high achievers were not better speakers of English than low achievers. Effort and related high grades in exams but not language skills were linked with positive course outcomes. Suggestions to enrich the language classrooms were to invest more time in different speaking activities instead of grammar, ask students to produce language rather than absorb it, and prepare students for language encounters in different contexts.

Task difficulty in English classes was rated as average. The number of students who referred to the role effort played in the perception of task difficulty was higher than students who claimed that English courses were difficult. Thus, an increase in effort on students' side was correlated with decreased difficulty. In general, students felt more satisfied if they got high scores on exams of high rather than low difficulty level. At the same time, students mainly indicated that they did not strive for satisfaction within the language classroom. Teachers were said to decrease task difficulty on purpose only from time to time. The provided explanations for the stated teacher behavior were increasing student motivation and boosting course grades. Students stated that task difficulty in the language classrooms did not match with the task difficulty confronted outside of the classroom. Thus, compared to the real-life context, task difficulty in the language classroom was simplified and adapted to students' proficiency level. Students mostly emphasized that ability was not indispensable in order to be successful in English classes. That is why low English ability was not an obstacle for high course grades, while general academic ability and effort were ascribed the power to compensate for low ability. Clarity existed in terms of the impact of effort on course grades. Every student agreed on the strong potential of effort to increase course grades and to compensate for low ability but not all students were ready to invest effort. In addition, failure experiences in the

language classroom despite the exertion of effort were also reported by some students. According to the students, luck was the least influential factor in grading among ability, effort and task difficulty. As a whole, students stated that a combination of all of the four components or some of them is required to increase the chance to succeed in English.

Among the four components which impact grades, effort was ranked first by the majority of all grade levels. In terms of the second most influential component, opinions were not as clear. Nevertheless, it was ability which was more dominant here. Lastly, task difficulty was more frequently placed third, while luck was ranked last.

The ability to speak and express oneself in English was considered as an essential competence of a language speaker. In this context, knowing the grammar rules of the target language was not regarded as sufficient for an individual to claim to know a language. The combination of language comprehension and production was especially valued. The importance of a wide vocabulary repertoire was also voiced. The majority of students indicated that they did not know English or that they knew it to an extent. Again the majority did not believe to hold the required qualities and competencies of a fully equipped language speaker. In this context, they admitted to lack productive skills in particular. Nevertheless, students did not hesitate to assert that they were meeting the demands of English classes at school. Students' feeling of competence in English classes was not influenced by neither success nor failure experiences. Students getting low grades in the language classroom did not necessarily feel less competent, while high grades were not explained with language competence either. Students rather explained their achievement outcomes with the amount of effort they had invested. Thus, low grades were ascribed to lack of effort, and high grades to increased effort.

The Impact of Gender on Interviewees' Perceptions on English in State Schools

Female language learners considered English classes as adequate in terms of their potential to make students learn English. What was criticized with regard to English

instruction in state schools was the lacking focus on productive skills like speaking skills in favor of excessive and repetitive grammar instruction. On the other hand, a small male superiority classified English classes as insufficient. In the process of evaluating the quality of language instruction in state schools, a differentiation between different language skills was made by language learners. It turned out that students had two opposing views in terms of speaking and grammar instruction. Grammar was addressed excessively, while speaking was mainly neglected in the eyes of the students. This showed that despite the difference in the overall evaluation of English classes, males and females agreed on the nature of them: grammar overweighs other language skills, especially speaking.

The majority of females observed little improvement in their English. Males could not decide whether English classes improved their English over the last years. Some students admitted that English classes provided the conditions for improvement but that their lack of study hindered improvement. Application exams were appreciated by both males and females in terms of the improvement they promised. Females' suggestions centered on increasing language input in classes and allocating more time for speaking activities. Similarly, males suggested providing students with more opportunities to work on their language by actively producing the language either in written or spoken form in or outside language classrooms.

According to female interviewees, grades were accepted as indicators of memorization skills and were not considered as a valid source to deduce language proficiency and especially communicative competence from. Therefore, high grades were linked to interest in English and effort to memorize grammar rules. Low English proficiency was not considered as an obstacle for high English grades. While only two female students believed that high grades could not be achieved without language ability, the rest of the females indicated that general academic ability compensated for low ability. According to female students, luck was not impacting course outcomes, while effort was fully precious. Males agreed with females on the impact of ability, luck and effort on course grades. In general, task difficulty was ranked moderate by females, while more males defined English classes as easy, as they did not believe that classroom English equaled every day English. Females ranked effort first, ability second, difficulty third and luck forth in terms of their

influence on course outcomes. Effort was never ranked last, while luck and difficulty were never ranked first. Overall, a clear agreement was observed in terms of the ranking. A final ranking of these four components by males showed that effort was considered the most and luck the least impactful component impacting grades. While effort was never ranked third or last, luck was ranked first once. In terms of the second and fourth places a clear agreement was not observed among males. Four males rated effort second, while out of the remaining six students, three voted for ability and the other three for difficulty. In the case of the third rank a similar scenario was encountered. Four indicated luck as the third most influential factor, while difficulty and ability were stated by three students each. Both females and males agreed on the place of effort and luck within course outcomes. A small part of females indicated to study and prepare for English classes, while the rest stated that they either did not study at all or could not motivate themselves to study consistently. The majority of males also indicated that they did not learn and prepare for English classes.

According to females, knowing a language was not limited to grammar knowledge but included the ability to speak and communicate in English by applying grammar knowledge. Sub skills such as vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation were also listed among the features a competent language learner should hold. If it came to the male interviewees, speaking competence was the most important and relevant ability to determine whether an individual knows a language. Vocabulary knowledge was also mentioned frequently in connection with the speaking skill, while grammar on its own did not represent language knowledge. Thus, both grammar and communicative skills had to go along with each other according to both sides. The majority of female students did not believe to be competent within language classrooms or to be equipped with all of the required qualities. The majority of female students labeled themselves as moderate in terms of their English competence, while males mainly considered themselves competent to some extent. Five stated that they did not know any English, two stated they knew English and the other five stated they could at least express themselves. As a whole, they did not believe to be as competent as a speaker of English should be. In these respects, both females and males were on common ground. In contrast to females, the number of

male students who regarded themselves as adequate in English classes was higher. According to both sides, high and low grades did not affect the feeling of competence, as they were ascribed to effort.

As a whole, the image of English instruction in Turkish state schools which was created by the conducted interviews equals the outcomes of the needs assessment conducted in 2013 (TEPAV & British Council). The needs assessment revealed that students ascribed great value to English as a foreign language but lacked the required English proficiency. In addition, they perceived a decrease rather than improvement in their English over the years of English instruction, they complained about the repetitive curriculum and the design of language instruction which prohibited the use of English, and finally they demonstrated low motivation to learn English.



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, interview and questionnaire results will be discussed by referring to previously conducted research studies related to the field of achievement attributions and metacognitive awareness.

Discussion of Interviews

Taking 9th to 12th graders' statements about English in state schools into consideration, different trends, concepts and clashes were identified which will be addressed in detail.

Attribution Theory

Throughout the interviews, students shared their ideas about English classes, English proficiency and course grades. Within this process, components related to attribution theory emerged. Interviewees expressed that failure despite effort led to a decrease in motivation related to attempting tasks in the future. Hence, the link between attributions and future behavior was portrayed, as attribution theory claims that based on ascribed causes for failure or success, individuals' engagement in future tasks, their expectancy of goal attainment and the emotions evoked are determined (Weiner, 1986). In this context, one student pointed out the importance to feel satisfied despite experiencing failure by choosing an adaptive explanation for the achievement outcome. Students' statements showed that the knowledge that one has

at least tried to succeed might diminish the feeling of guilt in the face of failure. Thus, as attribution theory suggests, students are used to experience different kind of emotions based on how they explain their course outcomes. In addition, some of the low achieving student did not believe in their potential to succeed in future. Components of attribution theory were also present here. The ascribed causes for failure experiences are said to influence devotion in upcoming tasks. The students who explained their failure with their lack of ability were not eager to continue their English study. In addition, one of the students provided a felicitous description of the attribution process following failure experiences in classes. “I don’t understand it I say, I can’t understand it. Or do I understand, but cannot apply it? I mean, I pose questions to myself. What is my weakness? I concentrate on this”. This statement proves people’s inclination to seek for explanations especially for negative achievement outcomes which on the other hand is what attribution theory asserts (Wong & Weiner, 1981). As a whole, these insights proved the validity of attributions within the language learning process.

English in State Schools

The interviews revealed Turkish language learners perception about English instruction in Turkey in more detail. The concept which emerged in this respect are as follows.

Traditional Language Teaching

The responses interviewees provided with respect to English classes in state schools allowed to draw a picture of their focus, strengths and weaknesses. According to the students, classes were centered on grammar instruction and memorization of rules at the expense of communicative activities which would foster lacking speaking skills. Students mainly criticized the lack of time allocated to speaking and the chances given to use English in the classroom despite the well-known fact that they cannot actively use English outside of the classroom due to the EFL context. Students’ utterances clearly implied that they were not asked to speak or produce English within English classes, which means that English was not used for its real purpose.

Some students criticized that the chance to apply one's knowledge was not provided in state schools and that the classroom context was too fixated on learning the language rather than acquiring it.

The majority agreed on the positive impact of application exams which covered the four language skills, as the confrontation and involvement with the target language was increased thanks to these. One student indicated that he valued the application exams because these allowed him to present his real language skills which were not asked for within class hours. All the signs were that English classes did not foster the main language skills, especially speaking. Vocabulary was stated to be transmitted most successfully after grammar knowledge. These aspects clearly were indications for the predominant implementation of the Grammar Translation Method in English classes. While grammar seemed to be heavily dwelt on, other language skills and sub skills were pushed into the background. The needs' assessment conducted by TEPAV and the British Council (2013) provided similar results, as classes were identified to be grammar-based, and to be focused on isolated sub skills which were relevant for standardized assessment at the expense of communication. In the process of evaluating English classes in terms of their effectiveness, students of different performance levels mostly judged classes as sufficient in terms of grammar instruction, but insufficient with regard to the teaching of language skills. It was stated and criticized that addressing grammar instruction to a great extent led to the neglect of especially communicative skills. Thus, independent from whether students experienced success or failure in the language classroom, the perception of the dominant implementation of the Grammar Translation Method and its negative effects remained.

However, an impeding role was ascribed to an excessive focus on grammar. One student addressed that he felt the urge to conform to language rules when he tried to make use of his vocabulary knowledge in the process of producing language output. He indicated that his focus shifted to rules and he tried to strictly follow and apply them, and thereby failed in speaking. This is a reasonable explanation for students' difficulties in speaking English. What stroke attention was that students had difficulties in classifying which language skills were aimed to be improved or assessed by certain tasks. Thus, listening activities were recalled as reading activities.

In other words, students referred to application exams designed to measure their listening skills as reading exams. In the listening exams of concern, students have to listen to the teacher and complete the text while filling in the blanks with the required words or phrases. Yet, another student recalled this exam to measure writing skills, as students were supposed to write down what they hear. Another misunderstanding was located in terms of reading and pronunciation. One of the students believed it was possible to increase reading comprehension by reading out loud, while she was referring to improving pronunciation skills. These misconceptions about what constitutes specific language skills can be considered as proof for the little contact with language skills in language classes.

Identical conditions were encountered in the Chinese EFL context (Tse, 2000). The classroom activities were criticized by language learners, while teacher interaction was mentioned in a positive light. The majority of Chinese language learners indicated that courses did not center on the development of oral skills and communicative competence and that the target language was not actively used and practiced. Some students did not feel prepared for the practical use of the target language outside of the classroom. A small amount of students referred to the focus on grammar knowledge and memorization of vocabulary and dialogues. Furthermore, Tse (2000) drew attention to the fact that despite the methodological improvements in terms of language teaching over the years, students still voiced the same concerns which were stated in the past. This on the other hand implied that new teaching methods were not implemented in the language classroom as required. In another study, learners of English again reported to struggle in speaking and writing (Vispoel & Austin, 1991). Thus, productive skills appear to be the most neglected skills in the traditional language learning classroom. In this context, EFL learners in Bahrain amongst others mainly blamed inadequate teaching methods for their failure in learning English (Williams et al., 2001). The studies referred to showed that the problems encountered in the Turkish language classroom are not limited to Turkey. In the interviews, students were asked to reflect on English classes in state schools and on their English competence. They stated that they were not asked to actively use or engage with English in the classroom and that the English classes were fixated on the transmission of grammar knowledge. This is a clear indication for the use of the

Grammar Translation Method which fails to prepare individuals for communication in the target language. Thus, Turkish students also believed that the teaching methods used were not efficient to make students learn English.

As a whole, students' utterances proved that a profoundly negative connotation of English instruction in state schools exists. Some students criticized the Ministry of Education because it was considered as the force which imposed a monotonous and repetitive curriculum which neglected certain language skills to a great extent. In addition, in some instances teachers were considered incompetent or unmotivated. Some students emphasized that English instruction in Turkey was not as successful as language instruction in ESL contexts. The repetitive curriculum, the teacher-centered instruction and the coursebooks which failed to address students' different levels and needs were also referred to within the needs' assessment which was conducted in state schools (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). Suggestions made to improve English instruction in general were the use of language laboratories, more varied activities, and a focus on and more chances to work on speaking. All of these suggestions made in order to improve language instruction mainly dealt with the improvement of students' speaking skills by increasing the English input and by making students produce English more frequently. In short, the tendency to neglect speaking, and traditional language teaching stroke attention within the language classroom in the Turkish state school of concern.

Grades as Empty Shells

The majority of students, independent from their course outcomes, clearly stated that English classes did not prepare them for the real use of English outside of the classroom but to master grammar and succeed in English exams. Thus, the perception that exams did not assess and grades did not reflect language proficiency was predominant among students. According to the interviewees, memorization skills and general academic ability but not language ability or competence; positive behavior in the classroom; respect towards the teacher; and effort in form of learning for exams, note-taking and following the teacher in the classroom were amongst the components that shaped course grades. In this context, effort was almost always

placed as the most determinant component. Speaking ability was ascribed little impact on course grades because exams which determined course outcomes to a great extent were not productive in nature. Thus, students believed to have little chance to demonstrate and get assessed by their speaking ability which indicated that only specific language abilities were measured within English courses and reflected in course grades. In this context, Perrey and his colleagues (Perrey, Hechter, Menec, & Weinberg, 1993) emphasized that the grading system either supports or undermines achievement. In other words, the classroom context which includes the grading system might evoke the perception that grades do not have real essence.

“Grades do not express anything” and “Grades are just grades” are impactful statements formulated by students which demonstrate what a hollow conception grades are in the English classroom. They show that grades are not a reliable source of language proficiency according to students. The majority of students did not equal higher scoring students with having higher language proficiency, or lower scoring students with low language proficiency. In fact, a negative relation between scores and proficiency was also evaluated as possible. Students mainly stated that grades did not reflect language ability and competence but whether grammar rules could be learned and applied. In this context, grades were also stated to assess short-term memory in particular, as students were said to prepare for English exams by repeating course content and trying to realize related skills. At the same time, it was pointed out that students would not be repeating the same content continuously, so that after a while, the memorized course content would be forgotten to a great extent. In addition, exams did not assess real English competence, as they were perceived to be centered on assessing grammar knowledge. Thus, exams rather prepared for language reception but not production, while English classes were based on measuring memorization and short-term success. That is why a clash between students’ high course grades in English within state schools and formally assessed language proficiency of Turkish learners of English in form of EPI scores (2016), TOEFL outcomes (2016) and results as presented by TEPAV and the British Council (2013) might exist.

One of the reasons why grades were not accepted as real indicators of language proficiency might be related to students’ perception about what constituted knowing

a language as a whole. Hence, grammar knowledge on its own was rated as insufficient to claim that one knew English. It was emphasized that the ability to form sentences by applying the rules learned and to express oneself freely in spoken form were the important aspects. As these aspects were stated not to be represented by course grades, the importance attached to them might decrease in the eyes of the students. The difference between classroom and real-life contexts was stressed, such that it was possible to get high grades despite low ability but that passing exams and courses might not prevent failure in real life. Here, it was also emphasized that English in state schools did not prepare for the outer context. English classes in state schools were rather taught as a subject but not as a means of communication according to the results of the conducted needs assessment either (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). Most students agreed that low grades did not reflect language competence but the extent of effort and time invested to study. They stated that they did not consider themselves as incompetent after receiving low grades. At the same time, they did not believe to be competent based on their high grades. In addition, they clearly indicated that once they left the language classroom they did not feel as competent as in it. This means that the aspects valued in the language classroom did not help or prepare students to survive outside of it. Again, the clash between focusing on grammar in classes and the necessity to use the language communicatively aroused.

All students agreed that among ability, luck, difficulty and effort which were four of the addressed components expected to shape course grades, effort was perceived to be the most relevant and also the strongest determinant of grades. High achieving students indicated that effort could even compensate for low ability and contribute to getting high grades and succeed in classes. In general, course outcomes were linked to the amount of effort and preparation time invested in studying for exams. The fact that some students got high and other low grades in English classes was not explained with differences in English proficiency but with the amount of effort invested for English classes. This is in line with how language teachers as observers would judge students' performance in the classroom. As Weiner and Kukla (1970) stated, observers of an action or behavior are more likely to value the exerted effort rather than ability. In this context, students might have remarked that high grades can

be achieved despite the lack of ability. Nevertheless, one student also stated that effort on its own might not be sufficient, such that investing effort to succeed in exams only, did not guarantee any success in the process of language learning because it would only generate short-term success. Thus, awareness about the superficial nature of grades exists. As course content was described as being based on grammar, students had to learn for grammar if they wanted to succeed in the language classroom.

In order to examine how sustainable course grades were, the English course grades of interviewees were gathered one year after the interviews were conducted and compared with their course grades from the second semester of the 2016-2017 educational year. As one of the interviewee's changed his school and as all of the 12th graders graduated from high school, 17 of the 24 students' grades could be considered for this comparison. In general, the number of students whose course grades improved and whose course grades did not change was equal. Only two students got lower grades in comparison to the previous educational year. The grades of high achievers did not decrease over the one year period. It seems that they kept their effort at high levels and were hardworking in nature. It was mainly the low achievers who scored better after one year. Interestingly, low achieving students' grades did not improve by one but by two course grades. Thus, students' English course grades increased from unsatisfactory to average level. Only in one incident, a bigger deterioration of course grades was located. Such a huge improvement in previously low achieving students' language skills is questionable, if students' perception of English classes in state schools is taken into consideration. In the interviews, high achievers indicated that they owed their course grades to their effort, while the rest of the students also acknowledged the role effort played but nevertheless did not invest effort to a great extent. Thus, the rise in low achievers' grades might be most probably related to their increased effort within the language classroom but not their increased language proficiency within a traditional language classroom.

English as a Lesson in an EFL Context

One possible explanation for the failure in language learning was the emergent perception of English as a lesson. Students considered the language classroom as the only context in which they encountered English. Related to this, the fact that students completely lost contact with English within summer break was labeled as a problem for language development. The students mentioned that the time period of three months sufficed to completely forget about English and what was addressed in one academic year within the language classroom. Thus, after passing grades at the end of the year, the summer break equaled the initiation of a new beginning in terms of language learning. In other words, summer breaks zeroized the contact of language learners with English, as English is barely used outside of the classroom in an EFL context. It is important to internalize what the EFL context provides because learning a language is different from learning any other school subject (Dörnyei, 2003). Language learning and teaching is not bound to mastering grammar rules or lexis only but it is also shaped by social and cultural factors which determine the context in which the language is learned. As a result, the EFL context in Turkey does not create the perception of English as a social and communicative tool.

Furthermore, one 10th grader positively referred to teachers who according to her explained English well and in detail. This statement can be approached as an indication that students regard English as a lesson which should be explained rather than a language which should be actively used and produced. Another 10th grader claimed that teachers did not approach students positively, that they did not explain English on a suitable level based on students' proficiency level and that they tended to immediately leave the classroom at the end of the lesson once explanations and classes finished. Thus, English seems also to be approached as a lesson on the part of some teachers. This on the other side might shape students' view on English which appears to be a lesson based on explanations. The conception of English as a lesson seems to be strengthened by the fact that students did not feel prepared for the real-life context. The majority of students claimed that they were not able to successfully express themselves outside of the classroom even though they might feel competent in the classroom. Thus, the perception that the content addressed in English classes was only of profit within the classroom but could not be applied elsewhere might

lead language learners to limit English to the classroom context. Even high achieving students claimed that they learned grammar rules and thereby succeeded in exams but were not able to engage in communication. This proved that English could not outreach being solely a lesson to be mastered, as its impact could not be felt outside of the classroom. This is an indication for the different demands of the classroom and the real-life context. While students might fulfill the demands of the classroom and consequently get high scores, they might be unprepared to master the conditions outside of the classroom. Thus, the classroom context seems to be artificial, while everyday life is clearly authentic. The concept of English as a lesson also emerged in the claim of a student that luck played a role in speaking within the classroom but not outside of it. He explained this perception with the artificial context created in the scope of application exams. It was stated that students were provided with pre-given topics and language structures they would have to use in these exams and that students already knew what they would be asked to talk about in contrast to authentic contexts which are marked by the engagement in spontaneous conversations. Here, the concept of English as a lesson rather than a real means of communication showed up again. The needs assessment conducted in the scope of Turkish state schools had also identified that English is approached as a lesson rather than a communicative tool to use (TEPAV & British Council, 2013).

Interestingly, none of the students who believed to be better speakers of English compared to their classmates explained their improvement in English with the contribution of English classes in state schools. They explained their improvement with their own attempts to get involved with the target language by either watching movies with or even without English subtitles or by playing video games. In addition, these students did not ascribe any meaning to grades. Interestingly, not all of these students who claimed to be good in English were high achievers in English classes. Grades were disregarded as real indicators of language proficiency and ability. Students criticized the focus on grammar in classes and clearly welcomed application exams in which they could demonstrate how they can interact with the language itself rather than its rules and structures. One of the students pointed out that he was getting confused when he had to master written exams as he mainly

worked on his oral production of the language. This shows that the conception of English as a lesson limits the chance for language development.

Impact of Language Teachers

The number of students referring to language teachers in the scope of English classes was rather low. Nevertheless, both positive and negative student' views existed. The needs assessment conducted by TEPAV (TEPAV & British Council, 2013) showed that 80% of language teachers demonstrated the required competence and language proficiency to instruct English. Thus, teachers at state schools have the potential to fully equip language learners. This was also prevalent in some of the interviewees' utterances. One student pointed out that language teachers were explaining course content well and in detail, while another student pointed out that some teachers were lacking interest in teaching and did not show interest in students. The classification of English teachers in Turkey as insufficient or their teaching as inefficient is not new either, as the many reforms which were conducted in the scope of language teaching or teacher training emerged out of these perceptions (Büyükkantarçioğlu, 2004). In addition, research conducted in the field of achievement attributions showed that teacher support, classroom environment, poor teaching, or teaching methods were also used to explain success and failure outcomes by students (Tse, 2000; Williams & Burden, 1999; Williams et al., 2001; Williams et al., 2004). Only one student indicated that she blames the teacher if she gets low grades in exams because exam difficulty which was considered to be shaped by the language teacher was perceived as the reason for failure. In this context, almost all students agreed on English classes to be of average task difficulty. They stated that sometimes but not too often teachers decreased the level of difficulty in the language classroom on purpose. Among reasons to do so, boosting students' confidence and motivation, ensuring that students get a certain amount of points in exams to avoid course failure, increasing course success, and paying tribute to positive student behavior were enlisted. Students seemed to sense some type of disposition on the side of teachers to help them pass classes. Low achievers welcomed this teacher behavior even at the expense of a healthy assessment of students' real language proficiency. Hence, the observations students made in relation to the classroom dynamics shaped students'

approach to academic achievement (Perrey et al., 1993). In Erten's study which was conducted in the Turkish EFL context (Erten & Burden, 2014), students regardless of their achievement outcomes in the language classroom stated that the impact of the teacher was the most important factor on exam scores. Next to this, one student asserted that teachers do not want students to fail in English classes and cause students to repeat a grade because they are not inclined to deal with unmotivated and problematic students twice. Consequently, teachers were stated to provide students with grades which allowed students to pass English classes. In short, teachers were evaluated as being inclined to make students pass courses, and thereby guiding the process of course failure or success.

Personal Components

The interviews pointed out to the relevance of some personal components in the language learning process in Turkey as an EFL context.

Low motivation

Another component which contributes to students' low proficiency seemed to be their lack of motivation, as was also identified in the needs assessment conducted among Turkish state schools which stated that Turkish learners of English' motivation decreased over the years of language instruction (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). With this respect, the decreasing motivation level of students as revealed in the needs assessment was linked to their struggle to cope with English as a subject. The pattern of the decreasing motivation with increasing age of the students was also observed among other English foreign language learners (Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002).

In the interviews, most students shared the idea that success in exams of higher task difficulty led to a greater feeling of satisfaction rather than in exams of low difficulty. At the same time, the majority including high achievers stated that they did not strive for satisfaction in the process of language learning but that they were rather interested in getting high course grades. The fact that students solely aimed to get high grades to pass courses, and did not aim to acquire speaking skills shows that

students had conceptualized English as a lesson to succeed rather than a language to master. This indicates that students are mostly motivated to prevent course failure. A differentiation between two types of motives is made within Atkinson's classification of achievement motivation (1957): the motive to aim success in order to achieve satisfaction and the motive to avoid failure. The first motive leads to the feeling of pride while the second one is centered on avoiding the feeling of shame or humiliation. At the same time, it is the first type of motivation which increases engagement in tasks. In the interviews students explicitly stated that they feel better if they achieve high grades in difficult exams. On the contrary, they clearly indicated that they do not strive for satisfaction within the language classroom. In other words, students are not eager to get engaged in the language learning process. It should not be neglected that the majority of students do not evaluate speaking skills or a high English proficiency as a prerequisite to pass English courses or to be a successful language learner in state schools. In this context, the identified low motivation level of the interviewees relates to learning the language, while their motivation level might be higher in terms of passing classes.

The two approaches to achievement outcomes also introduce different types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In light of the tendency of students to focus on passing courses only, they appear to be mostly directed by extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation focuses on gaining some extrinsic reward, while intrinsic motivation leads individuals to perform specific behavior for their own sake. Hence, intrinsic motivation is more profitable in the educational context (Dörnyei, 1998). Language learners' inclination to either feel forced to study for English or to show interest and aim to improve their English was ascribed the power to determine the magnitude of effort and the related success. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were perceived to increase grades but intrinsic motivation was regarded as more forceful. According to Atkinson (1957), achievement motivation increases if students' expectancy for success is higher than for failure. Taking into consideration that the majority of students did not notice an improvement in their English especially in terms of communicative skills, it is normal that students have low motivation levels.

Low motivation in the language classroom is problematic as motivation determines the frequency of language learning strategy use, the urge to interact in the target language, achievement outcomes, language proficiency and the persistence to continue language study (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). However, within the Turkish context some students held the perception that they will not need to use English in any other context than Turkey, where they expected to communicate with tourists at most. The fact that one 9th grader suggested that English classes should not prepare students for the global context but only for the EFL context in Turkey accentuates this tendency. Course content which might be relevant within the Turkish EFL context for Turkish learners of English was favored by some students and considered as sufficient to be addressed in the language classroom. In other words, certain language content which was perceived to be more likely to be applied in an EFL context should be taught and given priority to according to some language learners. Thus, one could say that students did not feel motivated to learn each and every detail of the target language, as they were convinced that they would not have to use English in Turkey in full terms. This showed that the EFL context failed to evoke any interest in learning English. Interest on the other hand is labeled an important factor which might either lead to success or failure over the years (Williams et al., 2004). Thus, despite its acknowledged general value, the urge to learn a foreign language in an EFL context did not seem to be that strong.

Interviewees linked low language proficiency with low motivation level. In general, it was reported that students did not invest any effort in language learning, as they did not even pay attention to the course content within English classes. The lack of attention in English classes on the other hand was linked with decreased motivation. Interestingly, there were even students who believed to be skilled in English but nevertheless refused to invest the required effort in the language learning process. The lack of motivation to invest effort despite the perceived language aptitude might be explained by the lacking value ascribed to English. In this context, the dynamics of the expectancy-value theory can be observed. It is apparent that students' expectancies for success and the value ascribed to learning English shape their motivation (Schunk et al., 2014). In other words, Turkish students do not expect to succeed in English if their lack of improvement is taken into consideration. At the

same time, they do not ascribe big value to learn the language, as they do not believe in its relevance in the EFL context. On the other hand, the importance of fostering motivation by establishing relevance in learning is highly praised (Kember, Ho, & Hong, 2008). Consequently, Turkish students demonstrate low motivation to learn English.

Half of the high achievers in English classes indicated that they continuously studied for English classes, which means that they invested effort in learning and were responsible students in general. Interestingly, it turned out that even high achieving students invested effort only in specific contexts. Thus, some of the high achieving language learners indicated that they could improve their pronunciation skills if they would work on it but that they did not allocate time to it, although they always study for exams. It should be noted that pronunciation skills do not inherit a central position in the grading process. Thus, the urge to pass courses rather than to learn the language itself can be observed even among high achievers. This complies with the different motives behind following learning or performance goals. Individuals who set learning goals try to learn something new, and to improve and increase their competence; performance goals on the other hand are centered on obtaining positive judgments of competence and avoiding negative ones (Dweck, 1986). Thus, Turkish students do not aim to improve their English but to maintain the image of being competent by getting high grades. The lack of intrinsic motivation was apparent among Turkish language learners.

Another facet of student's low motivation was that they did not bring English in relation with their future professions. In the school under study there were not any language classes, which are designed to prepare students for the university entrance exam, because none of the students aim to get enrolled in departments related to English. The fact that some believed in their potential to improve their English but did not do so, showed that they lacked a purpose or the motivation to learn English. Here, the concept of utility value which is part of the expectancy-value model comes into play. Utility value is concerned with whether a task is related to or useful for future goals (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). The EFL context, and the fact that students still could not speak English or observe any improvements despite the many years of instruction might impact the value ascribed to English.

Hence, motivation is shaped by students' decreased expectancies for future success, their perceived lack of ability and the low value ascribed to learning English, as Wigfield's model suggests (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992).

One student refused to learn English in particular but demonstrated a positive attitude towards other foreign languages. This shows that in this case integrativeness, which addresses the willingness to identify with and welcome another language community, was lacking (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). This concept is important in language learning as it fosters achievement and increases motivation to learn due to the welcoming attitude towards the target language community and its culture and life style. Hence, although not voiced by all students, students might not feel connected to English itself.

Self-Interest versus Real Profit

Another clash existed between interviewees' self-interest and their real profit in the language learning process. Here, self-interest refers to any kind of vain and short-term gain while profit refers to a real and long-term gain. To put it in more detail, there were students who uttered that exams in English classes did not necessarily measure English competence and knowledge, and that their task difficulty did not fully comply with real-life English. Nevertheless, they disapproved the inclusion of open-ended questions in exams which would be more beneficial to promote language learning in favor of items which are prone to luck. Students were rather concerned with whether exams would get more difficult and as a result the chance to succeed in classes would be endangered. Students mainly aimed to pass English courses rather than really learn and internalize it. Easier and manageable content, exam questions or items were preferred, as students did not aim to succeed in long-term. In this context, a low achieving student even criticized the implementation of application exams which according to him impeded his success in English in the form of lower course grades. This mindset resembles the difference between individuals who follow mastery or performance goals (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Legget, 1988; Covington & Omelich, 1979). Students rather avoid failure and harming their self-concept by following performance goals rather than trying to

improve by internalizing mastery goals. Mastery goals foster long-term involvement and engagement in challenging tasks (Ames, 1992). Thus, interviewees did not follow mastery goals and thereby did not want to attempt tasks which would lead to real improvement. In contrast, they were concerned about their own profit and in some way they expected to appear competent on the surface. Thus, the main concern in following performance goals is to create the image of competence. In this context, Nicholls (1984) refers to task-involving and ego-involving achievement contexts. Individuals are stated to strive for the acquisition of a new skill and the mastery of a task in task-involving context, while the goal individuals set in ego-involving contexts is to hide inability and appear to be more competent. Taking the statements of the interviewees into account, Turkish EFL learners attempt to learn English in an ego-involving context.

Two Different Selves

Students evaluated their competence in English under the consideration of different criteria, as half of the students who did not believe in their English competence or their ability to communicate in English stated that they were competent in English classes. This clearly showed that students judged their competence within two different dimensions. The first dimension covered the classroom context with its related dynamics such as participation, student behavior, or effort. The second dimension embraced any place outside of the classroom in which real conversations in English take place. One student explicitly stated that he felt competent within classes as long as he managed grammar rules. Competence in school seemed to be equaled to grammar knowledge. Again, the main focus in state schools emerged to be grammar. Similarly, Chinese students who considered themselves successful to some extent indicated that they had acquired some language abilities but were lacking speaking skills in particular (Tse, 2000). Some referred to their grammar knowledge or reading and writing skills but again they accepted to have limited speaking ability. Thus, a distinction between English grades and language competence was observed. When asked whether they believe to be successful in their foreign language study, Chinese language learners judged their success based on their ability to use the language for communicative purposes. Interestingly, students who got high course

grades in language courses pointed out that they had not reached the required language proficiency and did not believe to be successful in terms of English (Tse, 2000). The exact same outcome was observed among the interviewed Turkish students. Just like the Chinese language learners, they also touched upon their lack of effort and their inefficient study habits next to their low motivation level and the unsuitable teaching methods used. Hence, research outcomes are in agreement.

Nicholls' (1984) conception of ability can be referred to with respect to language learners' evaluation of ability of competence. According to Nicholls, there are two conceptions of ability. The first one refers to the individual's perceived mastery and knowledge. Individuals feel more competent and able when they believe to learn and improve. The second conception relates to standard intelligence testing practices. In other words, the conception of ability might also be based on the performance of others. Being above or below average determines the perception of high or low ability. In line with the first conception, Turkish students are more likely to accept their low ability due to their inability to use English for communicative purposes. On the other hand, students feel more competent if it comes to the mastery of course content. High course grades suffice to provide the feeling of competence in English courses. In this context, high achieving students believed in their competence within classes, although the majority disagreed on knowing English or having the abilities they ascribed to competent language speakers. In other words, being competent in English classes did not reflect English ability according to students. Thus, a twofold concept of self and ability emerged. Students differentiated between their selves in and outside of English classes. This indicated that students have two different selves based on the context they were situated in. One is the competence as a student in general and the other one is related to the language competence. The difference in the evaluation of the self was explained with the different demands outside and inside the classroom. Once students left the classroom, they felt incompetent. This distinction among selves resembles Chomsky's (1965) fundamental distinction between competence and performance. In his theory, he distinguishes between competence which refers to individuals' knowledge of the language, and performance which reflects the actual use of the language within specific contexts.

The resemblance arises in students' knowledge of grammar within language classes but their lacking competence to use the language in authentic contexts.

The low achievers were the only ones who mostly considered themselves as not measuring up to the requirements to be labeled as competent or satisfactory within English classes. In addition, the majority of these students refused to claim that they know English or have the competencies of a competent speaker of English. Thus, only low achievers did not perceive to have two different selves in relation to their English. In this context, low achievers were aware of their inadequate performance in and outside of the language classrooms.

Changing Perception on Task Difficulty Based on Students' Course Outcomes

Task difficulty moderately impacted course outcomes according to students. Apart from this general perception, some differences were located among students with different achievement outcomes in English classes. While most of the students categorized task difficulty in English classes as average, some students considered task difficulty as a dynamic variable whose direction changed based on the amount of exerted effort. In other words, it was assumed that the level of difficulty will decrease if students learn for English classes or listen to the teacher during class, while it will increase when the opposite scenario occurs. In this case, control over task difficulty was ascribed to the person. Nevertheless, the number of students who believed to be in control over their own learning process was rather low.

Only one student considered English classes as easy. As this student was a high achieving student, this could be linked with the perception that task difficulty decreased with increased effort, as previously suggested. Two of the interviewed high achieving students stated that teachers did not decrease task difficulty on purpose. At the same time, they were clearly against simplification within courses. For higher achievers, it was the higher amount of effort invested which helped them to shine out. That is why these hardworking students expected other students to work for and deserve their grades rather than get high grades because of easy task or course difficulty. It seemed that high achievers were aware that they were getting

high grades because they studied for English classes and not because of their ability and competence. That was why they would not prefer their advantage in getting higher grades due to effort cease by simplification within classes. It could be assumed that high achievers believe that each student should at least study for classes, which shows that they had a strong sense of responsibility in general. Some of the low achievers on the other hand uttered that they expected the teacher to firstly ensure students to get high grades rather than assess language proficiency. That is why the student wanted the teachers to incorporate easier questions for their own profit so that they could get higher grades without having to invest special effort. This preference is related with their attempt to compensate for their lack of effort. In short, high or low achieving language learners had different expectations from English classes and language teachers in terms of task difficulty.

The observed difference among high and low achievers was addressed by Atkinson (1957). Thus, his theory examined individuals of different achievement outcomes' preferences over tasks of different difficulty level. In this context, individuals who strived for achievement and those who tried to avoid failure were compared. The first group was reported to consist of high achievers who prefer tasks of intermediate difficulty and risk, while the other group attempted extremely difficult or very easy and therefore safe tasks. This correlates with the opposition of high achievers who claim more responsibility for their course outcomes to decrease difficulty, and low achievers' tendency to prefer easier tasks in order to avoid failure. In addition, individuals with high resultant achievement motivation (RAM) persist longer on a task than those with low RAM (Blankenship, 1992). Low RAM led to the preference and persistence in easy tasks, while high RAM fostered persistence in difficult tasks. In other words, while some students aim to succeed and thereby invest effort on a more stable basis, others aim to avoid failure by favoring easy tasks which do not require systematic and persistent learning behavior. In this context, goals and task choices should be referred to. Performance goal orientations combined with low ability lead to the selection of easy tasks compared to a learning goal orientation (Dweck, 1986). Hence, another reason for low achievers' tendency to prefer easy tasks and avoid challenges might be related to their goal orientation in language learning. This might also be linked with students' low self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has

an impact on students' motivation, while it also applies as a mediator between knowledge and action. Students of low self-efficacy attempt tasks which they believe they can master taking their perceived competence and confidence into consideration (Pajares, 1996). If students do not feel competent and confident, tasks are avoided. The stated aspects could be used to explain students' preference for easier task despite the educational value of more difficult ones.

The Eclipse of Language Ability

According to students it is generally possible to get high grades without any English ability. With this respect, course grades do not seem to represent English proficiency but to be empty shells. In other words, there is the chance that a student is considered successful in English classes despite the lack of required English skills. Interestingly, most high achievers claimed that they could use English to a limited extent. They reported to know little English, to have sufficient knowledge of vocabulary items but to lack the ability to form sentences and express themselves fluently. On the other hand, they considered themselves sufficient within English classes. This indicates that interviewees had rather low self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief in the capacity to master a task and the perceived control over outcomes (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Considering the self-evaluation of interviewees' ability in English, they do not appear to believe in their potential to communicate successfully. In this context, it is interesting to see that students with high course grades also stated that low English ability was not an obstacle for success in English classes. It is possible that they based this statement on their own experiences in English classes, which would mean that so far they got high grades despite their lack of the required language ability. Therefore, grades were not perceived to represent language ability but rather effort invested in memorization, and student behavior in class. Here, a controversy emerges. Although interviewees indicate to exert low effort in language classes, they claim to get high grades despite their low ability thanks to their effort.

The relation between achievement goals and achievement behavior (Dweck, 1986) asserts that behavior patterns emerge from the confidence in one's ability which depends on the preferred goal orientation. Learning goals do not automatically lead

to a change in behavior pattern, as the confidence in ability also plays an important role. Both high and low confidence generates mastery-oriented behavior and thereby fosters learning. Performance goals in combination with high confidence lead to mastery-oriented behavior but low confidence triggers helplessness which demonstrates itself in form of low persistence and avoidance of challenging tasks (Dweck, 1986). Low effort and low persistence is anticipated if language learners' low confidence in their ability is taken into consideration. Interestingly, interviewees believed in passing English courses due to their effort. To explain this controversy, Covington's conception of the role of effort can be referred to (Covington & Omelich, 1979). Covington labeled effort as a double-edged sword for students. He indicated that students who expect to fail are likely to decrease effort so that low ability attributions for failure and the related feeling of shame are avoided in favor of low effort attributions. At the same time, the need to exert effort to an extent to avoid punishment was also pointed out so that the amount of effort is balanced by students. This could be why students succeed in language classes despite their lacking ability, and without investing a high amount of consistent effort.

The perception that effort is more relevant than ability in the grading process correlates with previous research outcomes, as observers of an action or behavior turned out to value effort over ability (Weiner & Kukla, 1970). Weiner and Kukla (1970) revealed that when asked to judge student' behavior and achievement, observers were more likely to highly reward perceived high effort and sharply punish low effort. Student who failed due to low effort despite high ability were punished most. Hence, students might have noticed that language teachers who are the observers and raters of students' performance in the classroom mainly pay attention to students' amount of effort within the grading process. Therefore, most of the students in this research context might be indicating that their grades did not reflect their language ability and proficiency but their amount of effort. In addition, teachers tended to care about and help students who were perceived to have low ability. The opposite applied for students who were considered to invest low effort, as they were praised and sympathized less with (Georgiou, Christou, Stavrinides, & Panaoura, 2002; Tollefson & Chen 1988). In this context, students' wish to maintain one's self-worth by preferring low effort attributions over low ability attributions might be

problematic for future improvement. This is related with the fact that teachers evaluate students who invest low effort in a more negative light, and less frequently tend to help them. As a consequence, the chance to improve might diminish for these students. In this context, it should be noted that although effort is valued by teachers in the role of observers, students might avoid effort in order to prevent the perception of inability in the face of failure (Covington & Omelich, 1979). Failing despite effort evokes shame and dissatisfaction on the side of the students while low ability attributions inhibit these feelings. That is why it turned out that students are not eager to increase effort. At the same time, the role of student excuses should be addressed. Covington and Omelich (1979) revealed that excuses are relevant to maintain the balance between trying too much and too little. Thus, if a student invests low effort, the student is expected to fail and get negative feedback or punishment from the teacher but with the help of excuses for the low amount of effort exerted students have the power to change the whole picture. Covington and Omelich (1979) state that excuses are a

‘winning’ formula when risking failure which is designed to avoid personal humiliation and shame and to minimize teacher punishment: Try, or at least *appear* to try, but not too energetically and with excuses always handy. It is difficult to imagine a strategy better calculated to sabotage the pursuit of personal excellence. (p.178).

The students in the current research study appear to have found the ideal balance in terms of how much effort they have to invest in order to pass English courses while the preference is to exert the least required amount of effort in this process.

High achieving students ranked the items which were considered to be relevant for English course grades in identical order: effort, task difficulty, ability, and luck. In this context, what strikes attention is that ability ranked third. Thus, language learners did not think that their ability determined high course grades. In this context, general academic ability which covered general characteristics such as discharging responsibilities as a student, regularly repeating course content, or motivating oneself seems to come into play and lead to a rise in course grades. In general, the majority of students indicated that general academic ability compensated for low language ability when it comes to course grades. High achievers did not ascribe their success to their ability but other factors and thereby demonstrated awareness about their

lacking English skills. In this context, they demonstrated a realistic point of view, as their language ability is in fact rather low. This also showed that students have awareness considering their study habits and their possible outcomes. The notion that students reported an improvement in their English while they considered themselves as insufficient is also important. This might be an indication for their continuous low proficiency level. Although students made some progress in terms of English, they did not believe to have reached the level to be considered competent. In this context, students demonstrated awareness about their language proficiency level. The fact that students did not feel competent once they received high grades, and that they did not feel incompetent following low grades also illustrated that students were aware of their lacking competence. Fortunately, this implies that students were unskilled but aware rather than unskilled and unaware (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Haendel, 2015).

In contrast to females, the majority of male students believed to demonstrate a sufficient performance in English classes. Interestingly, the majority of males indicated that they did not learn and prepare for English classes. The question why they nevertheless labeled themselves as sufficient arises. At the same time, most of the students voiced that they would be more successful in classes if they would start studying. It seems that male students have higher self-confidence in their potential to succeed, as they labeled themselves as sufficient within language classrooms for which they did not care academically. As Lenney, Gold, and Browning (1983) pointed out men in comparison to women were the ones who demonstrated higher self-confidence in almost all academic or professional achievement situations. This self-confidence covered their performance expectancies and their self-evaluation of ability. Thus, the observed tendency of male interviewees should not surprise.

Unskilled and Aware

The majority of students did not feel competent despite their high course grades. This shows that students are aware of their lacking English ability and skills, and do not explain course outcomes with their ability, as their language proficiency would confirm. Furthermore, even high achievers did not explain their high course grades with their language proficiency and ability but their effort and therefore

demonstrated awareness about their lacking skills. There were only some low achieving students who accepted that high achieving classmates could speak better English and were superior to them, and that grades did in fact reflect language proficiency. One even uttered that she would actually deserve lower scores if course grades would measure language proficiency. Low achievers were the only ones to accept that students with better achievement outcomes are superior to them. Thereby, low achievers also demonstrated awareness about their range of skills and their inadequate performance within language classrooms. According to the majority of low achievers, English classes improved or had the potential to improve students' language proficiency. Students who believed their English had not improved acknowledged that English classes offered many opportunities to improve one's language skills but that they themselves did not profit from classes because they did not invest any effort. Here, the implications of equity theory seem to be relevant. According to equity theory language learning motivation is determined by comparing the input provided to learn a language and the outcomes achieved in form of either grades, praise or language proficiency (Pritchard, 1969). Taking into consideration students' statements about the lack of improvement in the process of learning English and their lack of effort, it becomes clear that students' motivation dropped as the many years of language learning did not yield the expected results.

Thus, awareness about the reasons behind the acknowledged lack of ability or competence is also apparent. Compared to high achievers, low achievers did not label luck as ineffective but they were more likely to refer to luck as a potential factor which shaped their course outcomes. This difference might be related with low achievers' awareness about their lack of preparation for exams, so that luck was considered a plausible factor to explain scores which were higher than anticipated. The concept of unskilled and unaware individuals refers to the lack of metacognitive abilities to identify deficiencies. This is dangerous, as individuals who misjudge their abilities and performance, and therefore lack proper self-assessment are likely to fail in the process of engaging in appropriate attempts to search for remedy (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Consequently, the fact that the majority of students explained outcomes with effort rather than ability might be an indication for their awareness of lacking ability. In this context, interviewees appear to be conscious learners.

Theory versus Practice

All students valued the impact of effort on course grades in general while it was even regarded as the most influential factor to determine the direction of outcomes. In other words, study habits and amount of learning were said to influence the direction of grades. This positive relation is beneficial as students who explain their achievement outcomes with effort are accepted to have high self-efficacy (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Nevertheless, a clash was identified in terms of this theoretically ascribed impact of effort on the process of learning English and the practical implementation of effort itself. Thus, low achieving and average students claimed that they would be more successful in English classes if they would study harder. Interestingly, they did not prefer to invest or increase effort despite its acknowledged impact. Although the interviewees knew how to improve their English or get higher course grades, this knowledge was not implemented in real life. Thus, a prohibitory aspect seems to prevent students to put their knowledge about the power of effort into practice. Self-efficacy might be relevant here, as it is a mediating factor between knowledge and action which boosts motivation. Individuals with low self-efficacy are acknowledged to invest less effort and demonstrate low persistence in tasks (Pajares, 1996). Therefore, it could be concluded that interviewees have low self-efficacy.

The link to resultant achievement motivation can also be drawn here. According to Weiner (Weiner & Kukla, 1971), stable causes for failure diminish and unstable causes increase achievement motivation. The fact that students do not focus on increasing effort in the language learning process might be related to their low achievement motivation, as they appear to be pessimistic concerning learning English in an EFL context. The EFL context is stable in nature and decreases achievement motivation when failure is experienced. Although high achieving students were more likely to explain their success with their own effort, they also struggled to invest more effort in the language learning process as a whole. Hence, half of the high achievers in English classes indicated that they study and prepare for English exams in particular. Nevertheless, it turned out that these students only invested effort in particular context. Thus, some students acknowledged the opportunities they were given to improve their pronunciation skills but they did not

make use of these chances. This means that low resultant achievement motivation which is a prohibitory effect applied in the case of high achievers although limited to some cases.

The lack of improvement in students' English proficiency or skills should not be neglected in this context. Interviewees left the impression that they were expecting failure in the upcoming learning process, as they had a bad image about language instruction in Turkish state schools. As Wong and Weiner (1981) stated, expected failure elicits an escape or avoidance behavior in the tasks of concern. In other words, rather than trying to succeed in the specific task, a decrease in the desire to get engaged in it is more widespread. That could be why interviewees' did not intend to raise the amount of effort within the language learning process.

Unfortunately, some students reported that they did not put the required amount of effort into English classes although they were convinced of their language ability. Similarly, a learner of French who was regarded as a competent student with the potential to succeed in learning the target language refused to continue the language learning process. The student reported a lack in her sense of achievement especially in terms of communication skills (Graham, 2003). In this context, the question whether students lack a real purpose to learn English arises. This might explain the reluctance to study for English classes. Here, the EFL context, the conception of English to be a lesson only, the repetitive curriculum and traditional teaching methods might be relevant as factors which decrease students' motivation. As Perrey points out, the classroom context and its related components determine the direction of students' academic achievement (Perrey, Hechter, Menec, & Weinberg, 1993). One statement of a low achieving student perfectly summarized and explained the clash concerning the ascribed importance to effort and its lack of investment: "The aim of students is not to learn, but to pass the course only. That is the psychology of students". This statement also showed that students aimed to succeed in short-term by passing classes but not in long-term by aiming to improve one's English. Hence, the conflict between self-interest and real profit can be observed. With respect to the interplay between effort and ability, Covington and Omelich (1979) asked the question why students were unwilling to invest effort in the educational context although failure was anticipated without it. In this respect, they referred to self-worth

theory which explains achievement behavior with individuals' wish to feel able and competent when facing failure outcomes. In other words, the main aim is to keep up a positive self-image. That is why individuals do not attempt to enhance effort in order to avoid low ability attributions which are harmful for one's self-image (Heider, 1958), and lead to shame and dissatisfaction (Weiner, 1986). Research outcomes showed that failure despite increased effort evokes rather pessimistic self-attributions of ability among students of each gender. In addition, these students were also perceived to have low ability in the eyes of outsiders (Covington & Omelich, 1979), while interviewees uttered personal dissatisfaction and public shame in the portrayed context. In addition, it turned out that students want to appear able rather than unable and that they tend to exert less rather than increased effort. Thus, in the face of failure low effort attributions appear to be more beneficial than low ability attributions. That is why students might refuse to try in order to escape low ability attributions. Covington referred to effort as a double-edged sword for students (Covington & Omelich, 1979). Although students might fear to fail despite having invested effort, they have to invest effort in order not to fail. Here, a balance for the right amount of effort has to be found so that punishment and the feeling of shame are avoided. This dilemma was also addressed in the interviews. Interviewees made an interesting remark related to the existence of two types of students, as next to students who succeeded thanks to their effort, some students failed despite investing effort. Thus, it was pointed out that effort did not necessarily guarantee success. In this case, the importance to know how to study efficiently and effectively was also emphasized. Here, metacognitive awareness seems to emerge as another factor impacting outcomes. In short, students' unwillingness to exert effort despite acknowledging its central role in learning can be explained with the fear to harm one's self-image following failure. This shows that negative affects and a negative self-image are avoided by not trying.

It is notable that students who were not high achievers in English classes claimed to be more competent in English than those with high course grades. Interestingly, these students were reluctant to invest effort in English classes and as a result turned out to be average students with regard to their course grades. A plausible explanation for this dilemma might be their negative attitude towards grammar-based lessons.

Averagely scoring language learners who believed to be skilled in English compared to their high achieving classmates criticized the focus and structure of English lessons, and felt inhibited to invest effort within the language classroom because they did not support the instruction of grammar at the expense of communicative skills. As they were not given the chance to demonstrate their productive skills in the language classroom, they were bored by grammar topics, and reluctant to follow the traditional classroom instruction. In this context, all of these students indicated that their English did not progress because of the language instruction at state schools but their own effort outside of the classroom. It were high achieving students who voiced their pleasure about application exams which were stated to provide language learners with the chance to demonstrate their real English ability.

Moreover, although English classes were ascribed the potential to make students learn and improve their English, students also indicated that they did not know English and did not consider themselves as a speaker of that language. This discrepancy could be resolved under the consideration of the fact that the majority of students also stated that they did not study for or invested continuous effort in English classes. The next oddity emerged from the valued impact of effort on course outcome which was accompanied by the refusal to invest effort in English classes. Students refused to study for English and thereby failed to profit from this insight in practice. Awareness about the role of effort does not seem to trigger its investment. In addition, students do not appear to aim to learn English, which relates back to students' low motivation.

These controversies can be encountered in existing literature. The concept of constrained performance which was introduced by Atkinson (1957) strikes attention here. As the name suggests, constrained performance refers to individuals' performance following a task which was not attempted on voluntary basis but rather enforced. Constrained performance is shaped by individuals' unwillingness to perform the specific task because of the lack of selection. At the same time, individuals feel enforced to perform the task due to the threat of failure if the task is not attempted task. Thus, although the chance to refuse the task is available, the urge not to perish within a competitive achievement context increases the probability of the unwilling individual to at least attempt the task. In this context, although

individuals might attempt a task, the quality of the demonstrated performance is open to argument. What remains is the question of how much effort will be exerted to master the task of concern, as the main motivation is not to succeed in the task but avoid failure. According to Atkinson (1957) the amount of invested effort varies depending on the task difficulty. Individuals who performed a task to avoid failure were stated to be more likely to select easy or difficult tasks out of available alternatives, so that the chance to fail is decreased or the extent of self-blame is diminished. It can be concluded that the interviewees might refuse to invest effort in English classes, because they do not learn it on voluntary basis. Furthermore, they might feel satisfied by investing effort in only some specific language learning contexts which they perceive to be easier and more manageable.

In addition, research studies were conducted to investigate learners' motivation level in the classrooms in relation to the goals set. In this context, achievement goals emerged as a term which was used to refer to the aim of achievement behavior. Ames and Archer (1988) classified achievement goals into mastery and performance goals. Mastery goals represent the idea that effort leads to success. Individuals following mastery goals are eager to develop new skills and improve themselves (Ames & Archer, 1988). This means that mastery goals foster achievement-directed behavior (Weiner, 1979). Taking into account interviewees' reluctance for effort, they do not appear to follow mastery goals in the language classroom. Performance goals are centered on ability, self-worth (Dweck, 1986) and demonstrating a better performance compared to others. Due to the focus on ability and performance outcomes, students who believe to lack ability are more likely to withdraw (Dweck, 1986). Next to the inclination to avoid failure, individuals acknowledging performance goals are also more likely to demonstrate learned helplessness (Elliot & Dweck, 1988). In this context, Covington and Omelich (1979) asserted that increasing effort might harm one's self-worth if failure is experienced. As a consequence individuals might tend to withdraw from exerting effort. Hornsta, Majoor, and Peetsma (2017) pointed out that performance goals can be divided into performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals. While the first one refers to the attempt to maintain self-worth and the image of competence; the latter covers the avoidance to appear incompetent. In this context, performance-avoidance goals

were the ones which mainly contributed to unfavorable outcomes. This achievement goal seems to fit the description provided by the interviewees. The fear to fail and the lack of motivation to succeed provide a plausible explanation for refusing the highly valued effort. While mastery goals lead to the maintenance of achievement behavior and encourage success in educational contexts, performance goals promote failure avoidance (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & Dweck, 1988). This pattern could be observed among interviewees.

Learned Helplessness

Learned helplessness is a concept which deals with the exposition of individuals to aversive events which they have no control of (Maier & Seligman, 1976). The feeling of uncontrollability on the other hand arises out of motivational, cognitive and emotional influences. Cognition covers the idea that there is not a direct link between behavior and outcomes due to the perceived uncontrollability. Motivation relates to the lack in attempts to overcome the situations which are evaluated as aversive. Lastly, uncontrollable and aversive events are said to generate emotional disruptions of great extent. As a whole, the individual believes to be within a situation whose outcomes cannot be controlled personally. Thus, the perception that one's own responses do not determine outcomes and the unquestioned acceptance of this perception disables the individual to invest effort especially in contexts in which failure was experienced despite previous attempts to succeed. In short, learned helplessness claims that "when events are uncontrollable the organism learns that its behavior and outcomes are independent, and that this learning produces the motivational, cognitive, and emotional effects of uncontrollability" (Maier & Seligman, 1976, p.3). Within the language learning context, learned helplessness has demonstrated itself in form of students who were not motivated to learn English as they were not voluntarily engaged in the language learning process. Moreover, the fact that improvement could not be observed in terms of language proficiency fostered the perception that the investment of effort to learn English would be vain. The same pattern was observed in the Chinese EFL context in which language learners were dissatisfied with their inability to speak the target language despite the many years of language instruction (Tse, 2000).

In the interviews, learned helplessness emerged as a factor which impeded language learning. Among low achieving students, one 9th grader stated to prepare and learn for English courses but to fail, while another 9th grader admitted not to learn at all. The latter student stated that he prepared for language classes in the past but as outcomes did not turn out as desired, he stopped trying. The other low achieving student, who did not explain failing grades with the lack of competence but effort, stated that she continued to get low grades despite her effort. Thus, she failed in achieving anticipated success in relation with increased effort. The same student indicated that she never succeeded in exams if she was anticipating difficulties in managing the exam. Here, indications for learned helplessness were present. At the same time, low grades were reported to decrease student's motivation. It should not be neglected that both of the students who resembled to carry behavioral characteristics of learned helplessness were low achieving students.

According to an 11th grader her insufficiency in English classes and her lacking English knowledge and skills were rooted in her past. She claimed that she does not understand much English since secondary school. In addition, she pointed out that she made some negative experience with language learning in the past, as she failed to succeed in English classes despite her will and attempts to improve. Another 12th grader agreed that his previous failure experiences made him believe that studying did not impact course outcomes, so that he gave up on trying. The same student did not even attempt to prepare for English classes or fully internalize course content. In this context, the concept of learned helplessness emerged, while the student experiencing learned helplessness was again a low achiever who appeared to have accepted to fail. What should be noted here is that the fruitlessness in improvement might be related with language learners' lacking knowledge on how to prepare for exams or relevant tasks. This on the other hand, touches upon the importance of metacognitive awareness.

Another low achieving 11th grader stated that he disliked English because he believed to be unsuccessful. Interestingly, he insisted to be unsuccessful although he reported to have experienced success after having prepared for exams in the past. According to him, his previous success experiences were not based on his effort but on low task difficulty and luck. He dwelt upon the fact that the content covered within the exams

in which he succeeded was easy and manageable. In general, the majority of students felt more satisfied if they succeeded in exams of high difficulty. Interestingly, this low achieving 11th grader indicated that he felt more satisfied if he got high grades in easy exams. He explained this condition with his misbelieve in his ability to get a good grade in difficult exams and his belief in succeeding in exams of low difficulty in his own right. Low self-perception in English if not learned helplessness can be observed here.

In general, the students stated to fail in the language learning process despite having invested effort. This implies that students are likely to explain their failure with their low ability (Omelič & Covington, 1979). On the other hand, lack of ability attributions for failure decrease the investment of persistent effort and push individuals towards the feeling of learned helplessness, as the control over the learning process is perceived to be lost (Dweck, 1975).

Conclusion

The first aspect to address is that although the majority of 9th graders classified English classes as sufficient in many respects and stated that English classes improved their English, they mostly indicated that they cannot speak and do not know English. Thus, the located problematic situation in Turkey with regard to learning English despite the existing potential for improvement (TEPAV & British Council, 2013) was also reflected in the interview outcomes. Following the many years of English instruction, students failed to achieve the aimed proficiency level. That is why as a whole, the majority of the interviewees perceived English classes as rather insufficient. In general, English classes were not portrayed in a positive light especially with regard to the development of communicative competence. Most of the emerging concepts provided possible explanations for the unsatisfactory language proficiency of Turkish learners of English. In this light, traditional teaching methods such as the Grammar Translation Method, the conception of English as a lesson to master rather than a communicative tool to use, the low motivation in approaching and learning English, and the unfavorable impact of the EFL context were all linked with each other and appeared to impede improvement in English. The repeated

failure to improve one's English even contributed to the feeling of learned helplessness in some incidents.

The most dominant aspect was that students were actually aware of their lacking English competence and thereby demonstrated metacognitive awareness. Unfortunately, there were other dynamics which inhibited language learners to increase their language competence. Thus, it turned out that students valued high English grades over the progress in the language learning process. That is why they opposed difficult tasks, open-ended questions or the implementation of application exams, which more specifically assess language competence and are more challenging in nature. Another contradictory occurrence was that despite the knowledge to succeed in and improve one's English through increased effort, relevant attempts were not made by the majority of students. This was related with the fact that students did not aim to learn English but to pass English courses. Mastery goals were neglected in favor of performance avoidance goals, short-term success was valued over long-term improvement. This might be linked with the absence of a communicative context to use English in Turkey. Students struggled to attribute meaning to learning English in an EFL context and did not see any practical use for English in their future life in general. Another holdback was that grades were considered as empty shells which did not reflect language ability and competence, so that students were convinced that passing English classes was possible without being able to speak or improving one's English. Students of high and low language ability were believed to end up with the identical course grades. Hence, students started to attach less importance to language ability.

In this context, students including high achievers who stated to study and prepare for English classes admitted to lack core competences such as speaking skills. Here, the concept of two different selves can be taken into account. Students turned out to differentiate between their performance in and outside of the classroom. Students judged their performance in class based on their amount of effort to especially memorize grammar rules, their preparation for exams and their behavior as a student. Outside of the classroom, they evaluated their competence based on their ability to communicate in English and the extent to which they can apply grammar knowledge in authentic contexts. Language learners were aware of the difference between

language competence and language performance. As high achieving students felt competent within the classroom but not outside of it, it would not be wrong to claim that it was mainly the amount of effort they invested which contributed to their perception of competence within the classroom. Their effort was especially directed towards memorizing grammar rules.

As a whole, it can be seen that English classes are structured and centered on grammar at the expense of communicative and productive competences. As a result, the grammar-based nature of classes was not motivating for students who already lacked motivation in learning English within an EFL context. In addition, the language classroom did not reflect the authenticity of the target language. That is because it limits language learning to the memorization of language formulas and does not provide a communicative context to use the language. Language learners on the other hand, lack motivation which is an important pillar stone in keeping the learning process alive. In addition, they are inclined to make their lives as students easier by refusing to learn English in its essence. Students are aware of the nature of English classes and what competences they ask for. In combination with the knowledge that passing English courses does not necessitate to learn it and be fully competent in it, students just do as much as required, and as a consequence end up with a low language proficiency.

Discussion of Questionnaires

Turkish EFL learners measured metacognitive awareness levels and their identified achievement attributions will be discussed in relation with previously conducted research studies.

Language Learners' Achievement Attributions

The purpose of this research study was to answer the following research questions:

1. Which causes do Turkish upper secondary students in state schools attribute their failure in learning English in an EFL context?

2. What is the level of metacognitive awareness of Turkish upper secondary students in state schools in terms of learning English in an EFL context?
3. Does metacognitive awareness of the learners interact with attribution of failure in learning English in an EFL context?

These questions will be discussed in light of both questionnaire and interview outcomes. With regard to students' achievement attributions, research results indicated that success was attributed to effort, task difficulty and luck, and ability in respective order. Again lack of effort, task difficulty and luck, and lack of ability were preferred as failure attributions in respective order. The literature review conducted revealed that effort was the most favored attribution to explain success and failure outcomes in several studies. Nevertheless, achievement attributions changed from study to study and will be discussed with an emphasis on failure outcomes in the following.

In the current study the most favored failure attribution was the lack of effort which is internal, unstable and controllable in nature. Lack of effort as an internal attribution indicates that the individual judges herself or himself as in control over the experienced achievement outcomes. According to attribution theory, ability or effort attributions for success are adaptive and of advantage for the upcoming learning process, while labeling the lack of ability as the reason behind failure would be maladaptive (Weiner, 1986) as negatively loaded attributions for failure have the potential to foster learned helplessness (Chan & Moore, 2006). In other words, the fact that failure is attributed to lack of effort indicates that there is a greater expectancy for future success than failure, so that learning motivation is high, learning behavior is influenced positively and the chance for improvement is increased (El-Hindi & Childers, 1996). In this context, Victori and Lockhart (1995) pointed out that the students who hold unconstructive ideas about their skills are more likely to be poor learners. As research outcomes showed, students do not explain failure with the lack of ability which is advantageous for the learning process. In this context, researchers make the call to guide learners to take responsibility for their achievement outcomes (Victori & Lockhart, 1995). According to attribution theory, attributions evoke specific emotions which might have a negative or positive impact on behavior. Effort attributions are unstable in nature,

and provide individuals with the feeling of control rather than the feeling of helplessness, which again is of advantage in the future learning process (Weiner, 1980).

Attributing achievement outcomes to internal factors turned out to be positively related with self-regulated learning (Gray, 2005). As a consequence, students' confidence and willingness to invest effort in the learning process increases in line with the power of regulation. Research results showed that the ability attributions for success boost confidence and the attempt to master more challenging tasks. Effort attributions for success outcomes on the other hand generated an increase in trying to regulate learning by increasing effort. In both cases, students are the ones in control over their own learning. In the face of the current research outcomes, this means that students are expected to exert effort in the language learning process, as the major achievement attribution for success was effort. Gray (2005) pointed out that although attributing failure to the lack of effort would be adaptive in theory, effort attributions for failure had a negative impact on self-regulated learning in his study covering Chinese EFL undergraduates. In other words, although Turkish upper secondary students' explanation of failure with their lack of effort appears to be favorable at first glance, it might have a negative impact on self-regulated learning. In the interviews conducted, Turkish upper secondary students indicated that they do not plan to increase the required amount of effort within the language learning process which showed that attributing failure to the lack of effort had a rather negative than positive impact on students' learning behavior. This unexpected tendency can again be explained with the help of the interview outcomes. At first glance, students appear to explain their failure with the lack of effort but if interview outcomes are taken into consideration students' low motivation surfaced as a cause for refusing the investment of effort. The cause behind low motivation on the other hand was identified to be the perception of English as a lesson to be learned in the EFL context, where chances to use the language are limited. Thus, the EFL context emerged as the real cause behind the lack of effort of language learners. This might be the reason why the anticipated self-regulated learning behavior cannot be demonstrated as the causal dimensions of lack of effort and the EFL context are opposite to each other. It should be noted that the interviews conducted allow for a

deeper analysis of the questionnaire outcomes and related lack of effort attributions. As researchers remark (Williams et al., 2004), methodology which distances itself from a sole statistical approach warrant a deeper understanding of the causes behind specific achievement attributions.

In line with the differentiation between internal, unstable and controllable effort and external, stable and uncontrollable context attributions, the discrepancy in terms of achievement motivation can also be solved. Thus, individuals who prefer unstable causes such as effort for their achievement outcomes have high resultant achievement motivation, while individuals with stable lack of ability attributions for failure have low achievement motivation (Weiner & Kukla, 1970). Achievement motivation determines whether a task is attempted and how persistent the demonstrated behavior will be (Weiner et al., 1971). According to the questionnaire outcomes only, Turkish students would be eager to increase their level of effort due to their high achievement motivation but the contrary situation was prevalent within the interviews conducted. High achievement motivation which in theory should follow effort attributions, does not appear to be demonstrated by Turkish language learners as the real cause for failure seems to be the EFL context which is stable and therefore diminishes achievement motivation (Weiner et al., 1971). That is why students do not show the motivation to increase the amount of effort in language learning. In addition, goal incentives are relevant if it comes to trigger a certain behavior (Weiner, 1986). Although language improvement might be possible within the EFL context, the lacking attractiveness of the goal, the perceived likelihood of the goal to be achieved, or the personal need to achieve the goal might be factors why attempts to improve might not be initiated. The fact that students explicitly stated that occasions to use English in the classroom or in the Turkish EFL context were missing, that they could not improve their English in long term and that they did not desire to learn or improve their English proves that goal incentives are absent so that the learning behavior is not triggered. In addition, an individual who is involved in an action is described to explain his or her demonstrated behavior and related outcomes with situational and therefore external factors compared to an observer of the same action (Heider, 1958; Jones & Nisbett, 1971). The tendency to explain failure outcomes with the EFL context confirms this exact diagnosis.

The analysis of interviews showed that students did not see any practical value for English in an EFL context. Thus, low motivation and the lack of effort were mainly linked to the context in which English was supposed to be learned. This on the other hand means that failure is attributed to an external factor and that individuals actually are not in control of their learning process. In this context, Bar-Tal and Bar-Zohar (1977) emphasized that individuals who explain outcomes internally in academic settings are high achievers compared to those attributing outcomes to external causes. They explained this state with individuals' belief in their own power to control and influence their environment. The stated pattern was also observed in this current research study, as learners of English did not believe to have high language proficiency and thereby were not high achievers in terms of producing the language, and attributed their failure to the EFL context which is an external factor. Students did not believe they could impact the learning process and thereby were not motivated to exert effort.

Internal attributions following failure decrease self-esteem while external ones lead to an increase (Weiner, 1986). When failure experiences are linked to external rather than internal factors individuals' self-value and self-worth are sustained. In other words, the self-serving attributional bias applies (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 2010a). In this context, Turkish students favorably presented a protective attitude towards their self-esteem. This pattern was also observed in the interviews in form of EFL attributions for failure as students' expressed beliefs in themselves to succeed in English. The interviewees claimed to fail in learning English because they did not intend to learn it, but as a whole they recognized their potential to be more successful in the language learning process.

Turkish learners of English attributed their failure outcomes to their lack of effort. What strikes attention here was that contrary to theoretical expectations, they were not inclined to increase their amount of effort within the language learning process in the future. In this context, Heider's (1958) statements are noteworthy. According to Heider, concepts such as can, try, want or ought are important when it comes to determine future behavior. Thus, despite the approved role of trying in the language learning process, another concept, namely want turned out to be missing in light of the conducted interviews. A common concept which emerged in the interviews was

the lack of motivation to learn English. In other words, students lacked the motivation to succeed in English and thereby refused to increase the amount of invested effort. The lack of motivation on the other hand is a drawback for successful learning (Schunk et al., 2014), as it is motivation which instills the desire for success. In addition, motivation leads to an increase in persistence, amount of effort, systematicity in learning, performance and productivity. Motivation is considered to be shaped by personal, social and contextual variables (Schunk et al., 2014). In this context, it turned out that the contextual variable had a negative impact on achievement in Turkey. Interview outcomes showed that students stated to be unmotivated to learn English because they were not provided with many possibilities to use the target language in or outside of the classroom. Thus, students brought their achievement outcomes into connection with their lack of effort which aroused due to their low motivation to learn English in the Turkish EFL context. With this respect, the contextual variable seems to negatively impact the personal variable, as students did not plan to increase their amount of effort in the language learning process.

Attributions which are unstable in nature are beneficial as they lead to the expectancy of success in future and increase optimism while the opposite applies for stable attributions (Weiner, 1986; Weiner et al., 1976; Weiner & Seirad, 1975). In this context, effort attributions are unstable, while the EFL context is stable. As Turkish students related their failure in learning English with the EFL context, they are more likely to expect failure but not success in the future because it was the stability dimension which was identified as the trigger for expectancy and expectancy shifts (Weiner, 1974; Weiner et al., 1976; Weiner & Sierad, 1975). If students' attributions are examined in terms of expectancy-value theories of motivation (Schunk et al., 2014), it becomes visible that Turkish students do not ascribe a great value to language learning in light with the EFL context which does not necessitate the use of English. In addition, interview outcomes showed that students only expected to improve their English in terms of their grammar knowledge but not vital language skills. At the same time, the majority believed in their inability to speak English despite the many years of English instruction in state schools. This repeated failure experience in learning English on the other hand triggers the expectancy of failure rather than success in the upcoming language learning process (Weiner, 1986). In

this context, stable causes for failure indicate a low chance for change in the future. Therefore, they evoke fear for upcoming learning (Weiner, 1986). More specifically, external attributions lead to the feeling of anger or surprise, while stable and uncontrollable explanations are related to helplessness. Together with the perception of unchangeability for experienced outcomes, the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness arises (Weiner, 1986). As a result, the likelihood to attempt specific behavior decreases and students are not inclined to invest effort in the language learning process as they fear the future and most probably expect to encounter repeated failure. Failing in previous attempts to achieve a certain outcome diminishes motivation and instills the feeling of helplessness as effort is interpreted as useless and failure as inevitable (Weiner, 1986). This is another explanation for the resistance to increase effort. As a consequence, it should not surprise that students have low motivation levels. Students who expect to fail and who do not value the language learning process will resign which illustrates itself in form of the lack of effort in the process of learning English. The fact that interviewees who reported to face failure in terms of actively using English demonstrated a lack in motivation shows that their levels of aspiration to perform certain behavior or to improve is low (Lewin, 1935).

Uncontrollable achievement attributions evoke shame which leads to a decrease in performance, while guilt emerging from controllable attributions boosts the motivation to improve one's performance (Weiner, 1994, 1986). Accordingly, lack of effort attributions will generate the feeling of guilt, evoke negative emotions and have a negative impact on students' future performance. If the EFL context is blamed for failure a more positive condition for upcoming learning is generated.

In short, students' failure attributions indicated that they make dysfunctional attributions by linking their low motivation to invest effort in the language learning process to the EFL context. External and uncontrollable causes are considered to be dysfunctional, as they decrease the expectancy to succeed next to the motivation level (Weiner, 1988). Pishghadam and Zabihi (2011) suggest educators to make learners believe that failure experiences emerged due to their lack of effort, so that consequently students are motivated to manage tasks in long term. It is important to convince students of the relevance of English in Turkey so that the perceived lack of

effort is not attributed to the EFL context which is uncontrollable and stable in nature. In other words, students themselves but not their environment should be considered as having control over the language learning process. By eliminating the EFL context as an explanation for low motivation, students have to be directed towards internal, unstable and controllable attributions (Peacock, 2009; Schunk, 1981; Weiner, 1988; Weiner, 2010). In this context, pure lack of effort attributions are of advantage, as attribution training programs aim to make individuals attribute their failure to the lack of effort (Weiner, 1986). If other studies which were concerned with working out achievement attributions in the language learning contexts are taken into account, both similar and different outcomes emerged with respect to the current research study.

In Bahrain, another EFL context, language learners claimed responsibility for their success but attributed their failure to external factors such as the teaching methods used and the lacking support on the side of both teachers and family (Williams et al., 2001). The same pattern was identified among Turkish learners of English in this study. Although questionnaire results indicated that lack of effort as an internal attribution was referred to as the cause for failure outcomes, low motivation due to the EFL and the classroom context emerged as an external factor in the interviews. Similarly, failure was explained with external factors by Moroccan students (Zohri, 2011). Teachers' attitude, unfair grading and pressure were stated as causes which are altogether related to the classroom context. As a whole, it seems that the self-protective bias and the self-enhancement bias applied for Turkish students, as external factors were blamed for failure and success was explained by internal factors.

Japanese learners of English used external, stable and uncontrollable attributions to explain their success, while internal attributions were referred to in failure contexts (Gobel & Mori, 2007). Thus, in contrast to the interview outcomes, students in other language learning contexts had a positive perception of the classroom context, as success was related to classroom atmosphere (Gobel & Mori, 2007; Mori, 2009). The same pattern was observed among Israeli learners of English in elementary schools (Bar-Tal & Efraim, 1979). While in the stated studies (Bar-Tal & Efraim, 1979; Gobel & Mori, 2007; Mori, 2009), failure was explained internally and success

externally, both success and failure outcomes were linked to internal factors in other studies.

Secondary students who were learning different foreign languages in the UK listed effort, strategy, ability, interest and task difficulty as success factors in respective order (Williams et al., 2004). In terms of failure outcomes, again lack of effort ranked first, followed by lack of ability and interest. Hence, the majority of failure and success attributions were internal. Chinese learners of English explained their failure in learning the target language with their lack of effort (Tse, 2000), while Chinese university students attributed their success in learning English to their effort, teachers, confidence and practical use (Lei & Qin, 2009). Failure on the other hand was explained with the lack of effort, test-oriented learning, the lack of practical use of English and help in respective order. Again effort attributions were preferred. In another study conducted in the Turkish EFL context (Besimoğlu et al., 2010), university preparatory school students ascribed success and also failure outcomes to internal causes. Each achievement outcome was taken responsibility for by language learners. The same pattern was observed in terms of Turkish young learners who favored internal attributions for both achievement outcomes, while effort was the most frequently used internal attribution (Sahinkarakas, 2011). The same outcome was observed in this study if the quantitative instrument would be taken into account only, as both failure and success was explained with effort by Turkish upper secondary learners of English. But as mentioned earlier, interview outcomes pointed out to the relevance and impact of the EFL context as an external factor on student motivation and learning behavior.

It seems that lack of effort attributions for failure are popular among language learners. Despite the widespread use of effort attributions to explain failure outcomes, the reasons behind the discouragement to invest effort might differ. In the current study, the EFL context came to the forefront. At the same time, there were two different approaches to explain failure if the outcomes yielded by the quantitative research instrument and the conducted interviews would be analyzed in isolation. The self-serving bias which refers to individuals' tendency to take responsibility for success outcomes and blame external factors for failure does not apply if the questionnaire results are considered but it applies if the interview

outcomes are analyzed. That is why both types of data have to be combined in order to make sense of the real motive behind attributing failure to specific causes. Only by following this route, it becomes clear that the lack of effort attributions for failure are rooted in language learners' low motivation to learn English in an EFL context, as English is limited to the traditionally oriented language classroom.

An attempt to reveal the cause behind inconsistent research outcomes was to refer to language learners' different culture. It should be noted that the culture of individuals as divided into Western and non-Western is believed to impact attributions for social failure or success (Armbrister, McCallum, & Lee, 2002). Thus, in some cultures people tend to see themselves as responsible for an outcome by searching for internal causes rather than external ones (Weiner, 2006). In this context, Koreans as representers of non-Western culture used lack of effort, Americans as individuals living in Western culture preferred bad luck as attributions for their failure. In other words, Koreans preferred internal attributions and thereby took responsibility for their failure outcomes in contrast to Americans (Armbrister et al., 2002). Similar studies were conducted in the language learning context. In Gray's (2005) research study, Japanese and Chinese undergraduate students' achievement attributions for English were investigated. Japanese students mainly attributed success to their effort and motivation. Luck and ability ranked third and fourth and were ascribed a very low relevance in determining achievement outcomes. In terms of failure, the same ranking emerged with effort being perceived as the main contributor for failure. Chinese students explained success firstly with effort, followed by motivation and ability. Failure on the other hand, was again attributed to effort, followed by ability and poor motivation. Ability was considered more influential among Chinese students. Thus, although effort was the most relevant cause for both parties, the number of Japanese language learners who referred to effort was higher than Chinese students. This proved that differences in achievement attributions should be expected even within similar cultures.

In this context, Gray (2005) refers to the difference in achievement attributions among collectivist and individualist cultures. Western countries are considered to be individualist, while Eastern countries are regarded as collectivist. Collectivist cultures are stated to value effort and ascribe it a central role in achievement

outcomes. On the other hand, ability is pushed into the foreground as an essential achievement attribution within individualist cultures. Individualist societies turned out to explain social outcomes with personal dispositions while collectivist societies preferred external and situational attributions (Morris & Peng, 1994). Gray conducted another study among Chinese and Japanese students, while this time Turkish students were also included (Brown, Gray, & Ferrera, 2005). Chinese and Japanese language learners representing the East Asian, and Turkish students representing the Islamic culture, all attributed success to effort and ability, and failure to lack of effort, while only Japanese students also referred to their lack of ability. Kun and Liming (2007) conducted another study in which Chinese EFL undergraduates' achievement attributions were identified. In the face of success and failure outcomes, Chinese language learners made effort attributions. The tendency of individuals who were living in collectivist societies to value trying hard and investing effort was also observed in other research studies (Bond & Smith, 1996). In other non-Western countries such as China (Tse, 2000), Japan (Gobel & Mori, 2007), Malaysia (Thang et al., 2011) and Thailand (Gobel, Mori, Thank, Kan, & Lee, 2011) students took responsibility for their achievement outcomes by attributing failure to internal causes. In each context, students more frequently attributed their success to external and their failure to internal causes, while slight differences in terms of which specific external or internal attribution was made emerged. Research findings showed that the self-enhancement and self-protective bias as reported in Western countries did not apply in the Asian contexts of concern.

At first sight, Turkish students seem to conform to the characteristics of collectivist societies by accepting the role of effort in their failure in language learning. Students clearly ascribed a central importance to effort and acknowledged its impact on positive and negative achievement outcomes. Thus, internal attributions are made when failure is experienced. As indicated before, interview outcomes showed that students did not tend to invest effort in the upcoming learning process because they were not motivated to learn English especially due to the EFL context in which English was not considered to be relevant. Hence, the real cause for failure experiences in English was the EFL context which is external in nature. This means that although students might take responsibility for their failure in form of making

internal attribution (Weiner, 2006) by admitting their lack of effort, their motive to refuse to invest effort is external. This implies that they might not feel a strong responsibility for the experienced failure outcomes. As Weiner (2006) puts it, culture on its own is not the only determinant to shape attributions. Individuals who were born and raised in the same culture can still prefer different attributions based on factors such as their motivation, personal history or trait.

Internal, controllable and unstable attributions are required for individuals to be highly motivated in the upcoming learning process (Weiner, 2010). Turkish upper secondary students appeared to conform to this profile as they explained their failure in the language learning process with their lack of effort. Nevertheless, the EFL context and the teaching method emerged as the real motives behind the lack of effort attributions for failure outcomes within the interviews.

As a whole, it should not surprise that Turkish upper secondary students did not tend to increase the amount of effort in learning English although they were aware that their lack of effort was the cause for their failure. This is linked with the fact that the core reason for their behavior was the language learning context which decreased their motivation.

The reason behind the interviewees' refusal to study for English despite their perceived potential in language learning was related to their repeated failure experiences to improve. Consequently, students were hopeless and did not anticipate any change in the future. Therefore, Weiner's ascribed impact of attributions on the intensity of future performance, task persistence and the likelihood to initiate specific actions was confirmed in this study. Attributions appear to determine success or failure experiences in educational contexts, while the knowledge about students' achievement attributions can be incorporated into language instruction.

The Relationship between Variables and Achievement Attributions

One of the variables which was examined in relation to language learners' achievement attributions was gender. Findings indicated that students' achievement attributions do not vary with regards to gender. In Lian's research study (Lian, 2012) gender did not turn out to exert a difference in terms of achievement attributions, just

as it was the case in the current study. Among Chinese English Majors' listening achievement attributions gender did not lead to big differences (Lian, 2012). In previously conducted studies (Covington & Omelich, 1979; Williams et al., 2004), a slight difference among gender was to be found, as females facing failure tended to make internal attributions to a greater extent than males. In general, females are stated to attribute success outcomes to external and failure outcomes to internal causes (Bar-Tal & Frieze, 1977; Lian, 2012).

In this respect, female foreign language learners in Williams' study (Williams et al., 2004) attributed failure more often to internal factors than males. Females were more likely to refer to the lack of effort, lack of ability and inappropriate strategy use while males referred to the impact of poor teaching, lack of interest and the environment on failure outcomes. Success attributions did not yield any differences, as males and females used internal attributions to explain their achievement. Nevertheless, although internal in nature the specific attribution made varied. In this context, females used lack of effort and lack of ability attributions, males addressed their poor behavior. Amongst external success causes, females mainly referred to the impact of teachers and males to the nature of the attempted task (William et al., 2004). In general, both males and females attributed their failure and success to internal causes. Nevertheless, males tended to be more external and females more internal in failure attributions. In another study dealing with school failure in general, female students were more likely to attribute their failure to their lack of ability which is maladaptive (Farmer & Vispoel, 1990). Nevertheless, female students did not turn out to present characteristics of learned helplessness to a greater extent than males.

In contrast, male students in Zohri's research study (2011) were more likely to explain their failure with the lack of effort compared to female students, while female students explained failure with lack of ability and task difficulty. The most favored internal success attributions by female foreign language learners in the UK was strategy use, while males tended to attribute their success to effort. Yet in another study, female EFL learners in Hong Kong attributed their success to internal, unstable and controllable causes and more frequently stated effort as a success attribution compared to males (Peacock, 2010).

In short, there is no consistency in terms of the impact of the gender variable. Bartal and Frieze (1977) point out that the differences related to the impact of gender on achievement attributions might arise due to the differences in individuals' achievement motivation. Thus, although males and females are mainly considered as two distinct groups, the different levels of achievement motivation among males and females might generate inconsistent results.

Another variable of concern was grade level. It can be claimed that the grade level variable equals the age variable, as students of a certain age range are enrolled in specific grade levels. That is why research outcomes which addressed the age variable will be addressed in the following section. Research findings showed that Turkish students' achievement attributions for effort, task difficulty and luck increased with students' grade levels. Similarly, Williams' research study on learners of French in England (Williams & Burden, 1999) revealed the tendency of students to attribute failure to their lack of effort with increasing age. Stipek's study (1980) showed that with increasing school experience, students internal attributions also increased. This research outcome complies with the current research study only in terms of the increased effort attributions with increasing age. In another study, foreign language learners' effort attributions decreased over the years, while changes in terms of ability attributions for success were not observed (Williams et al., 2004). There was a decrease in lack of ability attributions for failure. As a whole, the age variable did not yield consistent outcomes.

The vocational field within the Technical and Vocational High School was not statistically significant. The reason behind this outcome might be the identical school culture and climate, as this research study constituted a single case study. Just like attributions are stated to be influenced by culture (Gobel & Mori, 2007), they are also influenced by factors such as rurality and urbanity. In this context, Gobel investigated Malaysian EFL learners in urban and rural areas' achievement attributions (Gobel et al., 2013). Research results revealed that this variable led to differences in students' achievement attributions. Thus, even within the same city, different findings can be encountered if differentiated between urbanity and rurality. These findings are important, as they show that culture is not limited to the country or city one is located in. Hence, high school type might also play a role in the

formation of attributions, as each school comes along with different conditions, student profiles or classroom atmospheres which create a new culture on its own. In this context, MacNeil (MacNeil, Prater, & Brusch, 2009) pointed out to the crucial role of school culture and climate on success. Schools with different success levels provide for different school climates, while higher student achievement is linked to healthier school climates. Thus, the school climate and culture exerts an influential power on students. In this context, the school culture and climate of the Technical and Vocational High School of concern with its specific norms, student profile and atmosphere might have a stronger impact on achievement attributions than the particular fields students were enrolled in within the school. Thus, school culture seems to be more powerful than classroom culture, as students with identical fields of study are placed in the same classroom.

In terms of achievement outcomes, a statistically significant difference was identified with ability attributions only. To put it in more detail, the tendency to explain success with ability rose with increasing success in the language classroom. In other words, successful students in English courses attributed their performance to their ability, while low achievers did not attribute their failure to ability. This was an expected result, as Bar-Tal's (Bar-Tal & Bar-Zohar, 1977) review concerning research studies on internal control and achievement outcomes revealed that an internal orientation was accompanied by higher achievement. In this context, this study provided consistent results as with increasing achievement, an increase in ability attributions was observed. This tendency was explained with the different motivational and cognitive style of internal students compared to externals. Internal students turned out to invest more effort, take more initiative, demonstrate greater persistence, focus more on task-relevant information and use these more efficiently (Bar-Tal & Bar-Zohar, 1977). These differences were stated to evoke higher achievement. The same pattern was to be found among Turkish 6th graders who were learning English in state schools (Erten & Burden, 2014). High achievers were more likely to make ability attributions for their success outcomes next to referring to their interest in learning English. Again the strongest correlation turned out to be between ability attributions and exam scores. The ranking of high and low achievers' achievement attributions was similar but the mean values of low achievers' achievement

attributions were lower than those of the high achievers. In the Malaysian EFL context, high achievers preferred ability attributions for their success while low achievers referred more commonly to their lack of ability and effort for failure outcomes (Gobel et al., 2013). High achieving primary and secondary school students who were learning English were more likely to explain their achievement outcomes with stable and internal factors in comparison to low achievers (Sorić & Ančić, 2008). Ability, task difficulty and like were reasons for success according to high achievers, while low achievers put these attributions in the same order when asked to identify causes for their failure (Gobel & Mori, 2007). To conclude, high achievers are more confident and believe in their own ability. This is of advantage as ability attributions for success increase motivation.

Pishghadam and Zahibi (2011) investigated Iranian EFL learners' attributions and achievement outcomes within the language classroom. Among six possible attributions which were ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, mood and teacher, a correlation between achievement and effort, ability and luck attributions were identified. In this context, effort attributions were the best predictor for achievement. Thus, students who preferred effort attributions were more successful in English classes. Effort turned out to be more influential in terms of determining high scores in the language classroom. Luck and mood attributions predicted lower grades. In this context, the importance to help students internalize the role of effort was also addressed by the researchers. Although effort but not ability attributions triggered the strongest relation with achievement outcomes, it should be noted that both of these attributions are internal.

There was not a statistically significant difference with regard to the socioeconomic level of the participants. Yet in another study which focused on students' SES and their locus of control in a general educational context, students of a middle SES more frequently made internal attributions than those of low SES (Stipek, 1980). In the case of both fathers' and mothers' education level there was not a statistically significant difference either. In terms of these two variables, the number of research studies was scarce so that research outcomes could not be compared with other contexts.

To conclude, researchers stated that achievement attributions are complex and might differ based on the specific activity to be mastered within a subject (Gobel & Mori, 2007). In this context, inconsistency in research results might have arisen because participants have considered different language tasks or activities although they were asked to evaluate the language learning process as a whole. In addition, Tse (2000) referred to the complexity of foreign language achievement attributions, as language learners might infer their success or failure in learning English either based on their course grades or their language proficiency. This distinction might also cause inconsistencies in research outcomes.

Language Learners' Metacognitive Awareness Levels

The second research question aimed to identify language learners' metacognitive awareness levels in the foreign language learning context. Research results showed that Turkish upper secondary students demonstrated a high metacognitive awareness level with a mean of 184.02. This is a beneficial outcome, as metacognition facilitates students' self-regulation and thereby provides an ideal prerequisite for success outcomes (Young & Fry, 2008). Hence, metacognitively aware students are reported to be better performers and effective learners (Bruning et al., 2004; Schraw & Dennison, 1994). Moreover, metacognition is linked with high responsibility and efficacy and less learned helplessness experiences in general educational terms (Ganz & Ganz, 1990). These advantages of metacognition are also relevant within the language learning process (Rubin, 1975; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). What strikes attention is that in the Turkish context, studies related to metacognitive awareness did not center on language learning, mainly included university students, and provided inconsistent results (Bedel, 2012; Cihanoglu, 2012; Hart & Memnun, 2015; Kirbulut, 2014; Kiremitçi, 2013; Kılınç, 2013; Sarıcoban, 2015; Şendurur et al., 2011; Topçu & Yılmaz-Tüzün, 2009). As the number of studies which focus on upper secondary students and the EFL context is scarce, a direct comparison among research results is not allowed for. Interestingly, metacognitive knowledge scores of the language learners in this study were lower than their regulation scores. High metacognitive regulation scores can be equaled to the ability to manage the learning process (Kluwe, 1982) and therefore is favorable. Nevertheless, lower knowledge

compared to regulation scores is an unexpected outcome as the knowledge of one's own cognition is labeled as the prerequisite for self-regulation (Schoenfeld, 1987). Thus, the question which arises is how high regulation can be achieved if knowledge is lacking.

Other questions are also relevant in this context. How does it come that language learners who are expected to be better learners due to their high metacognitive awareness (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Winne & Hadwin, 1998) have low language proficiency? This question is vital as the literature review conducted with regard to metacognition and second and foreign language learning implied that metacognition significantly predicted language performance (Raaofi et al., 2013). The reason behind the failure in language learning despite the high metacognitive awareness level might be related to the lack of motivation which clearly emerged as a motive in the conducted interviews. Metacognitive awareness is not considered to be sufficient on its own. Thus, students who demonstrate the motivation to succeed and to learn are the ones who tend to organize and rehearse materials, monitor understanding and ask for help if required (Zimmerman, 2000). In other words, although individuals of high metacognitive awareness levels have the required qualities to implement the stated processes, these might not be applied in theory when motivation is absent and thereby hinders the use of metacognitive skills (Zimmerman, 1990a). In this context, student' interviews revealed that language learning motivation was in fact lacking. As a consequence, the learning process might not be initiated as required. In relation to this, researchers state that metacognitive awareness is linked with self-regulated learning which consists of three different components: motivation, cognition and metacognition. These components altogether are believed to facilitate successful learning (Händel & Fritzsche, 2016; Schraw et al., 2006). In addition, motivation is increased once goals are achieved and individuals feel confirmed. Taking into consideration that Turkish learners of English were not able to succeed despite several years of language instruction (TEPAV & British Council, 2013), it should not surprise that students' motivation is rather low.

Zimmerman and Moylan (2009) approach self-regulation as the intersection of metacognition and motivation and address it as a cyclical phase. This cyclical model of self-regulation is described to be composed of the forethought, performance and

self-reflection phase. The forethought phase covers goal setting, strategic planning, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, task interest and value, and goal orientation. The performance phase amongst others consists of self-observation including metacognitive monitoring and self-control ranging from time management to help-seeking. Lastly, the self-reflection phase relates to self-judgment including self-evaluation and causal attributions, and self-reaction covering affect and adaptive/defensive decisions. Each of these phases are said to have an impact on each other. If the phases are examined, it can be seen that the forethought phase is centered on motivation which impacts the willingness to self-regulate, the performance phase deals with metacognitive factors, and the self-reflection phase is concerned with attributions. As students demonstrated high metacognitive awareness levels in general, the attributionally and motivationally accentuated phases might be the ones which impede successful learning.

At the same time, Williams (Williams et al., 2002) emphasized that demonstrating high metacognitive awareness does not guarantee the implementation and use of metacognitive strategies. In other words, despite acknowledging the importance of metacognition in terms of successful language learning, language learners might not be using metacognitive strategies. In this context, it should be noted that while some researchers value raising students' metacognitive awareness levels, others emphasized the importance of effective strategy training to increase academic performance in educational contexts (Nelson & Narens, 1994; White & Frederiksen, 1998). In addition, next to research studies which aim to measure students' metacognitive awareness, others more specifically focused on metacognitive awareness levels of learning strategies (Okoza et al., 2013). This implies that there might be a distinction between being metacognitively aware and being metacognitively aware of learning strategies which might give rise to the observed controversy.

In this context, Hartman (2001) refers to students' possible inability to realize the purpose of the attempted tasks. That is why these ineffective learners might be working on a task without realizing what they are doing or trying to achieve. He points out that students might hold the required knowledge and skills but fail to implement these and perform tasks at hand. This might be relevant especially in the

case of challenging tasks. The lack of motivation and confidence are considered to trigger this problematic condition. In addition, students' inability to figure out whether they have to implement the knowledge and skills they possess is also considered to be relevant. In other words, despite their high metacognitive awareness in general, language learners might not be fully equipped to judge when they have to put their knowledge or skills into practice. Chamot (2004) states that knowing each and every strategy in the language learning context is not required but that it is vital to know which strategy has to be applied in which context. As indicated before, students might experience difficulty in the process of implementation.

Another drawback might be that metacognitive awareness on its own is not considered sufficient to guarantee success. Research outcomes showed that setting goals is also determinant. If goals are missing within a task, metacognitive awareness cannot lead to success by itself (Ridley et al., 1992). In Ridley's experimental study, performance was best facilitated if students had high metacognitive awareness in combination with pre-set goals. Goals were labeled as the leading power behind motivation, while awareness was judged as the force to find the most appropriate ways to manage tasks. This outcome fits the current research study, as Turkish students did not follow the goal to improve their English. In this context, Zimmerman (2000) states that goals are set by self-regulated learners who at the same time are expected to regulate their motivation, choose the appropriate strategy and necessarily adapt their goals. Therefore, it would not be wrong to claim that Turkish students have not set learning English as their goal, do not demonstrate the required motivation and therefore are not self-regulated learners. What should be noted here is that metacognition is linked with adaptive mastery goals (Perreault et al., 1993). Interestingly, interviewees' responses within the interviews indicated that they follow ego-oriented goals.

It should not be neglected that students might have judged their general metacognitive awareness but not their subject specific awareness with regards to English. Thus, although students might be aware of how to monitor the learning process or know which learning strategies are more useful, they might be unaware about language learning strategies or how to control the language learning process in particular. In addition, the criticism that self-report instruments might assess

knowledge rather than usual behavior might be also relevant here (Händel, Artelt, & Weinert, 2013). Students might not be able to profit from their high metacognitive awareness in the learning process.

The Relationship between Variables and Metacognitive Awareness

One of the variables which was examined in line with metacognitive awareness levels was gender. Research results showed that females had higher metacognitive awareness scores compared to males. There was a statistically significant difference in favor of females in terms of metacognitive regulation in particular. Compared to males, females scored higher in each subcomponent of the metacognitive regulation subscale. This indicates that females are more skilled in making use of their metacognitive knowledge and implementing it in the learning process. In another Turkish context, female students in science classes developed better regulation and knowledge skills compared to males (Topçu & Yılmaz-Tüzün, 2009). Yet, in the general educational context a significant difference was not located for Indian students of different gender (Jaleel, 2016). Turkish university students in the school of physical education and sports management also did not show any difference in their awareness levels with regards to gender (Kiremitçi, 2013).

There was a statistically significant difference among the scores of each subcomponent expect declarative knowledge for grade levels. Post-hoc (Tukey) results indicated that 11th graders constituted for the statistically significant difference. Hence, 11th graders had higher metacognitive awareness levels compared to students of other grade levels. In contexts independent from language learning, a similar outcome was observed as graduate students achieved higher metacognitive regulation scores compared to undergraduate students (Young & Fry, 2008). This outcome showed that age and experience pays off with regards to metacognitive regulation, and that graduate students are more skilled in making use of their metacognitive knowledge. In addition, grade level led to an increase in metacognitive skills, and reading comprehension and performance (Forrest-Pressley & Waller, 1984). In general, metacognition and metacognitive awareness is acknowledged to

improve and develop over time although inconsistencies arise in some instances (Fischer, 1998).

Metacognitive awareness scores varied depending on language learners' achievement outcomes, as students with good or very good course grades had higher awareness levels. There was a statistically significant difference especially in terms of metacognitive knowledge, declarative knowledge, contextual knowledge and debugging for students with good or very good grades. In other words, language learners turned out to get more skilled in metacognitive knowledge rather than metacognitive regulation. As a whole, language learners' high awareness levels was an expected outcome, as research studies conducted so far strengthened the link between metacognitive awareness and its positive impact on course grades and performance (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Young & Fry, 2008). That is why it is not surprising that metacognitive awareness levels were higher for high achievers. In Hartman's (2001) research study, high achievers again displayed higher awareness levels than low achievers. In another non-language learning context, undergraduate and graduate students' metacognitive awareness levels were measured in relation to achievement outcomes (Young & Fry, 2008). In this study, both metacognitive knowledge and regulation increased with student achievement. The same pattern was observed in the Slovenian context, in which metacognitive knowledge amongst others was one of the factors that increased with achievement (Peklaj & Pecjak, 2002). Literature review conducted in the field of second and foreign language learning showed that students were more successful when they used metacognitive resources (Raoofi et al., 2013). Most of the studies in the field of language learning deal with metacognitive strategy awareness in different language skills rather than metacognitive awareness in general. In one of these studies, high metacognitive listening strategies awareness correlated with higher listening comprehension (Al-Awan et al., 2013). In general, high metacognitive awareness in relation to high achievement is not surprising in terms of successful learning, as the metacognitive component within self-regulated learning theories is acknowledged to be the most important among the motivational and cognitive ones (Händel & Fritzsche, 2016; Schraw et al., 2006).

Metacognitive awareness levels did not change based on students' vocational field in their school. As there is a lack of research studies which address the metacognitive awareness levels of English learners who are enrolled in different fields of study, the research outcomes could not be further discussed. In terms of students' socioeconomic levels, students from families with average or high family income turned out to have high metacognitive awareness levels. Researchers also pointed out to the lack of research studies which examined the effects of SES on students' metacognition (Topçu & Yılmaz-Tüzün, 2009). In the needs assessment conducted by TEPAV and the British Council (2013), the role of income level was referred to. Next to its direct impact like affording quality language instruction, its indirect effects on the development of English were addressed. A higher income level was linked to access to English language music and television, and a greater possession of books and required learning aids.

In terms of parents' educational level, mothers' educational level did not lead to any change with respect to students' metacognitive awareness levels in learning English. On the contrary, with the increasing educational level of fathers, students' metacognitive awareness also increased. There was a statistically significant difference for the Upper Secondary School Graduate category in particular. An increase in scores for metacognitive knowledge, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and evaluation was observed for fathers' who had graduated from upper secondary schools. The only difference between fathers' and mothers' educational level was that the number of fathers who had graduated from upper secondary school was higher than the number of mothers, while parents' educational level was rather low in general. In this context, low educational level was stated to restrict parents' ability to support their child within the educational process including language learning (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). That is why an increase in students' metacognitive awareness levels was anticipated with increasing educational level. Topçu's research study (Topçu & Yılmaz-Tüzün, 2009) on Turkish students' metacognition concerning science achievement proved this patterns, as students developed better knowledge and regulation skills with an increase in both fathers' and mothers' educational level.

The Relationship between Language Learners' Achievement Attributions and Metacognitive Awareness Levels

One final aim of this research study was to work out the relation between language learners' achievement attributions and metacognitive awareness levels. A very weak negative correlation among metacognitive awareness scores and achievement attributions was identified. Based on different metacognitive awareness levels, students did not tend to make specific attributions for their achievement outcomes. In this context, students with both high and low metacognitive awareness levels attributed their failure to their lack of effort. Following the central role ascribed to metacognitive awareness in terms of student success and performance, it was hypothesized that there must be an impeding condition which prevents students to profit from their identified high awareness levels. Taking the impact of achievement attributions with regard to persistence, expectancy and future behavior into consideration, the possibility of maladaptive attributions to be the impeding factor was dwelt on. This hypothesis was formulated because metacognition on its own was not judged to be the only indicator for learning and because nowadays the role of motivation in combination with metacognition is placed to forefront (Bruning et al., 2004; Zimmerman, 1990a). As there was a negative correlation between metacognitive awareness levels and achievement attributions, it would be wrong to claim that attributions are the reason students cannot profit from their high metacognitive awareness levels.

Although the hypothesis that maladaptive attributions might impede students to profit from their high awareness levels was rejected, the link between motivation and metacognitive awareness seems to be present. The only difference is that motivation does not reflect itself in form of attributions. In this context, self-regulated learning which combines metacognitive, motivational and cognitive factors should be addressed. While metacognitive awareness is considered as one of the prerequisites for self-regulated learning (Ghatala, 1986), the motivation construct, which is also comprised of concepts such as high self-efficacy or intrinsic motivation next to adaptive attributions, is also relevant (Schunk, 1986). Hence, the reason why language learners cannot profit from their metacognitive awareness levels might be their low motivation level due to the language learning context but not their

achievement attributions. As a result, Turkish language learners might be failing in the language learning process, as the components of self-regulated learning do not interact with each other. In the scope of the current research study, Turkish language learners do not appear to hold the qualities of self-regulated learners and thereby are more likely to form a negative self-image as learners, if both quantitative and qualitative data is taken into consideration. In addition, students who cannot self-regulate their learning process fail to adjust their emotions or readjust their goals for the future (Bruning et al., 2004). Zimmerman (1990b) asserts that in relation to motivation, learners perceived competence, autonomy and self-efficacy are important. Ability was considered the least influential cause for success in the language classroom which proved that Turkish language learners do not consider themselves as competent. In other words, some of these factors might be causing problems which impede improvement in English despite high awareness.

Another question was concerned with how metacognitive awareness of the learners exerts an impact on attributions to failure in learning English in an EFL context. Research results showed that independent from low or high metacognitive awareness levels, Turkish language learners attributed their achievement outcomes to effort. Thus, high or low metacognitive awareness levels did not exert an impact on language learners' failure attributions. One of the few studies which directly dealt with metacognitive awareness and achievement attributions was conducted among at-risk college students and provided opposing outcomes (El-Hindi & Childers, 1996). Students in this study were labeled as at-risk because they had a grade point average lower than 2.0 and were risking not to complete the programs they were enrolled in. Research outcomes showed that once students' metacognitive awareness levels were increased with the help of academic support courses, attributions to controllable causes also increased. In other words, there was a shift from uncontrollable to controllable achievement attributions with increasing awareness levels. The current research study confirms this tendency to a limited extent, as controllable attributions were not restricted to students with high metacognitive awareness levels only.

Next, the question whether language learners' metacognitive awareness levels of high, low or averagely scoring students exerted an impact on failure or success

attributions was aimed to be answered in this study. A difference was located among ability attributions and high achieving students only. Thus, the combinations of low achiever, low metacognitive awareness and failure attributions; low achiever, low metacognitive awareness and success attributions; low achiever, high metacognitive awareness and failure attributions; low achiever, high metacognitive awareness and success attributions did not yield any significant differences. On the other hand, high-achieving students with high metacognitive awareness levels believed that ability was less likely linked with success outcomes compared to high-achieving students with low metacognitive awareness levels. These results might be an indication for high achievers' belief to have achieved high grades in English courses due to their high metacognitive awareness levels but not their language ability. Thus, they might think that their metacognitive awareness has the power to compensate for their ability deficiencies. In other words, high-achieving students with low metacognitive awareness levels tended to explain their success more often with their ability, while failure outcomes were more often related to their lacking ability. High achievers with high metacognitive awareness levels less likely referred to their lack of ability in the face of failure experiences compared to students with low metacognitive awareness levels. It is possible that their high metacognitive awareness allows students to realize that their lack of ability might not be the main cause for their failure. Their awareness levels might help them realize that it is in fact their lack of effort that causes failure outcomes. In other words, high achievers with high awareness levels appear to have a more realistic view about their performance, and to be able to identify their mistakes which caused the failure outcome. At the same time, high achievers with high awareness levels tended to make more adaptive failure attributions compared to those with low awareness levels.

To conclude, the present research study has provided an insight into how Turkish EFL learners explain their achievement outcomes in Turkish state schools. In addition, it revealed EFL learners metacognitive awareness levels and pointed out to the extent of interaction among both concepts. Research results showed that students made maladaptive achievement attributions as they blamed the EFL context and language instruction which are external factors for their failure outcomes. At the same time, they demonstrated high metacognitive awareness which is advantageous

in the learning process. Lastly, a weak negative correlation was identified between metacognitive awareness levels and achievement attributions.





CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The language learning process for Turkish EFL learners is rather problematic as English proficiency among Turkish students remains low despite the many years of language instruction in state schools. In other words, EFL learners in Turkey are mainly exposed to failure outcomes with regard to language learning. As it is the case in everyday life, the search for a cause for this tendency initiated the quest for language learners' achievement attributions. In addition, the lack of improvement over the years increased interest in students' metacognitive awareness levels which is one of the prerequisites for successful learning.

The general literature on achievement attributions emphasize that adaptive attributions are beneficial in both the learning and the language learning process. Internal, controllable and unstable causes are aimed at, so that expectancy for future success is maintained, persistence in the learning process is warranted, positive emotions are evoked, and motivation is kept high. Literature has proven that high metacognitive awareness leads to high performance and successful learning, and that metacognition is relevant and activated in attributional processes. In addition, nowadays it is emphasized that letting students take responsibility for their learning process and making them internalize this process should be favored over the teaching of subjects only (Larkin, 2009).

For this case study, data were collected from 218 Turkish EFL learners in an upper secondary state school. Two different research instruments were used to firstly identify students' achievement attributions and secondly, to measure their

metacognitive awareness levels. As the study followed a mixed-method design, semi-structured interviews were also conducted to reveal language learners' ideas on English instruction in state schools, and the language learning process and outcomes. The collected data were analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics, t-tests, one-way ANOVAs and a Pearson correlation test. Concepts were derived from the qualitative data.

At first glance, Turkish language learners seemed to attribute their failure to their lack of effort based on the quantitative research instrument. However, interview outcomes revealed that the EFL context and the traditional English instruction in the language classroom in state schools were perceived as the causes which decrease learners' motivation level due to the lacking applicability of English. The causal dimensions of this failure attribution revealed that language learners make maladaptive failure attributions which are acknowledged to negatively impact expectancy for success, motivation level, and persistence. In contrast, Turkish language learners demonstrated high metacognitive awareness levels which foster the learning process. The question why language learners failed in the language learning process despite their high awareness levels was linked with their lacking motivation, as metacognitive awareness is considered to be effective in combination with motivation. Only if cognition, metacognition and motivation interact with each other, self-regulated learning can take place. This seems to be a drawback for Turkish language learners. Lastly, there was a weak negative correlation between metacognitive awareness and achievement attributions, while high or low metacognitive awareness did not trigger specific achievement attributions, so that maladaptive achievement attributions do not appear to be related with low metacognitive awareness levels. As a whole, it can be concluded that students fail in learning English because of their lacking motivation.

This study also displayed the structure, quality, and focus of language education in Turkish state schools, next to the relevance and constituents of course grades from the perspective of language learners. These insights should be taken into consideration by educators and stakeholders in the process of planning and implementing language teaching in the future, as a rather negative image was drawn about English instruction in state schools. Furthermore, this study can assist

educators to internalize the importance and relevance of achievement attributions in the learning process, as their impact might be bigger than anticipated. Therefore, educators should approach students and the language classroom with caution and take into consideration how different attributions might evoke different learning behavior and impact performance either in a positive or negative light. If needed, language teachers should consider changing students' achievement attributions through attribution retraining, so that maladaptive achievement attributions as a cause for ongoing failure experiences are removed. As metacognitive awareness is also modifiable just like achievement attributions, language teachers should also consider low awareness levels as a possible cause for students' struggle in the classroom. They should familiarize students with the impact of high metacognitive awareness and increase their awareness levels with the help of related instruction. What is important in this context is that language teachers should focus on both metacognitive and attributional components all in the same breath, as cognition, metacognition and motivation mutually foster learning.

The outcomes of this research study should be approached with caution due to their limited extent of generalizability, as a case study was conducted in a Technical and Vocational High School in the Black Sea Region of Turkey with a limited number of Turkish upper secondary students. The study could be duplicated in other language classrooms among different contexts.

Recommendations

Interview outcomes revealed that language learners are not content with the language instruction they receive in state schools, that they make maladaptive failure attributions, and that they have high metacognitive awareness but low motivation to exert effort. In relation to these outcomes some suggestions are made to nourish the language learning process.

Firstly, the perception that English is only a lesson should be prevented. This can be achieved with the help of some changes.

1. Language teachers should distance themselves from using traditional language teaching methods such as the old-fashioned Grammar-Translation

Method only. Language instruction should be engaging, students should be provided with the chance to choose among different tasks, and group interaction should be fostered (Vispoel & Austin, 1990).

2. Emphasis in the language classroom should drift from grammar instruction to the application of the language and the development of productive skills.
3. Communicative competence should be systematically aimed at by providing language learners with a great deal of possibilities to make use of and get engaged with the target language (Oxford & Shearin, 1994).
4. The relevance of productive skills in the grading process within English courses could be increased, so that the image that grades only catch hold of short-term memorization skills is abolished, and language learners get more motivated to work on the language itself.

The need to increase students' motivation level in terms of language learning is also prevalent.

1. There is the need to increase the utility value of learning English in Turkey. This can be achieved by approaching English as a tool for communication which can be applied rather than a lesson to master, and by referring to its relevance for language learners in or outside of the classroom (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Kember, Ho, & Hong, 2008; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992).
2. Language learners should be guided towards setting mastery rather than performance goals in order to ensure long-term improvement, as mastering the language rather than passing courses is put to the forefront. Many researchers addressed the relevance of and ways to generate these goals (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1986). In addition, challenging but achievable goals should be worked out (Vispoel & Austin, 1990).
3. More opportunities to use English, textbooks which do not center on continuous repetition of the same course content, and a focus on students' areas of interest within the lessons are enlisted as possible factors to boost motivation by Turkish language learners (TEPAV & British Council, 2013).

Related to students' motivation, language learners' achievement attributions should be kept in sight.

1. Language learners should be guided to make internal, controllable and unstable failure attributions, so that individuals take responsibility for their failure, feel in charge, do not experience learned helplessness, are motivated, and are more likely to expect to succeed in the future (Vispoel & Austin, 1990; Weiner et al., 1971; Weiner, 1986; Weiner, 2000).
2. Adaptive achievement attributions should be aimed at, so that strategy use, achievement and self-efficacy is increased (Chan & Moore, 2006; Oxford & Shearin, 1994).
3. Teachers should attempt to change language learners' attributions if required. In this context, they can address the impact of different achievement attributions; point out to the link between effort and achievement outcomes; trivialize the role of ability, intelligence or luck; help students locate their strengths and weaknesses; instill enjoyment for English; promote confidence and control over the learning process; avoid feedback which implements low ability; and support and encourage students especially in the process of overcoming difficulties (Chan & Moore, 2006; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Peacock, 2010; Vispoel & Austin, 1990).

In order to promote metacognitive awareness, different methods can be used.

1. The language teacher should make language learners internalize that the language learning process is accompanied by the development of learning skills (Anderson, 2002).
2. The aim to raise students' metacognitive skills and knowledge could be incorporated into the subject curriculum (White & Frederiksen, 1998).
3. The language teacher can model and instruct metacognitive strategies in the language classroom (Schraw & Graham, 1997).

The stated recommendations can be most ideally put into practice in a supportive classroom environment.

1. The classroom climate should be nonthreatening and positive, so that language anxiety is prevented (Oxford & Shearin, 1994).
2. A school climate which rewards academic success should be cultivated (Renchler, 1992; Maehr & Midgley, 1991).

3. Schools should promote clearly defined goals which are acknowledged by the whole school population (Renchler, 1992; Maehr & Midgley, 1991).

These are some plausible suggestions which could be followed to promote effective and successful language learning with regards to the research outcomes. At the same time, the stated recommendations can be generalized to any language learning context.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Demographic Information

İNGİLİZCE’NİN YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRETİMİ BAĞLAMINDA ÖĞRENCİLERİN ÜSTBİLİŞSEL FARKINDALIKLARI VE BAŞARISIZLIK ATIFLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ ÇALIŞMASI

Bu çalışmanın amacı İngilizce öğrenmekte olan lise öğrencilerinin İngilizce öğrenmedeki başarısızlıklarını nasıl açıkladıklarını ve öğrencilerin üstbilişsel farkındalık düzeylerini belirlemektir.

Bu kapsamda katılımcıların “Katılımcı Bilgileri” kısmını doldurduktan sonra, atfedilen başarısızlık nedenlerinin belirlenebilmesi için “Çok Boyutlu Nedensel Yükleme Ölçeği”ni ve üstbilişsel farkındalık düzeyinin belirlenmesi için ise “Üstbilişsel Farkındalık Envanteri”ni verilen yönergeler doğrultusunda doldurmaları gerekmektedir.

Bu çalışmaya katılım toplam 20 dakika sürmektedir. Çalışma sonuçları gizli tutulacaktır.

Katılımınız için teşekkürler.

Araştırmacı: Özlem GÜNEŞ, Telefon: 05319472752, Mail: ozlem.gunes@hotmail.de

Katılımcı Bilgileri

1. Cinsiyet

- ☐ Kadın
- ☐ Erkek

2. Sınıf

- ☐ 9. Sınıf
- ☐ 10. Sınıf
- ☐ 11. Sınıf
- ☐ 12. Sınıf

3. Bölüm/Alan Bilgisi

- ☐ Muhasebe
- ☐ Büro Yönetimi
- ☐ Ulaştırma Hizmetleri
- ☐ Adalet : ☐ İnfaz ve Koruma
☐ Zabıt Katipliği

4. 1. dönem İngilizce notu: _____

5. Aile Gelir Durumu

- ☐ Yüksek: 4000TL ve üzeri
- ☐ Orta: 2000-4000 TL
- ☐ Düşük: 0-2000 TL

6. Ailenin Eğitim Düzeyi

Baba:

- ☐ Okuryazar
- ☐ İlkokul mezunu
- ☐ Ortaokul mezunu
- ☐ Lise mezunu
- ☐ Üniversite mezunu
- ☐ Yüksek Lisans
- ☐ Doktora

Anne:

- ☐ Okuryazar
- ☐ İlkokul mezunu
- ☐ Ortaokul mezunu
- ☐ Lise mezunu
- ☐ Üniversite mezunu
- ☐ Yüksek Lisans
- ☐ Doktora

Appendix 2. Üstbilişsel Farkındalık Envanteri

Kendini İngilizce öğrenen bir öğrenci olarak göz önünde bulundur. İngilizce öğrenme süreciyle ilgili verilen her ifadeyi dikkatlice oku. Bu ifadelerin senin bugüne kadarki İngilizce öğrenme sürecin kapsamında doğru mu yoksa yanlış mı olduklarını değerlendir. Uygun olan seçeneği işaretle (✓).

	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
1. Düzenli olarak kendime hedeflerime ulaşip ulaşmadığımı sorarım.					
2. Bir soruna çözüm ararken, önce birçok alternatifi değerlendiririm.					
3. İngilizce öğrenirken, geçmişte işe yarayan stratejileri kullanmaya çalışırım.					
4. Öğrenirken yeterince zamanımın olması için öğrenme hızımı kendime göre ayarlarım.					
5. Genel kültür anlamında zayıf ve güçlü yönlerimin farkındayım.					
6. Bir keresinde sınav sonunda, sınavı başarıyla tamamladığımı hatırlıyorum.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
7. Bir göreve başlamadan önce, o görevle ilgili belirli hedefler koyarım.					
8. Önemli bilgilerle karşılaştığımda hızımı düşürürüm.					
9. Ne tür bilginin öğrenme için önemli olduğunu bilirim					
10. Bir sorunu çözerken tüm seçenekleri göz önünde bulundurup bulundurmadığımı kendime sorarım.					
11. Bilgi düzenlemek konusunda iyiyimdir.					
12. Dikkatimi bilinçli olarak önemli bilgiye odaklarım.					
13. Kullandığım her öğrenme stratejisini belirli bir amaçla kullanırım.					
14. Bir konu hakkında önbilgi sahibiysem o konuyu daha iyi öğreniyorum.					
15. Öğretmenin benden neyi öğrenmemi beklediğini bilirim.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
16. Bilgileri hatırlamada başarılıyım.					
17. Duruma göre farklı öğrenme stratejileri kullanırım.					
18. Bir görevi tamamladıktan sonra, kendime görevi daha kolay tamamlamanın başka bir yolu olup olmadığını sorarım.					
19. Öğrenme sürecimi kontrol edebilirim.					
20. Bilgiler arasındaki önemli ilişkileri anlayabilmek için düzenli olarak konu tekrarı yaparım.					
21. Bir konuyu çalışmaya başlamadan önce kendime o konu hakkında sorular sorarım.					
22. Bir sorunu çözerken farklı yöntemler belirler, aralarından en iyisini seçerim.					
23. Konuyu bitirdikten sonra, öğrendiklerimi özetlerim.					
24. Anlamadığım konu olursa, başkalarından yardım isterim.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
25. Gerektiğinde öğrenmek için kendimi motive edebilirim.					
26. Ders çalışırken hangi stratejileri kullandığımın farkındayım.					
27. Ders çalışırken kullandığım çalışma stratejilerin ne kadar işe yaradığını analiz ederim.					
28. Genel kültür anlamındaki güçlü yönlerimi, zayıf yönlerimi gidermek için kullanırım.					
29. Yeni bir bilginin anlam ve önemine odaklanırım.					
30. Bilgileri daha anlamlı kılmak için kendi örneklerimi oluştururum.					
31. Bir konuyu ne kadar iyi anladığımı değerlendirmek konusunda başarılıyım.					
32. Kendimi istemsiz olarak yararlı öğrenme stratejileri kullanırken buluyorum.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
33. Kavrayıp kavramadığımı denetlemek için düzenli olarak duraksadığımı fark ederim.					
34. Kullandığım hangi stratejinin ne zaman en etkili olacağını bilirim.					
35. Çalışmamı bitirince amaçlarıma ne kadar ulaşabildiğimi kendime sorarım.					
36. Öğrenirken bana yardımcı olmaları için şekiller veya grafikler çizerim.					
37. Bir sorunu çözdükten sonra, her bir seçeneği göz önünde bulundurup bulundurmadığımı kendime sorarım.					
38. Yeni öğrendiğim bilgileri kendi kelimelerimle ifade etmeyi denerim.					
39. Bir konuyu anlamakta başarısız olduğumda, stratejimi değiştiririm.					
40. Anlamamı kolaylaştırması için metnin yapısını kullanırım.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
41. Bir işe başlamadan önce yönergeleri dikkatlice okurum.					
42. Okumakta olduğum şeylerin bildiklerimle bağlantılı olup olmadığını kendime sorarım.					
43. Aklım karıştığında varsayımlarımı tekrar değerlendiririm/gözden geçiririm.					
44. Hedeflerime en iyi şekilde ulaşmak için zamanımı düzenlerim.					
45. İlgiğim olan konuyu daha iyi öğrenirim.					
46. Öğrenme sürecimi daha küçük adımlara bölmeye çalışırım.					
47. Detaylar yerine genel anlama odaklanırım.					
48. Yeni bir şey öğrenirken ne kadar başarılı olduğuma dair kendime sorular sorarım.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
49. Anlamadığım yeni bilgi olduğunda durur ve o bilginin üzerinden geçerim.					
50. Kafam karıştığında durur ve tekrar okurum.					

Appendix 3. Çok Boyutlu Nedensel Yükleme Ölçeği

Kendini İngilizce öğrenen bir öğrenci olarak göz önünde bulundur. İngilizce öğrenme sürecinde karşılaştığınız başarı ve başarısızlıkları hatırla. İngilizce dersindeki başarı ve başarısızlık nedenleri ile ilgili verilen her ifadeyi dikkatlice oku. Bu ifadelere ne derecede katıldığını verilen beş seçenek doğrultusunda belirt. En uygun olan seçeneği işaretle (✓).

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
1. İngilizce dersinde düşük bir not aldığımda, asıl sebebin genellikle o ders için fazla çalışmamış olduğumu hissederim.					
2. İngilizce dersinde düşük notlar alsaydım, bu akademik yeterliğimi sorgulamama sebep olurdu.					
3. İngilizce dersinde aldığım iyi notları bazen öğretmenin esnek notlandırma düzeni sayesinde aldım.					
4. İngilizce sınavlarındaki başarımlarım bazen şansa bağlıdır.					
5. Aldığım yüksek notlar her zaman doğrudan emeklerimin sonucudur.					
6. İyi not almamın en önemli bileşeni benim akademik yeterliğimdir.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
7. Edindiğim tecrübelerle göre eğer bir öğretmenin gözünde başarısız bir öğrenciyse, o derste sunduğunuz ürünün, diğer öğrencilerin ürünlerine göre, düşük not alması olasıdır.					
8. Düşük notlarımın bazıları kısmen şanssızlıktan kaynaklanıyormuş gibi görünüyor.					
9. Okulda beklenen performansı sergileyemediğimde, bunun sebebi çoğu kez çaba göstermememdir.					
10. Eğer bir derste başarısız olursam, bunun nedeni büyük ihtimalle o alanda yeteneğim olmamasıdır.					
11. Bazı derslerden iyi notlar almam, o derslerin sınavlarının diğerlerine oranla daha kolay olduğunu gösterebilir.					
12. Bazen iyi notlar almam sınavda çalıştığınız yerden sorulması gibi büyük ölçüde şans faktörüne bağlıdır.					
13. İyi notlar almam tamamen çok çalıştığım içindir.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
14. İyi notlarımın akademik yeteneğimin bir göstergesi olduğunu hissediyorum					
15. Düşük notlarımı çoğu kez öğretmenin dersi ilgi çekici hale getiremediği için aldım.					
16. Düşük notlarım bana bazen sadece şanssız olduğumu düşündürüyor.					
17. Düşük notlar yeterince çalışmadığımı habercisi oluyor.					
18. Eğer düşük notlar alırsam, derste başarılı olmamı sağlayacak becerilere sahip olmadığımı varsayardım.					
19. Bazen sadece ders materyalinin çok kolay olmasından dolayı iyi notlar alıyorum.					
20. Bazen aldığım iyi notlar için kendimi şanslı görmem gerektiğini hissediyorum.					

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
21. Yeterince çalışırsam, akademik başarı yolundaki tüm engelleri aşabilirim.					
22. İyi notlar alıyorsam, bu akademik yeterliliğimdendir.					
23. Aldığım bazı düşük notlar bazı öğretmenlerin not verirken cimri olmaları gerçeğini yansıtıyormuş gibi duruyor.					
24. Bazı düşük notlarım yanlış zamanda yanlış derste olmak gibi kötü şansın bir etkeni olabilir.					

Appendix 4. Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI)

Think of yourself as a learner of English. Read each statement carefully. Consider if the statement is true or false as it generally applies to you when you are in the role of learning English. Check (✓) True or False as appropriate.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I ask myself periodically if I am meeting my goals.					
2. I consider several alternatives to a problem before I answer.					
3. I try to use strategies that have worked in the past.					
4. I pace myself while learning in order to have enough time.					
5. I understand my intellectual strengths and weaknesses.					
6. I know how well I did once I finish a test.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. I set specific goals before I begin a task.					
8. I slow down when I encounter important information.					
9. I know what kind of information is most important to learn.					
10. I ask myself if I have considered all options when solving a problem.					
11. I am good at organizing information.					
12. I consciously focus my attention on important information.					
13. I have a specific purpose for each strategy I use.					
14. I learn best when I know something about the topic.					
15. I know what the teacher expects me to learn.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. I am good at remembering information.					
17. I use different learning strategies depending on the situation.					
18. I ask myself if there was an easier way to do things after I finish a task.					
19. I have control over how well I learn.					
20. I periodically review to help me understand important relationships.					
21. I ask myself questions about the material before I begin.					
22. I think of several ways to solve a problem and choose the best one.					
23. I summarize what I've learned after I finish.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24. I ask others for help when I don't understand something.					
25. I can motivate myself to learn when I need to.					
26. I am aware of what strategies I use when I study.					
27. I find myself analyzing the usefulness of strategies while I study.					
28. I use my intellectual strengths to compensate for my weaknesses.					
29. I focus on the meaning and significance of new information.					
30. I create my own examples to make information more meaningful.					
31. I am a good judge of how well I understand something.					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
32. I find myself using helpful learning strategies automatically.					
33. I find myself pausing regularly to check my comprehension.					
34. I know when each strategy I use will be most effective.					
35. I ask myself how well I accomplish my goals once I'm finished.					
36. I draw pictures or diagrams to help me understand while learning.					
37. I ask myself if I have considered all options after I solve a problem.					
38. I try to translate new information into my own words.					
39. I change strategies when I fail to understand.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40. I use the organizational structure of the text to help me learn.					
41. I read instructions carefully before I begin a task.					
42. I ask myself if what I'm reading is related to what I already know.					
43. I reevaluate my assumptions when I get confused.					
44. I organize my time to best accomplish my goals.					
45. I learn more when I am interested in the topic.					
46. I try to break studying down into smaller steps.					
47. I focus on overall meaning rather than specifics.					
48. I ask myself questions about how well I am doing while I am learning something new.					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
49. I stop and go back over new information that is not clear.					
50. I stop and reread when I get confused.					

Appendix 5. Multidimensional-Multiattributibutional Causality Scale (MMCS)

Think of yourself as a learner of English. Read each statement carefully. Consider if you agree or disagree with the statement when you are in the role of learning English. Check (✓) Agree or Disagree.

I. ACHIEVEMENT

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. When I receive a poor grade, I usually feel that the main reason is that I haven't studied enough for that course.					
2. If I were to receive low marks it would cause me to question my academic ability.					
3. Some of the times that I have gotten a good grade in a course, it was due to the teacher's easy grading scheme.					
4. Sometimes my success on exams depends on some luck.					
5. In my case, the good grades I receive are always the direct result of my efforts.					
6. The most important ingredient in getting good grades is my academic ability.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. In my experience, once a professor gets the idea you're a poor student, your work is much more likely to receive poor grades than if someone else handed it in.					
8. Some of my lower grades have seemed to be partially due to bad breaks.					
9. When I fail to do as well as expected in school, it is often due to a lack of effort on my part.					
10. If I were to fail a course it would probably be because I lacked skill in that area.					
11. Some of my good grades may simply reflect that these were easier courses than most.					
12. I feel that some of my good grades depend to a considerable extent on chance factors, such as having the right questions show up on an exam.					
13. Whenever I receive good grades, it is always because I have studied hard for that course.					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. I feel that my good grades reflect directly on my academic ability.					
15. Often my poorer grades are obtained in courses that the professor has failed to make interesting.					
16. My academic low points sometimes make me think I was just unlucky.					
17. Poor grades inform me that I haven't worked hard enough.					
18. If I were to get poor grades I would assume that I lacked ability to succeed in those courses.					
19. Sometimes I get good grades only because the course material was easy to learn.					
20. Sometimes I feel that I have to consider myself lucky for the good grades I get.					
21. I can overcome all obstacles in the path of academic success if I work hard enough.					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. When I get good grades, it is because of my academic competence.					
23. Some low grades I've received seem to me to reflect the fact that some teachers are just stingy with marks.					
24. Some of my bad grades may have been a function of bad luck, being in the wrong course at the wrong time.					

Appendix 6. Interview Questions

A) Evaluation of English Classes and Course Grades

- What do you think about English classes in state school?
- In what aspects do you consider English classes in state schools as sufficient?
 - What are the contributions of English classes?
 - What are the contributions of English classes with regard to vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and reading, speaking, listening and writing skills?
- In what aspects do you consider English classes in state schools as insufficient?
 - How do you explain this insufficiency?
 - What are the roles of aspects such as the teacher, curriculum, classroom environment or yourself?
- How do your test or course grades in English classes reflect your English language proficiency?
 - How do you explain this?
 - What are the elements that form course grades?
- Do you believe that classmates with a higher English grade are more competent in English?/ Do you believe that your English is better than those with lower English grades?
 - Why do they have higher grades than you? / In what respect are you better in English and get higher grades?

B) Ability

- Do you consider yourself as competent within English classes?
 - Under which conditions could you say that you fully know English?
 - Which qualities do you need to have?

- Which of these qualities do you already inherit?
- Would you claim that you know English?
- Is it possible that your English grades reflect your academic ability rather than your English skills?
 - To what extent do you believe your academic ability impacts your English grades?
 - How could it impact your grades?
- Would you be able to correctly answer test items and get high grades despite lacking English skills?
 - If yes, how would you do this?
 - If not, why?
- Do you consider yourself as incompetent if you receive low grades in English?
 - How often does this feeling occur?
- Do you explain failure experiences in English classes with your lacking competence, and success experiences with your competence?
 - If not, how do you explain it?
 - If yes, is competence the most important aspect in success and failure outcomes? Why?
- Do you believe that English classes foster your competence and ability to improve your language proficiency? Why?

C) Context-task difficulty

- What do you think about the difficulty of English exams?
- Do you think that English teachers purposefully use easy test items on exams?

- Do you believe English teachers try to guarantee that students at least reach some points in English exams by including such test items? Why?
- Do English teachers design English exams that correspond to students' language proficiency?
 - If yes, why?
 - If not, why do they use easier/more difficult test items?
- Does a high grade in an easy or difficult exam lead to greater satisfaction?
 - Why?
 - Do you study for English to feel satisfied at the end of the process?
- Do you believe that task difficulty in English classes will facilitate your communication with foreigners outside of the classroom?
 - If not, why do you think so? Should task difficulty be increased? How?
 - If yes, do you believe the difficulty level in English classes corresponds to “real-life English” outside of the classroom?
- Does task difficulty in English classes and the subsequent course grades reflect your real English competence/abilities?
 - How do you explain this?

D) Effort

- To what extent does effort impact your English grades?
- Could your English grades be the consequence of your effort rather than your English competence/ability itself?
 - In what respect could effort impact your grades?
- Could you pass English classes/exams with high grades by investing effort even though you struggle with learning English?
 - If yes, how would you explain this? How would you achieve this?

- If not, why not? Would not you try to study in order to compensate for your deficiencies? Did not effort lead to improvement so far?
- In which language skills do you consider improvement to be more likely to occur based on investing more effort?
 - Grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, writing or listening?

E) Luck

- To what extent are your course/exam grades shaped by chance factors? (easy tasks/test items, cheating, ...)
- How lucky do you consider yourself within the language classroom?
- Does it occur that you do not study because you trust in your luck? Under which conditions does this occur?
- Which question types increase the chance to get high grades?
 - Open-ended, matching, multiple choice, or fill in the blanks items?
 - How often are these question types used in exams/classes? Which are the most frequent ones?
 - Are the most frequently used question types fostering your English proficiency? What are their impacts on your language proficiency?
 - Do you believe test items used most frequently in English exams are assessing your English proficiency?
 - What do you think about “Application Exams” specialized on different skills?
 - Do they help you to improve your English?
 - Do they urge you to focus more on language skills and how to improve them?
- Exams assessing which language skill are more prone to be affected by chance?
 - Grammar, vocabulary, speaking, reading, writing or listening?
 - Which language skill is assessed most?

- Are chance factors relevant if you are required to use English outside of the language classroom?
 - To what extent? How do you explain this?

F) Ranking

- Could you rank ability, effort, task difficulty and luck in terms of their impact on your course/exam grades from the most to least influential?



Appendix 7. Permission to Use the Research Instruments

Gmail

E-POSTA YAZ

Gelen Kutusu (28)

Yıldızlı

Önemli

Gönderilmiş Postalar

Taslaqlar (1)

Kategoriler

Diğer

Özlem

Yakın zamanda gerçekleşen bir sohbet yok

Yeni bir tane başlatın

←

📧

🔔

🗑️

Gelen Kutusuna taşı

Diğer

66 ileti dizisinden 2.

⏪

⏩

⚙️

Permission to use the Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale

Gelen Kutusu x

26 Oca (3 gün önce)

☆

↩️

▼

Özlem G <oozlemguness@gmail.com>

Alıcı: carl.vonbaeyer

Dr. Carl L. von Baeyer,

I am a Master's student in ELT at Gazi University in Turkey. I am currently working on my thesis titled "The relation between students' metacognitive awareness and failure attributions in an EFL context". The focus of my study is to investigate to which causes language learners attribute their failure experiences in learning English, to measure language learners' level of metacognitive awareness and to examine the relationship between these two concepts.

I would like your permission to use the "Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale" as one of my instruments in my research study.

The instrument and your publication will be appropriately cited.

Please let me know if you need any further information or have any additional concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Özlem Güneş

Carl L von Baeyer

Alıcı: bana

27 Oca (2 gün önce)

☆

↩️

▼

Özlem Güneş

Carl L von Baeyer

Alıcı: bana

27 Oca (2 gün önce)

☆

↩️

▼

İngilizce > Türkçe

İletiyi çevir

İngilizce için kapat x

Yes, this is fine.

I no longer have any information on file about this scale. I was just a student assistant when I worked on it.

...

Carl von Baeyer

On Jan 26, 2018 11:06, "Özlem G" <oozlemguness@gmail.com> wrote:
Dr. Carl L. von Baeyer,
I am a Master's student in ELT at Gazi University in Turkey. I am currently working on my thesis titled "The relation between students'

Gmail

Gelen Kutusuna taşı Diğer

66 ileti dizisinden 1.

E-POSTA YAZ

Gelen Kutusu (28)

Yıldızlı

Önemli

Gönderilmiş Postalar

Taslaklar (1)

Kategoriler

Diğer

Özlem

Yakın zamanda gerçekleşen

Permission to use the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory

Özlem G <oozlemguness@gmail.com>
Alıcı: rsd7

26 Oca (3 gün önce)

Dr. Rayne A. Sperling,

I am a Master's student in ELT at Gazi University in Turkey. I am currently working on my thesis titled "The relation between students' metacognitive awareness and failure attributions in an EFL context". The focus of my study is to investigate to which causes language learners attribute their failure experiences in learning English, to measure language learners' level of metacognitive awareness and to examine the relationship between these two concepts.

I would like your permission to use the "Metacognitive Awareness Inventory" as one of my instruments in my research study. The instrument and your publication will be appropriately cited.

Please let me know if you need any further information or have any additional concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Özlem Güneş

Gmail

Gelen Kutusuna taşı Diğer

105 ileti dizisinden 1.

E-POSTA YAZ

Gelen Kutusu (28)

Yıldızlı

Önemli

Gönderilmiş Postalar

Taslaklar

Kategoriler

Diğer

Özlem

Özlem G
Dr. Rayne A. Sperling, I am a Master's student in ELT at Gazi University in T...

26 Oca (5 gün önce)

Rayne Sperling
Alıcı: bana

02:20 (11 saat önce)

İngilizce > Türkçe İletiyi çevir

İngilizce için kapat

Good luck with your research!

From: Özlem G [mailto:oozlemguness@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, January 26, 2018 12:10 PM
To: Rayne Sperling <rsd7@psu.edu>
Subject: Permission to use the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory

Dr. Rayne A. Sperling,

I am a Master's student in ELT at Gazi University in Turkey. I am currently working on my thesis titled "The relation between students' metacognitive awareness and failure attributions in



GAZİ GELECEKTİR..