Learning Climate and Self-Efficacy Beliefs of High School Students in an EFL Setting

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Abstract: Language learning constitutes a prominent need in the 21st century, and many factors influence it, such as cognitive, affective, social, cultural and physical conditions. Considering that where we learn language impacts how we feel while learning, the present study dwells upon two of these conditions: learning climate and self-efficacy. In this study, 192 students from a vocational high school in Turkey were administered a Learning Climate Questionnaire, Self-efficacy Scale and one open-ended question that explored their attributions for success or failure in learning English. This descriptive study used a mixed research design.. The results showed that high school students have positive perceptions of their learning climate and their own abilities to learn English although they remain neutral on most issues, which might be indicative of their unconstructed opinions on learning atmosphere and their own language learning abilities. A statistically significant relationship was found between learning climate and self-efficacy. Qualitative data also shed light onto students' attributions for success and failure in learning English Therefore, the present study has implications for stakeholders who make decisions on language learning and teaching procedures.

İngilizce'nin Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğretildiği Bağlamda, Lise Öğrencilerinin Öğrenme İklimi ve Öz-yeterlik İnançları Arasındaki İlişkiyi İnceleme
Öz: Dil öğrenme, 21. yüzyılın öne çıkan bir ihtiyacıdır, ve bilişsel, duyuşsal, sosyal, kültürel ve fiziksel olmak üzere birçok faktörden etkilenir. Öğrenmenin gerçekleştiği yer öğrenme sırasındaki duyguları etkilediğinden, çalışma bu faktörlerden ikisi olan öğrenme iklimi ve öz-yeterlik konularına odaklanmaktadır. Çalışmaya, Türkiye'de meslek lisesinde okuyan 192 öğrenci katılmıştır. Veriler, Öğrenme İklimi Anketi, Öz-yeterlik Ölçeği, ve İngilizce öğrenmede başarı ve başarısızlığa neden olan faktörleri inceleyen açık uçlu soru yöntemi ile toplanmıştır. Bu betimsel çalışma karma araştırma modelini kullanmıştır. Çalışma bulgularına göre, lise öğrencileri öğrenme iklimi ve öz-yeterlilikleri konusunda olumlu algılara sahiptir, fakat birçok konuda kararsızlık sergilemişlerdir. Öğrenme iklimi ve öz-yeterlik arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Nitel veriler de öğrencilerin İngilizce öğrenmedeki başarı ve başarısızlıkları nelere bağladıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Çalışma, dil öğrenme ve öğretme uygulamaları karar sürecinde paydaş olan kişilere öneriler sunmaktadır.

1. Introduction

Learning is one of the basic needs of humans, and when this need is fulfilled, individuals become more equipped and powerful. It lasts a lifetime and results in positive change and improvement. While learning is important in human life, the environment where learning takes place also plays a critical role since it can positively or negatively influence the outcomes of learning. Moreover, school success is valuable, particularly among young people, because school is the basic setting where success and failure are gauged and supported through interactions with instructors and peers (Sandahl, 2016). Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2013) define school climate as students', school staff's and parents' experiences in school life from social, emotional and academic perspectives. Cohen (2006) adds a list of factors that describe school climate which includes issues with structure (i.e., school size); issues with environment (i.e., cleanliness); level of safety and order (i.e., social-emotional and physical); expectations for student achievement; quality of instruction; amount of collaboration and communication; sense of school community; norms of peer groups; partnerships in school-home communities; morale of students; and the degree of importance as a learning community. These factors combine to create a setting which is influential in the academic life of students because it is directly connected to a classroom's learning atmosphere, which plays a significant role in a student's success or failure. In fact, a classroom atmosphere which fosters positive affective feelings in students may be a larger contributor to success than the physical conditions; thus, the psychological atmosphere could be more important. Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold: firstly, it attempts to highlight the relationship between learning climate and self-efficacy beliefs, and secondly, it seeks to reveal students' attributions for success and failure in learning English since perceived attributions are also related with sense of efficacy.

2. Review of Literature
2.1. Learning Climate

Classroom climate refers to students' feelings about their instructor and peers (Barr, 2016) within social, psychological and pedagogical settings where learning happens which impacts students' success and attitudes (Fraser, 1998). If positive, a learning environment enables learners to cope with their problems and realize their goals through access to the materials; moreover, experiences in this environment can make learning a lifelong process (Özerem & Akkoyunlu, 2015). What is more, learning environment affects students' academic engagement (Opdenakker & Minnaert, 2011). Thus, this broad concept is of great consequence in education.

Learning climate gains even more importance in language learning environments because language learning prioritizes active participation and interaction, which results in fluent communication. However, this occurs in a positive learning atmosphere. Yi (2006) notes that building a climate suitable for learning in the class is the most significant task of an EFL teacher for classroom management, and Yi adds that motivation, involvement, relaxed atmosphere and fluency over accuracy can help to create such an environment. Since learning a foreign language, especially English, is one of the basic requirements of the 21st century, potentially positive factors in language learning should be emphasized more in academic studies and teacher training programs, which is in line with current research. According to Özdemir and Rahimi's (2013) study, conducted among EFL learners in a Turkish context, environment as psychosocial setting influences learning substantially, and a positive psychosocial setting leads to productive learning and increases student engagement. Similarly, Sağlam and Salı (2013), in their study of foreign language learning environment, highlight the importance of the socio-psychological, socio-cultural and pedagogical domains of

environments in addition to the physical side. Therefore, a language learning environment should not be viewed as only a physical setting where learning and teaching occurs. The psychological face of the environment is likely to hold greater importance, and students can achieve more and feel more confident in a psychologically secure learning environment even if it lacks some physical features. How teachers approach the students and how students view the lesson accordingly are related to the classroom atmosphere and success in language learning. Hemanth (2015) also claims that the learning climate of a classroom is influenced by different factors, and the main ones include teacher attitude and student response. Therefore, teachers should give priority to a non-threatening language learning climate (Finch, 2001).

The positive atmosphere in a language classroom can boost students' self-concepts as learners and enable them to construct more positive feelings about themselves. One of these feelings is undoubtedly self-efficacy, which is a key to success in language learning. Daemi, Tahriri and Zafarghandi (2017) found a significant relationship between classroom environment and EFL learners' academic self-efficacy. Considering the importance of self-efficacy in language learning, the atmosphere of the classroom needs greater attention, and the teacher should not underestimate the potential role of climate, which could increase the language performance.

2.2. Self-Efficacy

Language learning involves various affective factors, one of which is the sense of self-efficacy. It has become one of the important issues in education, and it refers to personal determination of one's own skill to do a certain task (Genç, Kuluşaklı & Aydın, 2016). Efficacy beliefs influence the way individuals feel, think, motivate themselves and act through cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes (Bandura, 1993). Self-efficacy is related to people's beliefs in their skills in dealing with the events that affect their lives; in fact, people do not persist in the face of difficulties if they do not believe that they will succeed (Bandura, 2010).

In the context of learning, studies show high self-efficacy is beneficial. Students with higher self-efficacy show greater effort, perseverance and resilience (Pajares, 2000). Similarly, Asakereh and Dehghannezhad (2015) state that satisfaction from classroom environment and self-efficacy are associated with students' academic performance. Likewise, Rahimi and Abedini (2009) state that self-efficacy predicts students' achievement; thus, instructors should encourage learners to believe in their abilities and to exert more effort in the face of difficulties instead of attributing their failures to their lack of abilities. Moreover, according to Tılfarlıoğlu and Cinkara (2009), self-efficacy provides valuable insight into student success, and it can be a significant tool for EFL classrooms, so students' learning environments could be used to promote self-efficacy.

In the context of language learning, various studies indicated that a sense of self-efficacy is related to good performance in language learning tasks in different language skills (Asakereh and Dehghannezhad, 2015; Farjami & Amerian, 2013; Ghonsooly & Elahi, 2010; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009; Wang, Spencer & Xing, 2009). Khajavi and Ketabi (2012) underline the effect of self-efficacy beliefs on student achievement in language learning, and they propose attribution retraining to overcome negative self-efficacy beliefs. Since attributions can influence the effort that learners exert, they can be encouraged to regard success and failure as an outcome that they can control, which may enhance their expectancy for achievement (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Concerning this issue, Şener and Erol (2017) also state that a high level of self-efficacy enables students to feel anxiety less and to benefit from language learning opportunities more. Therefore, when students with high self-efficacy are provided

with ample language learning materials integrated with technology, they can make the most out of such opportunities and make language learning a more conscious and sound process.

In addition to achievement, students' interest in one academic task is also directly related to their efficacy, and high efficacy levels in students can make them more autonomous learners based on the effort they make (Balaman Uçar, 2016). Given the importance of autonomy in language learning, it is obvious that self-efficacy can enhance the language learning process. Autonomous learners, who assume responsibilities in their learning process, can achieve more productive foreign language learning; hence, providing students with more autonomous and positive language learning environments can increase their efficiency in learning. All in all, a sense of efficacy can impact individuals' everyday lives, boost personal well-being and reduce the level of stress (Oksaharju, 2017), which in turn promotes academic attainments. Therefore, factors affecting self-efficacious feelings should be considered and examined to raise success levels in learning a foreign language.

The present study focuses on one of the potential factors, which is learning climate. It aims to find the relationship between learning climate and self-efficacy level in high school students who take English as a compulsory course. Given that students who have just entered university after high school lack communication skills in English, this study looks closely into the context of a state high school in Turkey. Solving the problems and clearing the barriers that prevent students from having a good command of English before they start to study at university can enable instructors and students to learn English more academically at university level. Additionally, although learning environment studies have involved many subject areas, research on learning environments in English classrooms is limited (Lim & Fraser, 2018). With these notions in mind, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do high school students feel about the learning climate in which they learn English?
2. What is the self-efficacy level of high school students in terms of learning English?
3. What are their attributions for success and failure in learning English?
4. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the learning climate and sense of self-efficacy?

3. Methodology
3.1. Research Design and Participants
The present study was descriptive in nature. It used a mixed research design with both quantitative and qualitative features. A vocational high school in Turkey constituted the context of the study. The participants included 192 randomly selected 9th and 10th grade high school students taking English as a compulsory course. The age ranged between 14 and 20; however, only one student was 14, 19 and 20 respectively, and six students were 18 years old; hence, the study's representative age range could be accepted as 15 to 17. As regards gender, 137 students were male; 46 students were female, and data were missing on gender for 9 students; however, the age and gender of the students were not taken into consideration, so the missing data were inconsequential to the results.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments
The participants were administered three different data collection instruments. Triangulation was performed through both quantitative and qualitative tools. A Turkish version of the Learning Climate Questionnaire developed by Williams and Deci (1996) was given to the participants. The questionnaire was adapted into Turkish by Kanadlı and Bağçeci (2016), with

Cronbach Alpha coefficient as 0.89. It especially focused on a learning environment where the teacher supported learner autonomy. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items, and they were Likert type items with seven choices. All the statements, except for the 13th item, were positive. The scores were calculated by averaging the individual item scores, and the higher average scores meant a higher level of perceived autonomy support. The participants were also given a Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Rahemi (2007) to determine the students' self-efficacy levels. The Likert type items were composed of 10 items, all of which were positive statements. The scale presented the respondents with five options as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. However, the scale was distributed to the students in Turkish, and the translation of the instrument into the English language was checked by both English and Turkish language instructors. Students were also asked one open-ended question about their beliefs on the reasons for success and failure in learning English. The aim of the question was to reveal their perceived causal attributions for success and failure in learning English.

3.3. Data Analysis
Both the Learning Climate Questionnaire and the Self-Efficacy Scale were analyzed quantitatively using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0 version for Windows). The data were presented descriptively. How students viewed their learning climate and whether they felt efficacious in learning English were described with their percentages and frequencies. Then, the relationship between learning climate and self-efficacy belief was determined using correlation analysis. To support the related data, the open-ended question was analyzed qualitatively. The qualitative data was subjected to content analysis, and codes and themes were identified for both success and failure attributions. All the responses to the open-ended question were put into analysis without limiting the number of the participants. Through this method, what the students attributed their success and failure to was uncovered, and their perceived causes were discussed in line with learning climate and sense of self-efficacy.

4. Findings
The study explored the high school students' beliefs on learning climate and self-efficacy within the framework of the English course. The findings present the data in three different sections: perceptions of students' language learning environment and self-efficacy, the relationship between learning climate and self-efficacy, and the students' causal attributions for success and failure in learning English, which were believed to be connected to learning climate and sense of efficacy.

4.1. Findings of the Learning Climate Questionnaire
The Learning Climate Questionnaire revealed students' beliefs on the extent to which their teachers built an autonomy-supporting environment in the classroom. The higher average score meant a higher level of autonomy perceived by the participants. The questionnaire involved seven degrees of responses; however, it gave only three categories for the answers: strongly disagree (1), neutral (4) and strongly agree. To identify the categories clearly, the interval width was found. The range, which means the difference between minimum and maximum data entries (Larson & Farber, 2002), was specified by subtracting minimum data entry (15) from the maximum data entry (105). The best method for finding the best interval width was the trial-and-error approach (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2010); therefore, the interval width was taken as 15 since there were seven categories, and the range was 90. Namely, the scores in the distribution were grouped into intervals referred to as grouped frequency distribution (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2011). Accordingly, the scores ranged between 1-14 were named as *strongly disagree*, 15-29 as *disagree*, 30-44 as *slightly disagree*, 45-59 as

neutral, 60-74 as *slightly agree*, 75-89 as *agree* and 90-105 as *strongly agree*. The mean score of the students' responses were found to be 4.80, which indicated that they did not feel negative towards the learning climate or the teacher's behaviour in the English lesson, and they perceived a moderate level of autonomy. It was neither too low nor too high; however, they held the opinion that autonomy was supported in their learning environment to some extent.

The total score of the questionnaire supported this finding as well. It was found to be 72.14 implying that students had positive beliefs on the autonomy supporting environment in their English lessons. Higher scores indicated a higher level of perceived autonomy support. When individual items were explored, the responses revealed similar findings. Their answers went between strongly agree and neutral. The findings indicated the students had positive feelings towards the learning climate; however, they remain undecided or neutral on some points. For instance, 42% of the students, the highest percentage, agreed that their teacher provided them with choices. Roughly 30% of the students, were neutral that their teacher tried to get their opinions before suggesting a new method to apply to any issue.

When it came to psychological security, most of the students felt that they were understood by their teacher; they felt relaxed with their teacher in the classroom; they could share their feelings with their teacher; their teacher could understand people's feelings well; they liked the way their teacher talked to them, and they trusted their teacher very much. However, nearly 28% of the students strongly agreed that their teacher relied on their abilities to be successful, and the same number of students preferred to stay neutral on it. Likewise, 27.1% of the students strongly agreed that their teacher respected them as an individual, while 26.6% of students remained unsure about it. Approximately, one third of the students were neutral that their teacher accepted students' negative feelings about the course though nearly 27% of them did not believe their teacher had a negative attitude towards students' negative opinions about the course. Furthermore, more than one third of the students strongly believed that their teacher helped them to comprehend what to do to achieve course objectives (38%), encouraged them to ask questions (41.1%) and answered their questions carefully (46.9%). The findings revealed that the students had positive feelings towards their learning environment. Although they preferred to remain neutral on most issues, they did not frequently report unfavorable or negative perceptions on the climate.

4.2. Findings of the Self-Efficacy Scale
In addition to students' perceptions on the learning climate in English lessons, their beliefs on their own abilities in English were also elicited.

Table 1
Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Students

		Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	ITEMS	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
1	I have got a special ability for learning English	32	17	39	20	**71**	37	22	12	28	15
2	I believe I have the power to get my desired grade on the final exam in English	50	26	**65**	34	46	24	16	8	15	8
3	I think that someday I will speak English very well	43	22	**61**	32	50	26	18	9	20	10
4	I am sure I can solve any problems I face in learning	39	20	50	26	**70**	36	18	9	15	8

	English because I've got the power to do it									
5	Personally, I'm satisfied with my current level of English proficiency	43	22	**59**	31	40	21	29	15	21	11
6	I'm definitely sure that I can improve my English by trying harder	64	33	**73**	38	33	17	12	6	10	5
7	If I do not do well in this lesson, it is only because I do not exert enough effort	**79**	41	53	28	27	14	17	9	16	8
8	Generally speaking, my self – confidence in English classes is high	30	16	**64**	33	63	33	20	10	15	8
9	Learning English is a very easy task	28	15	**58**	30	50	26	29	15	27	14
10	I try to study English to reach the highest level of ability in it	59	31	**60**	31	42	22	20	10	11	6

Table 1 presents the descriptive results of the self-efficacy scale. Generally speaking, students had positive self-efficacy beliefs; however, the mean score of their responses was 3.50, which suggests the students were unsure of their abilities to learn English. Although the students did not perceive their language learning skills negatively, their scores reflected neutrality on this point. For instance, 37% of the students were neutral when asked if they had a special ability for learning English. Likewise, 33.3% of the students agreed that they had high self-confidence in English though a similar number of students seemed to be undecided on their confidence. Although more than half of the students believed that they would speak English very well one day, 26.1% of the students remained neutral, indicating uncertainty of their future speaking abilities. Considering the satisfaction with the current level of English proficiency, more than half of the students were pleased with their English level though 26% of the students are not content with it, and one fourth of them are not definite about it. However, the majority of the students believed that they could improve their English by making an effort, and they attributed their failure in English to lack of effort. Although they seemed to believe in the importance of effort, 36.4% of the students were not sure about whether they had the power to solve any problems they faced while learning English.

Since learning atmosphere could influence students' self-concepts of their abilities in learning, the probable relationship between learning climate and self-efficacy beliefs was also investigated in the study. Since the distribution was not found to be normal after the normality tests (sig. < .05), Spearman's rho was conducted instead of Pearson correlation to establish the relationship between climate and efficacy. Table 2 presents the correlation findings below:

Table 2
Correlation between Learning Climate and Self-efficacy Beliefs

		Learning Climate	Self-Efficacy
Learning Climate	Spearman's rho	1	.423
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	192	192

Self-Efficacy	Spearman's rho	.423	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	192	192

Table 2 shows that there is a positive relationship between learning climate and self-efficacy at a medium level. Since the relationship is positive, it could be said that they increase or decrease in the same direction even though this relation is at medium level (.423). However, the relationship was found to be statistically significant (sig. <.05).

4.3. Findings of Students' Attributions for Success and Failure

The participants were also asked an open-ended question regarding their perceived causal attributions for success and failure in learning English. In the qualitative analysis, responses of the all participants were analysed; however, 41 students in total put forth irrelevant responses to the question or gave no answer; thus, they were not included in the analysis. In addition, 11 students reported that they had no idea about the issue. Consequently, responses of 140 participants were put into content analysis.

Table 3 below pictures the students' beliefs on the reasons for being successful in learning English. Frequencies of citations by the participants were presented in the table.

Table 3
Perceived Causal Attributions for Success in Learning English

	Attributions for success	Frequency *(f)*
Personal Factors	Effort	40
	Comprehension	5
	Motivation	5
	Interest in English	5
	Self-confidence	4
	Effective communication	2
	Knowledge of grammar rules	1
Learning Preferences	Revision	6
	New words	3
	Practice	3
	Songs	1
	Games	1
	Movies	1
	Learning visually	1
	Working in an English-speaking environment	1
	Travelling	1
	Homework	1
	Books	1
External Factors	Teacher	14
	Friends	4
	Environment	1
	Effective instruction of vocabulary	1
	Variety of materials	1

Among the success attributions, *effort* was found to have the highest frequency of citation. According to the students, if they exert enough effort and study, they can be successful in learning English. This finding is in line with their responses to the Self-Efficacy Scale. It is

obvious that students valued the role of effort in succeeding in English. They see lack of comprehension as a barrier to success. Similarly, *motivation* and *interest* were also among the factors that influenced language learning positively. Expressing oneself well was seen as a success attribution, as well. Furthermore, students stated different learning preferences to achieve success in English. While *making revision* had the highest frequency, it was followed by *learning new words* and *making practice*. As a matter of fact, both revision and practice could also be categorized under effort since both are related to study skills and devoting time and effort to learning. In addition, students viewed the *teacher* as one of the important factors in language learning. According to the students, *peers* also had a positive effect on language learning. *Environment* was also given as one of the reasons for success in learning. The students also posed similar responses for failure attributions as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4
Perceived Causal Attributions for Failure in Learning English

	Attributions for failure	**Frequency *(f)***
Personal Factors	Lack of effort	34
	Not listening to the lesson	9
	Not understanding	7
	Lack of revision	7
	Lack of motivation	5
	Lack of self-confidence	4
	Lack of interest	3
	Boredom	2
	Lack of practice	1
	Lack of language knowledge	1
	Lack of time	1
	Wasting time on phone	1
	Loss of concentration	1
	Shame for mistake	1
	Forgetting easily	1
Language-related	Difficulty of English	4
	Difference from Turkish	1
	Difficulty in Turkish	1
External Factors	Teacher	11
	Friends	4
	Environment	3
	Overload of other lessons	2
	Family	1
	Coursebooks	1

The notion of *effort* was also mentioned in factors that influence language learning. Students regarded lack of effort as one of the reasons for failure in learning English, with the highest frequency. Students see it as one of the debilitative factors in learning. Related to this, not listening to lesson, *lack of participation* or sabotaging the lesson was viewed to cause failure. It also concerns classroom environment. Likewise, students think that *lack of revision* after class might pave the way for failure. *Lack of comprehension*, as stated in success attributions, could lead to failure according to the participants. As regards personal factors, *lack of motivation, self-confidence* and *interest* were accepted to be among the factors affecting language learning adversely. Language differences could play a negative role in achieving the language learning from the students' perspective. What is more, as found in success

attributions, *teacher* was considered to be a significant role in language learning. *Friends* and *environment* could also be among the other debilitative factors.

5. Discussion

The present study explored learning climate, self-efficacy beliefs, and students' attributions to success and failure using quantitative and qualitative data to shed light onto the high school students' perceptions on the issue. One of the basic components of the study was the *learning environment* since where students learn a language could have quite a significant influence on how much they succeed and how they approach learning. The concept of environment, as applied to educational settings, refers to the atmosphere, ambience, tone, or climate, and it is important to accept that classroom environments are human environments (Ghosh, 2015). Learning environment constitutes a major aspect in the learning and teaching process, and it has a critical role in determining the students' learning and engagement; what is more, it could also facilitate the development of students' skills and cognitive abilities (Amirul et al., 2013).

Teachers play a big role in building a supportive learning climate. The participants in the present study had positive opinions of their teachers' establishment of an autonomy-supporting environment in the classroom. Additionally, findings showed they felt supported psychologically and academically by their teacher. As Koka and Hein (2003) assert, situations focusing on failure feedback have a higher possibility of inducing a sense of incompetence and decreasing the intrinsic motivation; thus, it is important to build a non-threatening and stimulating environment. A study carried out among high school students (Bouchaib, Ahmadou, & Abdelkader, 2018) indicated that students ranked the learning atmosphere and teacher's teaching method as the leading factors contributing to success in foreign language learning. Students' responses in qualitative analysis also revealed similar findings since they attributed both their success and failure to the *teacher*. Allan and Clarke (2007) also regard with whom students learn and where students learn best as aspects that might facilitate effective learning.

Similarly, students also had positive feelings about their own abilities to learn English, and they believed that they could be successful if they made an effort. Quantitative and qualitative findings show when an *effort* was made, it facilitated learning; when an effort wasn't made it debilitated learning. The study conducted by Kálmán and Gutierrez Eugenio (2015) also found that effort was one of the main factors contributing to success in learning English. Similarly, studies show that effort is the best predictor of higher scores (Hashemi & Zabihi, 2011; Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2011). All these display that *effort* constitutes a key to success.

Attributions influence expectancy for success, self-efficacy beliefs and actual behaviours (Gobel & Mori, 2007). If effort attributions are encouraged instead of ability attributions, students could show higher persistence in their learning (Rosevear, 2010). Considering that attributions affect the sense of self-efficacy (Bong, 2004), students could be trained to construct sound and realistic attributions for their success and failure, which could also help them to cope with the probable problems better. Attributional theory advances on three causal dimensions as locus, controllability and stability (Weiner, 1985). With respect to locus, causes can be intrinsic or extrinsic to the individual; controllability relates to the factors that are or are not under the individual's control; in addition, stability is pertinent to the temporary or permanent nature of the cause (Boruchovitch, 2004). The present study revealed that students attributed success and failure in learning English mostly to internal factors such as *effort*, *motivation*, *personal study preferences* and *comprehension*. Other studies (Yavuz & Hol, 2017; Besimoğlu, Serdar & Yavuz, 2010) also found that the students stated both internal and

external attributions; however, they gave more priority to internal ones in their responses. This implies that students have a tendency to take responsibility for their own learning.

The external attributions students stated included *teacher*, *friends* and *environment*. Thang, Gobel, Nor and Suppiah (2011) found teacher influence as one of the most important reasons for success. Likewise, studies indicated that the majority of the students attributed their failure and low English learning to the teacher factor (Souriyavongsa, Rany, Abidin, M & Mei, 2013; Yaghoubi & Rasouli, 2015). Additionally, Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015) found that the teacher as an external factor had the most notable role in students' failure. Similarly, Heidari and Tahriri (2015) identified the teacher-based factors to be the most relevant causes of high school students' low achievement in the English course. Hence, it is quite important to pursue both personal and professional development since teachers are influential in shaping students' academic performance and attitudes both positively and negatively. Teachers should be aware of their own role in students' learning and try to address their students' cognitive and affective needs to support learning.

Not only teachers but also *peers* influence learning, and they cause either progression or regression. In the classroom, teachers and peers are social partners who can fulfil a student's needs in terms of relatedness, competence and autonomy (Furrer, Skinner & Pitzer, 2014). While hardworking friends influence academic and disciplinary standards positively, misbehaving peers lead to disruption and distraction (Hoxby, 2002). Low ability students influence regular students adversely (Lavy, Paserman & Schlosser, 2012), and high ability students benefit more from higher achieving schoolmates (Ding & Lehrer, 2007). Peer effect is obvious in success and failure, and it could have an impact even outside classroom walls. Thus, friends also constitute a part of the learning environment, or they could be regarded as the environment itself. Peers should try to feed each other both academically and socially, and teachers should try to keep low achieving and disruptive students engaged during the lesson. Providing those students with choices and including students in some decision-making processes could increase their participation and self-confidence. In an environment where peers support each other, and teachers do not disregard the importance of peer effect, language learning could be a more conscious and fruitful process, and students could develop more positive beliefs about themselves and their abilities. In this study, the data show peers were one of the reasons for success and failure in language learning.

The study also found a statistically significant relationship between *learning environment* and *self-efficacy* in a positive direction; therefore, any change in perceptions of learning climate and self-efficacy could influence each other in the same way. As Jungert and Rosander (2010) assert, increasing students' self-efficacy is important not only in academic performance but also affecting the study atmosphere positively. Lorsbach and Jinks (1999) also suggest that teachers who are interested in enhancing students' perceptions of a learning setting could benefit from the knowledge of their academic self-efficacy in that teachers can build environments that can address the needs of the high or low efficacious students. Environmental interventions could boost self-efficacy beliefs since students could choose more challenging tasks, which may provide more chances for useful feedback (Sharma & Nasa, 2014). Boz, Yerdelen-Damar, Aydemir and Aydemir (2016) suggest that especially constructivist learning environments increase the students' self-efficacy beliefs. As the students' sense of efficacy raises, they can benefit from the classroom dynamics more, and they can make better use of classroom opportunities. Therefore, it is safe to note that learning climate and self-efficacy are interrelated, which in turn impacts students' academic achievement. As Zedan and Bitar (2014) propose, learning the factors that influence learning environment could enable teachers to understand the cognitive and affective behaviours of the

students, and based on the fact that self-efficacy is sensitive to the setting where the task is performed (Zimmerman, 2000), Zedan and Bitar believe that classroom atmosphere can predict self-efficacy.

All in all, learning climate and sense of self-efficacy are related to each other. The more positive the learning atmosphere that teachers build, the more efficacious students feel. It should be noted that encouraging and psychosocially secure atmospheres could ensure learning more than environments which are only physically-rich. As students develop positive self-concepts, they are more likely to learn English effectively. However, the role of effort cannot be denied in achieving success in foreign language learning. A higher level of effort brings success in EFL setting as in all disciplines.

6. Implications

Given the importance of learning climate, teachers should build positive environments which enhance students' self-confidence, self-efficacy and autonomy. They should also encourage students to have positive and supportive relationships with their peers. Students could be motivated to voice their choices and take an active role in their own learning. Teachers could design different tasks to address the students' needs. Teachers should be aware of their influence on learners and shape their teaching accordingly. Moreover, if students have unhealthy attributions for their success and failure, attribution retraining could help develop realistic and sound attributions, which makes learning more efficient since students would see the causes more clearly and objectively. Both teachers and students should know that language learning is not easy process; thus, teachers should try to be more patient and constructive, and students should try to assume the responsibility of their learning.

7. Limitations and Further Studies

The study examined learning climate and self-efficacy in one high school in Turkey. Other studies including more variables in more than one high school could further the findings of the present study. In addition, in this study only the students' perceived causal attributions were elicited; however, exploring teachers' attributions as well could uncover different reasons for success and failure in learning English. Different factors such as age, gender, school year, type of school and grade could be taken into account to detect any probable effect on students' perceptions.

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Appendix
Learning Climate Questionnaire

	Items	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	Neutral (4)	(5)	(6)	Strongly agree (7)
1	I feel that my instructor provides me with choices and options.							
2	I feel understood by my instructor.							
3	I am able to be open with my instructor during class.							
4	My instructor conveyed confidence in my ability to do well in the course.							
5	I feel that my instructor accepts me.							
6	My instructor made sure I really understood the goals of the course and what I need to do.							
7	My instructor encouraged me to ask questions							
8	I feel a lot of trust in my instructor							
9	My instructor answers my questions fully and carefully.							
10	My instructor listens to how I would like to do things							
11	My instructor handles people's emotions very well.							
12	I feel that my instructor cares about me as a person.							
13	I don't feel very good about the way my instructor talks to me							
14	My instructor tries to understand how I see things before suggesting a new way to do things							
15	I feel able to share my feelings with my instructor							