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Scaling the Factors Affecting Learning and Teaching English at University Preparatory Class

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Abstract

This study aims to scale the significance rankings of the factors affecting learning English according to students who have been placed at an English-medium instruction university in Turkiye for the 2024-2025 academic year and the factors affecting teaching English for the instructors employed at different preparatory schools at different universities. Quantitative research method has been deployed in this study. The factors have been determined after a literature review, consultations, and pilot studies. 11 factors have been ranked by using a questionnaire form. Data have been collected from 546 students and from 134 instructors and analysed through Microsoft Excel. The students ranked "effort, interest, health, previous experience, learning strategies, school system, task difficulty, teacher support, classroom atmosphere, family support, and luck" in their order of significance.The rank of significance by all instructors is student participation, teaching language learning strategies, classroom management, asking guiding questions, giving oral and/or written feedback, class size, sharing expectations from students with students, instructor experience, integrating fun and/or game, collaboration with colleagues and following current approaches related to ELT. The findings have been evaluated under the scope of Causal Attribution Theory by Weiner, and conclusions have been drawn.

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Keywords: Causal attribution; Learning; Health; Scaling; Luck

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***This study was adapted from the master's thesis prepared by the first author under the supervision of the second author.**

Introduction

To ensure the mobility of international students and faculty members, to achieve higher positions in international university academic rankings, and to help graduates stand out in the job market, universities aim to designate English as the medium of instruction (Björkman, 2011).

Between 2007 and 2014, the number of English-taught programs at universities in countries where English is not the native language increased by approximately 250% (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). Middle East Technical University (METU), which is a pioneer in Turkey in terms of offering undergraduate and graduate programs in English, was ranked as the best university in Turkey in 14 fields in the QS World University Rankings 2025, and was the only Turkish university to be included in the Times Higher Education (THE) World Reputation Rankings 2025 within the 201–300 band.

When the mission and vision statements of universities in Turkey are analyzed through corpus-based discourse analysis, it is observed that terms such as international, international standard/level/scale, universal level, world-transforming, and contributing to international competitiveness are frequently used (Efe & Özer, 2015). According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is internationally recognized, the English proficiency levels required for students to be able to follow university courses can be determined as C1 (advanced) for undergraduate programs, and C1 and C2 (proficiency) for graduate programs. However, it is surprising that some universities contradict these international standards (Cicillini, 2021). In Turkey, B1 or B2 proficiency levels are considered sufficient at many universities (Carlsen, 2018).

Turkish students who wish to pursue undergraduate and graduate studies in programs where the medium of instruction is English are required to complete English preparatory classes successfully within two years at most if they cannot provide the necessary proficiency certificates. These certificates may include proof of completing at least the last three years of high school in an institution where the medium of instruction is entirely English in a country where English is the native language; obtaining valid (within the last two years) scores from skill-based exams such as TOEFL (including the writing test); or achieving a passing score in the English proficiency exam administered by the admitting university (Resmî Gazete, 2016).

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In addition to student mobility, English-medium MOOCs and platforms such as Coursera, Khan Academy, LinkedIn Learning, OpenCourseWare, Stanford Engineering Everywhere, FUN, FutureLearn, NovoEd, Iversity, Udacity, and EdX provide students with opportunities to take courses from some of the world's most renowned universities. In today's context, where the teacher's role is increasingly being redefined as that of a mentor, the ability to use artificial intelligence applications in English not only enables English language learning but also makes it possible to study departmental courses at an individual pace. Applications such as ProProfs Quiz Maker, Duolingo, Brainly, MATHiaU, Thinkster Math, Oddizzi, Presentation Translator, Netex Learning, Mastery Learning, Intelligent Tutoring Systems, Carnegie Learning, and the Open Learning Initiative eliminate inequality by enabling the use of English and contribute to achieving the goal of quality education more rapidly (Erkut, 2022).

Weiner and Frieze (1971) argued that behaviors can be understood and guided through causal attributions. They suggested that students who make adaptive causal attributions are more likely to be resilient and persistent in their efforts. They tested whether this attitude could lead them to success. Their experimental studies revealed that students who attributed failure to a lack of effort achieved higher success compared to those who attributed it to a lack of ability.

Weiner (1972) argued that educational institutions can develop programs that foster adaptive causal attributions in student behaviors. He suggested that external, uncontrollable, and stable causal attributions should be changed, while internal, controllable, and unstable factors should be emphasized in explaining success and failure.

Literature Review

In his case study, Yenen (2022) states that the factors affecting teachers' professional teaching competencies are pre-service education, attitudes toward the profession, school climate, professional experience, professional development, family and social environment, and economic status. He lists teacher behaviors as the primary factors positively influencing foreign language learning. These include rewarding and/or punishing students, playing games, teaching methods, reviewing previous topics and encouraging new ones, making each student feel valued, and emphasizing the importance of fairness.

The desired student behaviors include willingness and participation, liking the subject and the teacher, coming to class prepared, perceiving English as a tool for success, using

learning strategies, being extroverted and self-confident, making an effort, and not being afraid of making mistakes. Desired teaching and assessment methods include providing multiple learning environments, incorporating elements of fun, ensuring suitability to the level, being comprehensible, and providing feedback (Özer & Korkmaz, 2016).

In his study with 333 students learning English at a Moroccan university, Zohri (2011) aimed to analyze the reasons students attributed to failure and whether these reasons differed by gender. The main factors expressed were teacher attitude, effort, interest, and pressure. Since similar factors were listed by both genders, no significant difference was observed (Zohri, 2011).

According to Hashemnezhad (2021), in his study with 12 university students and 10 English teachers in Iran, data gathered through interviews to determine the factors affecting English learning were analyzed using MAXQDA 10 software until saturation was reached. The categories were grouped under four main headings: “language teaching policies,” “teacher’s character traits,” “social environment,” and “individual characteristics.”

In his study with students at the National Sports University in Thailand, Srisopha (2022) grouped the factors affecting English learning under three main headings: student factors, teacher factors, and environmental factors. Sub-categories included attitude and readiness toward learning English; the teacher’s classroom management and preparation; and physical conditions and class size.

Taşkıran and Pan (2024), in their study with undergraduate and graduate students in China, aimed to identify causal attributions related to English learning. They used the Causal Dimension Scale developed by McAuley et al. (1992, pp. 566–573). Two-thirds of the participants considered themselves unsuccessful in learning English. The most prominent reasons for both success and failure were effort, interest, and ability. Perceptions of instrumentality for environment and career were also among the important factors. Internal, controllable, and stable factors were found to influence success, while failure was attributed to internal and controllable factors.

In their study examining the reasons attributed to success and failure by students repeating the English preparatory class for the second year at Middle East Technical University, and comparing them with the opinions of instructors, Bıçak (2019) revealed that regardless of gender or type of high school graduated from, students perceived themselves as

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unsuccessful and attributed their success and failure to external and uncontrollable factors. Among the attributions were external reasons such as the school system, exam difficulty level, family and social life, as well as psychological reasons, effort, strategy, motivation, lack of interest and knowledge, absenteeism, health condition, age, and lack of ability as internal reasons. The findings obtained from students were found to be consistent with those obtained from instructors.

In addition, in a study evaluating the effectiveness of an intervention program designed to transform causal attributions into adaptive styles in the English preparatory class at Pamukkale University during the 2013–2014 academic year, it was found in the first stage that success was attributed to internal causes, whereas failure was attributed to external causes. While no significant difference was found in terms of gender, it was observed that as socio-economic conditions worsened, students increasingly tended to attribute their failures to external causes (Höl, 2016).

The general aim of this research is to rank the factors affecting English learning in the English preparatory program of a university in Türkiye where the medium of instruction is 100% English, based on students' perspectives. In addition, the study seeks to determine the order of importance of the factors affecting the teaching process according to English language instructors at different universities. The study was carried out by scaling the factors emphasized in the literature as influencing the English learning and teaching processes, based on the ranking judgments of students and instructors.

Research Problem

1. According to students' perspectives, what is the order of importance of the factors affecting the learning process in the English preparatory program at a university where the medium of instruction is 100% English?

2. According to instructors' perspectives, what is the order of importance of the factors affecting the teaching process in the English preparatory program at a university?

Method

In this study, conducted in the English preparatory program of a university where the medium of instruction is 100% English, the aim was to identify the factors affecting learning from the perspective of students, to examine the extent to which these factors are prioritized in

relation to students' success-oriented and adaptive causal attributions (factors), and to determine the order of importance of the factors that instructors in an English preparatory program consider to affect teaching. For this purpose, a quantitative method and survey model were employed after Ethics Committee Approval with the application number 378 from Erciyes University Social and Humanities Science Ethics Committee dated 27.08.2024 was granted. In the survey model, the relationships between the quantitative data obtained from the scales are analyzed (Hocaoğlu, 2019).

Setting and Participants

For the research data, the ranking judgments of 546 students enrolled in the English preparatory program of a university in Türkiye where the medium of instruction is 100% English during the 2024–2025 academic year, as well as 134 instructors working in English preparatory programs at different universities in Türkiye, were utilized. The population of this quantitative study consists of students in English preparatory programs at universities where the medium of instruction is English and instructors working in English preparatory programs at universities in Türkiye. In determining the sample groups, the convenience sampling method was employed for both students and instructors. The convenience sampling method is important because it makes it possible to infer that the problems experienced by a specific group under a given condition are also experienced by other groups (Marczyk et al., 2005).

Data Collection Procedure and Instrumentation

From the repository of factors listed in the literature as influencing English learning and English teaching, 11 items were prioritized based on the opinions of students and instructors. Data collection was carried out during the fall semester of the 2024–2025 academic year after receiving the Ethics Committee Approval. Volunteer participants were informed about the ranking procedure. The purpose of the ranking method was to determine the relative position of a given factor compared to other factors (Tongerson, 1958). Since the ranking method forces the respondent to make the largest possible distinctions, it becomes a highly valid and internally consistent scale when the procedure is carried out correctly (Turgut & Baykul, 1992). Confidentiality principles were observed during the data collection process.

Data Analysis

After conducting a literature review and pilot studies, a pool of factors was created, and survey items were developed from the most important factors. Each of the student and

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instructor survey forms contained 11 items. The aim was to identify the relationships between demographic variables and the factors. Participants ranked the factors from "1" (most important) to "11" (least important). Since this ranking process requires participants to make high-level distinctions, it is considered a highly valid method (Turgut & Baykul, 1992).

Following the measurement of frequency values, a frequency matrix was formed using the equation n(Sji>Ski) = fji + (½ fki) (Turgut & Baykul, 1992). By dividing the sum of all rows and columns of this matrix by N^2, a ratio matrix was obtained. Based on this matrix, the cell values (P) and standard values (Z) were calculated, and a normal deviations matrix was created. The average of the Z values in each column of the normal deviations matrix was calculated, and the scale values (Sj) were determined. The column with the smallest Z value was shifted to zero, and the scale values were ranked accordingly. For the smallest negative value, all values were adjusted by adding the absolute value of this smallest value. For the smallest positive value, all values were adjusted by subtracting this value. In this way, the scale value (Sc) of each factor was obtained. Finally, the statistical analysis results were presented and interpreted visually with the help of tables.

Findings

Research Problem 1. How do the significance rankings of the factors affecting learning in the English preparatory class differ according to students?

All Students

The frequency matrix is presented in Table 1. The column and row totals correspond to the total number of participants, which is 546.

Table 1. Frequency Matrix (F) of the Rankings of Factors Affecting English Learning by All Students

Ri	ri	Exam Difficulty Level	Classroom Environment	Interest	Teacher Support	Health	Learning Strategies	Luck	School System	Family Support	Previous experiences	Effort	Σrow
1	11	27	12	78	10	164	32	17	30	22	51	103	546
2	10	43	17	71	28	58	59	22	38	54	62	94	546
3	9	37	36	79	38	40	87	14	52	24	54	85	546
4	8	47	44	73	77	28	40	12	84	26	57	58	546
5	7	62	51	45	72	33	63	34	53	22	67	44	546
6	6	62	49	46	60	32	56	25	78	43	50	45	546
7	5	54	75	42	65	34	59	22	66	39	47	43	546
8	4	70	69	40	65	36	44	32	45	67	49	29	546
9	3	60	70	28	65	48	47	44	56	68	45	15	546
10	2	48	78	29	39	44	40	82	22	110	41	13	546
11	1	36	45	15	27	29	19	242	22	71	23	17	546
Σcol.		546	546	546	546	546	546	546	546	546	546	546	

The value in each cell of the frequency (F) matrix was compared with the values in the other cells. For this comparison, the equation n(Sji > Ski) = fji + (½ fki) was used. This comparison made it possible to calculate the frequencies n(Sji > Ski). The ratio matrix presented in Table 2 was obtained by dividing the frequency values by N^2.

Table 2. Ratio Matrix (P) of the Rankings of Factors Affecting English Learning by All Students

1		0,42	0,66	0,5	0,64	0,58	0,27	0,56	0,39	0,58	0,71
2	0,58		0,73	0,58	0,7	0,65	0,3	0,64	0,46	0,65	0,78
3	0,34	0,27		0,33	0,52	0,42	0,17	0,39	0,28	0,42	0,56
4	0,5	0,41	0,67		0,65	0,58	0,25	0,57	0,39	0,59	0,73
5	0,36	0,3	0,48	0,35		0,41	0,19	0,4	0,29	0,42	0,52
6	0,42	0,34	0,58	0,42	0,59		0,21	0,48	0,33	0,51	0,65
7	0,73	0,7	0,83	0,75	0,81	0,79		0,78	0,67	0,79	0,85
8	0,44	0,35	0,61	0,43	0,6	0,52	0,22		0,34	0,53	0,67
9	0,61	0,53	0,72	0,61	0,71	0,67	0,33	0,66		0,67	0,77
10	0,42	0,34	0,58	0,41	0,58	0,49	0,21	0,47	0,33		0,63
11	0,29	0,22	0,44	0,27	0,48	0,35	0,15	0,33	0,23	0,37	
Σcolumn	5,58	4,92	7,29	5,67	7,26	6,47	3,29	6,29	4,72	6,52	7,87

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In Table 3, a normal deviations matrix was obtained by making use of the ratio matrix and Z standard values. The Z standard values were calculated according to the cell values in the ratio matrix. Since the z values of the unit normal distribution are symmetrical in terms of absolute values when the main diagonal is taken into account, this property was applied. To calculate the scale value (Sc) of each of the 11 factors ranked by the participants, the column totals obtained from the matrix were divided by the number of factors (11).

Table 3. Unit Normal Deviations Matrix (Z) of the Rankings of Factors Affecting English Learning by All Students

1		-0,19	0,4	0,01	0,36	0,2	-0,6	0,16	-0,3	0,21	0,56
2	0,2		0,6	0,21	0,51	0,4	-0,5	0,37	-0,1	0,4	0,76
3	-0,4	-0,6		-0,4	0,05	-0,2	-0,9	-0,3	-0,6	-0,2	0,15
4	0	-0,213	0,44		0,37	0,21	-0,7	0,17	-0,3	0,22	0,61
5	-0,4	-0,511	-0,1	-0,4		-0,2	-0,9	-0,3	-0,5	-0,2	0,06
6	-0,2	-0,398	-0,21	-0,2	0,22		-0,8	-0,1	-0,4	0,02	0,37
7	-0,62	0,52	-0,95	0,68	0,88	0,8		0,79	0,43	0,8	1,05
8	-0,2	-0,36	0,28	-0,2	0,25	0,66	-0,8		-0,4	0,07	0,44
9	-0,27	0,09	0,6	-0,28	0,55	0,43	-0,4	0,41		0,43	0,73
10	-0,2	-0,39	0,19	-0,2	0,2	0	-0,8	-0,1	-0,4		0,34
11	-0,6	-0,76	-0,2	-0,6	-0,1	-0,4	-1,1	-0,4	-0,7	-0,3	
Σcolumn	-0,8	-2,82	3,46	-0,8	3,34	1,27	-7,5	0,8	-3,4	1,41	5,08
S(j)	-0,1	-0,2	0,25	-0,1	0,24	0,09	-0,5	0,06	-0,2	0,1	0,36
S(c)	0,48	0,33	0,78	0,48	0,78	0,63	0	0,59	0,3	0,64	0,9

The starting point of the axis (zero point) was shifted to the lowest z value, "-0.5," and the absolute value of the lowest score, "0.5," was added to each scale value. In this way, the scale value of each factor was determined. Figure 1 presents the distribution of the determined scale values.

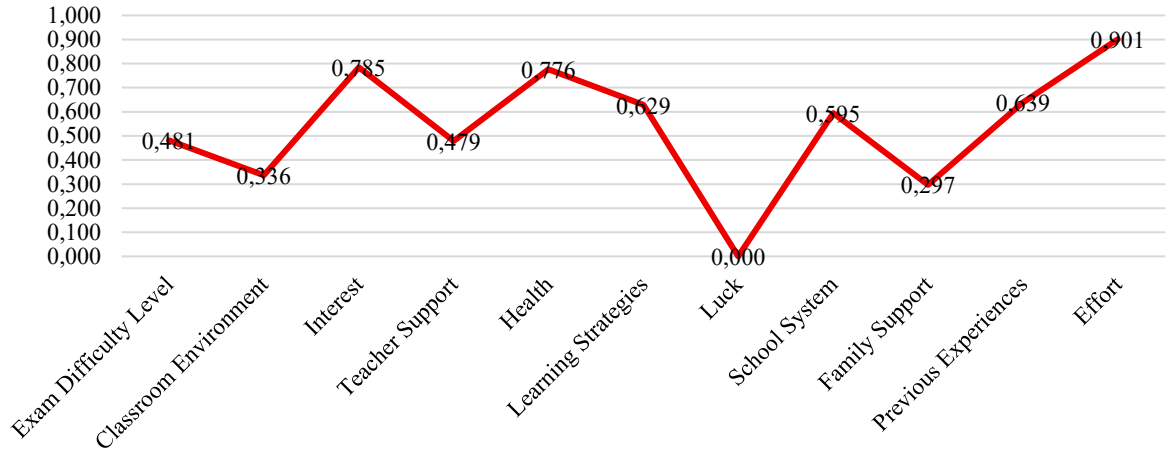


Figure 1. *Scale Values of the Rankings of Factors Affecting English Learning by All Students*

The calculated scale values revealed that, according to all student participants, the most important factor affecting English learning was "effort." This was followed, in order of importance, by interest in learning English, health condition, previous experiences, learning strategies, school system, exam difficulty level, teacher support, classroom environment, and family support. The factor of "luck" was found to have the lowest scale value.

Female Students

The calculated scale values showed that, according to the female students who participated, the most important factor affecting English learning was "health condition." The factors that followed in order of importance were effort, interest in learning English, learning strategies, previous experiences, school system, teacher support, exam difficulty level, family support, and classroom environment. The factor of "luck" was found to have the lowest scale value.

Male Students

The calculated scale values showed that, according to the male students who participated, the most important factor affecting English learning was "effort." The factors that followed in order of importance were interest in learning English, previous experiences, health condition, school system, learning strategies, exam difficulty level, teacher support, classroom environment, and family support. The factor of "luck" was found to have the lowest scale value.

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Research Problem 2. How do the significance rankings of the factors affecting teaching in the English preparatory class differ according to instructors?

All Instructors

The frequency matrix is presented in Table 4. The column and row totals correspond to the total number of instructors, which is 134.

Table 4. Frequency Matrix (F) of the Rankings of Factors Affecting English Teaching Processes by All Instructors

Ri	ri	Student Participation	Classroom Management	Teaching Language Learning Strategies	Giving verbal and oral feedback	Asking guiding questions	Adding fun elements and gamification	Keeping up with current issues related to my field	Collaboration with colleagues	Instructor Seniority/ Experience	Class Size	Sharing Expectations with Students	**Σrow**
1	11	53	22	14	8	12	3	3	1	13	3	2	134
2	10	27	25	17	9	16	6	1	5	7	7	14	134
3	9	12	13	26	17	16	10	3	8	9	12	8	134
4	8	7	4	13	24	27	10	4	8	11	18	8	134
5	7	8	19	21	18	19	9	6	3	8	9	14	134
6	6	8	25	11	23	8	12	6	13	7	10	11	134
7	5	8	1	11	12	10	18	20	13	10	14	17	134
8	4	3	4	3	11	11	20	18	16	10	20	18	134
9	3	4	2	9	4	10	14	23	21	16	14	17	134
10	2	2	9	2	5	5	11	32	25	19	13	11	134
11	1	2	10	7	3	0	21	18	21	24	14	14	134
Σcolumn		134	134	134	134	134	134	134	134	134	134	134	

The value in each cell of the frequency (F) matrix was compared with the values in the other cells. For this comparison, the equation n(Sji > Ski) = fji + (½ fki) was used. This comparison made it possible to calculate the frequencies n(Sji > Ski). The ratio matrix presented in Table 5 was obtained by dividing the frequency values by N^2.

Table 5. Ratio Matrix (P) of the Rankings of Factors Affecting English Teaching Processes by All Instructors

1		0,33	0,31	0,25	0,29	0,15	0,09	0,11	0,19	0,17	0,17
2	0,66		0,48	0,42	0,47	0,27	0,19	0,22	0,32	0,31	0,3
3	0,68	0,51		0,42	0,48	0,26	0,17	0,21	0,31	0,3	0,3
4	0,74	0,57	0,57		0,54	0,29	0,17	0,23	0,34	0,34	0,33
5	0,7	0,52	0,51	0,45		0,27	0,16	0,21	0,31	0,31	0,3
6	0,84	0,72	0,73	0,7	0,72		0,38	0,42	0,5	0,54	0,53
7	0,9	0,8	0,82	0,82	0,83	0,61		0,53	0,59	0,65	0,65
8	0,88	0,77	0,78	0,76	0,78	0,57	0,46		0,56	0,61	0,61
9	0,8	0,67	0,68	0,65	0,68	0,49	0,4	0,43		0,53	0,53
10	0,82	0,68	0,69	0,65	0,68	0,45	0,34	0,38	0,46		0,49
11	0,82	0,69	0,69	0,66	0,69	0,46	0,34	0,38	0,46	0,5	
Σsütun	8,88	7,3	7,31	6,83	7,21	4,87	3,75	4,17	5,07	5,29	5,26

In Table 6, a normal deviations matrix was obtained by making use of the ratio matrix and Z standard values. The Z standard values were calculated according to the cell values in the ratio matrix. Since the z values of the unit normal distribution are symmetrical in terms of absolute values when the main diagonal is taken into account, this property was applied. To calculate the scale value (Sc) of each of the 11 factors ranked by the participants, the column totals obtained from the matrix were divided by the number of factors (11).

Table 6. Unit Normal Deviations Matrix (Z) of the Rankings of Factors Affecting English Teaching Processes by All Instructors

1		-0,14	0,35	0	0,38	0,16	-0,65	0,16	-0,22	0,22	0,5
2	0,41		0,5	0,16	0,5	0,32	-0,57	0,32	-0,1	0,37	0,66
3	0,49	-0,5		-0,36	0,11	-0,2	-0,88	-0,21	-0,51	-0,13	0,17
4	0,65	-0,16	0,36		0,39	0,16	-0,68	0,15	-0,23	0,22	0,53
5	0,54	-0,5	-0,11	-0,39		-0,27	-0,86	-0,27	-0,52	-0,21	0,02
6	1,02	-0,32	0,2	-0,16	0,27		-0,78	0	-0,36	0,07	0,37
7	1,3	0,57	0,88	0,68	0,86	0,78		0,77	0,46	0,79	0,97
8	1,19	-0,32	0,21	-0,15	0,27	0	-0,77		-0,36	0,07	0,37
9	0,84	0,1	0,51	0,23	0,52	0,36	-0,46	0,36		0,4	0,64
10	0,94	-0,37	0,13	-0,22	0,21	-0,07	-0,79	-0,07	-0,4		0,28
11	0,94	-0,66	-0,17	-0,53	-0,02	-0,37	-0,97	-0,37	-0,64	-0,28	
Σsütun	8,35	3,5	3,57	2,28	3,32	-3,1	-6,41	-5,1	-2,47	-1,93	-2,01
S(j)	0,59	0,25	0,25	0,16	0,23	-0,22	-0,45	-0,36	-0,17	-0,13	-0,14
S(c)	1,05	0,7	0,71	0,62	0,69	0,23	0	0,09	0,28	0,32	0,31

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The starting point of the axis (zero point) was shifted to the lowest z value, "-0.45," and the absolute value of the lowest score, "0.45," was added to each scale value. In this way, the scale value of each factor was determined. Figure 2 presents the distribution of the determined scale values.

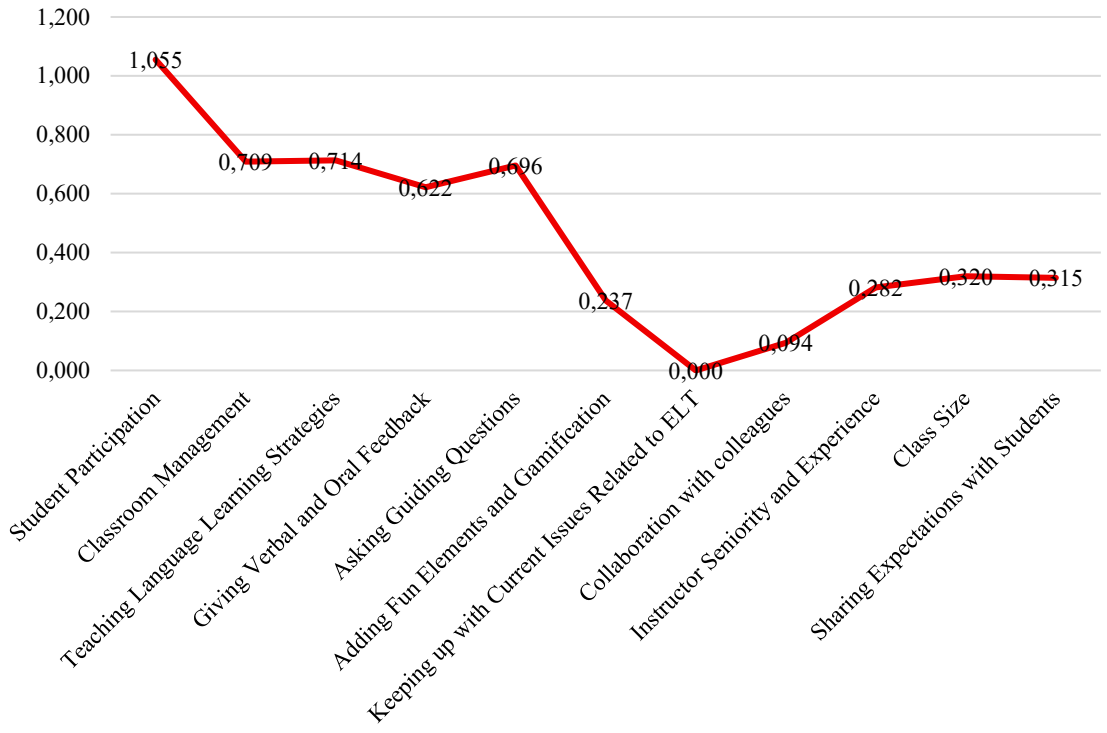


Figure 2. Scale Values of the Rankings of Factors Affecting English Teaching Processes by All Instructors

The calculated scale values revealed that, according to all instructor participants, the most important factor affecting the English teaching process was "student participation." This was followed, in order of importance, by the ability to teach learning strategies, classroom management, the ability to ask guiding questions, providing oral and/or written feedback, class size, sharing expectations with students, instructor experience/seniority, incorporating fun and/or games, and collaboration with colleagues. The factor of "keeping up with current issues related to my field" was found to have the lowest scale value.

Female Instructors

The calculated scale values showed that, according to the female instructors who participated, the most important factor affecting the process of teaching English was "student participation." The factors that followed in order of importance were classroom management, ability to teach language learning strategies, ability to provide oral and/or written feedback,

ability to ask guiding questions, sharing expectations with students, class size, the instructor's experience/seniority, ability to include fun and/or games, and cooperation with colleagues. The factor of "being able to follow current topics related to my field" was found to have the lowest scale value.

Male Instructors

The calculated scale values showed that, according to the male instructors who participated, the most important factor affecting the process of teaching English was "student participation." The factors that followed in order of importance were classroom management, ability to provide oral and/or written feedback, ability to teach language learning strategies, ability to ask guiding questions, class size, sharing expectations with students, the instructor's experience/seniority, ability to include fun and/or games, and cooperation with colleagues. The factor of "being able to follow current topics related to my field" was found to have the lowest scale value.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings revealed that, according to students' ranking judgments, the three most important factors affecting English learning in the university preparatory class were effort, interest in learning, and health condition. The factors that followed in the ranking were previous experiences, learning strategies, school system, exam difficulty level, teacher support, classroom environment, family support, and luck. Based on Weiner's attribution theory, it can be argued that students' references to internal, controllable, and changeable factors indicate that they possess an adaptive attributional style, which suggests that their perceptions of success or failure would not hinder their progress (Çağatay, 2018; Semiz, 2011; Taşkıran, 2010).

When the data were analyzed, it was found that, according to all instructors, the three most important factors affecting teaching in the English preparatory class were, respectively, student participation, the ability to teach language learning strategies, and classroom management. The least influential factors were, respectively, keeping up with current issues related to one's field, collaboration with colleagues, and incorporating fun and/or games.

In university English preparatory classes, the factors affecting learning and teaching tend to be internal, controllable, and changeable causal attributions. Providing continuous guidance to students and instructors regarding these factors will help them move away from

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negative thinking patterns. It is considered that both students and instructors need constructive oral and/or written feedback. In this study, it was found that students possessed an adaptive attributional style and, as a promising perspective, avoided attributing their learning primarily to external causes such as the school system, exam difficulty level, classroom environment, family support, and luck. Students who prioritized classroom environment and family support factors should be referred to Guidance and Psychological Counseling services.

Instructors, on the other hand, emphasized the factors they could control and change. Among these were student participation, classroom management, and providing feedback, whereas they preferred not to attribute importance to class size, collaboration with colleagues, and instructor seniority. Knowing language learning strategies for the students and teaching language learning strategies are ranked in the first five factors by both the students and instructors. It is suggested that the school administration pay attention on building their students' language learning strategy development skills which could be classified into different language skills such as speaking, reading, listening and vocabulary.

Data on the learning and teaching-related causal attributions of students and instructors can be collected through the *Language Achievement Attribution Scale* (LAAS), developed by Hsieh and Schallert (2008), and the *Causal Dimension Scale II* (CDS II), developed by McAuley, Duncan, and Russell (1992), both of which have undergone validity and reliability testing. Applying these instruments specifically to students who repeat the preparatory year would provide researchers with new perspectives on causal attributions. Collecting data from students at multiple universities where the medium of instruction is English would enable comparative and more comprehensive findings.

Contrary to what is suggested in the literature, the instructors' reluctance to refer to collaboration with colleagues and to their own teaching experience indicates a lack of cooperation among instructors. As preparatory classes are part of Schools of Foreign Languages, these schools are expected to encourage joint activities among colleagues such as developing materials and assessment tools. It is recommended that instructors engage in action research based on classroom observations or as a result of needs analyses.

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APPENDIX 1

Factors Affecting Teaching in the English Preparatory Class (For Instructors)

Please rank these factors according to how much they affect your English teaching activities, with "1" being the most important and "11" being the least important. We ask that you use each number only once.

RANK OF IMPORTANCE	Factors Affecting Teaching at Language School (1: the most important; 11: the least important)
	Student Participation
	Classroom management: resource management and mindfulness
	Teaching language learning strategies
	Being able to give verbal and/ or written feedback
	Being able to ask leading questions
	Being able to add fun and/or games
	Being able to follow current issues related to my field thanks to workshops, seminars, webinars, projects and conferences, etc.
	Collaboration with colleagues
	Instructor's experience/ seniority
	Class size
	Sharing with students what is expected from students

APPENDIX 2

Factors Affecting Learning in the English Preparatory Class (For Students)

Please rank these factors according to how much they affect your English teaching activities, with "1" being the most important and "11" being the least important. We ask that you use each number only once.

RANK OF IMPORTANCE	Factors Affecting Learning at Language School (1: the most important; 11: the least important)
	Task/ Exam Difficulty
	Classroom atmosphere
	Interest
	Teacher support
	Health
	Knowing how to learn English
	Luck
	School System
	Family
	Skill and prior experience
	Effort

The Conflict of Interest Statement

In line with the statement of Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), we hereby declare that we had no conflicting interests regarding any parties of this study.