




Samina Safdar¹, Sumera Rashid² & Sajida Saif³

¹Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies, University of Education, Lahore

²Lecturer, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies University of Education, Lahore

³Research Officer, University of Education, Bank Road Campus, Lahore

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Attribution Theory; Success and Failure Attribution; Attribution Patterns, Male & Female Students	<p>The current study was designed to explore attributions made by students while reflecting on their success and failure in learning English as a second language (ESL). The study also focused on looking at different attributional patterns demonstrated by male and female students. The target population of the study consisted of all students enrolled in 12th grade at public sector colleges of Lahore district. The study included 2152 students (1076 male & 1076 female) studying at intermediate level of public sector colleges. Data were collected by using ASQ & AFQ. Results of t-test also highlighted the differences amid male and female students' attributions regarding success and failure. Based on the findings, college administration, and teachers can gain the valuable insights into the factors that impact students' learning experiences and identify areas for improvement in acquisition of a second language. Moreover, they can play an indispensable role in modifying the students' attributions by using the appropriate measures such as providing constructive feedback on students' work so they can develop a realization regarding relationship between actions and outcomes, and controllability over events.</p>  <p>2024 Journal of Social Research Development</p>
ARTICLE HISTORY	
Date of Submission: 28-05-2024 Date of Acceptance: 29-06-2024 Date of Publication: 30-06-2024	
Correspondence	Samina Safdar
Email:	samina.safdar@ue.edu.pk
DOI	https://doi.org/10.53664/JSRD/05-02-2024-17-207-224

INTRODUCTION

The globalization has enabled the English language to gain high level of international significance, resulting in its status as a lingua franca (Bouchaib, Ahmadou & Abdelkader, 2018). It is estimated that English is spoken by 1.46 billion people as a mother tongue and 1.5 billion people as second and /or foreign language worldwide, in various forms (Heinrich, 2007). Presently, it is most extensively taught as a second language in over 100 countries including China, Australia, Singapore, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Finland. English is preferred as the language to be learned for variety of reasons,

including business, trade, academics, cultural and technological contacts, and political convenience (Crystal, 2012). Thus, communicating effectively in English is considered crucial for student's career & academic success since it opens doors to tertiary education and global networking (Saeed, Iqbal, Akhtar & Saleem, 2014). Hence, for aspiration to learn a second language, students' motivation to perform any task and interpretation of success or failure in that task is an important aspect. Firstly, it is not easy to teach a second language in a learning atmosphere if student does not have a desire to understand or learn a language. There would be no pulsation or liveliness in study process without student motivation.

When teachers find to integrate direct methods to raise student motivation in teaching language, they become more contested and more successful. Therefore, the success of any achievement usually depends on the extent to which students struggle to attain their goal, along with their aspiration to do so (Dörnyei, 2009; Duval, Silvia & Lalwani, 2012; Gomlekiz, 2001; Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008). Secondly, the extent to which individuals credit themselves or others for their successes or failures in learning English may have profound implications for their inspiration, self-efficacy, and overall language learning outcomes. The process of individuals' explanations about successes and failures can be better realized with the help of attribution theory (Försterling, 2013; Shaver, 2016). Weiner's attribution theory (2000) explains how individuals interpret internal and external causes of others' behaviors. It is considered a branch of psychology, this theory focuses on whys and what's by which people attempt to comprehend, evaluate and respond to diverse events. Weiner orders attributions given by individuals into four categories, effort; ability, luck & task difficulty. This classification system has more influential place in achievement domain because in this scheme effort is perceived as internal and stable, ability as internal and stable, luck as external and unstable, & task difficulty as external and stable.

Weiner's theory elaborates that individual can justify their successes and failures by considering internal (ability or effort) or external (such as an opportunity or task's difficulty) aspects. Besides, not only the reasons that students explain for their success and failure are important but it is significant to know whether they see them as result of inner/outside factors and perceive them as changeable or unchangeable, controllable/uncontrollable (Büyükkarçı, 2016; Schmidt & Dörnyei, 2001). Also, if an ascription is recognized as external that is assumed to be unchangeable and beyond the control; then it will likely have negative effects as compared to one that is known as inner, unpredictable and under student's control. For developing the recognition of responsibility of an event, attribution retraining can be utilized to modify negative thoughts of "learned helplessness" to positive thoughts of control over events (Williams, Burden, Poulet & Maun, 2004). Mikulincer (2013) explains that the stage of "learned helplessness" comes when individuals perceive outcome of event out of their control that results in low motivation and negative feelings like anxiety and depression. Learners' perspectives on their attributions vary due to their unique features and distinctions with the gender differences that influence the learners' perceptions of their learning ability (Dörnyei, 2005; Viriya & Sapsirin, 2014).

Consequently, the researchers worldwide continue to delve into the subject of gender differences in language acquisition. The study findings of Assouline, Mahatmya, Ihrig and Lane, (2021), Damir

(2017), Dewaele, MacIntyre, Boudreau and Dewaele (2016), Di Battista (2024), Ferrer and Blanco (2020), Sullivan (2016), Viriya and Sapsirin (2014), William et al., (2004), Yeung (2011), highlighted gender differences while revealing attributional patterns of students. These scholars have verified how male and female students interpret outcomes related to second language learning differently and form diverse opinions about their surroundings. They also looked at how societal expectations, personal experiences, and cultural norms were reflected in their explanations related to success and failure. Like many developed and developing countries, the English language is also taught as a compulsory subject from grades 1 to B.A/BSc levels in Pakistan considering its worth for individuals' personal, professional, and economic growth. Hence, data from intermediate examination reveals that thousands of students face failure in the subject of English every year ([Express Tribune, 2023](#)). This situation emphasizes the need to understand the factors impacting Pakistani undergraduates' English language learning experiences and the interpretation of these experiences in the form of success and failure.

Besides, investigating gender differences in attributions for success and failure in English language acquisition is consistent with the overarching goals of promoting gender equality and empowering females in educational sphere. Educational institutions and policymakers can establish measures that support gender equity and assure equal opportunities for male and female students in English language acquisition if they determine the unique attributions and attitudes at the root of gender inequalities in language teaching ([Niaz, Memon & Umrani, 2018](#)). Teachers can better understand how to motivate and inspire their male and female students by understanding differences in their attributions for their language learning outcomes ([Kollmayer et al., 2020](#); [Qian, 2015](#); [Purbandari et al., 2018](#)). Although the failure of students in the English subject at the intermediate level is high compared to other subjects, there is a lack of research studies on students' attributions especially in context of gender in Pakistan. This study aims to fill that void by looking into diverse attributional patterns of undergraduate female and male students for their success and failure. Thus, it may assist teachers and administrators in comprehending the inequalities between male and female students & bridge such gaps. Also, recognizing these differences in gender-specific attribution, educational programs & pedagogical strategies might be designed to meet specific requirements of individuals of either gender.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, language is a fundamental part of growing up that not only supplies motivation but also is indispensable for communication and taking part in one's surroundings. Typically, this may be not true in case of second languages, especially for those that are "learned" in the institution. There are many benefits to being acquainted with other languages but they are not extremely compulsory, and as a result, motivation and ability can play vital role in second language acquisition ([Seemann, 2009](#)). By holding in view, key purpose of motivation in the learning process, several theories with different hypotheses were introduced in context of Cognitive, Behavioral, Socio-cultural, and Goal orientation. The query that how cognition and learning are influenced by individual's motivation gained the attention of many researchers. In 1960, major changes were taken place in the sphere of psychology in which one significant change was the universal shift in the psychology away from the mechanism and towards cognition. Researchers started to focus on human rather than non-human

behaviors (Banton, 2016; Graham & Weiner, 1986; McClelland, 2015; Seifert, 2015; Wheldall, 2013). Moreover, issues related to success, failure and achievement endeavors provided base for empirical & theoretical study of motivation. In 1970, motivational research became identical to achievement motivation research.

In 1990, topics on motivation included the cognition (e.g., causal attributions) individual differences (e.g., need for achievement) and environmental effects on motivation (Fyans, 2013; Rubie-Davies et al., 2015). The common ground of all theories was to promote learning, to a maximum level by using different methods of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Child, 2007; Woolfolk, 2004). In Pakistan, as in several other countries, there is still the significant gender gap in access to education and the level of education attained. The viewpoint of cognitive theorists was that the intervention of human thinking has a greater influence on the motivation. The individual's awareness about the happening events has an important force upon future behaviors in similar circumstances. Perceiving, selecting, interpreting, storing and using information from the surroundings are indispensable processes which shape the students' present and future motivation (Child, 2007; Wallace & Ross, 2015; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002; Zuidema et al., 2023). Additionally, gender differences in the attributions of success and failure have the potential to affect the development of curricula as well as methods of teaching. Gardner's model (2006) discussed four elements that are related to second language learning. In this drive, these elements include (a) cultural and societal context; (b) individual differences; and (c) learning environment.

The basic concern of this model was the analysis of foreign language learning in the formal setting of the classroom (Norris-Holt, 2001). Gardner proposed the elements of language learning can be viewed as essential to discriminate between learners who are motivated as compared to those who are less motivated. Each component by itself is considered inadequate to indicate motivation. There may be some individuals who exhibit the effort but have no powerful desire to succeed, and on the whole not find experience enjoyable. There may be some students who want to learn the language and others who discontinue their efforts (Smith, 2012; Dongmei, 2014). The essence is that motivated students exhibit effort, and desire, and are goal-oriented. Henceforth, the model was perceived as a dynamic one in which mindset and motivation affect the language accomplishment, which in turn affects the future mindset & motivation of learners. Thus, the model suggested two main individual differences variables in language acquisition such as competence and motivation. Learners who are internally ambitious to learn a second language with having the strong belief about their ability experience more achievement in life as compared to those who are doubtful about their capability (Gardener, 2000; 2019). Similarly, self-motivated students perform better than those students who are less motivated.

They put more effort, are more determined, more conscientious, get pleasure from the experience, are goal-directed, have the desire to learn material by doing hard work & try to find opportunities to study more by doing additional work. In short, a motivated learner invests more effort and has a powerful desire to attain the goal. This way, he or she enjoys task of language learning (Gardener, 2009; 2010; Heinzmann 2013). Moreover, the researchers have shown that identification of students' motivation is only one factor in second language acquisition; another crucial factor is how students

interpret their successes and failures, which can have a significant impact on their future endeavors. [Weiner \(1986\)](#) worked on this aspect by working on individuals' attribution in educational context. According to him, a student's motivation for task depends on how successfully they have completed it in the past and what factors they took into account for success or failure. One significant aspect of Weiner's theory is that causal dimensions: locus, stability and controllability are more important than the specific attributions (effort, & luck, etc.) provided for any event. These dimensions help in shaping the learners' subsequent motivation towards any project or activity ([Möller et al., 2018](#); [Saks & Krupat, 1988](#)).

The locus dimension deals with the internal or external cause of an event perceived by individual. If an individual believes that his or her failure in a test is the result of inability then it means that he or she is picking out an internal cause as ability is internal characteristic of a person. On the other hand, if a learner perceives the teacher's incompetency as cause of failure in the test, then he/she is getting an external factor because incompetency of the teacher is external to the learner ([Antaki & Brewin, 1992](#); [Goldstein, 1980](#); [Taylor et al., 2003](#)). As far as the stability dimension is concerned, it refers to the stability or instability of the cause over time. When a person believes that the cause of his or her failure in English exam is his or her inability that is a stable and permanent characteristic of the personality that cannot be changed even with more effort invested in the task. In comparison, if a learner believes that the reason for his/her failure in the test is an illness at the time then it is an unstable and temporary factor ([Beswick, 2017](#); [Geddes et al., 2018](#); [Pennington, 2012](#)). In this regard, attributing success to stable factors leads the students to positive hopes for the future success whereas attributing failure to stable reasons can produce negative feelings and low expectations for the future. The third dimension of the controllability refers to perceiving the cause of an outcome under one's control.

If a learner considers his or her ill-preparation as the cause of failure that is a controllable factor then there is a possibility that he or she would work hard in future to achieve success with the belief of controlling the outcomes; contrary to this situation if he or she feels that he can face the failure because of lacking ability in the subject that is an uncontrollable factor, that would result into low expectations for future ([Fatemi & Asghari, 2012](#); [Graham & Folkes, 2014](#); [Weiner, 2006](#)). Many researchers also explored the cultural effects on people's causal attributions. These cultures are labelled as (i) individualistic cultures; and (b) collectivistic cultures. [Chiu et al., \(2008\)](#) explain that individualistic culture emphasizes the individuals' needs over the group's needs. People from this culture exhibit more independence and autonomy. Their social behaviors are determined by their attitude and preferences. North America and Western Europe are examples of the individualistic cultures. On the other hand, collectivistic cultures highlight the group's needs over the individual's goals or needs. These cultures promote the idea of interconnection between the members of group. People of Asia, Latin America and Africa reflect collectivistic culture. [Oyserman and Lee \(2007\)](#), [Wu \(2011\)](#) discussed that people who belong to individualistic cultures make internal attributions for their actions.

When they observe other's behaviors; they look at it as a trait of their personality, not the situation. Furthermore, [Miller \(1984\)](#) noted that people from collective cultures emphasize holistic analysis of

people. Based on her study conducted on the children and adults of the United States and India, she found that adults from the United States ascribed the behaviors of a person to his or her personality characteristic whereas children and adults from India, both attributed it to actor's role and social factors. Furthermore, Miller mentioned that the reason behind explanations based on personality characteristics was the learned pattern of the people of the United States; they acquired from their culture. Thus, she also points out that the impact of culture on attributions has been neglected by theorists. In addition, the findings of [Liwei and Erdong \(2008\)](#) also explored the difference between the attributional style of the people of individualistic and collectivistic cultures. They observed in their study that the Americans with the individualistic culture demonstrated self-serving biases by ascribing achievement to internal factors whereas Chinese with collectivistic culture attributed their success to external factors such as family or other persons related to them. Likewise, the study results of [Ming \(2009\)](#) revealed that the students of Malaysia from public and private universities showed a great inclination for the teachers to learn about the English language as they belonged to a collective culture.

Gender is another significant aspect that affects attributions. The study findings conducted by [Tulu \(2014\)](#) conducted in the Ethiopian context showed that girls ascribed their success more to effort than boys do. On the other hand, boys attributed their failure to lack of effort in English language learning whereas girls ascribed their failure to lack of effort and bad luck. The study results of [Mok et al., \(2019\)](#) carried out to investigate the causal attributions of Chinese students also revealed the differences between male and female students. Their study explored that female attributed their success more to strategy as compared to the male students. Likewise, the findings of [Mkumbo and Amani \(2012\)](#) conducted on the undergraduate students of Tanzania demonstrated the attribution difference between genders. One significant aspect of Weiner's theory is that causal dimensions: locus, stability and controllability are more important than the specific attributions provided for any event. They concluded that female students attributed their performance to internal factors more than males do. The literature review signifies the students' attributions which are their beliefs about success and failure. These beliefs play an important role in predicting the future performance of the students. To provide the right direction to the students while forming their belief system is a worthwhile affair. Thus, present study is an attempt to gain insight into students' attributions about the English language.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of present study was to investigate students' attributions for their success and failure in learning English as a second language. The focus of the study was to find out the difference between the attributions of male and female undergraduate students who see themselves as the successful language learners as compared to those who perceive themselves as unsuccessful. The nature of the research was descriptive which permitted the researchers to describe the specific phenomena as it exists in the environment and the characteristics of the population being studied. Thus, all male and female students enrolled at undergraduate level in the public sector colleges of the Lahore district were considered the population of the study. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. In the first phase, 14 male and 14 female colleges of the Lahore district were selected randomly.

In the second phase, 1076 male and 1076 female students enrolled in public sector colleges of the Lahore district were selected as a sample for the study. Attribution for Failure Questionnaire (ASQ) and Attribution for Failure Questionnaire (AFQ) developed by Thang, Gobel, Nor, and Suppiah (2011) were used as instruments to collect data from the sample representing the entire population for the study. In this connection, data were collected only from those students who were available and willing to participate in current study. The ASQ and AFQ consisted of two sections. In the first section of the ASQ, students were required to select just one activity from a list of 25 that they had excelled at in their previous English classes. These activities were broken down into the four skill categories: English reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Similarly, in the first section of AFQ, students were asked to choose only one activity from a list of 25 in which they had done very poorly in their previous English sessions. These activities included reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills. Both versions of the questionnaire had an identical second part. There was total 12 statements in this section.

Twelve distinct reasons for success and failure were indicated by these 12 statements: (i) aptitude, (ii) effort, (iii) strategy, (iv) interest, (v) luck, (vi) instructor influence, (vii) task complexity, (viii) the classroom environment, (ix) grades, (x) preparation, (xi) likeness, and (xii) class level. All students were asked to provide their responses for twelve reasons for success (for ASQ) or failure (for AFQ) on the six-point Likert scale: (a) strongly disagree, (b) disagree, (c) somewhat disagree, (d) somewhat agree, (e) agree, and (f) strongly agree. All participants were assured that the information provided by them would only be used for research purposes. In this regard, an equal number of ASQ and AFQ were distributed among the participants. Students were asked to carefully read the instructions and respond about their successful and unsuccessful learning experiences in the English language as a second language. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency and percentage were employed to determine preferences for activity selection among the language skills as under consideration, while the t-test was used to determine the differences between the attribution patterns of male and female students for success and failure in learning the English language.

RESULTS OF STUDY

Table 1 Preferences of Students' Selection among English Language Skills Regarding Success

Skills	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
Reading Skill	306	57	219	41
Listening Skill	59	11	72	13
Speaking Skill	123	23	160	30
Writing Skill	50	9	87	16

*Note: n1 denotes to sample of male and n2 denotes of sample of female (n1=538; n2=538)

Table 1 shows that, out of the 538 male students, 306 (57%) chose a reading activity, 59 (11%) chose listening activity, 123 (23%) chose speaking activity and 50 (9%) chose writing activity. In contrast, out of 538 female students, 219 female students (41%) selected an activity related to reading skills,

72 (13%) related to listening skills, 160 (30%) related to speaking skills, and 87 (16%) related to writing skills in which they were successful as evident from the results in determining the statement about student selection.

Table 2 Students' Responses about Selection of Activity amid Reading Skills About Success

Reading Skill	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
a) Reading Texts Using Appropriate Strategies	43	14	15	7
b) Answering Comprehension Questions	23	8	27	12
c) Learning Vocabulary	81	26	46	21
d) Understanding Grammar	73	24	65	30
e) Translating texts and Passages from English	73	24	45	20
f) Reading and Summarizing Texts	4	1	15	7
g) Quizzes and Exams	9	3	6	3
Total	306	100	219	100

Table 2 shows that out of 538 male students, 306 (57%) selected an activity related to the reading skill of which majority chose learning vocabulary (26%), understanding grammar, and translation of texts & passages (24%), whereas few students selected other activities, they experienced success. Out of 538 female students, 219 female students (41%) opted for activity related to the reading skill of which large number of students chose understanding grammar (30%), learning vocabulary (21%), & translation of texts and passages from English (20%), while few selected other activities in which they attained success.

Table 3 Student' Responses Related to Selection of Activity among Listening Skills

Listening Skill	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
a) Understanding a Passage using Appropriate Strategies	12	20	2	3
b) Listening and Repetition/Dictation	19	32	6	8
c) Listening and Note-taking	20	34	59	82
d) Quizzes and Exams	8	14	5	7
Total	59	100	72	100

Table 3 shows that, of the 538 male students, 59 (11%) chose a listening skill activity. The majority of male students chose listening and note taking (34%) and listening and repetition/dictation (32%) while the least number chose other activities where they were successful. However, of 538 female students, 72 (or 13%) chose a listening skills activity. Of these, majority of female students chose to listen and take notes (82%), while the least number of female students chose other activities, where they were successful.

Table 4 Students' Responses about the Selection of Activity amid Speaking Skills

Speaking Skill	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%

a) Giving a presentation and/or speech	16	13	23	14
b) Roleplay	11	9	16	10
c) Giving opinions/sharing ideas in class/groups	32	26	56	35
d) Answering the teacher`s questions	57	46	60	38
e) Examination	7	6	5	3
Total	123	100	160	100

Table 4 shows that, of the 538 male students, 123 (23%) selected a speaking skill activity. Of these, the majority of students selected activities in which they were successful, such as responding to the teacher's questions (46%) and offering opinions or sharing ideas in class or groups (26%). However, of the 538 female students, 160 (30%) selected a speaking skills activity. Of these, the majority of students preferred answering questions from teacher (38%) and sharing opinions in class or groups (35%), while the least number of students selected remaining speaking skills activities where they experienced success.

Table 5 Students' Responses to the Selection of Activity among Writing Skills

Writing Skill	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
a) Writing a summary	7	14	39	45
b) Writing Paragraphs	20	40	20	23
c) Writing diaries and/or portfolios	8	16	13	15
d) Writing a report	11	22	8	9
e) Quizzes and exams	4	8	7	8
Total	50	100	87	100

The table 5 shows that, of the 538 male students, 50 students (9%) chose a writing skill activity. Of these, the majority of students chose to write a report (22%) and a summary (40%) while fewer students chose residual activities in which they faced success. On the other hand, of the 538 female students, 87 (16%) chose a writing skill activity. Of these, the majority of students in study chose to write a paragraph and a summary (45%), while fewer chose the remaining tasks where they were therefore successful.

Table 6 Students' Selection among English Language Skills About Failure (n1=538; n2=538)

Skills	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
Reading Skill	199	37	182	34
Listening Skill	83	15	41	8
Speaking Skill	122	23	208	38
Writing Skill	134	25	107	20

*Note: n1 denotes to sample of male and n2 denotes of sample of female

Table 6 shows that, of 538 male students, 199 (37%) chose a reading skill, 83 (15%) chose listening, 122 (23%) chose speaking, and 134 (25%) chose writing. Of these, 199 students chose an activity in which they faced failure, and 538 female students, 182 (34%) selected a reading skill activity, 41

(8%) selected listening, 208 (38%) selected speaking and 107 (20%) selected writing skills, in which they faced failure.

Table 7 Responses of Students about Selection of Activity amid Reading Skills About Failure

Reading Skill	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
a) Reading texts using appropriate strategies	28	14	14	8
b) Answering comprehension questions	4	2	19	10
c) Learning vocabulary	80	40	34	19
d) Understanding grammar	46	23	78	43
e) Translating texts and passages from English	27	14	24	13
f) Reading and summarizing texts	12	6	10	5
g) Quizzes and exams	2	1	3	2
Total	199	100	182	100

Table 7 shows that, of 538 male students, 199 (37%) chose a writing skill activity. The maximum percentage of male students chose to learn vocabulary (40%) and understand grammar (23%), while the minimum number chose the remaining activities where they failed, 538 female students, 182 (34%) chose a writing skill activity. Majority of female students chose to learn vocabulary (19%) and comprehend grammar (43%), whereas fewer students chose remaining activities where they experienced failure.

Table 8 Responses of Students about Selection of Activity among Listening Skills About Failure

Listening Skill	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
a) Understanding a passage using appropriate strategies	34	41	11	27
b) Listening and repetition/dictation	4	5	7	17
c) Listening and note-taking	37	45	20	49
d) Quizzes and exams	8	9	3	7
Total	83	100	41	100

Table 8 shows that 83 (15%) of 538 male students chose a listening skills assignment. The majority of students (37%) opted to listen, take notes, and comprehend a paragraph using suitable tactics (41%), but fewer students chose the remaining tasks in which they were unsuccessful. Similarly, 41 (8%), out of 538 female students, chose listening skills assignment. It implies that while a minimum number of students selected remaining activities in which they experienced failure, a large number of students chose listening and taking notes (49%) and understanding a passage using appropriate strategies (27%).

Table 9 Responses of Students about Selection of Activity amid Speaking Skills About Failure

Speaking Skills	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
a) Giving a presentation and/or speech	36	30	81	39
b) Role play	3	2	8	4
c) Giving opinions/sharing ideas in	24	20	38	18

class/groups				
d) Answering the teacher `s questions	39	32	65	31
e) Examination	20	16	16	8
Total	122	100	208	100

Table 9 shows that of the 538 male students, 122 (23%) chose a speaking skill activity in which the majority of students chose to give a presentation and/or speech (30%) and answer questions from the teacher (32%), while a few students chose residual activities in which they failed. Conversely, the results revealed that of the 538 female students, 208 (38%) chose a speaking skill activity in which the majority of students chose to give a presentation and/or speech (39%), answer questions from the teacher (31%), while some of the students thus chose remaining activities in which they faced failure.

Table 10 Responses of Students about Selection of Activity amid Writing Skills About Failure

Writing Skill	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
a) Writing a summary	38	28	23	21
b) Writing Paragraphs	59	44	62	58
c) Writing diaries and/or portfolios	4	3	7	7
d) Writing a report	11	9	7	7
e) Quizzes and exams	22	16	8	7
Total	134	100	107	100

Table 10 shows that, of the 538 male students, 134 (25%) chose a writing skill activity. Most of the students opted to write a paragraph (44%) or a summary (28%) while fewer students chose the residual activities in which they faced failure. Similarly, of the 538 female students, 107 (20%) chose a writing skills task. In this regard, of these, majority of students selected to write a paragraph (58%) or the summary (21%), while fewer chose to complete the remaining activities where they experienced failure.

Table 11 Comparison of Male' & Female Students' Attributions About Success

QNo	Factors	Male		Female		t	df	p
		M	SD	M	SD			
20.	Ability	3.70	1.46	3.66	1.65	0.19	280	.849
21.	Effort	4.47	1.44	4.91	1.31	-2.73	280	.007**
22.	Strategy	4.23	1.42	4.65	1.29	-2.60	280	.010*
23.	Interest	4.30	1.50	4.45	1.49	-0.80	280	.427
24.	Luck	4.13	1.54	4.86	1.46	-4.09	280	<.000***
25.	Teacher	4.71	1.49	4.55	1.41	0.95	280	.345
26.	Task	3.72	1.52	3.91	1.49	-1.11	280	.268
27.	Class	4.33	1.52	4.20	1.57	0.73	280	.464
28.	Grade	5.27	1.22	5.25	1.15	0.15	280	.880
29.	Preparation	4.19	1.43	4.77	1.15	-3.72	280	<.001***
30.	Enjoyment	4.52	1.67	4.59	1.32	-0.36	280	.722

31.	Level	4.16	1.47	4.45	1.32	-1.78	279	.076
-----	-------	------	------	------	------	-------	-----	------

* $p < .05$, (n1=538, n2=538)

Note: n1 denotes to sample of male and n2 denotes of sample of female

Table 11 reflects that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the male' and female students' attributions for success regarding effort, strategy, luck and preparation whereas, there is statistically no significant difference ($p > .05$) between male' and female' attributions for success concerning ability, interest, teacher, task, class, grade, enjoyment and level. This implies that male students' attributions for success regarding effort, strategy, luck and preparation are different from female students.

Table 12 Comparison of Male and Female Students' Attributions About Failure

Q.	Factors	Male		Female		t	df	p
		M	SD	M	SD			
23.	Ability	3.55	1.45	3.54	1.46	0.04	280	.967
24.	Effort	3.24	1.54	2.89	1.39	2.03	280	.044*
25.	Strategy	2.84	1.43	2.70	1.49	0.78	280	.439
26.	Interest	2.36	1.67	2.68	1.62	-1.63	280	.105
27.	Luck	2.89	1.78	2.62	1.50	1.41	280	.160
28.	Teacher	2.82	1.57	2.88	1.57	-0.30	280	.762
29.	Task	3.50	1.55	3.84	1.48	-1.89	280	.060
30.	Class	3.38	1.78	2.86	1.52	2.62	280	.009**
31.	Grade	2.45	1.63	1.78	1.17	3.95	280	<.001**
32.	Preparation	3.04	1.50	2.94	1.43	0.57	280	.570
33.	Enjoyment	2.26	1.47	2.50	1.46	-1.38	280	.168
34.	Level	3.52	1.54	2.84	1.45	3.78	280	.000***

* $p < .05$, (n1=538, n2=538)

Note: n1 denotes to sample of male and n2 denotes of sample of female

Table 12 shows that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the male' and female students' attributions for failure regarding effort, class, grade, and level, whereas, there is no statistically significant difference ($p > .05$) amid male' and female students' attributions for failure about ability, effort, strategy, interest, luck, teacher's instruction, task, preparation and enjoyment in studying English.

Findings of Study

1. The majority of male and female students picked an activity from reading skills in which they faced success or failure
2. Female students perceived their effort as main cause for their success whereas male students considered their interest in getting good grades as the key factor behind their success in the English language. Results of t-test also showed significant difference between attributions of male and female students regarding success in terms of effort, strategy, luck and preparation whereas no significant difference was found related to ability, interest, teacher, task, class, grade, enjoyment and level.

3. Male and female students both considered their inability and task difficulty as main causes of failure in English. Significant difference was observed amid attributions of male & female students regarding failure in terms of effort, class, grade, level while, no significant difference was found related to ability, effort, plan, interest, luck, teacher instruction, task, preparation, and enjoyment in studying English.

DISCUSSION

Researchers explored that male and female student demonstrated different attributional patterns regarding English as second language learning. Male students tended to believe that grade (internal, stable & controllable) and teacher (external, stable & uncontrollable) were the major factors for their success while female students perceived effort (internal, unstable & controllable) and grade (internal, stable & controllable) as primary reasons behind their success. The interest in obtaining good grades for the male students might be to get good jobs or entry into higher education which is usually offered in the English language. Specifically, in Pakistani context, they are also expected to carry the responsibility of household. Male students' perception of their teachers as a major factor for their success is consistent with research findings of [Bzioui \(2017\)](#), [Ming \(2009\)](#), [Phothongsunan \(2014\)](#), and [Zuidema et al. \(2023\)](#), which established that students view their teachers as important contributors to their success. This study's finding also shows the impact of the collective culture of Pakistan on students' attributions. Moreover, the results related to students' attribution to internal factors for success are consistent with study findings of [Turek \(2017\)](#), [Kálmán et al., \(2015\)](#), and [Paker and Döğüş \(2017\)](#).

Though the factors provided by male and female students are internal as well as external but also possess the inclination to be controllable. When students believe that consequences are under their control, then further achievements in the academic domain can be anticipated. Furthermore, male and female students expressed different attributional styles regarding success. The female students ascribed their success more to effort, strategy, luck and preparation than male students do. On the other hand, the male and female students both considered their inability (external, stable and uncontrollable) and task difficulty (external, stable & uncontrollable) as the major reasons for their failure in the English language. This study's findings are aligned with those of studies conducted by [Genç \(2016\)](#), [Mkumbo and Amani \(2012\)](#) and [Soriano-Ferrer and Alonso-Blanco \(2020\)](#), which showed that the students attributed external factors to their failure. Similarly, [Bandura \(1994\)](#) also mentions that students who are doubtful about their competency tend to avoid difficult tasks with insufficient commitment to set goals. Thus, when they encounter difficult tasks, they start to think about their weaknesses and expected hurdles related to the task rather than focusing on the task to do it successfully.

They discontinue their effort after finding it difficult to do. As a result, these feelings lead them to a state of depression. Therefore, learners who consider their inability (an uncontrollable factor) as the cause of their failure are likely to reduce effort with low motivation and low expectations for the future as compared to those who perceive their low effort as the major reason for their failure. This finding shows students' self-protective tendency where they blame external factors for their failure. This implies that students perceive outcomes beyond their control. This study finding is consistent

with the study results of Pishghadam and Motakef, (2011), Lohbeck et al., (2017) and Mekonnen and Roba (2017), who explored that male and female student both blame their inability, task difficulty for their failure. Thus, appropriate measures might be used to change the negative perception of students regarding external factors as the causes for their failure. These measures include providing proper feedback on work, realization regarding the relationship between actions and outcomes, and controllability over events.

CONCLUSION

It seems probable that gender is important factor that significantly impacts how students perceive and approach the language learning process. While creating a nurturing and welcoming learning environment in the classroom, it is beneficial for teachers to consider the differences between male and female students. The study findings also explored the impact of Pakistani collective culture on students' attributions as male students perceive teachers as a major factor in their success while learning English as a second language. This indicates that the future goals and behaviors of a person are not only influenced by the specification of causes for success and failure but are also controlled by the social environment that includes teachers, parents and friends. Therefore, teachers can play an indispensable role in modifying the students' perception of their inability and task difficulty as major causes for their failure. This task can be performed by involving parents and friends of the students. Moreover, findings also revealed that students from collective cultures also make internal attributions for their success as students from individual cultures do. Thus, this implies that causal attribution between different cultures might be different. Consequently, it can be concluded that findings related to the causal attribution of one cultural group cannot be generalized towards other cultural groups.

Recommendations

1. By encouraging active engagement in learning activities and using powerful motivational techniques, instructors can significantly impact student attributions. They can offer feedback on students' assignments in such way that may enhance their motivation towards task rather than blaming their inability or task difficulty after getting negative remarks.
2. Teachers might involve students in activities that enhance their grasp of the subject matter to empower them to create goals on their own. This involvement can take the shape of students' personal, environmental, instructional, and course development or implementation process.
3. The administration can arrange workshops or seminars for English teachers so they can know different attributional patterns demonstrated by male and female students. Thus, teachers will be in a better position to provide counselling for students if they lack the motivation to learn English as a second language.
4. Students' parents may be involved in the counselling process, so they can help their children overcome negative perceptions of failure in the English language.

REFERENCES

Antaki, C., & Brewin. (1982). (Eds). *Attributions and psychological change*. London: Academic Press Inc.

- Assouline, S. G., Mahatmya, D., Ihrig, L., & Lane, E. (2021). High achieving rural middle-school students' academic self-efficacy and attributions in relationship to gender. *High Ability Studies*, 32(2), 143-169.
- Banton, C. C. (2016). *The psychology of the academic achievement motivation: An introduction: Achievement motivation*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Beswick, D. (2017). *Cognitive motivation: From curiosity to identity, purpose and meaning*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Bouchaib, B., Ahmadou, B., & Abdelkader, S. (2018). High school students' attributions of success in English language learning. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(2), 89-102.
- Büyükkarcı, K. (2016). Is it language learning anxiety and/or attitude of university students that determines their academic success? *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching*, 1(2), 57-65.
- Bzioui, A. (2017). English language teaching in Morocco: Unheeded messages. A paper presented at the colloquium "Issues in English language teaching: Theory and practice" held at Faculty of Education, Rabat, May 18-19, 2017.
- Child, D. (2007). *Psychology and teacher*. (8th ed). New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Chiu, C., Kim, Y., & Wan, N. (2008). Personality: Cross-cultural perspectives. In G. J. Boyle, G. Matthews, & D. H. Saklofske (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of personality theory and assessment: Vol. 1. personality theories and models* (pp. 124-144). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crystal, D. D. (2012). *The English as a global language*. Germany: The Cambridge University Press.
- Di Battista, S. (2024). 'She is failing; he is learning': Gender differentiated attributions for girls' and boys' errors. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 00, 1-18.
- Demir, Y. (2017). Turkish EFL learners' attributions for success and failure in speaking English. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 4(2), 39-47.
- Demont-Heinrich, C. (2008). American triumphalism and "Offensive" defensiveness of the French: French as a foil for English in U.S. Prestige Press Coverage of the global Hegemony of English. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 32(271), 271-291.
- Dewaele, J. M., MacIntyre, P., Boudreau, C., & Dewaele, L. (2016). Do girls have all the fun? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*, 2(1), 41-63.
- Dongmei, W. (2014). A study on students' integrative motivation for college English learning in Chinese universities. 2nd International Conference on the Applied Social Science Research (ICASSR). Atlantis Press.
- Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. New Jersey: Mahwah.
- Duval, T. S., Silvia, P. J., Lalwani, N. (2012). *Self-awareness & causal attribution: A dual systems theory*. United States: Springer US.
- Express Tribune. (2023). Intermediate students flunk language subjects: Dying culture of reading, poor pedagogical practices have spiked the rate of failure in English and Urdu exams. Retrieved from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2461172/intermediate-students-flunk-language-subjects>.

- Fatemi, H. A., & Asghari, A. (2012). Attribution theory, personality traits, and gender differences among EFL Learners. *International Journal of Education*, 4(2), 181-199.
- Försterling, F. (2013). Attribution: an introduction to theories, research and applications. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.
- Fyan, L. J. (Ed.). (2013). Achievement motivation: Recent trends in theory and research. United States: Springer US.
- Gömleksiz, M.N. (2001). The effects of age and motivation factors on second language acquisition. *Firat University Journal of Social Science*, 11(2), 217-224.
- Gardner, R. C. (2000). Correlation, causation, motivation, and second language acquisition. *Canadian Psychology*, 41, 10-24.
- Gardner, R. C. (2009). Gardner and Lambert (1959): Fifty years and doubting. Paper presented at the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics. Symposium presentation, Ottawa, publish. uwo.ca/~gardner.
- Gosiewska-Turek, B. (2017). The interdependence between attributions and second language attainments in secondary school students. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 8(1), 109-124.
- Geddes, D. Lindebaum, D., & Jordan, P. J. (Eds.). (2018). Social functions of emotion and talking about emotion at work. Germany: Edward Elgar Publishing, Incorporated.
- Genç, G. (2016). Attributions to success and failure in English language learning: The effects of gender, age and perceived success. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 2(12), 25-43.
- Graham, S., & Weiner, B. (1986). Theories and principles of motivation. In D. Berliner & R. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp.63-84). New York: MacMillan.
- Graham, S., & Folkes, V. S. (Eds.). (2014). Attribution theory: Applications to achievement, mental health, and interpersonal conflict. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.
- Heinzmann, S. (2013). Young language learners' motivation & attitudes: Longitudinal, comparative and explanatory perspectives. United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Kálmán, C., & Gutierrez Eugenio, E. (2015). Successful language learning in a corporate setting: The role of attribution theory and its relation to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(4), 583-608.
- Kollmayer, M., Schultes, M. T., Lüftenegger, M., Finsterwald, M., Spiel, C., & Schober, B. (2020). REFLECT-A teacher training program to promote gender equality in schools. *Frontiers in Education*, 5(136), 1-8.
- Liwei, L., & Erdong, Z. (2008). Research into culture difference of attribution theory. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 47(1), 149-166.
- Lohbeck, A., Grube, D., & Moschner, B. (2017). Academic self-concept and causal attributions for success and failure amongst elementary school children. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 25(2), 190-203.
- Miller, J. G. (1984). Culture and development of everyday social explanation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(5), 961-978.
- Mekonnen, G. T., & Roba, T. T. (2017). Students' attribution of performance in learning English language: A case of Adama Town high schools in Ethiopia. *Journal of Educational Research and Review*, 5(3), 26-40.

- Mikulincer, M. (2013). Human learned helplessness: A coping perspective. Germany: Springer US.
- Ming, T. S. (2009). Investigating autonomy of Malaysian ESL learners: A comparison between public and private universities. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 15,97-124.
- Mkumbo, K.A, K., & Amani, J. (2012). Perceived university students' attributions of their academic success and failure. *Asian Social Sciences*, 8 (7), 247-255.
- Möller, A, Rott, B., Törner, G., Dasdemir, J., & Safrudian. D. (2018). Views and beliefs in mathematics education: Role of beliefs in classroom. Germany: Springer International Publishing.
- Mok, C., Kennedy, K. J., & Moore, P. J. (2010). Academic attribution of secondary students: gender, year level and achievement level. *Educational Psychology*, 31(1), 87-104.
- Manusov, V., & Spitzberg, B. H. (2008). Attributes of attribution theory: Finding good cause in the search for theory. In D. O. Braithwaite & A. Baxter (Eds.), *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication*, pp. 37-49.
- Niaz, S, Memon, N., & Umrani, S. (2018). Gender differences in motivation level for learning English as an L2. *International Research Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 46(46), 27-33.
- Oyserman, D. & Lee, S. W. (2007). Priming 'culture': Culture as situated cognition. In S. Kitayama & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural psychology* (pp. 255-279). New York: Guilford Press.
- Paker, T., & Özkardeş-Döğüş, A. (2017). Achievement attributions of preparatory class learners in learning English. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 13(2), 109-135.
- Pishghadam, R., & Motakef, R. (2011). Attributional patterns with respect to major and attendance in private language schools: A case of EFL context. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 17, 888-894.
- Purbandari, P., Rachmawati, E., & Febriani, R. B. (2018). Male and female students' attitudes toward English vocabulary mastery in learning speaking. *Journal of Applied Linguistics & Literacy*, 2(2), 89-100.
- Qian, W. A. N. G. (2015). A study of the influence of gender differences on English learning of senior high school students. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 8(6), 66-69.
- Ross, L., Nisbett, R.E. (2011). *The person and the situation: Perspectives of social psychology*. United Kingdom: Pinter & Martin.
- Rubie-Davies, C. M., Stephens, J. M., & Watson, P. (Eds.). (2015). *International handbook of social psychology of the classroom*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis. Routledge
- Saks, M.J., & Krupat, E. (1988). *Social psychology and its applications*: New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc.
- Saeed, M, Iqbal, M. Z., Akhtar, M., & Saleem, K. (2014). Development of a scale to measure English language learning attitude of secondary school students. *Journal of Educational Research*, 17(2), 42-57.
- Schmidt, R. W., & Dörnyei, Z. (Eds.).(2001).*Motivation and second language Acquisition*. Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center, University of Hawaii' at Manoa.
- Seifert, K. (2015). *Educational Psychology*. United States: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Shaver, G. (2016). *An introduction to the attribution processes*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.

- Smith, G. (2012). Applying the findings of attribution theory-related research to the college foreign language classroom. *Accents Asia*, 5(2), 21-28.
- Soriano, M., & Alonso-Blanco, E. (2020). Why have I failed? Why have I passed? A comparison of students' causal attributions in second language acquisition (A1-B2 levels). *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90 (2020), 648-662.
- Sullivan, A., & Bers, M. U. (2016). Girls, boys, and bots: Gender differences in young children's performance on robotics and programming tasks. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, 15, 145-165.
- Taylor, S.E., Peplau, A.L., & Sears, D.O. (2011). *Social psychology* (12th ed). India: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Tulu, G. (2014). Boys' and girls' attribution of performance in learning English as a foreign language: The case of Adama high schools in Ethiopia. *Global Journal of Sex Education*, 2(3), 37-50.
- Viriya, C., & Sapsirin, S. (2014). Gender differences in language learning style and language learning strategies. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(2), 77-88.
- Wallace, B., Ross, A. (2015). *The Mind, the body and world: Psychology after cognitivism?* United Kingdom: Imprint Academic.
- Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. *Psychological Review*, 92, 548-573.
- Weiner, B. B. (1986). *An attribution theory of motivation and emotion*. Springer Verlag, New York.
- Weiner, B. (2000). Intrapersonal and interpersonal theories of motivation from an attributional perspective. *Educational Psychology Review*, 12(1), 1-14.
- Weiner, B. (2006). *Social motivation, justice, and the moral emotions: An attributional approach*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J.S. (Eds). (2002). *The development of achievement motivation*. Academic Press Inc
- Williams, M., Burden, R., Poulet, G., & Maun, I. (2004). Learners' perceptions of their successes and failures in foreign language learning. *Language Learning Journal*, 30(1), 19-29.
- Wheldall, K. (Ed.). (2013). *Developments in educational psychology*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.
- Wu, J. (2011). An investigation and analysis of attribution preference and gender difference of non-English majors' English learning-based on investigation of non-English majors in Tianjin Polytechnic University. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2 (2), 332-337.
- Yeung, A. S., Lau, S., & Nie, Y. (2011). Primary and secondary students' motivation in learning English: Grade and gender differences. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 36 (2011), 246-256.
- Zuidema, P. M., Hornstra, L., Schuitema, J., & Poorthuis, A. M. G. (2023). Attributional profiles: Considering multiple causal attributions for success and failure at beginning of secondary school. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 73, 1-21.