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# English language achievement among Ethiopian public secondary school students: Associated factors

**Geberew T.[1,2*], Tigist T.[2], J-F[1], Pullen D.[1] and Swabey K.[1]**

[1]School of Education, College of Arts, Law and Education, University of Tasmania, Australia.
[2]Department of Biomedical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

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**This study investigated attribution related factors in English language performance among grade nine students (n=147) in Ethiopia. Three public secondary schools were selected from Adama town using census sampling techniques. Sixty attribution items (that is, had 30 items of perceived reasons for success, and 30 items for perceived reasons for failure) were developed by the research team. The degree of influence for each item was scaled on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from unimportant to highly important. A reliability test of the attribution survey showed a value of 0.80 Cronbach Alpha. Descriptive statistics, principal component analysis (PCA), and linear regression analysis were carried out to investigate the association between students' English language performance and attribution related factors. PCA of 30 items on attribution for success and PCA on 30 items for failure were reduced into 8 items and 7 items respectively. Following the PCA, a linear regression analysis revealed that among the 8 variables, only 3 variables: student effort, language ability, and a good teaching practice, accounted for overall English language achievement. A significant regression equation was found F (8, 64) = 36.687, p <.000, with $R^2$ of .82, for these perceived reasons. Accordingly, a 10% increase in students' effort as a single factor was associated with 5.17%, (b=0.517, p-value= 0.012, a=0.05) in improved achievements. Similarly, a 10% increase in student language ability as a single factor was associated with 5.03%, (b= 0.503, p-value= 0.007, a=0.05) in improved achievements. In the same way, a significant regression equation was found for failure reasons F (7.66) =, p <.000 with an $R^2$ of 0.470. Linear regression analysis revealed that teachers' good teaching practice as a single factor was associated with increased student achievement by 9.5%, (b= 0.95, p-value= 0.001, a=0.05) in improved achievements. A 10% decrease was due to poor quality of teaching practice, which was related to decrease in students achievement and increase in task difficulty was also related to decrease in student achievement by 12.42%, (b= -1.242, p-value=001, a=0.05) and by 8.93%, (b= - 0.893, p-value= 0.048, a=0.05) respectively. Implications of the findings are discussed with regard to achievement. From finding of the study, teacher's awareness of the explanation of students to the success and failure of their achievement has got pedagogical implications.**

**Key words:** Success attribution, failure attribution, success and failure factors, and English language achievement.

## INTRODUCTION

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) took over the political power from the military regime 'Derg' in 1991 (Mekonnen, 2017). In 1994, soon after overthrowing the military government, the FDRE

introduced a new Education and Training Policy (ETP) (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1994). The introduction of the policy aimed at expanding the educational infrastructure, access to educational opportunity, and to improve the quality of education (Akbiyik, 2015; Mekasha, 2005). Specifically, FDRE aimed to achieve four educational goals: quality, access, relevance, and equity (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1994). Following the Education and Training Policy (1994), the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia initiated Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs, I to V) in every five years interval to meet the educational goals of the nation (Ministry of Education, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2015).

Improving the quality of education is at the heart of the ESDP. In the ESDP, it is clear that the teacher training system should be increased to provide adequate numbers of qualified teachers to address the demands of the Country, and the issue of upholding the quality of teachers was also another component of ESDP (Ministry of Education, 2010; 2015). However, nowadays, there is a common complaint among different stakeholders about the declining of quality education in the country (Mekasha, 2007; Mekonnen, 2008; Mekonnen, 2017; Semela, 2011). In line with this, Admassu (2008) notes in general that "educational quality has … declined in the last three decades …." in Ethopia (P 5). For example, even though English is a medium of instruction at secondary school level, there is a prevailing complaint among stakeholders (that is, English language teachers, teacher trainers, pre-service teachers, and researchers, etc.) that many school students, even at the completion of higher education are far from the standard in their English language ability. Thus, it is worth investigating the factors responsible with regard to English language.

In order to overcome the problem and to improve the quality of education in general and English language education, the Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced and implemented English language improvement program (ELIP) in Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP) (Ministry of Education, 2002). Ministry of Education (2002) also devised ELIP implementation strategies to improve the English language competency level of public teachers. Despite all these endeavors, the performance of students in English is declining (Haregewoin, 2003; Mekasha, 2007).

Nunan (1989) argues that the knowledge and skills of teachers can be passed on to learners if and only if, teachers recognize students' needs and perceptions in terms of how they learn, process and engage with content. Otherwise, there will be a mismatch between teaching and learning, and equally, it is important to note that many factors will affect teaching and learning environment. But even if many factors do influence and/or hamper learning languages, it is important to identify salient factors associated with learning in an Ethiopian context. The following are reasons: lack of motivation and interest, the rapid increase in the students enrollment in the primary schools, secondary schools through university with commensurate challenges in infrastructures, and lack of other resources (Abera, 1993; Leta, 1990).

On the contrary, (Stevick, 1980) claimed that "s*uccess depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom* …"(p. 4). Stevick's claim is noteworthy to explore in terms of how learners perceive themselves learning a foreign language in an inadequate background, and students' persona as a notable factors impeding foreign language in a non-supportive learning environment (Weiner, 1985). Accordingly Fraser (1994) argued that student perception towards learning has a great bearing on how they come to learn and engage in a classroom learning environment:

*The importance of students' perception is well supported by two lines of research[s]. Because, research in numerous country has revealed that consistence difference between students' and teachers' perception, a focus on the student rather than teachers' perception is likely to be more productive in attempt to improve and understand classroom learning. Second, students' perceptions help to explain students' outcomes beyond the effects of students' abilities, instructional methods, and curricular materials* (P 5772).

Fraser (1994) proposes that student perceptions could be thought of as a mediator between instruction and their outcomes. According to Nunan (1989), if students' perceptions related to the learning process are not recognized by teachers, there will be mismatch of thoughts. For this reason, this study considers attribution theory to investigate learners' perception of performance in learning English as a foreign language. In line with this thought, Williams and Burden (2004) also stressed that "…attribution theory is an extremely promising area for research into language learning". Little has been done on attribution theory in foreign language contexts. The majority of the studies investigating causal attributions for success and failure in achievement-related contexts were based on samples of children from developed countries (Boruchovitch, 2004; Burden, 2003; Weiner, 1992; Williams and Burden, 2004).

Indeed, in Africa, a few have been done with regard to attribution theory (Anteneh, 2004; Asonibare, 1986;

*Corresponding author. E-mail: gebtullu@gmail.com.

Mekonnen and Roba, 2017). For instance, Mekonnen and Roba (2017), investigated attribution related factors in relation to English language achievement among Ethiopian public secondary school students. The study revealed that Ethiopian students ascribed their success and failures to effort, ability, teachers, family support and availability of instructional materials.

However, the study didn't show the extent to which those factors affect students' English language performance. Bearing this research gap in mind, the present study attempts the different attribution patterns demonstrated by Ethiopian secondary school students who considered themselves normally successful in learning a language compared to those students who perceived themselves as normally unsuccessful. The study also attempts to determine attribution factors that influence students' English language performance.

(1) Need studies to support what we want to argue
(2) Need studies to show what factors or attribution are important to investigate
(3) Need studies to show what these factors are likely to show about student perception.

## Context of the study

This study attempted to answer the following research questions"

(1) To what major reasons do secondary school students ascribe the success and failure of their achievements in the English language?
(2) What are the factors that influence students English language achievement?
(3) What is the pedagogical implication of the study for teacher education program in Ethiopia?

## Study site

This study was conducted at three public secondary schools in Adama Town, Ethiopia. The public schools were purposively selected for the following reasons: The research site was convenient for the study as the investigator had access to the schools from his past teacher trainees' practicum supervision experience. Studies also revealed that students at private schools have better academic performance than their counterparts at public schools (Win and Miller, 2005), that is, students from public secondary schools perform low when seen in the light of the students from private schools (Getahun, 2002). Another reason was that students' achievement-related beliefs undergo a developmental change from elementary to secondary education, and are most pronounced during late adolescence (Shell and Husman, 2001). Hence, the researchers agreed that studying students' related factors about their English language achievement was found to be significant.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Grade nine was selected from three public secondary schools for some reasons: All subjects were taught in English language starting from grade nine. Second, Harmer (2001) argued that much attention is needed to improve students' English language performance at the initial stage of their secondary education by giving more attention to their perception in learning English as a foreign language. The third reason was that grade ten was making preparation for the national level examination, and hence, grade ten was deliberately omitted from this research. Therefore, grade nine was chosen as representative of the public secondary school students for this study. Finally, 147 students participated in the study.

### Data gathering instruments

Test and questionnaire were the two research tools, which was employed to collect relevant information.

### Testing

A test consisting of fifty items was prepared as an ongoing program of the schools. It was made with an agreement between English subject teachers of the schools who were teaching the subject according to the methods and objectives set in the textbook. Face validity of test was checked with the senior teachers of the subject and subject specialists from University. The internal consistencies of the items were also checked at non-sample secondary school, and the reliability of the test was found to be 0.80 Cronbach alpha. Therefore, it was believed that the test was more reliable and valid. At the end, the test was administered for the sample students that is, 147 students had sat for the test.

### Questionnaire

Questionnaires were prepared to assess the reason students provided for the success and failure of their test achievement. Questionnaires were adapted from McAuley et al. (1992) questionnaire on Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS) and Anteneh (2004) in such a way that they suit the purpose of the study in order to provide the study with a more authentic data. The attribution scale (perceived reasons for success, that is, had 30 items, and 30 items of the reasons for failure) and A 5 Likert scales ranging from unimportant to highly important was used to see the degree of influence of each reason. The attribution scale was made up of two parts: Part-I for those who felt that they were happy with their test score and hence, successful, and Part-II was completed by students who perceived that their score of the test was a failing one. The questionnaires were translated into the Amharic language to make readable and to get valid data. It was also pilot tested to estimate the reliability of the variables before the actual process of data collection. Finally, the reliability for perceived reasons of success and failure measures was found to be 0.76 and 0.93 Cronbach alpha respectively.

### Administration of the questionnaire

First, students were given back the result of the test and they were

asked to rate their result as success or a failure according to how they were satisfied with the result, hence, success and failure were determined. Students were given instruction to evaluate the performance of their English test in terms of success or failure. It was successful if she/he was happy or satisfied with what she/he got; it did not necessarily mean a pass mark. On the other hand, it was a failure if she/he was unhappy or dissatisfied with what she/he scored; it did not necessary mean a failing mark. Students' ratings of their satisfaction were scaled according to the perceived reasons of their performance. The degree of influence of each cause was scaled into five from unimportant to highly important. Finally, students rated the degree to which they believed the result of their test was due to their ability, effort, level of task difficulty, luck mood and so on.

#### Ethical considerations

First, a recommendation letter was issued from Adama City Administration, Education Head Office, Oromia Regional State for the sample secondary schools for the permission. A letter of permission was gotten from three public secondary schools for their permission to distribute a survey and to give a test with the research participants. Since, the topic of the research was to investigate attribution related factors in English language performance among Ethiopian secondary school students, grade nine students were the participants of the research.

#### Data analysis

In this study, descriptive statistics, principal component analysis (PCA), and linear regression analysis were carried out to investigate the association between students' English language achievements and explanatory variables. In order to test the strength of the relationship between each predictor (independent variable) and the dependent variable, different types of analysis of variance were undertaken. After selecting the main variables, data analysis and interpretation were employed to fit the data with best explaining variables. To run a regression analysis, one has to stick to some different relevant assumptions to characterize the features and interrelation of the variables which includes analysis of normality assumption, linearity assumption, homoscedasticity assumption, independence of residuals assumptions, etc. Normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals refer to different aspects of the distribution of scores and the nature of the underlying relationships between factors (Pallant, 2007). Residuals are differences between the obtained and predicted dependent variable scores (students' achievement, that is, test score). The Normality assumption is met when the residuals are normally distributed around the predicted dependent variable score (Achievement). The linearity assumption is met when the residuals have a straight-line relationship with the predicted variable scores. Finally, homoscedasticity is satisfied when the variance of the residuals about the predicted dependent variable scores are the same for all predicted scores (Pallant, 2007). The scatter plot confirms when the standardized residuals scores were concentrated in the center of the coordinate plane (Y = 0) which means the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity are met. Accordingly, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity assumption were checked to run the linear regression analysis.

## RESULTS

In this study, students' perceived reasons for success and failure of performance in learning English language were identified using principal component analysis. The 30 variables measuring student perceived reasons of success and 30 variables measuring perceived reasons for failure were reduced into eight and seven factors respectively as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, factor analysis was performed on 30 variables that measure perceived reasons of success, and 30 variables that measure perceived reasons of failure. The KMO test showed that there was significant relationships among the perceived reasons for success as the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.73 > 0.6, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with p-value <0.001, and perceived reasons for failure was 0.82 > 0.6. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with p-value <0.001 is statistically significant showing that the variables were correlated highly enough to provide a reasonable basis for PCA analysis supporting factorability of the correlation matrix. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values of perceived reasons for success and the failure were exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) and Pallant (2007).

For PCA analysis in varimax rotation, convergence established after fifteen iterations and 64.31 % of the total variance was explained by the first eight factors of perceived reasons of success, and 61.59 % of the total variance was explained by the first seven factors of perceived reasons of failure with eigenvalues greater than one (Tables 1 and 2 ).

### Results of the regression analysis

Regression analysis is a process for determining the statistical relationship between a random variable (Dependent Variable) and one or more independent variables that are used to predict the value of the dependent variable. Given as $y = b0 + b1x1 + b2x2 + \ldots bkxk + u$ (that is, where b0 is the intercept (constant); b1 to bk all called slope parameters and u is the error term (or disturbance) which considers a zero conditional mean assumption and assumed as $E(u|x1, x2, \ldots, xk) = 0$ ) (Assefa, 2015).

### Result of perceived reasons for success

After testing the different assumptions of linear regression analysis, an attempt was made to examine regression model with best explaining variables, that is, by examining the power of the explaining variables. Accordingly, the current model is sufficiently fitted with independent variables with R-square value of 0.821 which means the model was explained by 80.21%; and these explaining variables have also statistically significantly explained the dependent variable at a probability level of p (0.000), (Tables 3 and 4). The result of the linear regression analysis revealed that among

**Table 1.** Total Variance Explained for perceived causes of success items.

| Components | Initial eigenvalues | | | Rotation sums of squared loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of variance | Cumulative % |
| Effort | 5.600 | 18.666 | 18.666 | 3.335 | 11.116 | 11.116 |
| Ability | 3.677 | 12.256 | 30.922 | 3.221 | 10.738 | 21.854 |
| Good teaching practices | 2.925 | 9.750 | 40.672 | 2.969 | 9.897 | 31.752 |
| Task simplicity | 1.814 | 6.045 | 46.717 | 2.143 | 7.142 | 38.893 |
| Teacher's good behavior | 1.631 | 5.437 | 52.155 | 2.102 | 7.006 | 45.899 |
| Teacher's predisposition | 1.438 | 4.794 | 56.949 | 2.019 | 6.730 | 52.630 |
| Luck | 1.143 | 3.810 | 60.759 | 1.933 | 6.442 | 59.072 |
| Availability of instructional materials | 1.065 | 3.549 | 64.31 | 1.571 | 5.236 | 64.31 |

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.

**Table 2.** Total variance explained for perceived causes of failure items.

| Components | Initial eigen values | | | Rotation sums of squared loadings | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of variance | Cumulative % | Total |
| Lack of effort | 10.04 | 33.45 | 33.45 | 10.04 | 33.45 | 33.45 | 10.04 |
| Teacher's bad behavior | 1.80 | 5.99 | 39.44 | 1.80 | 5.99 | 39.44 | 1.80 |
| Unluckiness | 1.73 | 5.78 | 45.22 | 1.73 | 5.78 | 45.22 | 1.73 |
| Poor teaching practices | 1.36 | 4.52 | 49.74 | 1.36 | 4.52 | 49.74 | 1.36 |
| Lack of ability | 1.31 | 4.35 | 54.09 | 1.31 | 4.35 | 54.09 | 1.31 |
| Task difficulty | 1.23 | 4.09 | 58.18 | 1.23 | 4.09 | 58.18 | 1.23 |
| Bad mood | 1.02 | 3.41 | 61.59 | 1.02 | 3.41 | 61.59 | 1.02 |

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.

**Table 3.** Model summaryb.

| Model | R | R. square | Adjusted R Square | Std. error of the estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.901a | 0.812 | 0.789 | 5.188 |

[a]Predictors: (Constant), Extorting effort, ability, good teaching practice, task simplicity, teachers good behavior, teachers predisposition, luck, availability of instructional materials; [b]Dependent Variable: TEST SCOREb.

**Table 4.** ANOVAa

| Model | | Sum of squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 7532.435 | 8 | 941.554 | 36.687 | 0.000b |
| | Residual | 1642.524 | 64 | 25.664 | - | - |
| | Total | 9174.959 | 72 | - | - | - |

[a]Dependent Variable: Test_score; [b]Predictors: (Constant), Extorting effort, ability, good teaching practice, task simplicity, teachers good behavior, teachers predisposition, luck, availability of instructional materials.

eight variables, three variables including effort exertion, having language ability, and good teaching practice accounted for students overall achievement of English language. Hence, the linear regression result revealed the presence of a positive association between students' effort exertion and students' overall of English language score. A significant regression equation was found $F(8, 64) = 36.687$, $p < 0.000$, with an $R2$ of 0.82, for the

**Table 5.** Success attribution factors associated with students' test score.

| Coefficientsa | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Explanatory variable** | **Unstandardized coefficients** | | **Standardized coefficients** | **t** | **Sig.** |
| | **B** | **Std. Error** | **Beta** | | |
| Students' EL test score* | 5.825 | 5.534 | | 1.053 | 0.296 |
| Extorting effort | 0.517 | 0.200 | 0.253 | 2.584 | 0.012 |
| Ability | 0.503 | 0.181 | 0.282 | 2.772 | 0.007 |
| Good teaching practice | 0.952 | 0.275 | 0.360 | 3.462 | 0.001 |
| Task simplicity | -0.502 | 0.296 | -0.138 | -1.695 | 0.095 |
| Teachers good behavior | -0.384 | 0.246 | -0.111 | -1.561 | 0.123 |
| Teachers predisposition | -0.235 | 0.239 | -0.078 | -0.980 | 0.331 |
| Luck | 0.455 | 0.347 | 0.094 | 1.312 | 0.194 |
| Availability of instructional materials | -0.089 | 0.357 | -0.015 | -0.249 | 0.804 |

[a]Dependent variable: High and low achievers EFL test score; ∗Constant.

**Table 6.** Model Summaryb.

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. error of the estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.686a | 0.470 | 0.414 | 8.183 |

Predictors: (Constant), Lack of effort, teachers' bad behavior, lack, poor teaching practices, lack of ability, the level of task difficulty, and bad mood; [b]Dependent variable: Test_score.

**Table 7.** ANOVAa.

| Model | | Sum of squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Regression | 3923.007 | 7 | 560.430 | 8.369 | 1 |
| 1 | Residual | 4419.439 | 66 | 66.961 | - | - |
| | Total | 8342.446 | 73 | - | - | - |

[a]Dependent Variable: Test_score; [b]Predictors: (constant), lack of effort, teachers' bad behavior, lack, poor teaching practices, lack of ability, level of task difficulty, and bad mood.

perceived reasons (Tables 3 and 5). Accordingly, if other factors are assumed to be constant, a 10% increase in students' effort as a single factor was associated with improved achievements by 5.17%, ($\beta$=0.517, p-value= 0.012, $\alpha$=0.05). Similarly, a 10% increase in students' English language ability as a single factor was associated with achievement by 5.03%, ($\beta$= 0.503, p-value= 0.007, $\alpha$=0.05). Similarly, a 10% increase in students' English language ability as a single factor was associated with achievement by 5.03%, ($\beta$= 0.503, p-value=0.007, $\alpha$=0.05). The linear regression analysis also revealed that teachers' good teaching practice as a single factor was associated with increased students' achievement by 9.5%, $\beta$= 0.95, p-value= 0.001, $\alpha$=0.05.

### Result of perceived reasons of failure

A linear regression analysis revealed that the model summary for perceived reasons of failure is adequately fitted with independent variables with R-square value of 0.686 which means the model was explained by 68.6%; and these explaining variables have also statistically significantly explained the dependent variable at probability level of p (0.000), (Tables 6 and 7). In the same way, a significant regression equation was found for failure reasons F (7,66) = 8.37, p <.000 with an R2 of .470. As can be seen from Table 8, a 10% decrease in quality of teaching practice was related to decrease in students achievement and increase in task difficulty was also related to decreasing in student achievement by 12.42%, ($\beta$= -1.242, p-value=001, $\alpha$=0.05) and by 8.93%, ($\beta$= -0.893, p-value= 0.048, $\alpha$=0.05) respectively (Table 8).

## DISCUSSION

The finding of this study revealed that student's formed different reasons for their success and failure in English

**Table 8.** Failure attribution factors associated with students' test score.

| Coefficientsa | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Explanatory variable** | **Unstandardized coefficients** | | **Standardized coefficients** | **t** | **Sig.** |
| | **B** | **Std. Error** | **Beta** | | |
| Students' EL test score* | 29.287 | 9.430 | | 3.106 | 0.003 |
| Lack of effort | -0.302 | 0.302 | -0.145 | -0.999 | 0.322 |
| Teachers' bad behavior | 0.305 | 0.388 | 0.090 | .786 | 0.435 |
| Lack of chance | 0.486 | 0.301 | 0.184 | 1.614 | 0.111 |
| Poor teaching practices | -1.242 | 0.342 | -0.550 | -3.630 | 0.001 |
| Lack of ability | 0.626 | 0.389 | 0.189 | 1.607 | 0.113 |
| Level of task difficulty | -0.893 | 0.443 | -0.201 | -2.015 | 0.048 |
| Bad mood | 0.835 | 0.571 | 0.159 | 1.463 | 0.148 |

Dependent variable: High and low achievers EFL test score; ∗Constant.

language achievements. The reasons they established were statistically found to be significant. For instance, a linear regression analysis revealed that among the eight variables of success reasons, only three variables: student effort, language ability, and a good teaching practice, accounted for overall English language achievement.

A significant regression equation was found F (8, 64) = 36.687, p <.000, with R2 of .82, for these perceived reasons. In the same way, among seven variables of failure, only two reasons, that is, poor teaching practice and level of task difficulty were found to be influencing factors in explaining students' English language performance. A significant regression equation was found for failure reasons F (7,66) =, p <.000 with an R2 of .470. Linear regression analysis revealed that teachers' good teaching practice as a single factor was associated with improved achievements.

Unlike the previous findings of attribution research (Beyer, 1999; Felder and Henriques, 1995; Yan and Li, 2009), results of the current study demonstrate promising gains for students in terms of their attributions for success. That is, students tend to ascribe the cause of their successes more to effort, language ability and good teaching practice. Taking Weiner (1992) theory into account, that is, it was not only the reasons that people constructed for their successes or failures that were important but whether they saw these as due to internal or external factors, and hence, effort and ability were considered as internal to students. If students ascribe their success to internal factors (effort and ability), they are most likely to persist and eventually succeed in the future (Rao, 2007).

Attribution theory states that student beliefs about the causes of their success or failure at a particular task will influence how they approach that task in the future. Success due to ability promotes a sense of pride, whereas failure due to lack of ability promotes a sense of shame. If students successfully attribute their success to ability, it is quite probable they will expect the same results in the future. However, if students fail and perceive ability as the cause, they might continually expect to fail in the future. So, effort has to be shown to students as a changeable reason so that students will have a belief that a subsequent attempt at the same task will yield a totally different outcome. For this reason, language teachers and trainers need to consider giving more attention to effort than to ability (Weiner, 1985; 2005; 2006).

The findings of this study also depicted the presence of a positive association between students' overall of English language score and explanatory variables, that is, the reasons students formed as the success and failure of their English language achievements. Therefore, the study implied that pedagogical practices alongside language training and contextual bureaucratic regional policy should be considered in understanding the overall achievement of the students.

Finally, the researchers suggest that more studies of this kind need to be conducted on this area in the Ethiopian context. Since there are other external cause of attributions like teachers' perception which are thought to be related to students' perception of performance and also language learning, it would be best if teachers' perception is included and the effect of attribution on student's achievement is studied longitudinally. The door is now open for the development of further studies into attributions of success and failures in language learning in order to build up a more coherent picture of this area in relation to learning foreign language.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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