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Beliefs about Foreign Language Learning and their Relationship with Academic Achievement.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my family who have always supported me.

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ABSTRACT

Language learners hold a set of beliefs concerning language learning, those beliefs may influence the way students learn even though sometimes it is not possible to identify them easily. This thesis reports on a study that investigated beliefs about language learning held by 326 Mexican students undertaking English courses in the English Language Center at the Technological Institute of Chetumal. Data were gathered through a modified version of the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory questionnaire (Horwitz, 1987). The aims of this study were to identify the most and least common language learning beliefs about Learning English, to identify whether there were representative gender differences regarding English language learning beliefs, and to identify if there is a relation between the students' language learning beliefs and their academic achievement at college. Findings revealed that learners held beliefs related to motivation, the supremacy of the age in the language acquisition, and the expectations to learn the language; significant differences among students' beliefs were also found related to gender. Finally, no significant correlation was found between beliefs and students' academic achievement.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

"Understanding language beliefs is essential to understand learner strategies and planning appropriate language instruction." (Horwitz, 1897)

This thesis will present to identify the beliefs held by students of English as a foreign language at a public higher education institution: the Technological Institute of Chetumal (ITCH). As Horwitz (1987) suggests, to acquire a second language successfully the learner must accept the value of the learning. In recent decades, research interest in second or foreign language learning has moved from teacher training to student learning. Consequently, numerous studies conducted by researchers such as Horwitz (1988), Sakui & Gaies (1999), Kalaja & Barcelos (2003), have been carried out from the learners' perspective. These perspectives, that are also called learners' beliefs about language, have come to notify the domain of language learning. Without realizing, learners learn to have the same behavior or to acquire learning behaviors in a second or foreign language class (Michelle, 2001; Buehl, 2003; Alexander, 2006). It seems that the role of beliefs has been viewed as an important construct to investigate due to its impact on people's behavior (Gabillon, 2007). If you focus on this statement, it will be noticed that learners develop some beliefs that can influence their attitudes to language and learning, and their motivation, and this shapes their experiences and actions in the classroom (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). However, an enigma may be discovered in trying to explain how learners acquire, improve and apply these beliefs in learning a second or foreign language.

Many searches have been done to study the beliefs of students (Horwitz (1988, 1990), Banya and Cheng (1997), Kalaja and Barcelos (2003), Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) & Brown (2009); nevertheless, few of them have been carried out in the Mexican contexts (Reyes, 2007, 2009), Reyes & Murrieta (2008), Rojas (2008), Montalvo (2009), Ramirez (2009), Reyes & Reyes (n.d) that involve the learners' beliefs in a foreign learning language in Mexico. Although some of the researches have been carried out at the University of Quintana Roo (Reyes, 2009; Reyes & Murrieta, 2008), they are not enough to have a better understanding in the investigation about learning beliefs in Mexico. Therefore, further research in this area is necessary to expand the understanding of the ways in which a variety of beliefs have an impact in the learning of a foreign language, especially at the language centers.

The process of the globalization has changed the world economy, the politics, and the education. Because of those changes, the structure of the education is not permanent since the modification of the school programs, syllabus, and its curricula and content is needed. All those changes have required people to compete in a globalized world. Therefore, in the field of foreign languages, some institutions and universities offer some programs and academic activities like courses, workshops, among others, which are updated and have covered students' needs. Nowadays, the learning of a foreign language is required not only for getting a job, but also to communicate. The creation of international enterprises demands people to have a communicative competence in English which requires the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this case the ITCH has established some requirements that students need to cover such as the necessity of communicating among them; those requirements are based by the Common European Framework which describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn in order to use it for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis.

Therefore, some Mexican Institutes like the Technological Institute of Chetumal (ITCH) and universities like the Universidad de Quintana Roo (UQROO) decide what language they teach, and in what level, which is based according to the Common European Framework (CEFR).

Most of the times, this decision is based on their economy, geographical setting, the institutional politics, its mission, vision and philosophy. In this case, it seems that in the ITCH offer in their courses English Language as the principal. At the university level, however, the teaching and learning of English are geared toward communicative competency in all four skill areas. In order to be updated, some institutions place more emphasis on students, instead of teachers. The self–learning has taken over all the previous conceptions about the teaching and learning process. For example, some institutes and universities are struggling to adapt those competences and this student-based approach to their curricula. For example, in 2009 the English syllabus has been modified in the Universtiy of Quintana Roo since it was required to teach that language through competences and also the English language was incorporated in the programs and syllabus of all the majors (see actas del H. Consejo Universitario). The Language centered from the ITCH has also modified their English programs to be taught by competences, but focusing on communication. The ITCH and the UQROO are including this approach to their school regulations, in which they state that it is the student who should take action in the process of learning, a more significant role for the student than for the teacher. So far, many institutions have adapted their curricula to this tendency and necessities; at least that is what is expressed in their rules and regulations.

Consequently, the Technological Institute of Chetumal has integrated the learning of the English Language in its curricula with the aim of getting the high standard that organisms like the SEP has established. For instance, the SEP and the ISO certificate the majors of the ITCH and set up the level of English which is equivalent to a B2 (according to the Common European Framework).

Hence, some Mexican college students perceive learning English as an important matter not only because English courses are a requirement for Bachelor's degree from the university, but also because English is a language requisite when pursuing good jobs. Then, the ITCH professors try to set up some teaching tendencies which are applied to all the possible settings that have to do with teaching. In these classes teachers are trying to implement some communicative approaches that emphasize the role of the students in the learning process. However, what students think about the language and as correct behavior becomes evident and

may interfere. For example, students show certain behavior that they think of as correct for succeeding in learning a language like taking passive roles. Regarding this, some researchers have suggested that for the language learning process, this attitude (being passive) taken by students and other factors have a close relation with the language learning process (Horwitz, 1987; Mori, 1997; Gabillon, 2000)

A great interest in this topic covers more importance due to the fact that I have been working not only with young students but also with teens and adults. My students of fifth semester were learning English as a foreign language in the ITCH (Technological Institute of Chetumal) for a period of three years and I could realize that some colleagues had argued that even though they have developed several techniques, activities or methods in their classroom some students still have several problems to learn the language. As language teachers, we must consider that the learners' perspective and the teachers' perspective are not the same and can conflict in the foreign language classroom (Horwitz, 1987). Additionally, some colleagues feel that learners are not motivated or they have high anxiety about learning a language. Influenced by our training and personal philosophy, we, as teachers, think of our classroom as a communication center in all the course in which both students and teachers interact while our students are more likely to think of their courses as hard or easy and that their instructor is a strict or lenient person.

Likewise, in my work with learners, I have often been struck when students comment that English is very hard for them, that just children learn the language that they need to be in a country where English is the first language, and that it is impossible to learn it. I have perceived that when some students have some beliefs about learning English, they face a lot of problems in their learning, whereas students who think that English is not hard find it quite easy. On the other hand, the academic achievement was different among students with different beliefs. I have perceived students' concern about their academic achievement because they showed a great effort in learning English as a foreign language but their achievement was poorer than those learners who believe learning English is quite easy. It seems that some students, who believed that English was easy, or that they needed to practice more, managed a better achievement.

Therefore, it was observable the number of students complaining about the difficulty of learning English, and the worst issue was that students were getting behind for a semester, so they would have to wait for a semester to take again the course they had failed, where in fact for learning a language would require a different attitude.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

At the Language Center from the Technological Institute of Chetumal, I have observed that students have preconceived ideas about learning a language that influence the way they approach the learning of English. From the very first day, sometimes even before experiencing an English class they express having many problems to learn English among which they say that oral and written production in English are really difficult, that they are not good at English and that it is easier for children than for them to learn this foreign language. These and other beliefs regarding the learning of a language are also shared by senior English students.

Beliefs regarding the learning of a foreign language can also be related to the materials used in class, and previous experiences about learning English in the secondary or high school. I have observed that when students have had good English classes they tend to have positive beliefs about learning English while others who have failed their language class usually develop negative opinions in general and about their abilities to learn a new language. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that they have different beliefs about what learning a foreign language is and how it occurs. It has also been observed that women and men have different language learning beliefs.

My colleagues and I have perceived that those beliefs sometimes strongly influence the way they learn and perform in class and thus impact their academic achievement. Then my interest for knowing more about those beliefs aroused. I think that if students and teachers are aware of those beliefs they may have more opportunities to replace or modify the beliefs that do not beneficiate the learning of English.

I was interested in studying whether their positive or negative ideas influence their academic achievement and whether there were any gender differences regarding English language learning beliefs. From my point of view, this issue has a direct relationship with students' language learning process. As Zarate et al., (2004) said, beliefs somehow predict the results of actions taken, and as beliefs, they are said to be unconsciously present in the students mind.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This research aims to:

a) Identify the most and least common language learning beliefs about Learning English of students from the *Language Center* of the Technological Institute of Chetumal (ITCH).

b) Analyze if there are representative gender differences regarding English language learning beliefs.

c) Determine if there is a relation between the students' language learning beliefs and their academic achievement at college.

Therefore, the relevance of this topic is not only for teachers but also students due to the fact that knowing student' beliefs about language can help not only teachers to develop or implement some techniques or strategies, but also the students to know the reasons why they are getting a low academic achievement. Likewise, by identifying students' beliefs about learning English, teachers could prevent some future problems students might have when learning a language since they could identify the functional and contextual.

Three research questions arise with the present study:

1. What are the most and least common language learning beliefs students of ITCH have?

2. What are the differences between men's and women's beliefs?

3. Are students' language learning beliefs related to their English Foreign Language (EFL) academic achievement?

1.3. Limitations

This quantitative research will be conducted at the Technological Institute of Chetumal. The participants of this research will be young people studying English in the Language Center. However, a limitation for this study will be the participants because they are students from the first semester who are taking English 1 at the Language Center of the ITCH. Those subjects, then, represent only a small percentage of the all the population of the ITCH.

Even though there could be many studies done in the past, most of them are carried out mostly in the United State; there are not many that could be found in Mexico. Most of the information comes from other countries like the USA, Australia, Russia, Hong Kong and a few others countries (Horwitz, 1987; Sakui & Gaies, 1999; Brown, 2009; Bernat, 2006; Erlenawati, 2002; Truitt, 1995; Posen, 2006). Apparently, Mexico is delayed in this field (Reyes & Murrieta, 2009), and then it is difficult to find information about works done on beliefs in the country which at the end sets a limit itself for the research.

This research does not attempt to neither study the educational background where students have been educated, nor their sociocultural backgrounds like the relationship among the surroundings and the development of the beliefs. Even though, learners' beliefs are variable over time, from person to person, and setting to setting the results of this study present only a static view of students' beliefs since their opinions were asked only once and at a center period of time. Also, there is no intention of explaining or understanding the origin and the causes of the beliefs students hold.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study will help to know the students' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language. This work is also relevant because its subjects are people who study in an external center like the Language Center of the Technological Institute of Chetumal (ITCH) whose objective is not the investigation. Thus, this study will establish a reference of investigation in the ITCH because there is not a research work regarding to the students' beliefs. Thus, it will enable to determine a general outlook about how learning English is taught in this Language Center.

On the other hand, this study is relevant because knowing the students' beliefs about English learning can help teachers identify more adequate teaching techniques. The students can also be benefit since it will enable to know in a general way how they face their own learning. Likewise, by identifying students' beliefs about learning English, teachers could prevent some future problems students might have when learning a language. Teachers may try to replace beliefs that might negatively interfere with their learning process by more positive beliefs.

On the other hand, this research will provide practical information concerning Mexican students' beliefs and whether those beliefs are related to students' academic achievement. This will be helpful for both EFL teachers and directors of institutes who deal with students, as well as for students who deal with learning a foreign language. The awareness about students' beliefs can help teachers to improve and adapt to the Mexican context their language courses.

This study also provides students' opportunities to reflect and analyze if what they have been thinking of the learning process and the actions they are involved in are the correct ones to get the academic achievement they want. For example, students might think why they succeed at some things and fail at others and, think about their experiences, they ask themselves why success or failure has occurred. It is a part of human nature to find reasons for one's successes or failures. By seeking their beliefs explanations and understanding them, they can predict and control the events that affect them and continue working, with the hope of succeeding again and again.

Second, EFL teachers could identify students' beliefs. Once teachers identify them, they could see them as a real factor of the language learning process. Then they could reflect if their own beliefs interfere with their students' beliefs. Teachers could reflect on their practice and experience, and they could realize if what they do is expected from students. As Horwitz (1987) stated "Understanding language beliefs is essential to understand learner strategies and planning appropriate language instruction". Once teachers know what their students expect from the course they could modify or implement techniques they are used to doing to improve the learning process. Moreover, they may reflect on this variable when they are preparing their lessons, also, when they are planning to modify instructions, or procedures. The same could happen when gender differences are found; some actions could be taken to target both genders.

Consequently, schools could diminish the serious problem of failure or drop outs by creating or modifying programs in which students' expectations are taken into account. The present study can increase our understanding of how Mexican students approach the EFL learning process, thus helping us to better meet these students' needs, expectations, and goals. Horwitz (1987) suggests that variables such as age, gender, and stage of language learning may be important sources of within group variation in learner beliefs about language learning.

CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the theoretical perspectives that have addressed the study of the beliefs about language learning will be presented. The theory that describes the students' beliefs about English learning from the language center of the ITCH will be also emphasized. The study of the beliefs about language learning has been investigated within different approaches: normative, metacognitive, and the contextual. Those studies are based in two different theories: the theory of social representations and the theory of social cognition. Next, an overview of the most relevant variables looked into this study, and the concept of beliefs about language learning are presented, followed by a review of some researches looking into the origin of language learning beliefs and a review of the concepts of language proficiency and academic achievement is also presented.

The second part of this theoretical framework presents a review of some studies related to language learning beliefs carried out in different contexts; those investigations have studied the same variables that are going to be analyzed in this research. Hence, it is important to begin with the explanations of the two theories that support this study.

2.1. Social Representation Theory

The Social Representation is a body of theory within Social Psychology, and in particular within Sociological Social Psychology.. The term *social representation* was originally coined

by Serge Moscovici in 1961 in his study on the reception and circulation of psychoanalysis in France, and it is understood as the collective elaboration of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating. Social representations are "ways of world making" (Moscovici, 1988, p. 231). A more detailed definition that is commonly referred to describe social representations as a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history (Moscovici, 1973, p. xiii).

This definition highlights that social representations help us to make sense of our world and to interact within it with other societal members. They have the main function of familiarizing the unfamiliar since it is the unknown or incomprehensible that may constitute a threat to our socially constructed realities (Araya, 2002). In other words, social representations are triggered by the realization of a gap between what one knows and what one does not understand or cannot explain (Moscovici, 1961, cited in Voelklein & Howarth, 2005).

Araya (2002) mentions that the main parts of the social representation theory are the collective and the comprehension of the reality, beginning from its social construction. Every representation can thereby be understood of being situated inside a dynamic semiotic triangle, as proposed by Moscovici (1984b, cited in Voelklein & Howarth). This triadic relation specifies the three important dimensions of social psychology generally and of every representation in particular: the **object** that is represented, the **subject** that undertakes the representation and the **social group (alter)** whom the subject is positioning him- or herself towards in undertaking this representation and this is called the triadic model (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005).
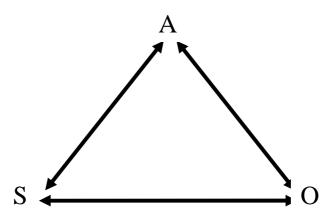
Figure 1. Triatic Model of Moscovici of the Social Representation Theory

The Triadic model of Moscovici (taken from Voelklein & Howarth, 2005) shows that there is not only a relation among the subject and the object, but at the members of the Alter also relate with the object and subject at the same time, and in this process, observations, comments and critics can be elaborated; it means that it can be elaborated the meanings of the reality that have an influence in the decisions, the way of educating children or in the elaboration of plans (Araya, 2002). Social representations are therefore not only a *product* of human agents acting upon their society but are equally prescriptive and coercive in nature. They become part of the collective consciousness, especially once they are "fossilised" in tradition and taken for granted in social practice (Moscovici, 1984a, p. 13).

According the Bandura (1991) the social representations theories may be studied through three research lines of the social representations that have been drawn through the time: (Pereira de Sá (1998, cited in Araya). The three lines are the following schools:

Classic school: it was developed by Denise Jodelet and it was based on Moscovici's principles. In other words, it is more focused on the study of the development process of the social representations, and it uses qualitative techniques especially in the content of analysis and interviews.

Aix-en-Provence school: it was develop by Jean Claude Abric in 1976, and it focused on the cognitive process. It is also known as the structural approach of the social representations, and it uses the experimental techniques.

Ginebra school: it is known as the sociological school and its main supporter is Willen Doise. This school focused on the condition of production and circulation of the social representations.

The classical school uses the processual approach because it is based on the qualitative assumptions and it benefits the social, cultural and the social interactions analysis. On the other hand, the Aix-en-Provence school is based on the structural approach and it benefits the cognitive and psychological development. The structural approach has some close characteristics of the social cognitive psychology of the American line (Araya, 2002). Next, the social cognition theory will be presented.

2.2. Social Cognition Theory

The social cognition theory was developed in the USA by psychologists that are within the approach called social psychology. Branch (2000, cited in Araya) mentions that the social cognition studies the ideas that people learn by watching what others do and that human thought processes are central to understanding personality. While social cognitists agree that there is a fair amount of influence on development generated by learned behavior displayed in the environment in which one grows up, they believe that the individual person (and therefore cognition) is just as important in determining moral development (Bandura, 1999). In other words it explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavioral patterns, while also providing the basis for intervention strategies.

Social cognitive theory provides a framework for understanding, predicting, and changing human behavior. The theory identifies human behavior as an interaction of personal factors, behavior, and the environment (Bandura 1977; Bandura 1986). In the model, the interaction

between the person and behavior involves the influences of a person's thoughts and actions. The interaction between the person and the environment involves human beliefs and cognitive competencies that are developed and modified by social influences and structures within the environment. The third interaction, between the environment and behavior, involves a person's behavior determining the aspects of their environment and in turn their behavior is modified by that environment.

According to Jones (1989), the fact that behavior varies from situation to situation may not necessarily mean that behavior is controlled by situations but rather that the person is construing the situations differently and thus the same set of stimuli may provoke different responses from different people or from the same person at different times.

On the other hand, Shunk (1997) points out that the social cognition of Bandura is a general learning theory done by observations since it has grown up gradually to cover the acquisition and the practice of some strategies, behaviors and skills. Schunk (1997) explains that the social cognitive theory takes out the idea that students learning is through the environment. When people watch what others do, they acquire knowledge, strategies, skills, beliefs, attitude and rules. People also learn about the use of the convenience of different behaviors because they took them as models to reenact and they do not expect actual rewards or punishments but anticipate similar outcomes to their imitated behaviors and allows for these effects to work.
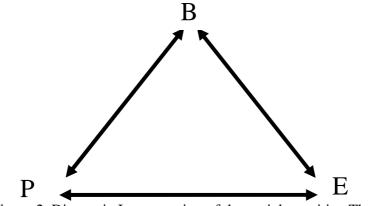

Figure 2. Diamatric Interpretation of the social cognitive Theory.

In the diagrammatic interpretation of the Social Cognitive Theory (taken from McAlister, Perry, & Parcel, 2008), it illustrates how personal and environmental factors affect behavior. B represents behavior, P represents personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events, and E represents the external environment. These factors, in turn, also are affected by behavior and are affected by each other.

Bandura's emphasis was on the cognitive aspects of how people think about their social experiences and how these thoughts affect their growth and actions. Bandura introduced the concept that learning can take places through modeling the behavior of others. He was the first to explain the ideas of self-efficacy, as well as the fact that when an action occurs, the effect of that action is not always immediate.

Bandura (1997) also mentions that the self-Regulation is the main role of the social cognition theory. He stated that **self-regulation** can be understood as one's personal ability to control oneself through self-monitoring, goal-setting, feedback, self-reward, self-instruction, and enlistment of social support (Bandura, 1991). Thus, people do not behave just to please the preferences of others since some part of their behavior is motivated and controlled by internal rules. Some very important concepts in psychology that can be understood well with self-regulation are self-efficacy, and **self-concept** (better known as self-esteem).

Self-efficacy is a more consistent predictor of behavior and behavior changes that any other expectancy theory (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1986, cited in Gabillon) defined self-**efficacy** beliefs as personal beliefs (judgments) about one's capabilities to engage in an activity or perform a task at a given level. Self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. This is because unless people believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. People´s self-efficacy beliefs also determine how hard they will try, how long they will persist when they run against barriers and how flexible they will be under adverse conditions. If the self-efficacy is positive, the labor will be more intense. In addition, there will be more perseverance and more flexibility will be generated (Shunk, 1981, cited in Valentine, DuBois, & Cooper, 2004).

On the other hand, self-concept is defined as "a composite view of oneself that is presumed to be formed through direct experience and evaluations adopted from significant others. Self-concepts are measured by having people rate how well descriptive statements of different attributes apply to themselves," (Bandura, 1997, p.10). Salazar (2005), however, mentions that self-concept is not a strong predictor of behavior as are beliefs in efficacy as demonstrate in various research studies as Pajares & Kranzler, 1995; Pajares & Miller, 1994. If, over the years, you find yourself meeting your standards and life loaded with self-praise and self-reward, you will have a pleasant self-concept (high self-esteem). If, on the other hand, you find yourself forever failing to meet your standards and punishing yourself, you will have a poor self-concept (low self-esteem).

To sum up, social cognitive theory is helpful for understanding and predicting both individual and group behavior and identifying methods in which behavior can be modified or changed. After explaining what social representation and social cognition theory, it is important to set up the relation among beliefs, their definitions and beliefs in the language learning.

2.3. Beliefs' Definition

Defining beliefs seems to be difficult due to the fact that there are several terms to refer to them. Those terms seem to reflect different researchers' approaches, theories and the purposes of study. In different literature about beliefs, learner's beliefs have emerged under different categories such as metacognitive knowledge (Weden, 1986), self-efficacy belief (Truitt, 1995), self-regulatory belief or attributions (Gabillon, 2002) and mental and social interpretations (Bernat & Gvozdenko 2005; Braten& Stromso, 2005).

In addition to this, there are a number of terms such as "folk linguistic theories of learning (Miller & Ginseberg, 1995), learners' representations (Holec, 1987), representations (Riley, 1994), learners' philosophy of language learning (Abraham & Vann, 1987), metacognitive

knowledge (Weden, 1986, 1987), cultural beliefs (Gardner, 1988), representations (Riley, 1994), learning culture, (Riley, 1997), the culture of learning languages (Barcelos, 1995) and culture of language (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996)," in Barcelos (2003).

The definition of beliefs is given according in terms of the purpose of the researches. For example, beliefs are taken as an opinion of the truth of proposition without evidence (Gleason, 2001). On the other hand, Victory (1999) states that beliefs have been seen as cognitive entities to be found inside the mind. Likewise, beliefs can be understood as a state of mind in the process of increasing understanding which is sometimes called deduction (Huglin, 2003). According to Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) and Breaten & Stromso (2005), beliefs are a mental interpretation that is derived from perceptions, communication and reasoning. As can be seen, beliefs are not only considered an area of individual learners' differences that influences the process of a second language acquisition, but beliefs are also defined as opinions and ideas that learners have in the process of learning a second language (Kalaja & Ferreira, 2006). According to Horwitz (1987, 1988) beliefs about language learning are preconceived notions, myths or misconceptions.

As summary, the term of *beliefs* has different definitions which are given according to the type of approaches researchers do (Barcelos, 2003; Hosenfeld, 2003; Gabillon, 2007). Nevertheless, for this study Horwitz's definition will be used because it describes beliefs as the cognitive dimensions that people use to understand the world around them (cited in Horwitz, 1998, p. 1) and also because her investigation was also based on the normative approach. Next, the some studies that investigated the relation of beliefs and language learning will be presented.

2.4. Beliefs about Language Learning

Success in language learning is influenced by many factors. Some of them are associated with the social context of the learning, cultural beliefs about language learning, and the process of language learning itself (Erlenawati, 2002). Therefore, many scholars in the field of language learning include some factors such as age, gender, aptitude, motivation, personality, culture,

cognitive style and beliefs as part of individual differences among learners that can estimate students' success or failure in language learning (Ellis, 1985). Other authors have also remarked the importance of beliefs. Horwitz (1987), for example, argued that language learners indeed hold some beliefs about language learning. Hence beliefs are considered an influence of the process and outcomes of second/foreign language learning (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2006).

Research about beliefs is not a new topic in fields such as psychology and anthropology, but it is in linguistics. In applied linguistics, beliefs have been of interest since the mid-eighties and have originated from an earlier discussion of what characterizes good language learners, including such traits as motivation, aptitude, personality, and learning strategies (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2006).

Current studies such as Barcelos (2000), and Kalaja, & Barcelos (2006), of beliefs about Second Language Acquisition (SLA) describe them as a cause-and-effect relationship to other factors involved such as social backgrounds in SLA. Beliefs, hence, can influence learners' motivation to learn, their expectations about language learning, their perceptions about what is easy or difficult about language, and the strategies they choose in learning (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

On the other hand, scholars taking social psychological and sociocultural perspectives claim that beliefs are acquired from the environment, so they consider unreliable to talk about beliefs without referring to the context they are from because beliefs are intertwined with the environment (Gabillon, 2002; (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). Gabillon (2007), for example, pointed out that language learning beliefs appeared in some different categories. She defined that beliefs are constructed in a social and cultural contexts where educators could use appropriately if they understand them.

To summarize, students' language learning could be constructed through the learning process which might be interfered by some beliefs. Those beliefs can interfere in students' learning

progress which can be seen in their academic achievement. Next, the definition of academic achievement will be explained.

2.5. Academic Achievement

The importance of academic achievement, also known as performance standard (WETA, 2008), has grew up in the recent years because it shows if students are doing well at school, or not. However, the definition of academic achievement varies among educators, policymakers and other educational stakeholders (Lewelling, 2007).

According to Valentine, DuBois, & Cooper (2004) academic achievement is understood as the expected performance of students on measures of their grades. It means that students are sometimes graded in a quantitative or qualitative way about how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers.

In the past, academic achievement was often measured more qualitatively than quantitatively. Teachers' observations made up the form of the assessment, and today' summation, or numerical are methods that define how well a student is performing at class (Valentine, DuBois, & Cooper, 2004). Grading systems came into existence in America in the late Victorian period, and were initially criticized due to high subjectivity since there was no proof about how much knowledge students got (Salazar, 2005), especially in the language classes since teachers could evaluate students by observations about their performance in classes.

Some years later, quantitative evaluation was used to grade students in their English performance like tests but teachers valued different aspects of learning more highly than others. However, changes in the evaluation criteria were suggested since there was not a standardized system for grading and since grading languages are not only exams but different activities to perform. Students from different institutions like the ITCH demonstrate, nowadays, their knowledge by taking written and oral tests, performing presentations, turning in homework and participating in class activities and discussions.

For this specific study, no special exam was designed. Their academic achievement was then based on the grade obtained in the exam they sit every semester, i.e. from their English 1 exam. Thus students' final grades of English 1 are to be used as indicators of their academic achievement during the course.

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2.6 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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This section reviews some studies related to the topic investigated in this research. It is important to mention that studies regarding language learning beliefs have been done within three main approaches: Normative, Metacognitive, and Contextual; however, since the normative approach is the basis for this study, it will be described more broadly; next, a summary of those approaches is also presented, followed by a review of some studies of beliefs done in Mexico, the studies investigating the gender beliefs, and finally the language learners' beliefs and academic achievement is presented.

2.6.1. Studies of Beliefs within the Normative, the Metacognitive and the Contextual Approaches.

Some studies have been investigated within various research paradigms (Barcelos, 2003), researchers have attempted to classify them. Barcelos (2003) & Bernal and Gvozdenko (2005) distinguish three main approaches: nominative, metacognitive and contextual. Barcelos' classification (2003) was based on a definition of beliefs, research methodology, and the relationship between beliefs and other factors. In this section, the studies will be grouped into these three approaches mentioning the authors of each approach and the main characteristics.

2.6.2 The Normative Approach

To begin with, the term Normative Approach was used for the first time by Holliday (1994). This approach defines beliefs as synonyms for preconceived notions, misconceptions or myths (Barcelos, 2003). This approach is characterized by the use of scale questionnaires in the research of learners' beliefs; also, it establishes a cause and effect relationship between beliefs and behavior (Hosefeld, 2003). Hence, data collection is done mostly through the use of questionnaires, and the data analysis through descriptive statistics.

It is important to mention that the most widely used questionnaire to investigate beliefs about language learning is the Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) that was developed by Horwitz (1985). This instrument, concerned about assessing teachers' opinions on issues related to language learning,' was created by asking teachers to list their beliefs, other people's beliefs, and their studies beliefs about language learning. Later, some idiosyncratic beliefs were eliminated, and the instrument was revised and complemented. The BALLI was later piloted at the University of Texas at Austin. Once the BALLI was finished, Horwitz aimed to study and identify the beliefs of beginning university foreign language students.

Most of the studies done in this approach have used the BALLI (Horwitz, 1987; Truitt, 1995; Mori, 1999; Yang, 1992; Tercanlioglu, n.d.; Nikitina, 2006), adapt it (Peacock, 1998; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2007), or have developed their own questionnaires (Campell, Shaw, Palgeman, & Allen, 1993; Wen & Jonhson, 1997; Cotterall, 1995, cited in Kalaja & Barcelos 2006).

2.6.2.1 Studies within the Normative Approach

Horwitz (1985) did a quantitative investigation where she administered the teacher version of the BALLI in addition to the Foreign Language Attitude Scale (FLAS) to students in her methods classes. Based on observations, she concluded that teachers enter the methods class with many preconceived ideas about language learning and teaching, some of which can impede with their understanding the information and the techniques presented in class.

Horwitz therefore recommended using the BALLI in teacher training in order to systematically assess pre-service teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching and to take these beliefs into account when planning and developing methods classes.

In a study of learner beliefs about language learning in an ESL context, Horwitz (1987) used the BALLI to explore the beliefs of 32 intermediate-level ESL students from diverse cultural background. She studied some students who had the idea that some people are born with a special ability to learn a foreign language; likewise, she argued that students' beliefs have been considered as some stables and statics. Therefore, professors shared beliefs that the only the best way of learning a language in living in the country the language belongs to.

In a subsequent study, Horwitz (1988) did another research in which, this time, she focused on beliefs about learning strategies and students' expectations for language learning. her subjects were university FL students of German, French and Spanish. The BALLI was administered to 241 students. In this study she found out that the beliefs students were only representative on first semester due the fact that the majority of the learners would drop out the language as soon as they can, meanwhile other may modify their beliefs. This quantitative research let her establish that students hold a range of beliefs with varying degrees of validity.

Next year, Horwitz (1989) investigated the relationship between learner beliefs about language learning and foreign language anxiety. The BALLI and a foreign language anxiety measure (Foreign Language Anxiety Scale, Horwitz et al., 1968) were administered to 34 beginning university Fl students of Spanish. Findings showed that the more anxious students tented to believe that only some people can learn a foreign language and that they themselves were not part of this exclusive group. Based on the findings of this study, Horwitz concluded that learner beliefs about language learning may be a major source of foreign language anxiety and that negative experiences probably reinforce beliefs that special abilities are necessary to learn a language.

Truitt (1995) investigated the beliefs about language learning of university students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Korea using the BALLI questionnaire and a

background questionnaire. Her findings showed that the students had some differences in their beliefs about language learning from those of American foreign language students (Horwitz, 1988). For example, she mentioned that EFL students have less confident of their personal language learning, and they were less supportive of the role of grammar and correctness. Another finding was that students felt that translation was not important, and reported that they did not enjoy practicing English with native speakers, nor did they seem to have an integrative motivation for learning English. An important finding was that students showed that the most important part of learning a language is learning vocabulary. Mori concluded that all the results suggested that students' previous experiences can have an influence on their beliefs about language learning. Kern (1995) and Mantle-Bromley (1995) made similar researches and they both obtained similar results. They found that teachers and students' beliefs did not match and they were having a negative influence in the students' performance within the language learning class.

The same year, Truitt (1995b) did another research. This time, she wanted to investigate the foreign language anxiety, and beliefs about language university students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Korean; and to study the relationships among the students' anxiety levels and beliefs. A total of 204 students enrolled in undergraduate English course in Seoul, Korean participated in the study. A questionnaire consisting of the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS, Horwitz, 1983b), and a background questionnaire was translated into Korean and administered to the subjects. Results indicated some differences in beliefs from the diverse groups. The findings provide evidence that learners' beliefs about language learning may be based on cultural background and previous experiences. Also, Korean subject had higher levels of foreign language anxiety. These findings suggested that Korean learners do indeed experience foreign language anxiety, and that learners from certain cultures may have higher levels of foreign language anxiety than those from other cultures. Also, Truitt concluded that beliefs about language learning, particularly low self-efficacy/confidence in speaking and beliefs about the difficult of language learning may be a source of foreign language anxiety.

Some years later, Peacock (1998) tried to verify if BALLI's results are reliable and to investigate if his result were the same that Horwitz did (1989). He states that Horwitz suggested that if learners' perception or beliefs about learning a foreign language differ from teachers' ideas, their academic achievement may be affected. He made a research of 202 Chinese learners in ten EFL classes, and 45 English teachers using Horwitz's BALLI. In the results of this study, Peacock exposed those learners who beliefs that learning a foreign language is just a matter of learning a lot of grammar's rules had a less proficiency than learners who thought otherwise. He pointed out that those students who hold this belief focus on memorizing grammar rules, is due the teacher-directed tasks. A negative issue of this belief, according to Peacock, is that students could become so dissatisfied with teachers who do not emphasize grammar in classroom tasks and marking essays. Another finding was that students who believed that people who speak more than one language were all very intelligent feel their progress may feel some frustration and dissatisfaction when they feel that their learning progress is slow. In general, Peacock showed in his quantitative research that the BALLI's responses were similar to those of Horwitz.

Mori (1999) wanted to find out how learner beliefs are related to the ability to combine information from word parts and context in interpreting novel semantically semitransparent in university students. Nevertheless, she found that language learners' word inference strategies at least partially reflect their beliefs about learning in general and language learning in particular. In the same year, Mori (1999), on the other hand, tried to study the relationship between the strategies learners use to interpret unfamiliar words in a target language and how to interpret kanji words. Her quantitative investigation carried on to discover that language learners' word implicate some strategies that reflect their beliefs about learning a language. She found out that if students believed that the learning is quick, they would perceive that learning a foreign language would be easier from those who believe it is difficult.

In the same year, Yang (1999) studied the relationship between college EFL (English as a foreign language) students' beliefs about language learning and the use of their learning strategies. A total of 505 university students in Taiwan participated in the study. The study was conducted by using the English Learning Questionnaire, which was composed of

Horwitz's (1987) BALLI inventory, Oxford's (1990) the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and a few questions that were designed by the author. The questionnaire was translated into Chinese, pilot tested and modified for the study. The factors identified in Yang's (1999) study differ to some extent from the classification that Horwitz (1987) used. However, Yang emphasized that the factor analysis was an exploratory one and it did not explain why certain items fell into one factor instead of another. This study showed that the subjects had a strong sense of self-efficacy about learning English; some students thought that they would learn to speak English very well. The subjects also believed in the importance and usefulness of speaking English and expressed a strong interest in learning spoken English.

Yang (1999) found that the students' self-efficacy beliefs were strongly related to their use of all types of learning strategies, especially functional practice strategies. In other words, these students would actively create opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Another correlation was found between the value and nature of learning spoken English and the use of formal oral practice strategies. The students wanted to learn to speak English very well, and thus focused on the practice of pronunciation. That is, they were interested in learning formal aspects of English, rather than functional or communicative use of the language. Yang also suggested cyclical relationships between learners' beliefs, motivation and strategy use.

Bernat (2006) researched on beliefs held by 262 English for Academic Purposes (EAP) language learners at an Australian University. The BALLI was used to collect data, which was later compared with an American study of 156 EAP learners (Siebert, 2003). Findings revealed that both study were similar in all categories. Both groups believed in child supremacy with respect to the age factor and supported the concept of foreign language attitude. It was reported that caution should be taken in generalizing that beliefs about language learning vary by contextual setting. Rather, the individuals' complex metacognitive structure (as affected by a number of social, cultural, contextual, cognitive, affective, and personal factors) that is responsible for the shaping nature and strength of these beliefs.

The same year, Altan (2006) explored the beliefs about language learning of foreign-major university students. The participants were 248 foreign languages major who belong in the

departments of English, German, French, Japanese and Arabic and they were all going to be the teachers of the language they were learning. The BALLI was administered to collect data. A minority of English Language students reported they think English is a language difficult language to learn because they need a lot of time to get it, some of them said that it cannot be learnt in one hour a day of study. In addition, this study also showed that some students expect to speak the language they are learning in an unrealistic amount of time; that it is easier for children than for adult to learn a foreign language; that women are better at learning languages; that learning another language is a matter of learning new vocabulary and grammatical rules; that repetition and practice in the laboratory is important for learning languages; that guessing a word you do not know is important; and that speaking with an excellent accent is important.

Nikitina & Furuoka (2007) conducted another study with 107 Russian language students at Malaysian University to investigate the beliefs about beginners and intermediate learners in order to assess which areas of beliefs were commonly shared. The modification of the BALLI was done in a Malaysian context to collect data. The results showed that the majority of students agreed that children were more adept language learners than adults, that learning a language mostly involves memorizing new vocabulary, grammar and requires different strategies from learning other school subjects, that excellent pronunciation was important as the same as knowing a foreign language. On the other hand, students disagreed with the beliefs of people who are good at science and mathematics are not good at learning language, learning a language is about performing translation from one's mother tongue, and one should peak only when is able to produce error-free language.

Loewen, Li, & ELT (2009) focused on the language beliefs about grammar instruction and error corrections. The instruments used for this research was the BALLI. In their quantitative research, it was found that ESL and EFL learners have some different beliefs about grammar instructions and the use of error correction. Findings also showed that learners that they hold negative views of grammar instruction and still others prioritized communication over grammar.

It can be seen that more research was conducted using the BALLI as the main tool; however, other researches omitted some of its questions or added some more. Also, other studies decided to make use of other questionnaires instead of the BALLI and/or complemented their study with interviews or observations. Next a review of some of those investigations will be presented.

2.6.2.2 Non-BALLI Research

There are other researchers who have the BALLI as basis to develop their own questionnaires which included different kind of questions, like open questions, multiple choice format questions, and also some considered the addition of writing tasks and activities. For instance, Kuntz's (1996) used her own version of the BALLI, the Kuntz-Rifkin Instrument. She investigated the beliefs about learning held by university students enrolled in Swahili compared to those of students French and Spanish. In her findings, she identified that students of Swahili do hold unique beliefs concerning language learning.

Sakui & Gaies (1999) investigated the relationship and their differences between Japanese learners' beliefs and EFL teachers' beliefs. In their investigation, they developed a 45-item questionnaire in a Likert-type scale. They exposed that students' beliefs about learning English were related to the distinction of many teachers had a traditional and contemporary approaches to language teaching and learning. They established their own questionnaires where they reveal that there are some difficulties nearby efforts to emphasize oral communication ability as a primary aim of instruction which is difficult to implement.

Cotterall (1999) first worked with her own designed questionnaire in 1995. Later on, she studied the language learner beliefs of a group of students enrolled in an English for Academic Purposes course. The study aimed to identify six dimensions underlying learner responses to a questionnaire (role of the teacher, role of feedback, learner independence, learner confidence in study ability, experience of language learning, and approach to studying) and explored the relationship between each factor and autonomous language learning behavior. In her results

she reported that teachers need to allocate class time and attention to raising awareness of monitoring and evaluating strategies, as well as to provide learners with opportunities to practice using metacognitive strategies. Regarding to teachers, she considered that they also needed to explore learners' beliefs about their ability as language learners and take action where they discover that learners lack confidence. This would allow teachers to acknowledge their learners' beliefs in the design of classroom tasks and in the organization of learning opportunities.

Some years later, Riley (2006) studied the beliefs about language learning of the first year university students in Japan. The questionnaire that was used to collect data was developed by Sakui and Gaies (1999). There were also formed two students discussion group to provide further information. He wanted to explore the differences between student beliefs and teacher beliefs, the change in student beliefs during s course study and the relationship between student beliefs and second language proficiency. In the results, he found out that some students seem to hold a variety of beliefs to varying beliefs. Also, there were some significant differences related to translation, the difficulty of language learning, error correction, and motivation.

Most of these studies within the normative approach have provided a general idea of the kind of beliefs about SLA and FLA students may have. Even though it was the first approach to the investigation of beliefs that was originated, the development of the BALLI marked the beginning of systematic research on student beliefs about language learning, and some subsequent research studies identified common beliefs among language learning. This approach has helped to develop important researches and findings related to beliefs and their relation to other variables.

2.6.2.3. Advantages and Limitations

Questionnaires have been the most commonly used in the investigation of beliefs about language learning in the Normative Approach. Among the advantages mentioned by authors

such as Barcelos (2000) and Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) questionnaires are seen less threatening than observation. They are also very useful if the researches have limited resources and time. With questionnaires researchers can gather information from many people at one time, and with only the questionnaire and a pen or pencil. Moreover, it is easier to analyze data through questionnaires, and can be used with large number of students (Gimenez, 1994). As there is not a wide range of expected answers, it becomes easier to collect and process the answers obtained. Questionnaires also afford precision and clarity, allow access to outside contexts, and allow data to be collected at different time periods (McDonough & McDonough, 1997).

On the other hand, questionnaires also have their limitations. Some of them are that they make it difficult to guarantee consistent interpretation by individuals. Also, respondents tend to reply what they think would be appropriate and not what it should be (Gimenez, 1994). What is more, questionnaires restrict respondents' choices by framing the answers according to a pre-established set of statements. As questionnaires do not allow students to use their own words and metaphors, they make it difficult to investigate beliefs in students' or teachers' own terms (Block, 1997).

In summary, within the normative approach, information on beliefs is collected through the use of questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics, and the perspective adopted is the quantitative. There are advantages of using questionnaires as the main tool for collecting data, such as time saving, information easy to analyze, and application of the questionnaire as many times as it is needed. However, there are limitations that need to be considered since they may affect the results of the research. In order to complement the information that questionnaires in the normative approach produced, researchers aimed at investigating beliefs using other data collection methods that would help them get a better understanding of students beliefs in which students would report their beliefs in their own words. This is how the metacognitive approach was identified.

2.6.3. The Metacognitive Approach

Studies within this approach define beliefs as metacognitive knowledge. According to Wenden (1987), metacognitive knowledge is defined as the stable, stable although sometimes incorrect knowledge that learner have acquired about language, learning and the language learning process (p.163). This approach shows a strong cause and effect between beliefs and behavior. Examples of authors using this approach are Cotterall, (1999), Reley, (2006), Wenden (1999, 2001), Victori (1992, 2000), among others.

Wenden (1999), who is one of the most advocates of this approach, makes a between knowledge and beliefs. She describes beliefs as individual, subjective understandings, idiosyncratic truths, which are often value-related and characterized by a commitment not present in knowledge. Whereas knowledge is viewed as factual, objective information, acquired through formal truths. The data collection within the Metacognitive approach is carried out by verbal accounts gathered through semi-structured interviews and self-reports (Hosenfeld, 2003). Content analysis is used to analyze this data.

Researchers have usually designed their own questionnaires (Victori, 1992) to address specific aspects of the theoretical framework of metacognitive knowledge. The distinction between the metacognitive approach and the normative approach is the framework that defines beliefs as metacognitive knowledge and their relationship with autonomy. Most of the studies within this approach see metacognitive knowledge as an essential feature in helping students to become autonomous.

2.6.3.1. Studies within the Metacognitive Approach

Wenden (1987) explored learners' explicit prescriptive beliefs with the purpose of determining whether the learners held such beliefs, and if so, what those were. She interviewed 25 students who had recently arrived in the USA and were enrolled in advanced level classes of a language program at a university. The findings revealed that learners held prescriptive beliefs,

which Wenden categorized into three groups. The first group was the importance of using the language in a natural way that is, practicing, thinking in the second language, and living an studying in an environment where the target language is spoken. The second group was concerned with the importance of learning about the language such as learning grammar and vocabulary, taking a formal language course, learning from mistakes, and being mentally active. The third group emphasized the importance of personal factors such as emotional aspect, self-concept, attitude and aptitude for learning. In her study, Wenden compared the beliefs with those in the BALLI. She found that they were very different, and others were not represented in the BALLI.

With the purpose of expending an understanding of the function of metacognitive knowledge in language learning, Goh (1997) investigated forty ESL learners' metacognitive awareness about listening. The data was obtained through some learners' diaries. In her investigation, she asked learners to keep a listening diary where they described the way the listened, react to, and perceive the information. In her investigation, she applied the knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge. The study revealed that learners had a big high degree of metacognitive awareness, and were conscious of their learning strategies in listening. One of the strengths of this investigation is that learners become aware of their learning styles, strategies and beliefs that could escort them to improve their own learning processes in other context.

In other study, Wenden (1999) set up that learner could acquire this knowledge unconsciously by observing and imitating at any age. She pointed out that beliefs, in this approach, are seemed as a system of linked ideas which some of them are accepting without question and other are confirmed by learners' experience. She also holds that learners may get it consciously by listening to others such as parents, or teachers (Sözcükler, 2007).

Fan (1999) investigated the beliefs and strategies of 529 Hong-Kong students in learning English. Findings of the study revealed a consistent relationship between language learning beliefs and strategies as well as other complicated relationships between them. In addition, language learning beliefs and strategies related to high English Proficiency have been revealed. Some important finding found in this research were that nobody can learn English

without hard work; doing a great deal of listening is important to learn English; and that selecting appropriate learning strategies for learning English is important. Fan suggested that most research needs to be conducted into students of different ages, cognitive backgrounds and interest in the language to understand more the language process.

Some years later, Riley (2006) explored the beliefs about language learning of the first year university students in Japan. The questionnaire developed by Sakiu and Gaies (1999) was used to collect the data. The study explored differences between student beliefs and teacher beliefs, change in student beliefs during a course of study, and relationships between students beliefs and second language proficiency. Significant differences were found between student responses and teachers responses. The four main areas of difference were related to translation, error correction, the difficulty of language learning, and motivation.

Sözcükler (2007) investigated the metacognitive knowledge or beliefs about language of Turkish EFL learners. He wanted to attest to whether there are differences in belief systems among learner groups according to the contexts (social, academic), gender, age, and grade level. In his study, he established that Turkish EFL learners have an extensive range of conceptions both similar to and different from the metacognitive knowledge.

A similar study was done by Goh & Xue (2002) who investigated the metacognitive knowledge about language learning among 177 English Language learning in two different environments, China and Singapore. To collect data, a 50-item questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was based on a three-dimensional framework of metacognitive knowledge: person, strategy, task (Flavell, 1979). Findings revealed that despite being in two different environments, both groups held many similar views about language learning. For example, both groups shared many similar views in person knowledge that is knowledge about themselves and other people as language learners. There were also similarities in some aspects of knowledge about learning strategies. Both groups agreed that an effective way to learn another language was through using it in everyday communication. An interesting point is that while both groups shared this common view. Other findings showed that although language environments can influence individuals' metacognitive knowledge, it may take a long time for

long held views to be changed. They usually remain for long periods to modify any personal beliefs (seen as metacognitive knowledge) of the language learning process.

More recently, some studies have started investigating beliefs from different perspective. Thus, there are some heterogeneous groups which include studies that have defined beliefs according to the different theoretical frameworks. Its goal is to describe beliefs embedded in students' context. This is the name of the following approach known as the Contextual Approach.

2.6.3.2. Advantages and Limitations

Among the advantages proposed by Barcelos (2000) and Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) are:

1. The use of interviews gives learners the opportunity to elaborate and reflect on their experience. It means that interviews allow students to define and evaluate the learning process in their own terms (Block, 1997, as cited in Barcelos 2000 p. 19).

2. The interviews in this approach are a constant tool, and it gives learners the opportunity to elaborate and reflect on their own experiences. The answers are more completed, and it seems that interviews can have a "normal" or "real" conversation and answers.

On the other hand, this approach, the metacognitive, does not infer beliefs from actions, but only from intentions and statements. What's more, beliefs are connected to experience, the context, and its influence on students' beliefs are not considered. Other limitations is that beliefs are seemed as ways to transform learners into better learners, and they are considerate as abstracts entities inside learners minds; to this same respect. Thus, beliefs are not stable; they are socially constructed, interactive, social in nature and variable. However, in order to know how beliefs are affected by the context, a new approach was created

2.6.4. The Contextual Approach

In the contextual approach, beliefs are viewed as set in students' contexts. Researches (Barcelos 2000, 2003; Kalaja, 2000; Liao, 2006) do not use questionnaires or see beliefs into metacognitive knowledge. Hence, this approach includes studies that have been defined beliefs according to various theoretical frameworks; they have collected a variety of types of data, and used diverse data analysis. The main goal of this approach is to get a better understanding of beliefs in specific contexts by combining different methods to interpret students' beliefs in their contexts (Barcelos, 2000).

Beliefs are investigated by using a variety of methods that include using ethnographic classroom observations (Alle, 1996; Barcelos, 1995, 2000), diaries and narratives (Miller & Ginsberg, 1995), metaphor analysis (Ellis, 2001), and discourse analysis (Riley, 1994; Grigoletto, 2000; Kalaja, 1995).

According to this approach, beliefs are characterized as contextual, dynamic and social. Within this approach, participants' perspectives and the way they organize their perceptions of events are essential.

2.6.4.1. Studies within the Contextual Approach

In her study, White (1999) used phenomenography aiming to expose how learners experienced and interpreted self-instructed language learning. She used interviews, raking exercises, questionnaires, and scenarios to gather data. Her study of students' beliefs about distances self-directed learning emphasizes the notion of context as what learners construct as they go along. White points out how beliefs helped learners to adjust to the new environment as they revised and adapted their initial expectations and gained experience in the new context.

In the same year, Benson and Lor (1999) proposed to take into consideration three levels of analysis: conception, belief, and approach. They explored whether or not a higher order of

conceptions of language and language learning could be identified, and whether the notion of approaches to language learning could help understand the function of beliefs in context. The participants were 16 first-year undergraduates. Benson and Lor found that learner' conception of the object and process of learning were influential in the learner's beliefs and subsequently learning strategies. They showed that conception of learning constitutes a higher level of abstractions than beliefs.

Barcelos (2000), on the other hand, did a qualitative research in which she studied the learning teachers' beliefs and their influence on the development of learners' beliefs about language and language learning; in her study she found out that there is a relationship of mismatch, similarity, and neutrality between different teachers and students. This study that was developed later with in 2003 is a summary about some studies that have done a review of common methodologies used in the investigation of beliefs about SLA. She analyzed some select studies on learner's beliefs about SLA, and discussed about their methodology, and mentioned their advantages and disadvantages of them.

In the same year, Grigoletto (2000) investigated the representations of English held by students of English in Brazilian public schools. Data collection included 50 written reports about some questions written by the researcher and semi-structured interviews with eight students. She found three main discourse analysis constructions: a) to know English is to know the school subject; b) to know English is to use it effectively in communication; and c) to know English is to master this language carefully and perfectly. She concluded that each student affiliates himself/herself to at least two beliefs and that these beliefs are part of how she/he relates to the school discourse.

Liao (2006), on the other hand, joined the language learning beliefs with specific fields like translation and grammar errors. For example, in his qualitative and quantitative study, he tried to explain how Taiwanese learners believe that using the translation help those to learn English Language and develop some abilities such as lecture, comprehension. His results showed that many students believe that translating helps them to acquire English language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, idioms, and phrases. Therefore, he set up

that translation learning was more effective than context learning in learning new vocabulary words.

2.6.4.2. Advantages and Limitations

The advantages of this approach is that it offers a broader definition of beliefs as dynamic and social, a different methodology to investigate beliefs is proposed, and it presents a much positive view of learners than the normative and metacognitive approaches because it takes students own perspectives and contexts into account.

Some of the limitations of this approach are that there is no evidence that with this approach researchers place enough importance to the interaction between beliefs and actions, only the context aspect is crucial for their beliefs. As observed with the examples of research done in the contextual approach, studies are more suitable with small samples, and it is time consuming. The amount of techniques for data collection, such as observation, and repeated interviews, does not allow any researcher to have a big sample universe to work with.

To sum up, it is important to point out that the distinctions between the three approaches may not be simple. The choices of the methodology or the approach depend on the types of questions the research is looking for. Also, most of the researchers have described the sort of beliefs that it can be encounter in language classroom. This seems that recent studies (Barcelos, 2003, Brown, 2009; Gabillon, 2007; Yu, 2007; Reyes, 2009; Reyes & Murrieta, 2008) have been combining questionnaires with classroom observations and analysis, and case studies. Although some researchers (Horwitz, 1988, 1999; Hosenfeld, 2003, Loewen, Li, Fei, & ELT, 2009) focus on specific purposes, they all show that beliefs influence students' behavior in one or other manner.

Likewise, whenever the topic of foreign language comes up in a conversation, many people try to express themselves their views and opinions about language learning. Therefore, having a belief about language learning means to have an important relevance and both a conception or

misconception about it. It is established that beliefs determines actions and ways of behavior in a negative and affirmative manner (Marín, n. d). Consequently, even though learners' beliefs about language learning would seem to have a notorious significance in the understanding of students' expectations of their language classes, they have remained unexplored.

2.6.5. Summary of the Three Approaches

In the following table, Barcelos (2003, p.9) shows the features, advantages and disadvantages of the three approaches to the research of beliefs about language learning.

Table 1. Summary of the three approaches

	Normative	Metacognitive	Contextual
Methodology Data Collection Data analysis	a) Questionnaires b) Descriptive statistics	a) Interviews and self-reported b) Content analysis	a) Observations, interviews, diaries, life stories b) Interpretative analysis
Definition of beliefs	Preconceived notions, misconceptions, and opinions	Metacognitive knowledge: stable of fallible know of second language have about language learning	Part of our culture of learning and representations of language learning in a given society.
Relationship beliefs/actions	Good indicators of future students' behaviors, autonomy, effectiveness	Good indicators of future students' autonomy, and effectiveness, though influence of other factors.	Context-specific. i.e. Students' beliefs are investigated within the context of their actions.
Advantages	Allows investigating beliefs wit large samples, different.	Students use their own words, elaborate, and reflect	Beliefs are investigated taking into account students' own words and

	Slots, outside contexts.	upon their language learning experiences.	the context on students' actions.
Limitations	Questionnaires make it difficult to guarantee consistent interpretation by individuals. Respondents tend to reply what they think would be appropriate Restrict respondents' choices by the research.	Beliefs are inferred only from statements.	More suitable with small samples only. It is time consuming.
Research	Horwitz, 1985, 1987; Truitt, 1995; Mori, 1999; Yang, 1992; Tercanlioglu, 2005; Nikitina, 2006; Peacock, 1998; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2007; Kern, 1995; Mantle-Bromley ,1995; Mori, 1999; Bernat, 2006;	Cotterall, 1999; Goh, 1997; Victori, 1992, 2000; Weden, 1999, 2001; Reley, 2006; Yang, 1999.	Barcelos, 1995; Allen, 1996; Berson and Lor, 1999; White, 1999; Barcelos, 2000; Grigoletto, 2000;

The above mentioned studies correspond to the three approaches identified to the investigation of beliefs: the normative approach, the metacognitive approach, and the contextual approach. Whereas within the normative approach, beliefs about FLA and SLA are defined as the opposite of knowledge and investigated in a discrete fashion, within the metacognitive approach, beliefs about ELF are defined as metacognitive knowledge and are investigated though interviews, giving students a chance to use their own words in telling a bit of their experiences. Both the normative and the metacognitive approaches fail to take into account the experienced-based nature beliefs by not looking at beliefs in students own terms and by paying attention to the social context of beliefs. On the other hand, the contextual approach tries to understand beliefs about EFL in the social context.

In addition, quantitative research studies in the normative approach provide clarity and precision through the use of well-designed questionnaires and descriptive statics. Quantitative

research studies can include a large number of subjects and afford the anonymity; they are suitable if the researcher has limited resources and time, and they also allow access to outside contexts and data to be collected at different periods of time. Some of the limitations of the quantitative studies are that the beliefs inferred in studies within the normative approach are only those identified by the researcher. In addition, respondents can confuse or misunderstand some items in the questionnaire and produce different interpretations to those statements.

On the other hand, qualitative research studies such as the ones within the metacognitive approach and the contextual approach are small scales studies. Whereas the metacognitive studies use interviews and self-report and content analysis to collect data, the contextual studies use observations, diaries, and cases of studies like life stories, metaphor analysis and interpretative analysis to collect data. The beliefs inferred in studies within the metacognitive approach and the contextual approach are students' own word, experiences and reflections in their language learning process. Some limitations within the metacognitive and contextual approaches area that beliefs are inferred only form students' statements; studies are more suitable with small samples only and are more time consuming. Therefore, the methodology selected in language learner beliefs studies will depend on investigations' purposes and questions of inquiry. Since this study is based on Horwitz research on beliefs about language training, the normative approach would be used.

2.6.6. Studies of beliefs about learning English as a foreign language in Mexico

As it was established at the beginning of this study, studies of beliefs done in Mexico are few and they were found in the Mextesol Journal reports and in important congress (Reyes, Murrieta & Hernandez, 2009). In those documents it was found some studies about "teachers beliefs and their evaluation practice (Araujo-Alvineda y Nacud, 2007), teachers' beliefs and their classroom interaction (Funderburk, 2008), students' and teachers' representations about French learning (Voissin y Summo, 2008), and beliefs about English language learning (Reyes, Murrieta y Hernández, 2009a)" (cited in Reyes, Murrieta & Hernandez, 2009). It was also found some studies which were related to beliefs about English learning in Taiwanese

students (Reyes, 2009), beliefs about English learning in Mayan students (Murrieta, 2009), and beliefs about English learning in Students of English Language major ((Reyes y Reyes, n.d). Nevertheless, studies of students' beliefs about language learning will be presented.

Reyes, Murrieta & Hernández (2008) did a narrative qualitative investigation of beliefs about English language learning. Their subjects were Taiwanese students who studied the English language major in Mexico. The aim of the investigation was to know what beliefs students hold, the relationship about their past culture and which the effects were when students learn English. Results showed that students mentioned that they could not learn when making translation from English to Mandarin; that it is necessary to spend some time when learning a foreign language. They also mentioned that a good teacher is someone who is an expert in their subject, and that is organized. Subjects also mentioned that they feel the cultural differences in the way of teaching in both countries, Mexico and Taiwan; and subjects also mentioned that it is quiet difficult for them to adapt themselves in the Mexican teaching method.

Rojas (2008) studied the beliefs of 107 Mexican students who were taking English in the first semester of the University of Quintana Roo. A quantitative study with the normative approach was used to find out the relationship between beliefs about language learning and gender. A modified version of the BALLI was used to collect data. Rojas found that those students had a diversity of functional beliefs that let them learn better. However, she also found that students hold some dysfunctional beliefs that could damage their learning. The items added to the BALLI showed that students take into account the effort, the independent work and the good learning strategies could improve their learning. She did not find any significant gender difference.

Reyes & Reyes (n.d) did a qualitative investigation using the phenomenological approach. The objective was to determine what beliefs university students of first semester hold about English language learning, the impact that those beliefs have in students and the expectations to choose the major. Results indicated that students mentioned that everybody can learn English and they need time and effort to learn that language. That the learning strategies most

used were translations, see movies, listen to songs, and do grammatical exercises. Students also mentioned that a good teacher is someone who masters their subject, that is organized and that is affective with students. Only two students from English language major mentioned that they really want to be teachers, but the rest of the students study that major for other different reasons.

The same year, Narvaez (2009, mentioned in Reyes, Murrieta & Hernandez) made a qualitative study based on a fundamental theory to investigate the university students' beliefs who study English about teachers and their teaching. Students mentioned that teachers should know the topics they teach; that teachers should be able to transmit knowledge and to give orientation and motivation in the students' learning process. Students also recognized teachers' authority and they emphasize that they like more the active classes.

A different investigation was done by Ramirez (2009) who used the quantitative investigation to study the Mexican students who were taking French in the English Language Major in the University of Quintana Roo. A modified version of the BALLI was used to collect data. The aim of this study was to analyze the students' beliefs about learning French and to find out any differences among gender. In her findings students strongly agreed that it is easier for children to learn a foreign language than adults; that everybody can learn a language; that it is important to have an excellent pronunciation, that it is important to repeat and practice French; that learning French gives people many job opportunities; and that it takes time to develop the language skills. Ramirez (2009) also found that students showed students considered French as a neither easy nor difficult language, and that they learn it properly from 3 to 5 years. Talking about gender differences, any significant gender difference was found in Ramirez's study.

In a similar study, Montalvo (2009) explored the most and the least language learning beliefs students from the English Language Major hold, the gender differences and the relationship among the language learning beliefs and students' academic achievement. The BALLI was the instrument used to collect data. Regarding the relationship among learning beliefs and the academic achievement, Montalvo (2009) found that only four items from the BALLI showed

direct correlations with students' grade. Those items were that some people have especial abilities to learn languages; that some languages are easy to be learnt; that Mexicans are good at learning English; and that if they learn English, they will have more opportunities to find a good job. Montalvo mentioned that the belief students thought that English language is a difficult language to learn, so that belief could affect their academic achievement since students thought they did not have the ability.

To sum up, studies of students' beliefs about learning a language agreed that it is necessary to involve time and effort to learn English. Reyes, Murrieta & Hernandez (2009) concluded that students from those investigations use dysfunctional strategies (like translating and emphasize more in grammar) and they also have functional strategies such as seeing movies, or listening to songs to learn English. Thus, those investigations give us a general idea about what is happening in Mexico regarding to students' beliefs about language learning. Next, studies about gender beliefs are described.

2.6.7. Gender Beliefs

Foreign language learners often hold different beliefs or notions about language learning and existing research suggests that learners' beliefs have the potential to influence both their experience and actions as language learners (Horwitz, 1987; Tercanlioglu, 2005). In the context of second or foreign language learning, beliefs held by students can be related to the nature of the language under study, the effects on age and gender on second/foreign acquisition, among others. In order to have a better understanding of learner beliefs and the relationship and their role in language learning, researchers have investigated a number of variables in relation to these beliefs like strategy use (Yang, 1999), anxiety (Banya & Chen, 1997; Kunt, 1998; Tsai, 2004), motivation, (Banya & Chen, 1997; Kim-Yoon, 2000), achievement (Banya & Chen, 1997), gender (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Siebert, 2003; Banya & Chen, 1997), personality traits (Bernat, 2006), and language proficiency (Huang & Tsai, 2003; Peacock, 1998, 1999; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). These studies have produced important insights.

For example, statically significant differences were found among some beliefs with respect to gender (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990). Bacon & Finnemann investigated the gender impact in students' beliefs, attitudes, strategies and experiences. The participants were 938 students from a Spanish course as a Foreign Language. They showed that foreign language learning can be predicted by gender. They found out that women reported a high level of motivation and strategy use in language learning than male students, greater use of global strategies in dealing with authentic input and a higher level of social interaction with the target language (Spanish). Thus, Bacon and Finnemann (1990) research showed that it is possible to predict foreign language attitude by gender.

Banya & Chen (1997) explored the causes and consequences of Chinese students' beliefs about foreign language learning. A questionnaire was used to collect data which was divided in four parts: Motivation/Attitude Inventory for English Learning (MAIEL) by Cheng (1995); Beliefs about Foreign Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) by Horwitz (1988); Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford, (1989, version 6); and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz & Cope (1986). Regarding to gender differences, they found that the only significant difference between males and females was in their academic achievement, and the use of cognitive strategies. They pointed out that females use more cognitive strategies like reasoning deductively, using contrastive analysis, and strengthening grammatical accuracy. Females also tend to have better English achievement than males. They were also found significant differences between good and poor language learners. For example, good language learners hold more positive attitudes, higher motivation, and use more strategies. In this aspect, females tend to be better language learners; that high achievers tend to regard English as less difficult, have less anxiety, and use more strategies than lower achievers. They concluded that students with positive beliefs tend to have more favorable attitude toward the language and have a better language achievement.

On the other hand, Siebert (2003) studied ESL students and teachers in the Northwest region of US in which she investigated the influence of national origin/ethnicity and gender on language beliefs. The BALLI (Horwitz, 1988) and demographic questionnaires were

administered to 91 males and 64 females (156 students) and 25 teachers. In her findings, she obtained that students generally recognize the existence of foreign attitude, strong emphasis on pronunciation and grammar and vocabulary. She also found that students' beliefs related to language learning methods differed from those held by their teachers.

With respect to gender, Siebert found a number of significant beliefs differences among males and females in relation to language learning and strategy use. For example, findings revealed that male students were more possible than female students to grade their abilities highly, and to respond that they have a special ability for learning languages. She also found that male students were more optimistic about the length of time it takes to learn a language. There were also other significant differences between males and females respect to the importance of grammar, and practicing with videotapes or computers.

In a very different context, Tercanlioglu (2005) investigated learners' beliefs and gender-related differences in beliefs with 118 Turkish subjects which 45 were male and 73 were female using the BALLI questionnaire. In his research, he mentioned that in Turkish culture, gender is a key variable that may influence or determine attitudes or motivations or behaviors. Therefore, he wanted to find out if male and female hold different beliefs about learning a foreign language and whether there may be an influence of it. In his findings, learners showed that they would like to learn English well to have better opportunities for a good job. Also, they mentioned that motivation and expectations to learn was more important in learning English. In his findings, there was no found significant difference into the relationships between beliefs factors and gender.

In the same vein, Diab (2000, 2005) studied the beliefs of 284 Lebanese undergraduate students enrolled in English language courses at American University of Beirut, the Lebanese American University, and the University of Balamand. The aim of her study was to describe the beliefs about language learning of Lebanese English as Foreign Language University students, to investigate with group variation in students' beliefs and to compare their beliefs about language with those revealed in previous studies of EFL studies from cultures. Through the use of the modified version of the BALLI and a background questionnaire, this study

revealed that many of the beliefs about language learning of Lebanese students are generally similar to those of EFL students from other parts of the world.

However, they also showed several beliefs about language learning in general and learning English in particular that were different from other EFL groups. Furthermore, significant differences were found related to variables such as level of proficiency in English, languages spoken at home, gender since female students were more likely to express motivation to learn French and confidence in speaking French than male students.

Bernat & Lloyd (2007) studied the relationship between beliefs about language learning and gender using the BALLI to collect the data. The participants were 155 females and 107 male English as Foreign Language students registered in an Academic English Program at an Australian University. Students hold beliefs related to the nature of language learning like it is necessary to learn about English cultures to speak English, that the most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from the target language to their mother tongue, and that learning English is different from learning other academic subjects. Students' beliefs concerning the Foreign Language Attitude are that some people have a special ability for learning foreign countries, and that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. Talking about the difficulty of language learning, students' responses were that some languages are easier than others, that it would take them from three to five years to learn a language, and that English is a medium-difficulty language. Students' beliefs related to learning and communication strategy are that learners enjoy practicing English with native speakers, it is important to practice and repeat a lot, and that it is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation. Finally, motivation and expectation's beliefs are that it is important to learn English in their country, and that learning English will help them to get better job opportunities. In almost all the categories, there were no significant differences among females' and males' language learning beliefs. The findings showed that in general males and females held similar beliefs about language aptitude, the difficulty they perceive when they are learning a language, the nature of language learning, and their motivations and expectations. Males and females differ considerably in their belief that multilingual are very intelligent, with more females agreeing in that statement. They differ in their enjoyment of practicing English

with Australian, with more males agreeing it. They differ in their enjoyment of practicing English with Australians, with women enjoying it less.

A year later, Rojas (2008) studied the beliefs of 107 Mexican students who were taking English in the first semester of the University of Quintana Roo. The participants were 48 males and 59 females. The aim of this study was to find out the relationship between beliefs about language learning and gender. A modified version of the BALLI was used to collect data. In her findings, learners agreed that it is easier for children to learn a language than adults; that it is important to speak English with an excellent vocabulary; that they can make mistakes; that it is important to practice a lot; that they will have many opportunities learning the language; that Learning English will help the to get a job; and that if they try hard, they will develop their English skills. Also, Rojas showed that many students disagreed that women are better than men at learning a language; that it is ok if they do know a word in English; and that teachers are the only ones who can help them. Furthermore, even though some differences among the expected values and values obtained were found, any gender difference was found in their study.

In a similar context, Ramirez (2009) studied the beliefs of 113 Mexican students who were taking French in the English Language Major in the University of Quintana Roo. The participants were 38.9% males and 61.1 females. A modified version of the BALLI was used to collect data. The aim of this study was to analyze the students' beliefs about learning French and to find out any differences among gender. In her findings students strongly agreed that it is easier for children to learn a foreign language than adults; that everybody can learn a language; that it is important to have an excellent pronunciation, that it is important to repeat and practice French; that learning French gives people many job opportunities; and that it takes time to develop the language skills. Ramirez (2009) also found that students showed students considered French as a neither easy nor difficult language, and that they learn it properly from 3 to 5 years. Talking about gender differences, any significant gender difference was found in Ramirez's study.

2.6.8. Language Learners' Beliefs and Academic Achievement

Despite the overwhelming desire of students to succeed academically, specifically when studying to learn English language, it is apparent that some beliefs might stand in the way. Salazar (2005), for example, suggests that there might be some beliefs like self-efficacy that might impede students to get an appropriate achievement in their learning progress.

Mori (1997) explored the epistemological beliefs and beliefs about language learning with 97 college Japanese students at various levels in Midwestern universities using a 132-item belief questionnaire. In her findings, she argued that language learning process is influenced by the beliefs the learners have about the nature of learning in his/her own abilities. For instance, a student may believe that language learning is the same as learning other subjects that risk taking is important when learning English for communication, that memorization is important, that learners cannot learn from their mistakes, and that language ability is innate rather than hard working results. Mori's research showed that learners' beliefs about learning have different effects on their learning. She found that students' beliefs about learning in general and their abilities to learn have differential effects on their learning; therefore, positive beliefs could compensate for one´s limited ability. Moreover, her study showed that higher achievers have positive beliefs, and demonstrated that a strong belief in an innate ability is associated with lower achievement. Also, she showed that negative beliefs about learning Kanji lead to lower performance in achievement tests and lower self-esteem. It could mean that unpleasant experiences with kanji characters in written exams or with pronunciation influence the way learners of Japanese perceive the language. She concluded that the correlation between learners' beliefs and their classroom performance suggests that language learning beliefs can account for their achievement in a target language and, conversely that what they learn from class may influence the way they perceive language learning.

Huang & Tsai (2003) investigated differences in the beliefs that high-English-proficiency and low-English-proficiency learners held about English learning. Data were collected by the BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory) developed by Horwitz (1985), the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), and students interviews. Results revealed

significant belief discrepancies between high-English-proficiency and low-English-proficiency in five areas (foreign language, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivation. Results showed that high proficiency learners were confidents that they were equipped with special abilities for learning English; that they perceived English as easier to learn; that they ultimately learn to speak this language very well. However, low proficiency learners showed that they had limited language abilities, and that translating will help them to learn English. Huang & Tsai concluded that high-English-proficiency learners tended to have more positive language learning beliefs than low-English-proficiency.

A year later, Hsieh (2004) examined the relationship between foreign language learners' attribution, self-efficacy beliefs, general language learning beliefs, and their achievement in foreign classes. Participants of this study were 500 undergraduate students enrolled in Spanish, German, and French classes. Regarding beliefs about language learning, Hsieh found that students' beliefs can change over time; that it is acceptable to guess if they do not a word in the foreign language; that learning a language is mostly a matter of knowing vocabulary, that learning a language is different from learning other school subjects. She also found that students who believe that they have a foreign language attitude got a high achievement of their test than those who believed that they do not have a good foreign attitude.

Some years later, Montalvo (2009) explored the most and the least language learning beliefs students hold, the gender differences and the relationship among the language learning beliefs and students' academic achievement. Participants of this study were 170 students of the English Language Major of the University of Quintana Roo. The BALLI was the instrument used to collect data. Regarding the relationship among learning beliefs and the academic achievement, Montalvo (2009) found that only four items from the BALLI showed direct correlations with students' grade. Those items were that some people have especial abilities to learn languages; that some languages are easy to be learnt; that Mexicans are good at learning English; and that if they learn English, they will have more opportunities to find a good job. Montalvo mentioned that the belief students thought that English language is a difficult

language to learn, so that belief could affect their academic achievement since students thought they did not have the ability.

2.7. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The normative approach has been selected to develop this study since this it tackles the variables that this work studies like learning beliefs, gender and academic achievement. In addition, the most common instrument used in the normative approach is convenient for this research too because of its limitations. When using questionnaires for collecting data the benefits are saving time, a very well set of information and an easy application of the questionnaire.

The theoretical perspective for this thesis is based on the normative approach addressed by Horwitz since her findings provide a clear understanding of language learners' beliefs and their attitudes towards the learning of a language. Also, Horwitz's definition of beliefs was taken into account since she defined beliefs as synonyms for preconceived notions, myths, or misconceptions (Horwitz, 1987, p. 127; Horwitz, 1988, p. 119). In other words, it is recognized that students have opinions and ideas about language learning, but these opinions are usually misconceptions.

The methodology used to the investigation of beliefs in the normative approach is done by the application of Likert-type questionnaire. Thus, data collection is done mostly through the use of questionnaires, and data analysis through descriptive statics. The most widely used and popular questionnaire to investigate beliefs is the BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory) that was developed by Horwitz (1985, 1987, 1988). This instrument was developed with the aim of measuring students' opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning.

The BALLI is divided into five main areas or dimensions related to the difficulty of language learning, the foreign language aptitude, the nature of language learning, learning and

communication strategies, and motivations and expectations. *The difficulty of language learning* concerns the general difficulty of learning a foreign language and the specific difficulty of the student's particular target language. *The foreign language aptitude* concerns the general experience of specialized abilities for language learning and beliefs about the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful language learners. Thus, it addresses the issue of individual potential for achievement in language learning. *The nature of language learning* includes a broad range of issues related to the nature of the language learning process like student's perceptions of structural differences between the mother tongue and the target language. *The learning and communication strategies* refer to learning strategies and communication strategies students can use and put them into practice. *The motivations and expectations* concern desires and opportunities the students associate with the learning of their target language.

The BALLI questions do not have clear-cut right and wrong answers because this instrument addresses the scope of such a belief among students and its consequences for language learning and teaching. Horwitz' main aim for the BALLI was to describe specific beliefs and discusses the potential impact of these beliefs on learner expectations and strategies.

In her studies, Horwitz's findings (1987) were that students had certain opinions about the time needed to learn a foreign language. Most of the students showed that a maximum of two years was sufficient for learning another language. However, many foreign language teachers would probably consider this a significant underestimate. Also, Horwitz reported that students' beliefs about aptitude were also noteworthy. Students also reported that the process of learning a language differed from learning another school subjects. He also reported that some of the students have a strong belief that some people are born with a special ability to learn a foreign language. Most of the students also agreed that it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. Students' responses indicated that some of the students have negative assessments of their own language learning abilities. On the other hand, most of the students surveyed believed that everyone can learn a foreign language. Students with these positive attitudes do not see themselves as gifted language learners, but they could perform a task. An important part of Horwitz's study was that students reported that learning vocabulary

words and mastering grammar rules was another language is a matter of translating grammar rules or new vocabulary, and those beliefs result in negative outcomes for many language learners. With these findings Horwitz suggests that teachers must avoid reinforcing negative beliefs because they limit students' capability for achieving another language (Horwitz, 1988, p.293).

To conclude, the literature suggests that beliefs about language learning have the possibility to influence the learners' attitude to learning, their motivations, and shape their actions in the classes, which at the end might represent a better performance in the usage of the language. Also, it is important to understand better the context of the Language Center of the ITCH and the way that English classes are designed and taught. Next, a brief explanation of the ITCH will be given and how the Language Center is important for that institute.

2.8 CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

This investigation was done in the Technological Institute of Chetumal, specifically in its Language Center. Thus a brief introduction about the institution and the Center language will be given to describe the context of the study.

2.8.1. The Technological Institute of Chetumal

The technological institutes are higher education institutions of the Federal Government and their objective is to develop professionals in the industry. In 1972, the Centro de Estudios Científicos y Tecnológicos # 165 was founded in the City of Chetumal. This institution depends on the Subsecretaría de Educación e Investigación Tecnológicas. In 1975, the Technological Institute of Chetumal started working, and it offered the majors of Business Administration, and Civil Engineering in semi-attending lessons to help people who worked and wanted to study at the same time.

However, in 1980, the Technological Institute of Chetumal became a higher education institute, and programs of Accounting and Biology were created. In this way, the institution was modified into a scholarized system. The institution has been changing over the years, and new programs such as Biology, Electrical Engineering, and Computer Science, Architecture, Business Management, and Engineering have been added to their academic offering.

2.8.2. The Language Center and its importance in the ITCH

In 1993, the Division General de Institutos Tecnológicos, based on the Academic Reform of the Technological High Education established that students should learn a foreign language in this case English with the purpose of achieving the competence to understand technical and scientific articles and thus getting the requisite accreditation they need to get the bachelors' degree. When the Educational Reform was changed, it emerged the necessity to create a language center which could offer students the opportunity to study a foreign language to help them cover the academic requirements. Thus, it was established that the students of the ITCH should learn English as a Foreign Language specifically because this language has become a global lingua franca over the past several decades; so, students were asked to sit English courses for four semesters and they were required to get an examination in which they should demonstrate the understanding of scientific and technical articles in their majors.

Even though the language center started to offer English as a Foreign Language in 1994, it was not considered important because it did not have a curricular value because the grades obtained in the courses did not appear in the students' grade report. Thus, students were not used to take English at the language center and they did not consider English an important language. Nevertheless, the main objective of the Language Center was to help students to learn a language in an easy way and offer different available schedules. Students could decide whether to take English at school or to take private lessons.

Some years later there was a readjustment in the curricula of the ITCH because some majors like Business Administration and Accountancy were evaluated by some organisms like the SEP and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), this organism evaluates the academic demand of a major in the state and it investigates if the major is well paid. Those organisms asked the ITCH that its students of Business Administration and Accountancy should get 550 points in an international examination called TOEFL. Thus, students from those majors should take eight levels of English in 4 semesters, but the other students that do not take Business Administration and Accountancy majors should take ten levels of English in 5 semesters. The language center had to make also modifications in their programs to prepare its teachers in order to guide the students of those majors for the TOEFL, and for those students that are in different majors, taking a different perspective in their teaching. For example, those teachers who are in charge of teaching English for the TOEFL examination were focused on teaching the learning strategies to their students.

Moreover, due to the globalization and the importance of having a better language center to compete with other schools, the language center had not only to offer English as a unique option, but also in 2008 the Italian language was added to the curricula. One year later, French language was also included in the language teaching center. The language center is considered as an outreach center because it offers its services to the scholastic community, and also to the society in general. The language center offers a wide repertoire of courses like English, Italian, French, Spanish and Maya.

However, the majors of Business Administration, Accountancy and Business Management Engineering were evaluated by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the SEP in order to certificate their curricula in 2008, and as a requirement to keep the certifications students are required to get 550 points in the TOEFL iBT (Internet-based Test) exam. Thus, students from those three majors are required to study only English to take the TOEFL iBT examination. This type of exam iBT measures how well students read, listen, speak and write in English and use these skills together in the university classroom. In order to contribute to reach the school's aim, English has been taught in sessions of 6 or 8 hours attending lessons in order to give students enough input in the foreign second language

instruction, especially in three majors Business Management, Accountancy, and Business Management Engineering due to they were the first three major to get the certification of ISO. Students then are required to take six levels of English such as beginner, basic, pre-intermediate, intermediate, post-intermediate, advanced, plus the TOEFL preparation.

Due to the many hours students have to spend at school and the complex schedules and subjects they have, the Heads of departments decided to get shorter the amount of language hours students had to take per week. After that, it was necessary to do a restructuration of the language hours from 8 to 5 hours per week. Thus, to compensate for the lack of teaching hours in the language lessons, it was necessary to take advantage of alternative resources that allow students develop their communicative and cognitive competencies. Then, all the majors of the ITCH were also required to be taught with competences, and the language center was not the exception. English teachers had to modify their syllabus and courses to reach that goal. Also, considering Internet as an innovative, practical and accessible tool, it is possible to use it in education area through teaching platforms such as Moodle, Blackboard, among others to strength the teaching-learning process. For those reasons and because in the institution there is a teaching platform called Moodle, it was decided to develop supporting English courses online to cover, somehow, the missing teaching time during the lessons. Another reason why it was adopted the use of a teaching platform is because the design used for these courses promote values such as compromise, responsibility, cooperative learning, autonomy, quality, personal out do, professionalism, ethics, respect to diversity. Thus, students will have to develop other abilities that will help them face more effectively the learning process.

In order to know the English level that students have when they get into the ITCH, an assessment test is required at the beginning of their courses. It is because teachers know that students have at least knowledge about English because, somehow, they have taken English at least at the secondary school and high school. Also, there are a few students that have had the possibility to take particular classes of English in other schools apart from the secondary.

As a summary, the Language Center at Technological Institute of Chetumal (ITCH) used to offer English courses in the traditional way using the basic technology to enrich the classes.

However, the need of getting into the new educational tendencies required the implementation of resources in campus to reach significant learning and thus accomplish the academic excellence which is vital in the professional world. The main objective of the institute is to graduate competent and high-qualified professionals that perform effectively in their jobs and daily life. As a requirement to keep the certifications students are required to get 550 point in the TOEFL exam (this is equivalent in the IBT application format). The English curricula, thus, had to be modified to reach the goals using the communicative competence model and the use of the platform Moodle online to support the English classes. All those changes and modifications were done by the authorities and the English Coordinator with the only purpose of having a competent language center in Chetumal city.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

In this chapter, the information about the research design, subjects, setting, instruments that were chosen to carry out this study will be presented. Likewise, the data analysis which was conducted with the database will be presented.

3.1. Research Design

This investigation was done within a quantitative approach. According to Mujis (2004) the survey research designs are quite flexible and they can be seen in different outlines, but all of them are characterized by the collection of the data using standard questionnaires. The Cross-Sectional Study was chosen to do this investigation since it involves conducting a survey of a sample of population elements at one point in time (Hernandez; Fernandez & Baptista, 2006, 2006). Since the main tool for data collection in this study was the BALLI, and this research had a quantitative nature, the normative approach was the guide used. Also, with this kind of research, the data gathered from the questionnaire could prove or disprove the hypothesis by the results that were acquired. It is understood that the quantitative method has four types of investigation: exploratory, descriptive, correlation, explicative (Hernandez; Fernandez & Baptista, 2006). For this investigation, the type of this survey was correlative because it describes the relationship among two or more variables like beliefs and academic achievement (Hernandez, 2006).

In this study, the researcher did not administer the questionnaire by herself. This is due to the fact that some groups were in a specific schedule which was impossible to span. For that reason, some colleagues helped with the administration of the questionnaire, so it was important to have the schedule of English 1.

On the other hand, the number of students of each classroom varies according to the request of their major and the level of English they have. Thus, it was possible to know the number of the students approximately who could have answered the questionnaire. However, there were some days off that made impossible to administer the questionnaire and there were few students who missed their English class.

Since teachers' evaluation criteria and their methodology for grading is not the same, the academic achievement of some students will be different from others. For that reason, the final grade was required to do this study. Using the students' final grade, I tried to find some correlations between these and students' beliefs, it is important to mention that grade will not always show the students' knowledge or performance of the language, and that it varies according to the teachers' criteria. However, they can be a reference of the academic achievement towards the English Language Learning.

3.2. Definition of the Variables

The following are definitions of the variables that are studied in this research:

**BELIEFS**: They are preconceived notions misconceptions about various aspects of the language learning process (Horwitz, 1987, p. 126) which may influence students' performance and attitude in their learning. Those beliefs can be classified in the following five dimensions: foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivation (Horwitz, 1987, p.121).

Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI): It is the first instrument developed to specifically identify and assess beliefs about language learning in a systematic manner (Horwitz, 1987; 1988). It is a self-reported measure, developed from free recall tasks and focus group discussions with both ESL and EFL teachers and ESL students in the US as well as with EFL students abroad.

FUNCTIONAL AND DYSFUNCTIONAL BELIEFS: The beliefs are neither "wrong" nor "correct" nor "permanent. They vary depending on the macro-context (curricular option, teaching orientations or approaches, and relationships between languages in the classroom), and micro-context (directly related to classroom activities, and the attitudinal and classroom dynamics) (Castellotti and Moore, 2002; cited in Gabillon, 2005). However, for this research purposes the definitions about functional and dysfunctional beliefs will be given:

   Functional beliefs: They are consistent notions about language learning student have been exposed. They are consistent with the teaching approach, in this case the communicative approach that the ITCH teachers use in their lessons.

   Dysfunctional beliefs: They are contradictory notions about language learning student have been exposed, in this case, with the teaching principles that the ITCH teachers hold and use in their classes: communicative approach, underlying the communicative activities, and teaching materials.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: It refers to the expected performance of students on measures of their grades; for instance. Also it is known as performance standard (WETA, 2008).

3.3. Setting

As it was mentioned before, the place in which the questionnaire was administered is a public school called Technological Institute of Chetumal (ITCH). This institution is a public school located in the Southeast of Mexico, in the state of Quintana Roo. This institution enrolls about

2300 students from different majors. Nowadays, this institute offers courses on Engineering, Computer Science, Business, Natural Science, and Architecture. Hence, their majors are Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Business Management Engineering, and Business Administration, Accountancy, Computer Science, Architecture, and Biology. It is important to mention that the ITCH provides students English language instruction for five semesters where students have to develop the skills to learn English as a Foreign Language and to get the level that is required.

3.4. Sample, population and participants

In this research the participants were selected by convenience. The ones selected were those that were studying English 1 in the first semester. It was chosen to work on those subjects because they carry some traditional learning techniques (like emphasis on grammar) which could interfere in the ITCH teachers' teaching technique. From 360 students of English 1, only 325 students were surveyed. Some reasons about why some students did not answer the questionnaire were because some of them were students from other semesters and/or they did not come to school when the questionnaire was administered.

The ITCH accepts around 500 students in the first semester in all the majors like Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Business Management Engineering, and Business Administration, Accountancy, Computer Science, Architecture, and Biology. From whom approximately 360 take English classes in that semester. Also, when they get in the ITCH, they have to take an English assessment test in which they can prove that some of them have a high English level.

The BALLI was administered to beginning English language students taking English 1 at the Technological Institute of Chetumal. Subjects were students of different majors. The participants ranged from eighteen to twenty-five years old. There were 181 males and 145 females. All of the students were Mexican from Quintana Roo State. It must be recognized

that because of different schedules in schools, students missing classes or any other cause, it was always difficult to find them all. As a consequence, there were some data missing.

3.5. Instruments

This study required a data-collecting instrument: a questionnaire, and their final grade in English 1. The questionnaire, that has been widely used in the past, and which was suitable for this research, was the BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory) developed by Horwitz (1988). Because of the context, there were some adaptations done to the instrument so that it could be used with the subjects. This questionnaire has been very popular in previous research to assess students' beliefs about learning a second or foreign language. (See Appendix 1)

3.5.1 BALLI

The BALLI questionnaire was designed to be a provider of data regarding beliefs not only about learning, but also about learning a new language, in this case, English language. The questionnaire consists of 34 questions in a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" statements and it is classified into five general categories that are: *"the difficult of Language Learning," "foreign language attitude," "the nature of Language Learning, "learning and communication strategies,"* and *"motivations and expectations"*. To get a more reliable and complete instrument, Rojas & Reyes (2008) added some questions to the original version to BALLI which was applied in the University of Quintana Roo. These questions were suggested by expert translators in the area of Language Learning Beliefs to apply in a Mexican context. Some of the added questions are focused on the learning strategies students use when learning a language; even thought the main goal of this investigation is not the learning strategies, it was necessary to have the added questions to get a wide panorama about learning language beliefs. Hence, students had to response the

questionnaire answering one of five responses from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" statements.

The dimension which has to do with difficult of language learning measures the students' beliefs on how difficult they think learning a language. The items are:

Table 2. The Difficult of Language Learning

	Ítems
3.	Algunos idiomas son más fáciles de aprender que el inglés.
5.	Creo que aprenderé inglés muy bien.
22.	Es más fácil hablar inglés que entenderlo.
26.	Es más fácil leer y escribir en inglés que hablarlo y entenderlo.
41.	El idioma inglés es: 1) muy difícil 2) difícil 3) ni muy fácil ni muy difícil 4) fácil 5) muy fácil
42.	Si alguien dedica una hora al día al estudio del idioma inglés, ¿cuánto tiempo crees que tardará en aprenderla bien?: 1) menos de un año 2) 1-2 años 3) 3-5 años 4) 5-10 años 5) no se puede aprender inglés estudiando sólo una hora diaria.

The foreign language attitude has 9 items. This dimension addresses the students' beliefs on how they think a foreign language is learnt. The questions are:

Table 3. Foreign Language Attitude

	Ítems
1.	A los niños les resulta más fácil aprender inglés que a los adultos

2.	Algunas personas tienen una capacidad especial para aprender una lengua extranjera
9.	Para alguien que ya domina una lengua extranjera es más fácil aprender inglés
13.	Creo que soy capaz de aprender el idioma inglés.
20.	Las mujeres tienen mejor capacidad para aprender inglés que los hombres.
27.	Las personas que son buenas en matemáticas o ciencias no son buenas para el inglés.
30.	Las personas que dominan más de un idioma son muy inteligentes.
31.	Los norteamericanos son buenos para aprender idiomas.
32.	Todas las personas tienen capacidad para aprender inglés.

The nature of language dimension has six items. They measure the students' beliefs on how they think it is a process of learning a foreign language. The items are:

Table 4. The Nature of Language Learning

Ítems	
4.	El idioma inglés está estructurado de la misma forma que el idioma español.
7.	Para aprender inglés hay que conocer la cultura de los países angloparlantes.
10.	Lo mejor es aprender inglés en un país angloparlante.
14.	Lo más importante al aprender el idioma inglés es saber mucho vocabulario.
18.	Lo más importante al aprender inglés es aprender la gramática.
23.	No es lo mismo aprender inglés que aprender otras materias.
24.	Lo más importante para aprender inglés es aprender a traducir.

The learning and communication strategies dimension include 8 items. They measure the students' beliefs on the learning and communication strategies they have when trying to learn a language. The items are:

Table 5. Learning and Communication Strategies

Learning Strategies	
Ítems	
15.	Es muy importante repetir y practicar mucho para aprender inglés.
19.	Para aprender inglés es muy importante practicar en el laboratorio de inglés.
Communication Strategies	
Ítems	
6.	Es importante hablar inglés con una pronunciación excelente.
8.	No se debe decir nada en inglés hasta que se pueda decir bien.
11.	A mí me gusta practicar mi inglés con angloparlantes.
12.	Si no se sabe una palabra en inglés es válido intentar adivinarla
16.	Soy un poco tímido(a) al hablar con otras personas en inglés.
17.	Si mis maestros no corrigen mis errores desde el principio después me será difícil eliminarlos

The motivation and expectation dimensions enclose 4 items. They measure students' beliefs on how students are motivated from the learning process. The items are:

Table 6. Motivation and Expectations

Ítems

21.	Si aprendo inglés muy bien tendré muchas oportunidades para usarlo.
25.	Si aprendo inglés tendré más oportunidades de encontrar un mejor trabajo.
28.	En mi país, la gente piensa que es muy importante saber inglés.
29.	Me gustaría aprender inglés para poder conocer mejor a personas angloparlantes.

These questions are focused on the learning strategies students use to develop the language skills and the language expectative. The items are:

Table 7.Questions added to BALLI

	Ítems
33.	Puedo mejorar mi desempeño en inglés si hago ejercicios extras y consulto otras fuentes aparte del profesor y mi libro.
34.	Si me esfuerzo mucho en aprender inglés con el tiempo mejoraré mi habilidad.
35.	Desarrollar buenas habilidades en inglés implica tiempo.
36.	Los maestros son los únicos que pueden resolver mis dudas sobre el idioma.
37.	Memorizar listas de palabras es bueno para aumentar mi vocabulario.
38.	Es importante dominar bien la gramática antes de empezar a hablar en inglés.
39.	No importa que cometa errores, debo de atreverme a hablar en inglés.
40.	Si en la primera semana no entendí nada en mi curso, quiere decir que nunca aprenderé inglés.

The final version of the BALLI was piloted at the University of Quintana Roo with a group of 25 students of introductory level at the Self Access Center to test its usefulness and to validate it. The group that was chosen has the same characteristics from the real subjects. Before the

instrument was administered to the students, it was checked by two expert translators who made some suggestions to improve the quality of the items. Also, when the instrument was administered, students made some comments and suggestions to make the final version of the questionnaire. In the pilot study the Cronbach alpha coefficient obtained was 0.76.

3.5.2 Students' Grades

The other essential information to be taken into account was the students' final grades. In some previous researches (Banya & Cheng, 1997), mid-term and final exams were used as the aspect to be related with their beliefs, not in this case. Nevertheless, for this research the use of mid-term and final exams is not feasible because of important reasons such as time, and students' availability.

Hence, the decision taken for this case was to ask the students' final grades to teachers of English 1. They were only global grades that stood for the researcher and represented for the researcher and the current study a measure of academic achievement.

3.6. Procedure

It is necessary to mention that it was decided to take an adapted questionnaire of the BALLI from English into Spanish develop to suit the Mexican students' context, and for the purpose of this study (Rojas, 2008).

Firstly, permission for both applying the survey to students, and for getting students grades of their tests, was required to the principal, the English coordinator and the English teachers. This was with the purpose of letting learners' coordinator and teachers know the main objectives of this research. Once the subjects have been identified, students were invited to be part of this project by explaining to them what this research concerns about. Likewise, the English coordinator was asked to give me access to the final grades of the students.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding of the instructions or questions about the survey, teachers were explained how to administer the questionnaire, and I administered the instrument in eight groups of 30 students approximately; hence, having established a date and schedule with the teacher in charge of the English classes, the instrument was administered to the rest of the students. There are 225 students sitting English classes, they are distributed in different levels. Some other students are either taking Italian, French or Spanish courses. The instrument was administered to all the groups that are in the first level of English. When this questionnaire was piloted, students were told that their answers were very important for the researcher, and they would have to consider that the questionnaire was not a test.

The BALLI was administered in the final application to students who were taking English 1; the only way to obtain this data from students was by meeting them in their classrooms, at the beginning or at the end of their classes. Otherwise, it was hard to find them because of the different schedules and different levels. Students were asked to cooperate.

When students were answering the instrument, they were asked not to write their names on the paper so that they could feel more comfortable, or more honest when giving their response. Yet, they were asked to write their student ID number so that it was possible to know who believe what and what his or her grade was.

Moreover, in order to have some accurate information, they were asked not to share answers with classmates, they were said that the objective of the tool was to know about their opinions and that it had to be personal. Their answers were expected to reflect their opinions and feelings about the issue being asked.

Once the data from the inventory was obtained and the grades were provided by teachers, the next stage consisted in the processing of that information. For this phase, it was essential to make use of the SPSS Statistics Software Manager Version 16. This way, the program would help analyze the answers to each item in the instrument used. Furthermore, as students' grade

in English was necessary, it was requested to provide the information of the final grades at the end of the semester.

3.7. Data Analysis

The survey was conducted by the author in the autumn semester of 2009.The data obtained were analyzed using the software called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 was used for all the purposes of this study. Among the needed analysis for which this software was used, descriptive analysis was the most used. For example, in order to find all the demographic data such as number of subjects, their gender, their grades, their grades, their mother tongue, their majors, and other important issues as the number of time a response was either or five, it was necessary to do the frequency analysis from this software.

Quantitative analysis involves several statistical procedures: (1) Describing statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations were computed for all the questionnaire items, grouped into five dimensions and extra one in which some questions were added to the BALLI; (2) Cross-tabulation analysis, including Pearson Chi-Square Tests and the T-test were carried out to find gender differences; (3) Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the beliefs and the academic achievement of the students.

Thereby, the data obtained in the questionnaire was analyzed to know the strongest beliefs students hold and the differences between male's and female's beliefs. Another type of analysis like the chi-square and the T-test were done between language learning beliefs and gender to ensure the previous result of the cross-tabulation. Then, the correlation between the different beliefs about language learning and their academic achievement was determined and examined.

Next, some of the most important findings from the analysis of the database are to be presented in the following chapter. They intend to answer the research questions and provide helpful extra information like the ten-top beliefs students hold, whether there is gender

difference among men and women, and whether there is a relation between students' beliefs and their academic achievement.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In this section, there is a presentation of the results obtained; they were organized to answer the first research questions. Some demographic data was also included in this part to help us understand better the context and the conditions where this study took place.

4.1. Demographic Data

Among the information obtained, it was identified from all the subjects (N=326) that the range of age is between 18 to 21 years old (84%); followed by students that are below the 18 years old (8%); and the rest of the participants are from 25 to 27 years old (7%) and a few cases were older than 25 years old (0.9%). Talking about gender, we found out that about 55.5% were male and the rest, 44.5 were female.

The BALLI was administered to students from all the majors, then, the results showed that about the 23.31 % were students from Business Manager, followed by the 14.72 % of Management. Architecture was in the third place with 11.35%, and Accounting and Engineering like Electric and Civil had the 10.43%. The least two subjects were Biology (9.82%) and Computer Science with 9.82%. A 96.6% of the subjects' mother tongue is Spanish, about 3.4% has Maya as their mother tongue, and about a 0.3 % has other languages (1 student).

In the next part the research questions of the study are going to be presented in the order they were stated to corroborate or disprove the hypothesis posted at the beginning of this thesis. The first question was: what were the most and least common language learning beliefs students of ITCH have?

4.2. Students' most and least common Language Learning Beliefs

The following table shows the top ten beliefs. The highest belief is "If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job", which was taken from the dimension of the Nature of Language Learning, followed by "It is important to repeat and practice a lot in order to learn English" which is from the dimension 4, Learning and Communication Strategies.

Table 8. Top ten beliefs

	Mean	Dimension
25. If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job.	4.60	Motivation and Expectation
15. It is important to repeat and practice a lot in order to learn English.	4.53	Learning and Communication Strategies
34. If I study very hard, I can develop my English skills.	4.52	Question added to BALLI
21. If I get to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	4.48	Motivation and Expectations
33. I can improve my English if I do extra exercises and consult other references than the teacher and my book.	4.46	Question added to BALLI
32. Everyone can learn to speak English.	4.45	Foreign Language Attitude
6. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	4.40	Learning and Communication Strategies

13. I have a foreign language attitude.	4.39	Foreign Language Attitude
39. I should try to speak in English even though I make mistakes.	4.33	Question added to BALLI
1. It is easier for children than for adults to learn English.	4.21	Foreign Language Attitude

As it can be seen in the table eight, the top beliefs show a common mean, all of them got over 4 points (that means that they tend to strongly agree on these issues).

On the other hand, there were beliefs that most students strongly disagree with. The following table shows those ones. For example, "If someone spends one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent?" The same happened with the item that mentions that "If I don't understand anything in the first week of my English course, it means I will never learn English" (See table 9). It can be seen that the dimension that appeared the most is the Foreign Language Attitude dimension.

Table 9. Last ten beliefs

	Mean	Dimension
42. If someone spends one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent?	1.56	The Difficult of Language Learning
40. If I don't understand anything in the first week of my English course, it means I will never learn English.	1.90	Question added to BALLI
8. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	2.14	Learning and Communication Strategies
27. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning English.	2.20	Foreign Language Attitude
20. Women are better than men at learning English.	2.25	Foreign Language

		Attitude
7. It is necessary to learn the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language.	2.53	Nature of Language Learning
12. It is OK to guess if you don't know a word in English.	2.60	Learning and Communication Strategies
36. Teachers are the only ones who can solve my doubts about the English language.	2.63	Question added to BALLI
31. Americans are good at learning foreign languages.	2.86	Foreign Language Attitude
30. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	3.01	Foreign Language Attitude

In the following section, the revision of students' beliefs is presented. This description is based on Horwitz' (1987) classification of the BALLI in the five dimensions: The difficulty of the Language Learning, Foreign Language Aptitude, Nature of the Language Learning, Language and Communication Strategies, and Motivation and Expectation.

4.3. Dimensions Description

Having organized the dimensions, it was observable that the Motivation and Expectation dimension was the one with more beliefs showing a tendency towards the 5 points (strongly agree). The mean of this dimension was 4.27; followed by the Learning and Communication Strategies dimension (3.33), English Foreign Language Attitude dimension (3.32), the Nature of Language Learning dimension (3.17), and the dimension that showed the lowest mean number was the Difficulty of the Language Learning (2.74). The added questions had 3.21 mean, towards strongly agree. In the subsequent part, each of these dimensions is reviewed with a closer look, in the order before mentioned.

4.3.1. Dimension 1: Motivation and Expectation

This dimension was integrated by 4 items. For these items separately, the mean and the standard deviation were calculated. The highest item was "If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job", mean of 4.60, followed by "If I get to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it", mean of 4.48. ". Those results may have been an indicator of motivation towards the language (See Table 10).

Table 10. Motivation Dimension

	Mean	St. Deviation
25. If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job.	4.60	0.770
21. If I get to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	4.48	0.879
29. I would like to learn English so I can get to know its speakers better.	4.15	0.945
28. Mexicans think that it is very important to speak English.	4.06	0.973

4.3.2. Dimension 2: Learning and Communication Strategies

This dimension was integrated by 8 items. The mean and the standard deviation were calculated for each item (See Table 11).

The higher means for this dimension were found in three items, "it is important to repeat and practice a lot", mean of 4.53; "It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation," mean of 4.40; and "If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on", 4. 05.

Table 11. Learning Strategies Dimension

	Mean	St. Deviation
15. It is important to repeat and practice a lot in order to learn English.	4.53	.763
6. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	4.40	1.200
17. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	4.05	.874
16. I feel self-conscious speaking English in front of other people.	3.44	1.104
19. It is important to practice in the language laboratory in order to learn English.	3.37	1.192
11. I like to practice English with native speakers.	3.11	.967
12. It is OK to guess if you don't know a word in English	2.60	1.132
8. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	2.14	1.159

The items that showed beliefs that were considered to have a similar mean were: "I feel self-conscious speaking English in front of other people", mean of 3.44; "It is important to practice in the language laboratory in order to learn English", 3.37; and "I like to practice English with native speakers", mean of 3.11.

The items that got low means were "It is OK to guess if you don't know a word in English", 2.60; and "students should not say anything in English until one can say it correctly", and this item had the lowest mean, 2.14.

4.3.3. Dimension 3: Foreign Language Attitude

The third dimension with more answers towards "strongly agree" was the Foreign Language dimension. The items of this dimension concern the general existence of specialized abilities for language learning and beliefs about the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful language learners. These items address the issue of individual potential for achievement in language learning (See table 12).

Table 12. EFL Attitude Dimension

	Mean	St. Deviation
32. Everyone can learn to speak English.	4.45	.857
13. I have a foreign language attitude.	4.39	.784
1. It is easier for children than for adults to learn English.	4.21	1.032
9. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn English.	3.73	1.046
2. Some people are born with a special ability that helps them learn English.	3.46	1.119
30. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	3.01	1.174
31. Americans are good at foreign languages.	2.86	1.051
20. Women are better than men at learning English.	2.25	1.218
27. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning English.	2.20	1.150

The majority of the students strongly agreed that "Everyone can learn to speak English", as a mean of 4.45. They also strongly agree that "I have a foreign language attitude", and "It is easier for children than for adults to learn English", as mean 4.21. Only few students disagree

with "Women are better than men at learning English", which had a mean 2.25; and "People who are good at math and science are not good at learning English", mean of 2.20.

4.3.4. Dimension 4: The Nature of Language Learning

The second dimension with fewer answers towards "strongly agree" was the Nature of Learning, and it was integrated by 7 items. Item 7 and item 10 concern the importance of cultural contact and language immersion in language achievement. Item 23 shows if learners see learning English as different from other types of learning. Items 14, 18, and 24 assess the learner's perception of the focus of the language learning task. Finally, item 4 addresses the students' perceptions of structural differences between English and Spanish. For these items, the mean, median, and mode were calculated separately (See Table 13).

Table 13. The Nature of Learning Dimension

	Mean	St. Deviation
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.	3.94	.931
18. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	3.75	1.008
23. Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.	3.46	1.165
24. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating into Spanish.	3.44	1.044
10. It is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country.	3.30	1.170
7. It is necessary to learn the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language.	2.53	1.083
4. English language structure is the same than Spanish language structure.	2.40	1.178

The item with a higher mean was "Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words", with a mean of 3.94; followed by "Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules", 7.75.

Other answers that got similar means were that students believed learning a foreign language is different from learning other academic subjects, with mean 3.46; they believe that learning a foreign language is a matter of translating, a mean of 3.44; and they believed it is better to learn English in an English-speaking country, mean of 3.30 (See table 14).

Table 14. Beliefs with a similar mean

	Mean
18. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	3.75
23. Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.	3.46
24. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating into Spanish.	3.44
10. It is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country.	3.30

The other item that could be commented had to do with structural differences between English and Spanish. The item that stated "English language structure is the same than Spanish language structure," had a mean of 2.40, and a mode of 2 which means that students do not agree with it.

4.3.5. Dimension 5: The difficulty of Language Learning

This dimension obtained the lowest mean of all the five dimensions. In general, subjects showed a tendency towards neither disagree nor agree with, i.e. a neutral choice. This

dimension was integrated by 6 items. Items 41 and 42 assess the relative difficulty of different language skills, and item 5 surveys students' expectations for success (See table 15).

Table 15. Language Difficulty Dimension

	Mean	St. Deviation
5. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.	3.92	.873
26. It is easier to read and write in English than to speak it and understand it.	3.14	1.098
22. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.	3.11	1.030
3. Some languages are easier to learn than the English Language.	3.06	1.058
41. The English Language is: a) very difficult b) difficult c) not easy not difficult d) easy e) very easy	3.04	.775
42. If someone spends one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? a) Less than a year b) 1-2 years c) 3-5 years d)5-10 years e) Not possible	1.56	.498

The results showed that the highest item was **"**I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well", which had as mean 3.92. 55.5 % of the participants showed that it would become fluent in the language if they spend from one to 2 years studying English (mean 2.00); and the 62.2 % of the subjects showed that English Language is not easy not difficult.

4.3.6. Questions added to the BALLI

Regarding to the questions that were added to the BALLI, it can be observed that they had a mean of 3.21. The mean was calculated for each item individually (See Table 16).

The higher means for these questions that showed strongly agree were four items: "If I study very hard I can develop my English skills," doing extra exercises and "consulting other references than their books and their teacher can help them to improve their English", they speak in English even though they made mistakes. The only item in which students showed they strongly disagree was the one which states that if they do not understand anything at the beginning of the course they will not able to understand anything in the course.

Table 16. Questions added to BALLI

	Mean	St. Deviation
34. If I study very hard I can develop my English skills.	4.52	.713
33. I can improve my English if I do extra exercises and consult other references than the teacher and my book.	4.46	.725
39. I should try to speak in English even though I made mistakes.	4.33	.833
35. Developing good skills in English takes time	3.98	.891
37. Memorizing lists of words is good to increase your English vocabulary	3.83	1.059
38. It is important to know about grammar rules before you start speaking English.	3.43	1.095
36. Teachers are the only ones who can solve my doubts about the English language.	2.63	1.240
40. If I don't understand anything in the first week of my English course it means I will never learn English.	1.90	1.118

As a summary, students' beliefs about language learning were shown first by the top ten beliefs, and the last ten beliefs. It was followed by the description of the 5 dimensions where it was exposed the beliefs in which students strongly agree and strongly disagree. Next, the answer to the other main issue of the research is to be set up.

4.4. Gender Beliefs

The second objective of this study was to identify if there was any gender difference towards the language learning beliefs. Thus, another type of analysis was done with the data; the crosstab calculation and chi square between language learning beliefs and gender. There were ten items from the BALLI that showed small significant differences in beliefs (See table 17).

Table 17. Gender Differences

Item		Disagreement		Neutral		Agreement		Pearson Chi-Square Tests Result
		Count	% within count	Count	% within count	% within count	% within count	
5. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.	**Male**	9	5%	37	20.4%	135	74.5%	0.048 (α= 95)
	Female	6	4.1%	47	32.4%	92	63.5%	
7. It is necessary to learn the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language.	**Male**	82	45.3%	59	32.6%	40	22.1%	0.038 (α= 95)
	Female	76	52.4%	34	37.2%	15	10.3%	
9. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn English.	**Male**	26	14.4%	62	34.3%	93	51.4%	0.003 (α= 95)
	Female	11	7.6%	30	20.7%	104	71.7%	
10. It is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country.	**Male**	34	18.8%	59	32.6%	88	48.6%	.020 (α= 95)
	Female	43	29.6%	48	33.1%	54	36.8%	
18. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	**Male**	16	8.8%	49	27.1%	116	64.1%	0.032 (α= 95)
	Female	14	8.6%	49	33.8%	82	56.5%	

22. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.	Male	37	19.9%	78	43.1%	66	36.5%	0.050 (α= 95)
	Female	39	26.9%	70	48.3%	36	24.5%	
23. Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.	Male	35	19.3%	62	34.3%	84	46.4%	0.038 (α= 95)
	Female	29	20%	39	26.9%	77	53.1%	
25 If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job.	Male	5	2.8%	19	19.3%	157	86.7%	0.040 (α= 95)
	Female	2	1.4%	5	16.6%	138	95.2%	
27. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning English.	Male	102	56.4%	54	29.8%	25	13.8%	0.032 (α= 95)
	Female	102	70%	29	20.0%	14	9.7%	
39. I should try to speak in English even though I make mistakes.	Male	10	4.9%	23	12.7%	148	81.8%	0.035 (α= 95)
	Female	2	1.4%	9	6.2%	134	92.5%	

The items that showed disagreement among women and men were items 7 and 27. In the item 7 'It is necessary to learn the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language', results showed that the half of women (52.4%) showed a higher disagreement than men with the statement, whereas some men (45.3%) agreed. Also, in the item 27 'People who are good at math and science are not good at learning English', women showed that they disagreed with this statement getting a high percentage (70%), whereas men only got the 56.4% related to the disagreement (see table 17).

On the other hand items that showed agreement among female students and male students were: the item 5 'I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well', results showed that male (74.5%) showed that they agree with the statement while women got 63.3%, a smaller percentage. In the item 9 'It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn English', results showed that most women (71.7%) got a high tendency towards the strongly agreement than men (51.4%). Even though the percentage of

disagreement is low, the 14.4% of men disagree with the statement meanwhile woman got only the 7.6 % (See table 17).

In the item 10 'It is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country', results showed that there are a few difference between men and women with the percentage. In this case, many men (48.6%) tended to have more agreement with the statement. Regarding to the item 18 'Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules', many men tended to have more tendency agreement towards the statement. Men got the 64.1% whereas women only got the 56.5%. The same happened with the next item, 22 'It is easier to speak English than to understand it'. Results showed that some men (36.5%) had a higher percentage towards the agreement whereas few women (24.5%) got a low percentage.

On the other hand, in the item (23) 'Learning English is different from learning other school subjects', many women (53.1%) tended to have a higher percentage towards the agreement rather than men (46.4%). In the item 25 'If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job', more women (95.2%) tented to have more percentage of agreement than men (86.7%). The last item 39 'I should try to speak in English even though I make mistakes', women also showed to have more percentage than men. In this case the 92.5% of women agreed with this item, whereas men only got the 81.8% (see table 17).

When trying a different analysis, a t-test analysis was done to corroborate if there were any significant gender differences. The T-test looks at the difference between means of continuous variable between two groups (Mujis, 2004). For finding correlations between gender and beliefs, results were significantly different. The items that showed difference when considering gender were: (7) 'It is necessary to learn the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language', (9) 'It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn English', (25) "If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job", and (39) 'I should try to speak in English even though I make mistakes' (See table 18).

Table 18. T-test of BALLI's items and gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means (Independent Sample Test)		
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
7. It is necessary to learn the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language.	Equal variances assumed.	5.768	.017	**2.542**	**324**	**.024**
9. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn English.	Equal variances assumed.	10.580	.001	**-3.544**	**324**	**.000**
25. If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job.	Equal variances assumed.	15.501	.000	**-2.438**	**324**	**.015**
27. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning English.	Equal variances assumed.	4.152	.042	**2.831**	**324**	**.005**
39. I should try to speak in English even though I make mistakes.	Equal variances assumed.	7.126	.008	**-2.820**	**324**	**.005**

The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances tells us if the two groups have approximately equal variance on the dependent variable. This type of tests shows two results: where **F** is the difference among the variances of the two groups: women and men; and **Sig**. is the significant level (Hernandez, Fernandez & Baptista, 2006). If the Levene's Test is significant (the value under "Sig." is less than 0.05), the two variances are significantly different. Thus, if we look at the table 18, we can say that all the 5 items are less than 0.05, so they are significant different.

Next, we have the Independent Samples T Test that compares the mean scores of two groups on a given variable that in this case are men and women (Mujis, 2004). According to Mujis (2004) and Hernandez, Fernandez & Baptista, (2006) the most important part of this test are the T that gives the t-test statistic; the Df which shows the degrees of freedom; and the Sig ((2-tailed) that is the significant difference. If we look at the table 18 we can see that the five items are less than 0.05 which means that there are significant differences among gender.

In the next section, the last objective related to the relationship among the language learning beliefs and the academic achievement will be set up.

4.5. Language learners' beliefs and the academic achievement

Another important goal of this study was to find out if there was any correlation between the different dimensions of the BALLI instrument and the final grade obtained in the last English course taken as a prove of academic achievement.

When the Pearson's correlation was done between the different dimensions of the BALLI and the final grade, any significant result was found. For that reason, it was necessary to do an extensive correlation with all the items separately and their final grade again. However, even though some items showed a little correlation with the academic achievement, they did not show any significant correlation since they were minor to 1 (See table 19).

Table 19. Correlation between grade of English and items of the BALLI

Dimension	Items	Correlation	Final English Grade
Foreign language attitude	2. Some people are born with a special ability that helps them learn English.	Pearson's correlation	.101
The difficulty of language learning	22. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.		.133'

Foreign language attitude	30. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.		.129'

As a summary, it can be stated that the BALLI dimensions and the questions added to the BALLI did not show any significant Pearson's correlations.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

The following section will present the analysis of the data to verify the hypothesis that were established at the beginning of this research. The analysis will be organized by the most and the least common beliefs, followed by the dimensional beliefs outlined by Horwitz, the gender differences, and whether there is a relation between the students' language learning beliefs and their academic achievement at college.

5.1. Students' most and least common language learning beliefs

The top ten most common beliefs belong to all the dimensions: the difficulty of language, the nature of language, learning and communication strategies, motivation and expectations, foreign language attitude and the questions added to BALLI. It could be seen that the item that got a higher mean was the motivation and expectation, followed by the learning communication strategies. From my point of view students could motivate themselves to learn English. That motivation is related to the job opportunities since students relate that learning English could help them to have a good job in their future. Teachers can take advantages about this belief and motivate students about learning English. In her study, Diab (2000) mentioned that motivation makes students to learn English and French to use those languages for a practical reason like working abroad or getting better job opportunities, so it is not surprising that the motivation item got a high mean. Also, another significant finding was the importance given to the practice and the repetition of the vocabulary. Students showed that they tend to

use this strategy which could help them in their pronunciation. Also, students stated that it is not easy to develop a skill since it is necessary to work hard if they want to improve their skills in listening, reading, writing and speaking.

However, most of the ten-top beliefs belong to the foreign language attitude. Horwitz (1988) emphasized that the dimension of the Foreign Language Attitude addresses the issue of individual potential for achievement in language learning. This finding could help us, as teachers, to identify students that have a foreign language attitude from those who do not so we realize who needs more help to learn the language.

Talking about the difficulty of language learning, students showed that they have a good perspective about language; it means that most of them agreed that everyone can learn a language and that they have a foreign language attitude. Those beliefs show that students understand that they are capable of learning English; however, they also believed that it is easier for children than for adults to learn English, this belief could interfere in their learning. Students who do not get a high academic achievement or that fail in their courses would think that they cannot learn the language because of their age. Bernat (2006) found out something similar. Their subjects believed in child supremacy with respect to the age factor and supported the concept of foreign language attitude. In this sense, the belief regarding to speaking English with an excellent pronunciation, which got a high mean, could also prevent and make difficult the learning of English because students would not take opportunities to speak or practice the language in the classes. Students might not participate in class but they have an excellent pronunciation, nevertheless this could be late for them because teachers are making their students to talk classes to practice their English. So, that belief eventually sets a barrier for the language learning process of the target language.

Another common belief found was that learning is important for them since they find it as an easy way to get a job, especially if they speak English well. Students assimilate that learning a foreign language could help them to get better in their economical status. Those beliefs can be motivating for students when learning a language because they relate it to using it when they finish their major and also extrinsic motivating since it could make students to learn

superficial the language. Since the State of Quintana Roo is a tourist zone, students may be convinced that after their major, they will probably get a job that requires knowing English. These results were quite similar to those Truitt (1995) whose subjects also found that English ability will give them better job opportunities. Montalvo (2009) and Ramirez (2009) also got similar findings. In Montalvo's and Ramirez (2009) investigations students showed that learning English and French would mean having better job opportunities. It also seems that students relate that they will have more opportunities to get a job when learning English.

Among the top ten least common beliefs the items that showed belong to the dimension of Foreign Language Attitude and Learning and Communication Strategies. Even though students' answers show disagreement with the item 8 'you shouldn't say anything in English unless it is correct', they revealed a good attitude towards the language. They answered they wanted to be independent learners; they said they would take some risk in speaking even though they made mistakes. This belief makes students develop confidence and decrease their anxiety when participating in oral activities. Erlenawatti's (2002) study subjects showed that they do not take the risk while they are speaking. She stated that learners who hold erroneous aspects of speaking like not speaking in class or not taking the risk may not develop oral communicative competence. As Mori (1997) found in her study, students believe that teachers are not the only persons who can help them solve their doubts about the language so they have to do independent or extra work.

Among those less common beliefs subjects also showed that it is acceptable to say something in English even though they say it wrong. That belief let students correct their pronunciation, so they are not afraid of the teachers' correction. However, that belief is opposite to the belief regarding the excellent pronunciation. A functional belief could be when some students believe that when they say an incorrect word anything wrong happens since learning requires time and practice because making mistakes is a natural process students need to face. Sometimes teachers use techniques for correction mistakes, but they do not know if those techniques help or not their students since there are students who want to be corrected by teachers and other students who want to correct themselves their mistakes. Haluskova (2008) mentions that it is important for language instructors to determine what teaching

methodologies and strategies can better improve their performance in English. From my point of view, students would have to invest much time on their pronunciation skill, and teachers should find out what correction strategies work better for their students since they do not have the same necessities and priorities.

Montalvo (2009) got similar findings. Among the less common beliefs, subjects also showed that it is possible to say a word in English even though the pronunciation is not perfect; that it is ok to guess words when learners do not know them; and that neither man nor women are better at learning languages.

5.2. Dimensions Description

In this section, the five dimensions set up by Horwitz will be analyzed starting with the dimension that got a high strongly agreement. In this research, the dimension that got the highest mean was the Motivation and Expectation dimension; the second dimension that got a high mean was the Learning and Communication Strategies, followed by English Foreign Language Attitude dimension, the Nature of Language Learning dimension, and finally the Difficulty of the Language. A similar analysis was done by Montalvo (2009) but he got different. In his study, the dimension that got the highest mean was Motivation and Expectation, followed by the Nature of Language Learning dimension, the Learning and Communication Strategies dimension, English Foreign Language Attitude dimension, and finally the difficulty of the Language Learning.

Comparing the findings in these two studies done in the same context it can be noticed that the dimensions in which subjects got the highest agreement and the lowest agreement were the same: Motivation and Expectation, and Difficulty for Language Learning. This could mean that in general students are high motivated to study English and they also have high expectations towards the language, but the difficulty in which they see the learning of English has not been benefit from that high motivation and expectation. According to Diab (2000), the motivation plays an important role in the learning of a language since it makes and encourages

students to learn English to use it for personal or practical reasons. Focus on this statement, it could mean that holding a functional belief related to the motivation and the expectation dimension seems to help students to get better in their learning, but there are some students that still perceive their task to be differentially difficult and, perhaps that it does not benefit student a lot since it does not stop seeing learning English as a difficult activity to do.

5.2.1. Dimension 1: Motivation and Expectation

This domain is concerned with the motivation and the expectations related to language learning. The results show students tend to strongly agree with all the items, this may be an indicator that students have a high motivation towards the language. Diad (2000) and Bernat (2004) mentioned that students exhibited high levels of the motivation dimension because students remain quite optimistic about their future language process and future jobs, and economical status.

Regarding this dimension, most of the students showed to have strong motives to learn English such as the ideas that learning English very well will help them to get a better job, to know English speaking people better and that they would like to practice their English. Those beliefs could be related to the geographical background of the State of Quintana because it is one of the main tourist destinations in the country. Ramirez (2009) and Montalvo (2009) got similar findings. In both studies subjects related learning English with the opportunities to get a job. Both authors agreed on the fact that the relation could be due to the location of the state.

Conversely, students hold the belief that Mexicans think that it is very important to speak English; this is a generalized belief in our society due to different factors one of which could be the fact that English is required in Mexican schools by the SEP, because English Language is generally perceived to be more important around the world than other languages (Horwitz, 1999).

Moreover, the belief these students expressed about existing many opportunities to use the language once they have learnt makes them think they are not wasting their time learning something they are not going to use, but a language that would be useful for getting more and better opportunities in their life. Horwitz (1988), Rojas (2008), Montalvo (2009) and Ramirez (2009) got similar findings. Their subjects agreed that learning English and French will give them better opportunities to get jobs. Reyes & Reyes (n.d) found that only two subjects studied the English Language major to be teachers, but the rest of the students studied the major for other different reasons. Montalvo (2009) and Ramirez (2009) both mentioned in their studies that Mexican people related that belief (getting better job opportunities) to the geographical situation of the state of Quintana Roo.

The findings that were mentioned before are related to the investigation that Diab (2005) did with Lebanese undergraduate students. He also stated that motivation is very important for students since it makes them to associate it with practical endings. In both studies, students relate learning English with their personal purposes like getting a better job. Also, Diab (2005) pointed out that students expect the language learning experience to be easier and enjoyable. Therefore students will feel more motivated to learn. On the contrary, if students think that learning a language is a waste of time, their motivations and expectations regarding the language could be low, and then they could have problems in their learning. hence, it could be stated that learners will feel more motivated to learn English if they expect the language to be easier and enjoyable; on the contrary, students who think it will be harder to learn the language and they do not have the capacity of learning English, they will see themselves as poor language learners. Moreover, Banya & Chen (1997) make a difference between good and poor language learners. For them, good language learners are highly motivated, and have positive expectations through the language, so they have better achievement. Meanwhile the poor language learners show a negative attitude to the language and are considerate future failing students.

Taken into account Banya & Chen's (1997) opinion, the learners from this research (ITCH students) and the subjects from Ramirez' (2009) and Montalvo's (2009) studies seem to be motivated since they relate their learning to their future jobs or destiny. Maybe some of those

subjects relate their opportunity to use the language in the Riviera Maya, or other places to work. Narvaez's (2009) findings showed that students like more the active classes. Active classes could be considered as a motivating factor since they make students enjoy the classes. Thus, if ITCH students are highly motivated they could be considered, according to Banya & Chen (1997), good language students. Findings in this study are also supported by Rojas' (2008), Montalvo's (2009) and Ramirez's (2009). All of these studies were carried out in the same context.

5.2.2. Dimension 2: Learning and Communication Strategies

The learning and communication strategies were the second highest dimension. It seems that students from the ITCH use a lot some learning strategies to learn English, since some students are required to present the TOEFL and others are taught by the communicative approach. Similar results were obtained by Altan (2006), students in this study supported beliefs such as the importance of repetition and practice in learning English, and the importance of speaking with an excellent pronunciation. Similar findings were also showed in Nikitina & Foruoka's (2007), Montavo's (2009), Ramirez's (2009) and Reyes & Reyes (n.d) studies where the highest item was related to the importance of repetition and the pronunciation.

Even though those beliefs were the most common ones, it is important to mention that Erlenawati (2000) considers that the belief related to have an excellent pronunciation is not considered as the correct behavior since it may influence the way students behave in an English class. It means that students could avoid speaking in the first months in their English courses because they do not have the appropriate pronunciation of the words. When you just start learning a new language, the pronunciation may not be very good, thus, having those beliefs will not help them dare to speak in class. Champagne (cited in Horwitz, 1988) mentioned that students tend to fail to develop native-like accents. He pointed out that adults are somehow physiologically unable to speak a second language without an accent because their mother tongue influences the target language. The belief about pronunciation then will

prevent learners from practicing in oral activities in class, and improving their pronunciation. That belief could be interpreted as a language learning barrier. This would not let students practice in the classroom because of their fear of making mistakes or because their accent is not good at all, and that would be a cause of their failing. Rojas (2008) and Montalvo (2009) also found that their subjects agreed that it is necessary to have an excellent pronunciation when learning English.

The students from the ITCH also agreed about the importance of repetition and practice when they are learning English. It seems that students put a great effort to practice new words they learn in class, and perhaps they see the repetitions as a learning strategy to be successful in learning the language. It is true that repetition has been taken into account as a learning strategy to improve pronunciation (Erlenawati, 2002). This is not surprising since students who came from different high schools still shared the traditional learning strategies which endorsed repetition. However, it is important to mention that the repetition help also to practice vocabulary or other skills in different tasks. Altan's (2006) findings showed that students in her study supported beliefs such as the importance of repetition and practice in learning English. However, Erlenawati (2002) states that learning a language can be influenced by many factors which inhibit students' participation in their classes. For example, Horwitz (1988) suggests that a factor could be teachers. She mentions that a gap between teacher and learner beliefs can lead to reduce learner confidence in and satisfaction with the class and to unwillingness to participate in communicative activities. The communicative language teaching makes students do some tasks which require them to interact with one another in foreign language.

Another belief related to the learning and communication strategies students hold is that mistakes have to be corrected since the beginning of their course because those mistakes are hard to correct later on. It can be seen that students perceive making mistakes as an inappropriate process of learning. But in fact, it does not have to be always the case since the communicative approach looks at errors as part of the learning experience, necessary to improve the language learning. In the communicative language, students need to negotiate meaning in conversations, so they will certainly make errors.

This result could be the explanation as a consequence of some previous experience from students when making mistakes. Sometimes, students are penalized or showed when they make mistakes, so that experience could create a negative perspective towards making mistakes. A possible relation could be also the participation in classes because if a teacher corrects every single mistake that students make learners may try to avoid speaking. Most of the time students are afraid of participating in class because they are not sure of their language performance. For that reason, I consider that it is important that teachers use correction strategies that let students speak even though they make mistakes since the main goal of the English classes from the ITCH is communication. Similar findings were showed by Rojas (2008) and Ramirez (2009). However, results from Elernawati (2002) stated that students seem to have a positive view about error correction since they do not view it as an impediment in language learning. Although it may not always be the same for other students, error correction may mean that correction will help develop the learner's self-confidence, and may also indicate learners' communicative intensions.

In the Learning and Communication Strategies dimension, participants in this research study also reported that they do not agree or disagree about guessing unknown English words. This belief may be a barrier for students because this means that they lack confidence in this learning technique which is very useful for learning, especially in the communicative competence where students need to negotiate the meaning of some words. Ramirez (2009) found out different reactions toward the same strategy. The students from her study strongly disagreed that guessing a word is aloud. This difference is important since both studies were carried out in the same context. Horwitz (1999) findings showed that most of the EFL learners were more willing to guess the words they did not know. Her study was performed in a different context.

Most the students from this research (70 %) study reported they disagree with the item "You should not say anything in English until you can say it correctly". This belief may be related to having a correct and excellent pronunciation and grammar. Thus, students support their belief since previously they mentioned that it is important to have a good pronunciation and the

importance of mastering grammar. However, in this case, students confirmed that having an excellent pronunciation is quite impossible since they are not native, so they will not have a native-like accent. On the other hand, students considered that guessing is allowed which seems to be too a contradictory belief if we reject saying something unless we say it correctly. In this sense, there is not a clear and coherent idea among students with respect to what learning a foreign language means and the best strategies to do it.

Another item is related to the importance of practicing in the lab. Subjects were neutral about this belief. This result could be related to the fact that teachers do not use the lab to practice or learn the language. The ITCH has two labs which are used by teachers, but if they do not use them in their classes, students do not see them as an important tool. Diab (2006) got different findings. Her subjects supported the belief about the importance to practice in the laboratory in language learning. She pointed out that this belief may make students practice in the lab to get an excellent pronunciation or to improve their skills, so it can influence the way students behave in the English class

5.2.3. Dimension 3: Foreign Language Attitude

Concerning this dimension, students strongly agreed that they have a foreign language attitude since they mentioned that everyone is capable of learning a language. Contrasting the belief of everyone is capable of learning a language with the belief of English is easier for children rather than adults', it could also be observed that even though students believe that everybody can learn languages, they also believe that children have a superiority to learn the language than they do. Since they are young adults, this belief may interfere with their language learning because they might think that their age does not benefit them, so this belief, in some way, could interfere with their language learning. Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) stated that older learners who believe in the superiority of younger learners probably begin language learning with fairly negative expectations of their own ultimate success. Similar findings can be found in Horwitz'(1988), Tercanlioglu' (2005), and Altan's (2006) studies which were done in different contexts. What's more, Rojas (2009) and Ramirez (2009) who also got

similarities in their findings mentioned that students could think that if they are in a higher age, they would have higher problems.

There was a neutral decision about the fact that people are born with a special ability. This might have both a positive and a negative influence on students' attitude towards the language since it might make students to work harder in their training. If students believe that they did not have a gift for learning a foreign language this could discourage their effort to learn the foreign language. Horwitz (1987) found that subjects did not see themselves as particularly gifted language learners, so she stated that this can lead to reduce their confidence in their courses if they hold those negative outcomes. However, in 1999, Horwitz got different results. Her subjects strongly agreed that they have special abilities to learn a foreign language. She mentioned that those students are motivated to learn the language and thus they would not have problems in their learning.

Diab (2000) who also got similarities with Horwitz's (1999) findings mentioned that students who agreed that they have abilities for learning a language reveal an opinion of themselves as language learner. She mentioned that learners who got this belief may indicate that learners have positive expectations about their own language learning ability and therefore they expect to become proficient in the foreign languages they study. This may indicate that students would think that some of them do not have the "gift" in learning English, and they might feel that they are not successful learners. However, there were still a number of subjects who believed the opposite; as a consequence that belief may have been interfering in the learning process.

Finally, students rejected the idea that women are better than men at learning English. Diab (2000) also found that Lebanese students did not agree that female students are better at learning English than males. Horwitz (1988), Nikitina & Furuoka (2007), Rojas (2008), Montalvo (2009) and Ramirez (2009) got similar findings.

5.2.4. Dimension 4: The Nature of Language Learning

Concerning the nature of language learning, findings in this study were similar to Horwitz (1988). Students in this study reported that they believe that learning a language is mostly a matter of learning new vocabulary words, learning a lot of grammar rules, and translating from the target language into their mother tongue. Those beliefs make students invest most of their time trying to memorize long of lists of words that they will later forget, or that learners would learn as much as they can the grammatical rules of the English language. What can be noted was that students thought grammar is the most important part of the language; this belief could be a dysfunctional belief if they do not give a similar importance to other aspect of a language like vocabulary. Besides that, students who think grammar is the key part of a language may be disappointed when they have teachers who use more communicative teaching methods and put more emphasis on meaning than on grammar (Vance, 2008). Thus, students could be more interested in learning grammar than in improving another aspect of the language such as speaking, listening, or writing. Thus, this belief (related to the importance of grammar) could cause a dysfunctional behavior in the classes since students would not be interested in developing other aspects of English Language and their communication competence. Horwitz (1988) also mentioned that this type of belief could make students not to practice or do the tasks or activities that are proposed by teachers, thus this attitude reduces students' opportunities to learn the language. Also, similar results were found in Peackock, (1988), Yang (1999), Altan (2006), Rojas (2008), Ramirez (2009) and Reyes & Reyes (n.d)

Another item that is important to mention is the one related to translation. In this sense, students tend to think that it is enough to do literal translations to know a language. Although there are occasions when literal translation is possible, it is true that most of the times translation processes are not correctly done through word by word technique. Maybe, an explanation about why subjects do translations might be that they are beginners so, for them this technique could be taught when they started to learn the language in secondary or high school and they got familiarized of using this technique. As they have the costume of doing that almost all the time it seems so hard to stop doing it, and we know that it is through time that the translation process diminishes. Thus, this belief seems to be dysfunctional to students'

learning process because they will have to look for more complex strategies when translating and this will certainly enrich their learning process. Another translation belief that predominated among the students from this research was the one related to the difference between Spanish and English language structure is related with the translation. If students consider that English language does not have the same structure as Spanish, they might understand that translating is, hence, difficult to do. However, if students believe that English language has the same structure than Spanish it will make students get frustrated when trying to translate and not being able to do so. Thus, students may reinforce the beliefs that learning a lot of vocabulary is the most important part of learning English because when translating (a dysfunctional belief) most of the problems are faced because a lack of vocabulary (meaning). It could be said that learners would think that translation plays an important role for learning a language but it could be considered as a dysfunctional behavior towards the learning process from the communicative approach because students could place more emphasis to the translation than to communication. Similar results were obtained by Horwitz (1988); students reported that they believe that learning a language is mostly a matter of learning new vocabulary words, learning a lot of grammar rules, and translating from the target language into their mother tongue. Bernat (2004), Nikitina & Furuoka (2007) also got similar findings. However, in Reyes, Murrieta & Hernández (2008), Altan' (2006) and Ramirez's (2009) studies, subjects showed that they strongly disagree that learning is a matter of translating. Altan mentioned that it was a good response from his subjects due to they would not have any further implications in their findings. I consider that students may have different conception of translation process, so it is necessary that students be informed that they are not leaning English to translate but to communicate, especially when the translation is difficult to do since there are some complex languages like the Chinese. Reyes', Murrieta' & Hernandez' (2008) also showed that their Taiwanese subjects mentioned that they cannot learn English doing the translation.

In the items (23) "Learning English is different from learning other school subjects", (10) "It is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country", and (7) "It is necessary to learn the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language", students neither agree nor disagree with them. They were neutral about the necessity to learn the English culture to learn English;

that learning a foreign language is different from learning other academic subjects; and that it is best to learn English in an English-speaking country. Even though it is well known that learning culture would help student to get a wide panorama of the language or to motivate them, students do not show interest in learning the culture of the language they are learning. Maybe, students are not being exposed, or they are not informed of how important culture is, so it will help them to understand and learn the language being used in the foreign language. Maybe, ITCH students could not be interested in learning the culture since their teachers do not teach it. If English teachers teach not only the language but also the culture, students could be more motivated in learning the language. Horwitz (1989) states that learners need to take into account the importance that the culture of a language has. Some of the reasons about learning a culture are to avoid using taboos and offensive words and because culture and diversity are viewed as integral to a student's language experience and to the shaping of communicative competence (Burns, 1990 as cited in Savignon, 2002). Students should understand that language use has to be associated with other culturally behavior. Rojas (2008) and Ramirez (2009) got similar findings. Ramirez (2009) pointed out that communication will be effective if it is supported by having knowledge of culture about a foreign language.

Finally, students showed a neutral attitude about learning the language in the foreign country; so they are not sure about if they really would like to learn the language in that country or not. Truitt (1995) mentioned that students who value learning English in a English-speaking country may try to travel abroad if possible, at least for a semester, to improve their English. Truitt (1995) also mentioned if this belief is unrealistic, learners could think that they will not pronounce English properly, and it could lead to frustration and anxiety. A different finding was showed by Erlenawati (2002); learners strongly agree that it is best to learn English in English speaking countries because learners will benefit from opportunities and the input the English-speaking countries provide. Bernat (2005) whose findings were similar to Erlenawati, also pointed out that students may recognize the inherent value of learning language in an immersion-type setting, where there is a greater exposure to the foreign language, its culture and its people.

The students from this research appeared not to have beliefs related to the importance of the environment and the culture of the target language since, as reported by Erlenawati (2002), they did not seem to be keen on employing such as practicing not only in the lab but among themselves, repeating words, guessing, feeling comfortable even though they make mistakes, and using more strategies like paraphrasing that conform to what is considered best practice in communicative language since this author points out that in order to understand the nature of a foreign language; students need to know the connection among the culture and the environment.

5.2.5. Dimension 5: The difficulty of Language Learning

Results obtained in this study compare to those found in Horwitz (1989) study as they reinforce that English can be learnt in two years of instruction, that it is easier for children to learn English language than for adults, that learning language is a matter of memorizing new words and translating from English, and that everyone can speak English.

Subjects from this research were generally optimistic about their own prognosis as language learners. Siebert (2003) and Bernat's (2005) studies reported comparable findings, only a minority of this research disagree that they will speak English well. It can be noted that ITCH students believe English as a language of medium difficulty. That belief might help them believe that they will learn the language very well at the end of their courses. Students also reported that a maximum of two years is sufficient for learning English language. If students are convinced that English is not really difficult, they could face the language learning process easily and more confident. But, on the other hand, believing that it is possible to learn English in two years could also discourage them from making an effort to learn it if they do not significantly advance in the learning of it in that period of time. Thus, students who do not consider the language as difficult could spend just a little time when he could dedicate the time required for learning the language. Holding that belief, it could also be functional for students since they might have a low level of anxiety in their classes. Horwitz (1987, 1988) got similar findings. Her subjects recognize that the foreign language was neither difficult nor easy, and

they also agreed that they will learn the language in two years. Horwitz corroborates that student's attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs may influence students' performance and ultimate success.

However, some learners from this study also expressed to believe that English is easier to speak and read than to write and understand it. Students could feel that writing is difficult since they do not know how to do it. This finding could be related to the traditional approach of teaching where the productions skills are first developed. Since English skills are not taught in some high schools students from the ITCH could find quiet difficult to develop their writing, listening, reading and speaking skills. In this case, ITCH teachers should teach how to do writing in English since the format, and style are totally different from Spanish. Students from the ITCH think that writing and understanding English is difficult because of their lack of training in writing and listening skills. There were different findings in Ramirez (2009). Ramirez's subjects mentioned that writing and reading a foreign language is easier than speaking and understanding. However, there were different results in Montalvo's (2009) findings from this study and from Ramirez (2009). For example, Montalvo's subjects neither agree nor disagree that it is easier to read English than to write it which is different from this study and from Ramirez; on the other hand, Montalvo's subjects believed mostly that it is easier to speak than to understand English, which it is similar from this study but different from Ramirez's.

To sum up the five dimensions, students revealed that they have beliefs such as guessing words, that everybody can learn a language that they are self-autonomous since they do not depend only on teachers, and they consider English as a medium difficult language. Those beliefs can be considered as positive ones since they motivate students to learn English. On the other hand, students also showed that they have beliefs that could damage their learning like having an excellent pronunciation, the great importance they give to know grammar before learning to speak and to translation, and the lack of importance they show for the culture.

5.2.6. Questions added to the BALLI

Regarding the items that were added to the BALLI, which also refer to the learning strategies used by English students, most of the subjects showed that they are really concerned about their learning progress. Most of them strongly agreed with the items that are related to the improvement of the language, the development of the skills, and the practice. In those items, student showed that they are ready to do extra exercises to get better grades; that they want to develop their language skills; and that they are not afraid of making mistakes when they are speaking. This last belief could be related to the item of correction mistakes (Learning and Communication Strategies dimension). In that dimension students pointed out that if they make mistakes at the beginning of the course, it could be difficult for them to correct their mistakes. However, it does not mean that they are afraid of making mistakes, as it was mentioned before it depends on how teachers deal with the error corrections (Rojas 2008).

The ITCH students who are aware of the importance of working independently will spend more time studying and they will understand and learn better at the end of their course than the ones that area waiting for the teacher to explain everything. Rojas (2008) got similar results. Their outcomes reported that most of the students shared the idea that doing extra exercises and consulting other references than their book and their teacher can help them improve their English.

Students stated that they are conscious that developing good skills in English takes time, especially if they want to be fluent in the language. Mori (1999) found in her study that developing English skills requires time, and that teachers are not the only persons who can help students to solve their doubts about the language. Rojas (2008) stated that if students are aware of their weaknesses and that in their studies they do not do well they can improve them. Also, being conscious that good skills do not develop in a short time will avoid students get frustrated if they do not understand anything during their first classes.

Another outcome was that students believe that learning a language takes time. That belief was supported with students' disagreement with the belief that if they do not learn anything in the first week or course they will never learn English. This item helps students not to be fear if they do not get it in the first weeks; that they should be patient in learning a language; that anxiety is a matter that everyone faces at the beginning of the courses. Students also reported that if they work very hard, they can develop the skills which may take time. Being conscious that good skills do not develop in a short time will help them not to get frustrated if they do not understand anything in the first classes. This kind of belief will help students to develop better and more learning strategies because students will be conscious that learning English is a process and not a product. Rojas (2008) and Ramirez (2009) also got similar outcomes.

Finally, students from the ITCH agreed that memorizing lists of words is good to increase your English vocabulary. That belief could prevent their language learning because they showed that way that they concentrate on this and forget to use other strategies for learning vocabulary. Nevertheless, memorizing can still be a good strategy for certain students. As Peacock states it has been proven that learners do not learn in the same way, indeed (2001). On the other hand, students are not quite sure whether teachers are the only ones who can solve their doubts about the English language. Students are used to studying in the old-fashioned technique when the teacher was the only one who could help them. In fact, most of the students thought that teachers know everything.

As a summary, if students are aware of their weaknesses and in their studies they do not do well they can improve them. Also, being conscious that good skills do not develop in a short time will help students not to get frustrated if they do not understand anything during their first classes. Next, the answer about gender differences will be analyzed.

5.3. Gender Beliefs

Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) mentioned that factors such as gender could determine or influence learners' belief. In this section, the gender differences among male and female will be analyzed in order to know whether there is any difference between them.

From analyzing beliefs differences with the cross tabulation process, it could be seen that only nine items showed few differences between both groups. It can be seen that the dimension that had more items related to the difference among male and female in this study was the dimension related to the nature of the language learning. Male showed that they have got a higher level in the difficulty of language than female students. This might explain how men think it could be the process of learning English and they might relate this domain with the difficulty of learning English. It means if men consider that learning English is hard, they might have problems in their learning, but if they consider that learning English is quite easy they may not have problems in their process. On the other hand, female got a higher level of foreign language attitude, and in the items added to the BALLI than male. This might show that some females might indicate that their failure or their success could be as a result of their attitude towards the language. Even though the differences are not bigger, these findings could tell us that there are differences in what they think and the way they approach the learning process.

Bacon & Finnemann (1990) and Diab (2000, 2005) got different findings in their study. They found out that women reported a high level of motivation and strategy use in language learning than male students. Comparing those findings to the results got in the ITCH, it could see that students from the ITCH did not show differences among motivation, but there were few differences in the other dimensions (difficulty of language learning, the nature of the language, and foreign language attitude) which could give a general idea about their way of thinking and the possible behavior in their English class. For example, if teachers see that some women use more learning strategies that help them to learn English, teachers might encourage men to use the same or other learning strategies to improve their grades. There were also different findings in Siebert (2003) and Bernat & Lloyd's (2007) studies.

Analyzing the items individually, it could be seen that women reported a higher level of disagreement in three items. For example, the fact of not considering the culture as a necessary aspect to learn may be a learning barrier since as Tercanlioglu (2005) states that learning the culture really matters since it helps people understand better the language. Maybe, some students are not being exposed, or they are not informed of how important culture facts are, so it will help them to understand and learn the language that being used in the foreign language. Another idea about why some students would not be interested in learning the culture could be that they are from different majors that are not related to English language and because of their traditions and customs.

Regarding the last belief about being good at Math and Science are not good at learning English we can say that disagreeing with this belief can beneficiated women since they will not think their skills are limited to learning languages but that they could learn many other things, they will be probably more confident and have a higher self-esteem to study foreign languages. This finding coincides with Diab's. In Diab's (2005) study, subjects also mentioned that people who are good at math and science are also good at English. They showed that being good at something does let you be good at other things. Thus, this functional belief could help people to build confidence and to improve their skills.

On the other hand, men showed slight higher level of agreement than women in the items (5) 'I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well', (10) 'It is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country'. (18) 'Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules', and (22) 'It is easier to speak English than to understand it'. From all these four items, it could be said that men present some functional and dysfunctional beliefs in their answers. An example of a functional belief is that several men (74.5%) believe that they will learn to speak English very well because they might show confidence and motivation in their learning, and this could help them to be better at the language. This belief may be related with it is easy to speak English rather than understand it (item 22) where some men (36.5%) also agreed with the statement. Results might give an idea about how they find themselves easy in speaking, and it could be considered as a functional belief because it may indicates that

students could not have problems in their oral activities and tests. Weden (2001) mentioned that if learners have a positive aptitude for learning another language, this aptitude will facilitate to learn it, but if they do not have this attitude, they will inhibit their process. On the other hand, Siebert (2003) got similar results. Findings revealed that male students were more possible than female students to grade their abilities highly, and to respond that they have a special ability for learning languages.

As some examples of dysfunctional beliefs could be the items 10 and 18. Some men from the ITCH (48.6%) got a higher level of agreement than women since some male students tend more to consider that learning English will be better in the native-speakers' countries (item 10). Holding this belief may be a disadvantage for students since they may think that they if they do not advance in learning English is because they are not in the foreign country; at the same time it could be an advantage since being conscious of it may mean that they have to study harder if they want to learn the language. As foreign teachers, we know that learning English in a foreign country might not damage students if they have their own feedback of the language. Those students might then be aware of the importance of other resources to be in contact with the foreign language through the internet or contact with foreign classmates or English teachers among others to learn the language. Martinez (2005, cited in Ramirez 2009), mentioned that foreign learners who are surrounded by native-speakers and foreign culture will have many advantages in learning the foreign language. So, this belief could be consider as a dysfunctional belief due to it could make students feel frustrated not to have a feedback outside the classroom. Similar findings were got by Bernat & Lloyd (2007).

Regarding the item 18 where more male students (64.1%) stated that grammar rules are really important when they learn English. This seems to be a dysfunctional belief because some men really care about knowing grammar rules, and they are not paying attention with the teaching approach they carry on, in this case is the communicative competence. Thus, those men could have problems in their learning since they might still hold the old fashioned teaching that were taught maybe in secondary and high schools, so they do not develop the learning language skills that are required. When they start learning English in the ITCH the teaching approach changes drastically for some of them due to in the ITCH teachers start developing skills and

they focus on the communicative competence, and perhaps students do not get used to studying in that way quickly. Siebert (2003) and Ramirez (2009) also found differences between males and females respect to the importance of grammar.

Most women got higher levels of agreement than men in the following items: (9) 'It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn English', (23) 'Learning English is different from learning other school subjects', (25) 'If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job', (27) 'People who are good at math and science are not good at learning English', and (39) 'I should try to speak in English even though I make mistakes'. More women (53.3%) from this study also agreed that learning English is different from learning other school subjects than men. Maybe those females really consider that the techniques they use in their other subjects like Biology or Math cannot be useful for learning English. This dysfunctional belief could cause them some problems to their learning since Gabillon (2007) stated that L2 and FL is often perceived as the same as learning other subjects. She pointed out that in many cases learning other subjects precedes L2 or FL learning and learners embark on the L2 and FL learning process with some preconceptions and techniques about learning. However, this belief gives some options to the students to reach out other learning and communication strategies to learn English. Horwitz (1999), Altan (2006) and Montalvo (2009) also got similar findings in their studies where most women agreed that learning English is different than learning other subjects.

The last item in which some female students (92.5%) from the ITCH got higher agreement was 'I should try to speak in English even though I make mistakes'. This is a functional belief since women encourage themselves to speak English, and they are not afraid in their mistakes. Even though Horwitz (1989) did not make any gender differences in her studies, she pointed out that some of her subjects believed that making mistakes will impede their language learning. Thus, she mentioned that those students who believed that making mistakes is bad may have been exposed to erroneous beliefs about language learning and those erroneous beliefs about language learning lead a less effective language learning strategy. However, making mistakes could not be taking as a negative point since the mistakes show us what skill we need to reinforce and want our weakness are. This could be supported by Peter

McWilliams's quotation: "Mistakes, obviously, show us what needs improving. Without mistakes, how would we know what we had to work on?"

An additional analysis was done to corroborate if there was any gender difference since the crosstab tabulation had slight difference. The intention was to find if there was enough significant of the previous results to be considered as important. If trying an interpretation of the results obtained by the T-test, it could be observed that five from the nine items presented before related to the gender got a significant difference between boys and girls. Those items that also got significant difference between men and women were: (7) 'It is necessary to learn the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language', (9) 'It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn English', (25) 'If I learn English very well, it will help me get a better job' (27) 'People who are good at math and science are not good at learning English', and (39) 'I should try to speak in English even though I make mistakes'.

As a conclusion, there were some items that had slightly differences regarding gender. However, doing another type of analysis, there were five items that showed that they have a significant relevance regarding to the nine beliefs that were presented at the beginning of this section. There exists some differences regarding to the dimensions of the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and foreign language attitude. It was also some gender differences in the questions added to the BALLI. Even though there were found some gender differences, Rojas (2008) and Ramirez (2009), who carried out similar studies in the same context, did not get any significant gender difference.

Next, the findings that were found in this study could be related to their academic achievement which will be analyzed in the following section.

5.4. Language Learners' Beliefs and the Academic Achievement

To answer the third research question, the Persons' correlation was done. Nevertheless, any significant correlations among the BALLI items and the academic achievement were found. Some reasons might be the diversity of beliefs students hold and that questionnaires only do not take into account all the beliefs and external factors such as the setting, motivation, students' feelings, schedule of classes and teachers' beliefs. Benson and Lor (1999) pointed out that questionnaire research tends to give only a snapshot of learners' beliefs without telling much about their beliefs in greater depth. Similar results where got by Montalvo's (2009) study. His findings did not report any significant Pearsons' correlation between beliefs and academic achievement.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions of the present study, and it also makes several recommendations for further research.

6.1. Conclusions

Results from this study have showed that students from the ITCH hold some beliefs about learning English as a Foreign Language. The BALLI seems to have proven its usefulness in the elicitation and comparison of many student beliefs about language learning, and it gives us the opportunity to classify, analyze the beliefs and to conclude that English students hold a variety of functional beliefs about learning. For example, students from the ITCH have high expectations that they will learn to speak English, they hope to learn the language very well, since they take into account that it takes some time to learn English and to develop the language skills.

This study also shows that students from the ITCH are high motivated to learn the language since they reveal strong motives to learn the language. Some of those strong motives that students hold to learn English are related to the job opportunities, and that students think that learning English is really important in Mexico, especially in Quintana Roo because of its geographical zone; they also showed that they want to use the language for personal purposes, and to know better the natives for any reasons. Students also showed the motivation and

expectation dimension was the group with the highest mean of respondents who agreed with it. It is known that external motivations could encourage learners to learn the language such as the need for employment and the economical status.

In addition, we can conclude that researched subjects showed beliefs that not only are functional for their learning, but they are also considered also helpful for their independent learning. This can be supported since students pointed out that they investigate in other sources and with teachers some information, and also they mentioned that not only teachers can solve their problems. Those students seem not to follow the old tradition of learning where teacher used to give all the information, and also students from the ITCH seem to be self-independent learners. However, there were some contradictions in their beliefs because most of them showed that they still use the old learning tradition techniques that do not match with the communicative competence like memorizing the grammar rules, and vocabulary.

Results from this study also showed that there were some dysfunctional beliefs students from the ITCH hold, and those beliefs could damage their learning. For example, many of the subjects surveyed agreed that mastering grammar, having an excellent pronunciation and doing translations are really important for learning English. Consequently, it is really important that teachers help learners to face up those dysfunctional beliefs by being exposed to new data about them, so they can develop more effective expectations about the language to be successful.

We can also conclude that there were found some similarities among this current research and the studies done by Rojas (2008), Ramirez (2009) and Montalvo (2009). For example, in all the four studies subjects agreed that the age is a factor for learning the language, that the repetitions and the practice is really important to learn the language, that some people are born with a special ability that helps them learn English, and learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words. Those similarities among these four studies suggest that some beliefs may be influenced by same characteristics students have such as age, stage of learning, and setting. Nevertheless, these similarities should be examined closely in the future.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there were found also some similarities with studies done in different context (Horwitz, (1989), Bernat (2000, 2005), Truitt (2003) and Altan (2006). Some of those common beliefs were that children can learn faster a language than adults, that English can be learnt within two years of instruction, that learning a language is a matter of memorizing new words and translating from English, and that everyone can learn to speak English.

Regarding to the gender difference, we can conclude that there were some items that showed slightly significant gender differences among males and females. Some of those differences are that male got a higher level of the difficulty of language, and that female students were higher in the foreign language attitude dimension. Some men showed that they really consider that grammar is really important when they learn English; that they will learn English to speak it very well; and that they consider that it is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country. If students have a positive aptitude for learning another language, it will facilitate to learn it, but if students have negative aptitudes, they could find difficult to learn the language. On the other hand, there were some female students mentioned that they are not afraid of making mistakes, that it is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country, and that that people who are good at math and science are also good at learning English. Even though in this research there did not take into account strategies, teachers should make sure about what kind of strategy they use in class to make students to develop their skills and teachers should create a comfortable environment.

Also, results of the academic achievement were important due to the fact that it was not possible to find much correlation among the students' grades and the dimensions of the BALLI. However, by analyzing the item in isolation, some minor correlations were found which might be approached to students' learning process and thus, related to their academic achievement.

Even though the results of this study only present a general view of students' beliefs about language learning in the ITCH, they were important since it let us know what students' beliefs

are about learning English. Identifying learners' beliefs is of particular importance to improve effectiveness of English language teaching, and to help students become better learners. However, beliefs about language learning are generally strongly held and difficult to change (Bernat, 2005).

To sum up, those paragraphs review the findings reported in the present study of beliefs about language learning. In order to know if those beliefs have been modified or are the same, other investigations will be required. Also, students' beliefs about foreign language learning are found to play an important role in influencing their motivation, attitude, strategy and communication use, anxiety and academic achievement. But with little or limited knowledge about the target language, students may have some misconceptions which seem to be conflicting, or mismatching with teachers' beliefs. All will lead to frustration or disappointment; bring problems in their academic achievement, and their learning. Thus, language learning beliefs need to be explored in next studies to know them better. In the next section, some recommendations for futures research and classroom consideration are suggested.

6.2 Recommendations

This section presents some recommendations for future research and classroom considerations. It is important to clarify not only teachers and students need to take into account those recommendations to understand what is going on in their learning, but also the institution which really needs to be involved in the process of learning a language.

Findings of this investigation reveal that students from the ITCH that studied English 1 hold beliefs that can help them to be successful in their language learning; also they also showed some beliefs that could be a barrier for their learning. It is necessary to help students to develop realistic beliefs about foreign language learning. Teachers can start from helping other teachers and students develop positive attitudes by showing them what kind of beliefs mismatch with teachers' teaching and with students' process of learning.

It is also recommended that students' belief about language learning be taken into account when designing the syllabus, and classroom activities. Teachers need to be aware of their students' language learning beliefs since the very beginning of their courses, so they can expose learners to new information that will help them to confront their unrealistic beliefs.

Another important recommendation is that Mexican teachers should look at what other countries and school are doing in academic achievement and beliefs. Gabillon (2005), for example, stated that in some institutions where foreign languages are taught, some syllabus or curriculums are integrated in language learning curricula to negotiate learners' dysfunctional beliefs and help them to appropriate these in a more functional way. This example could give an idea to teachers about how to design the syllabus that takes into account the possible dysfunctional beliefs.

It is also recommended to work with dysfunctional beliefs and negative attitudes towards the language; if teachers work on them students might modify them and those beliefs and attitude will not interfere with students' motivation. Attitudes and beliefs have also been reported to have a notable effect on L2 and LF learners' strategy use and motivation, with dysfunctional beliefs and attitudes resulting poor strategy use and lack of motivation (Oxford, 1994).

Teachers should develop students the habit of thinking in English and tell them that learning a language means paying attention to content, accuracy of linguistic form, practicing, and communicative effective as well to avoid the translation. For example, some English activities such as English contest, English corner, and English class report are all good ways to improving English thinking ability and the development of English learning, which stress not only the form-focused practice but also the meaning-focused practice. In addition, teachers can train students to use strategies that good learners frequently use, or recommend them some strategies which match their personality or learning styles.

Knowledge of learner beliefs about language learning should also increase teachers' understanding of how students approach the tasks required in language class, ultimately, help

teachers foster more effective learning strategies in their students. Language learning and teaching should not be only confined to language itself, learning skills should be also emphasized. More attention should be given to students' learning process and learning methods.

Finally, to sooth the impact of learners' perceptions of their English learning, teachers should include cultural features that reflect the language that students are learning, so they stop thinking that culture is not important when learning a language, but it could motivate them.

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Original Version

Directions: Below are some beliefs that people have bout learning foreign languages. Read each statement and then decide if you: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree. There are not right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions. Questions 4 & 14 are slightly different and you should mark the as indicated.

REMEMBER: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
**Beliefs about the nature of English Language Learning (BALLI)**
1.	It is easier for children to learn a foreign language.					
2.	Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a foreign language.					
3.	Some languages are easier to learn than others.					
4.	The language I am trying to learn is : 1) a very difficult language, 2) a difficult language, 3) a language of medium difficulty, 4) an easy language, 5) a very easy language					
5.	I believe that I will learn to speak this language very well.					
6.	People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.					
7.	It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.					
8.	It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.					
9.	You shouldn't say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.					
10.	It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.					
11.	It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.					
12.	If I heard someone speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.					
13.	It's OK to guess if you don't know a word in the foreign language.					
14.	If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to become fluent? 1) less than a year, 2) 1-2 years, 3) 3-5 years, 4) 5-10 years, 5) you can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.					
15.	15. I have foreign language aptitude.					
16.	Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.					
17.	It is important to repeat and practice a lot.					

Beliefs about the nature of English Language Learning (BALLI)						
No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.					
19.	If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.					
20.	Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.					
21.	It is important to practice in the language laboratory.					
22.	Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.					
23.	If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.					
24.	It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.					
25.	Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.					
26.	Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.					
27.	If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job.					
28.	It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.					
29.	People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign language.					
30.	Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language.					
31.	I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.					
32.	People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.					
33.	Americans are good at learning foreign languages.					
34.	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.					

Modified version

Prueba Piloto I

BALLI Cuestionario de creencias acerca del aprendizaje de un idioma.
Universidad de Quintana Roo
Maestría en Educación

Instrucciones generales:

Esta escala tiene como objetivo conocer las creencias acerca del aprendizaje del inglés. Le solicitamos su cooperación respondiendo a los ítems que a continuación aparecen. Por favor, no deje preguntas sin contestar; no existen preguntas falsas o verdaderas, correctas o incorrectas. No es necesario que escriba su nombre. Gracias por su colaboración.

Para cada enunciado encierre en un círculo la respuesta que mejor representa su acuerdo o desacuerdo.
1= Completamente en desacuerdo   2= En desacuerdo   3= Neutral
4= De acuerdo   5= Completamente de acuerdo

1. A los niños les resulta más fácil aprender inglés que a los adultos.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Algunas personas tienen una capacidad especial para aprender.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Algunos idiomas son más fáciles de aprender que el idioma inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
4. El idioma inglés está estructurado de la misma forma que el idioma español.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Creo que aprenderé inglés muy bien.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Es importante hablar inglés con una pronunciación excelente.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Para aprender inglés hay que conocer la cultura de los países angloparlantes.	1	2	3	4	5
8. No se debería decir nada en inglés hasta que se pueda decir bien.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Para alguien que ya domina una lengua extranjera es más fácil aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Lo mejor es aprender inglés en un país angloparlante.	1	2	3	4	5
11. A mí me gusta practicar mi inglés con angloparlantes.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Si no se sabe una palabra en inglés es válido intentar adivinarla.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Creo que soy capaz de aprender el idioma inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Lo más importante al aprender el idioma inglés es saber mucho vocabulario.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Es muy importante repetir y practicar mucho para aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Soy un poco tímido(a) al hablar con otras personas en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Si mis maestros no corrigen mis errores desde el principio después será difícil eliminarlos.	1	2	3	4	5

Para cada enunciado encierre en un círculo la respuesta que mejor representa su acuerdo o desacuerdo. 1= Completamente en desacuerdo 2= En desacuerdo 3= Neutral 4= De acuerdo 5= Completamente de acuerdo					
18. Lo más importante al aprender inglés es aprender la gramática.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Para aprender inglés es muy importante practicar en el laboratorio de inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Las mujeres tienen mejor capacidad para aprender inglés que los hombres.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Si aprendo inglés muy bien tendré muchas oportunidades para usarlo.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Es más fácil hablar inglés que entenderlo.	1	2	3	4	5
23. No es lo mismo aprender inglés que aprender otras materias.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Lo más importante para aprender inglés es aprender a traducir.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Si aprendo inglés tendré más oportunidades de encontrar un mejor trabajo.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Es más fácil leer y escribir en inglés que hablarlo y entenderlo.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Las personas que son buenas en matemáticas o ciencias no son buenas para el inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
28. En mi país, la gente piensa que es muy importante saber inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Me gustaría aprender inglés para poder conocer mejor a personas angloparlantes.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Las personas que dominan más de un idioma son muy inteligentes.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Los americanos son buenos para aprender idiomas.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Todas las personas tienen capacidad de aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Puedo mejorar mi desempeño en inglés si hago ejercicios extras y consulto otras fuentes aparte del profesor y mi libro.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Si me esfuerzo mucho en aprender inglés con e tiempo mejoraré mi habilidad.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Desarrollar buenas habilidades en inglés implica tiempo.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Los maestros son los únicos que pueden resolver mis dudas sobre el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Memorizar listas de palabras es bueno para mejorar el vocabulario.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Es importante dominar bien la gramática antes de empezar a hablar en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
39. No importa que cometa errores, debo de atreverme a hablar en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Si en la primera semana no entendí nada en mi curso quiere decir que nunca aprenderé inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
41. El idioma inglés es: 1) muy difícil, 2) difícil, 3) ni muy fácil ni muy difícil, 4) fácil, 5) muy fácil.	1	2	3	4	5

Para cada enunciado encierre en un círculo la respuesta que mejor representa su acuerdo o desacuerdo. 1= Completamente en desacuerdo 2= En desacuerdo 3= Neutral 4= De acuerdo 5= Completamente de acuerdo					
42. Si alguien dedica una hora al día al estudio del idioma inglés, ¿cuánto tiempo crees que tardará en aprenderla bien?: 1) menos de un año, 2) 1-2 años, 3) 3-5 años, 4) 5-10 años, 5) no se puede aprender inglés estudiando solo por una hora diaria.	1	2	3	4	5

Por favor, en esta sección anota todos los comentarios que puedan ayudar a mejorar este instrumento como redacción, vocabulario u otra cosa que no hayas entendido y que consideres deba cambiarse
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APENDIX C: Beliefs about Language learning Inventory (BALLI)

Modified version

BALLI
Encuesta sobre creencias acerca del aprendizaje del idioma inglés

<table>
<tr><td>
INSTRUCCIONES GENERALES:

Esta encuesta tiene como objetivo conocer las creencias acerca del aprendizaje del inglés. Le solicitamos su cooperación respondiendo a los ítems que a continuación aparecen. Sólo estamos interesados en conocer tu opinión, y por ello, te pedimos que nos respondas con sinceridad y no dejes ninguna pregunta sin responder. No es un examen, por lo tanto, no existen respuestas correctas o incorrectas. No es necesario que escriba su nombre.

GRACIAS POR SU COLABORACIÓN.
</td></tr>
</table>

SECCION I				
Encierra el número que más se acerque a tu respuesta.				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
En completo desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	No me puedo decidir	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo

1. A los niños les resulta más fácil aprender inglés que a los adultos.	1	2 3	4	5
2. Algunas personas tienen una capacidad especial para aprender una lengua extranjera.	1	2 3	4	5
3. Algunos idiomas son más fáciles de aprender que el inglés.	1	2 3	4	5
4. El idioma inglés está estructurado de la misma forma que el idioma español.	1	2 3	4	5
5. Creo que aprenderé inglés muy bien.	1	2 3	4	5
6. Es importante hablar inglés con una pronunciación excelente.	1	2 3	4	5
7. Para aprender inglés hay que conocer la cultura de los países angloparlantes.	1	2 3	4	5
8. No se debe decir nada en inglés hasta que se pueda decir bien.	1	2 3	4	5
9. Para alguien que ya domina una lengua extranjera es más fácil aprender inglés.	1	2 3	4	5
10. Lo mejor es aprender inglés en un país angloparlante.	1	2 3	4	5
11. A mí me gusta practicar mi inglés con angloparlantes.	1	2 3	4	5
12. Si no se sabe una palabra en inglés es válido intentar adivinarla	1	2 3	4	5
13. Creo que soy capaz de aprender el idioma inglés.	1	2 3	4	5
14. Lo más importante al aprender el idioma inglés es saber mucho vocabulario.	1	2 3	4	5
15. Es muy importante repetir y practicar mucho para aprender inglés.	1	2 3	4	5
16. Soy un poco tímido(a) al hablar con otras personas en inglés.	1	2 3	4	5
17. Si mis maestros no corrigen mis errores desde el principio después me será difícil eliminarlos.	1	2 3	4	5

Encierra el número que más se acerque a tu respuesta.				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
En completo desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	No me puedo decidir	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo

	1	2	3	4	5
18. Lo más importante al aprender inglés es aprender la gramática.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Para aprender inglés es muy importante practicar en el laboratorio de inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Las mujeres tienen mejor capacidad para aprender inglés que los hombres.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Si aprendo inglés muy bien tendré muchas oportunidades para usarlo.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Es más fácil hablar inglés que entenderlo.	1	2	3	4	5
23. No es lo mismo aprender inglés que aprender otras materias.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Lo más importante para aprender inglés es aprender a traducir.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Si aprendo inglés tendré más oportunidades de encontrar un mejor trabajo.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Es más fácil leer y escribir en inglés que hablarlo y entenderlo.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Las personas que son buenas en matemáticas o ciencias no son buenas para el inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
28. En mi país, la gente piensa que es muy importante saber inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Me gustaría aprender inglés para poder conocer mejor a personas angloparlantes.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Las personas que dominan más de un idioma son muy inteligentes.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Los americanos son buenos para aprender idiomas.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Todas las personas tienen capacidad para aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Puedo mejorar mi desempeño en inglés si hago ejercicios extras y consulto otras fuentes aparte del profesor y mi libro.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Si me esfuerzo mucho en aprender inglés con e tiempo mejoraré mi habilidad.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Desarrollar buenas habilidades en inglés implica tiempo.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Los maestros son los únicos que pueden resolver mis dudas sobre el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Memorizar listas de palabras es bueno para aumentar mi vocabulario.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Es importante dominar bien la gramática antes de empezar a hablar en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
39. No importa que cometa errores, debo de atreverme a hablar en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Si en la primera semana no entendí nada en mi curso quiere decir que nunca aprenderé inglés.	1	2	3	4	5

41. El idioma inglés es:

1) muy difícil	2) difícil	3) ni muy fácil ni muy difícil	4) fácil	5) muy fácil

Encierra el número que más se acerque a tu respuesta.				
42. Si alguien dedica una hora al día al estudio del idioma inglés, ¿cuánto tiempo crees que tardará en aprenderla bien?				
1) menos de un año	2) 1-2 años	3) 3-5 años	4) 5-10 años	5) Implosible hacerlo con una hora diaria

Instrumento modificado por Rojas & Reyes (2008)

Sección 2. Datos Demográficos

Datos estudiantiles:

1.1 Matricula: _____

1.2 Nombre de tu Licenciatura o ingeniería: _____

1.3 Semestre: _____

Datos Personales:

2.1 Tu edad es de:

Menos de 18	18-21	22-25	Mayor de 25
☐	☐	☐	☐

2.2 Género: ☐ **Hombre** ☐ **Mujer**

2.3 Lengua materna:		
Español	Maya	Otro:_____

2.4 ¿Has estudiado inglés aparte de la secundaria y preparatoria? ☐ Sí   ☐ No

GRACIAS POR TU COLABORACIÓN

Por favor, en esta sección anota todos los comentarios que puedan ayudar a mejorar este instrumento como redacción, vocabulario u otra cosa que no hayas entendido y que consideres deba cambiarse.