



UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

DIVISIÓN DE HUMANIDADES Y LENGUAS

**English Learning Self-Efficacy Beliefs of
Mexican Students in a Belizean High School**

Tesis

Para obtener el grado de
Licenciada en Lengua Inglesa

PRESENTA
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	3
ABSTRACT	6
INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	11
1.1 Self-Efficacy Theory.....	11
1.2 Sources of Self-Efficacy.....	14
1.3 Enactive Mastery Experiences	14
1.4 Vicarious Experiences	15
1.5 Verbal Persuasion.....	16
1.6 Physiological and Affective States.....	17
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	20
2.1 Self-Efficacy beliefs to learn English of primary and secondary school learners	21
2.2 Self-Efficacy regarding EFL/ESL investigations conducted in Mexico	24
2.3 Sources of Self-Efficacy in learning English	26
2.4 Self-Efficacy in learning English in a foreign country	29
2.5 Self-Efficacy in regard to language and academic achievement.....	31
CHAPTER 3. METHOD	35
3.1 A Qualitative Research Design.....	35
3.2 Participants	37
3.3 Context.....	37
3.4 Procedure	40
3.5 Instruments	41
3.6 Validation and Reliability.....	42
3.7 Data Analysis	43
CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS.....	44
4.1 Participants' profiles	44
4.2 Why did these young learners decide to commute to study high school in an English-speaking country?	46
4.3 What is the sense of Self-Efficacy of 3 young cross-border commuter learners to learn English at a foreign country?	52

4.4 How do the four sources of Self-Efficacy influence learners' sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English in the foreign country?	61
4.5 How do these young Mexican learners describe their experience to commute to an English-speaking country to study high school?	70
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS	75
5.1 Limitations	78
5.2 Recommendations.....	78
REFERENCES	80

ABSTRACT

Key words: Self-Efficacy, cross-border students, Belize

According to Bandura (1997), studying self-efficacy is significant because it has an influence on the academic performance, emotions and beliefs a person has about his or her capabilities to execute a certain task. Bandura (1997) argues that the sense of self-efficacy is influenced by four sources: previous experience, vicarious experience, feedback and physiological and emotional states. If a person has a low sense of self-efficacy, this may adversely influence his/her learning and then his/her academic performance. A positive sense of self-efficacy can help to enhance students' performance. Literature has also revealed that beliefs on self-efficacy have strongly influenced English learning (Alawiyah, 2018; Villanueva, 2015, Sansores, 2018). Therefore, the objective of this study was to explore the sense of self-efficacy beliefs of young students who commute to an English' speaking country to study in high school, as well as to identify how the four sources of self-efficacy have influenced their beliefs, what caused them to make the decision of studying in a foreign country and how do they describe their experiences. The participants were 3 young Mexican students between the ages of 11 and 16. To collect the data 3 semi-structured interviews were done to each of the participants. The interviews and the interpretation of the data were transcribed following the strategies proposed by Nohl (2009) and Creswell (2005). Then the data was analyzed in light of Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and the results of a review of the relevant literature. The results show that these students had a strong sense of self-efficacy in their capability to learn English before going to study in Belize due to the miscalibration. This miscalibration was caused by verbal persuasion received from their teachers and lack of accurate measuring of their English skills. Furthermore, their beliefs weakened during the first months in Belize. However, they increased to a higher level of self-efficacy after six months. Results also indicate that verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states were the most influential sources, contrary to enactive mastery experiences and vicarious experiences which were the least influential ones.

INTRODUCTION

Success in language learning achievement encompasses learners' learning strategies (Do-Hong et al., 2015), learners' motivation (Ersanli, 2015; Husain, 2014; Dörnyei, 2005) learners' beliefs in their abilities to perform a behavior (Bandura, 1997), among other variables. Although all of the above constructs are considerably important when it comes to language learning, learners' beliefs in their capacity to accomplish a task, i.e. self-efficacy, seems to play a crucial role in the process.

Self-efficacy contributes to students' perseverance, resilience and motivation to learn. Bandura (1997) stated that Self-efficacy has a strong influence on behavior, motivation, and academic performance, all of which are crucial factors in the process of learning a foreign language. Whether a learner will take action and pursue difficult or easy language learning tasks will depend on his or her perception of the difficulty of the task and the extent to which he or she thinks is capable of executing said task. Studying Self-Efficacy might help to identify if what students think about their ability to learn a foreign language is positive or negatively influencing his or her ability to do so.

Self-efficacy in the English language field has been studied internationally in relation to language learning strategies, linguistic skills such as: listening (Graham, 2011), reading (Naseri and Zaferanieh, 2012; Tobing, 2013), speaking (Asakereh and Dehghannezhad, 2015; Desmaliza and Septiani, 2017) and writing (Williams and Takaku, 2011), academic achievement (Huang and Chang, 1996), motivation (Ersanli, 2015; Husain, 2014), and resilience (Cassidy, 2015; Schwarzer and Warner, 2013). There is a significant amount of research regarding self-efficacy in ESL/EFL internationally, mainly regarding the learning of English.

Self-efficacy beliefs to learn English can be affected by different factors among which, learning strategies and academic background have been studied (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003; Yilmaz, 2010). Some studies have investigated foreign learners' Self-efficacy beliefs in learning English and have confirmed Bandura's theory on high self-efficacy learners being more persistent and encouraged to learn English than low Self-efficacy learners. (Açikel, 2011; Anam and Stracke, 2020; Hyang-Il and Kyung-Ae, 2017). Learning English in foreign countries has been studied in regard to study abroad programs (Amuzie and Winke, 2009; Cubillos and Ilvento, 2013; Hasan and Ali Samet, 2016; Kaypak and Ortaçtepe, 2014; Tanaka

and Ellis, 2003). However, much less attention has been paid to border-crossing learners who commute to learn the English language in a neighboring country and continue their studies learning content in English.

In Mexico, border-crossing learners have been studied in regard to identity formation, (Guajardo, 2018; Orta and Falcón, 2018; Relación and Pastor, 2007) but no research has addressed the experiences of ESL learners who commute to Belize on a daily basis. Although there is an increased interest in self-efficacy research, in Mexico, so far, little research has been conducted to examine self-efficacy in relation to English acquisition as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL). Among some of the topics that have been investigated it is possible to find research done in the field of self-efficacy among teachers in relation to doing research (Reyes-Cruz and Gutiérrez, 2015; Reyes-Cruz and Perales, 2014; Saens, 2016), the use of technology (Reyes-Cruz and Díaz-Mendoza, 2018), and Self-efficacy beliefs of future English teachers (Reyes-Cruz and Murrieta 2017; Pool, 2015). Furthermore, for English learning sense of Self-efficacy in Mexico, no other research was found apart from Rodríguez (2018), Sansores (2018) and Villanueva (2015).

English can be acquired either as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL). According to Richards, Platt & Platt (1996) EFL “English as a Foreign Language” is defined as: the role of English in countries where it is taught in schools as a subject without being neither the country’s language of instruction nor an official language for daily communication in government, business, industry, etc., within that country. On the other hand, ESL “English as a Second Language”, is defined as: the role of English for immigrants and other minority groups in countries where English is spoken. Such groups may use their native languages at home and among friends but have to use English at work and school (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1996). Thus, a second language environment occurs when a language is learnt inside its natural or cultural setting by individuals who speak another language as their mother tongue (Gahungu, 2007, p. 15)

On Mexico’s southern border with Belize, there has been a continual phenomenon of Mexican students crossing the border to attend school in Belize. Before starting to study in Belize, most of these students have little or no knowledge of English other than what they have studied in elementary school. Nevertheless, most of them not only succeed but exceed their own learning expectations while studying there. Based on anecdotal experience it can

be stated that English classes in formal education in Mexico are, most of the time: boring, repetitive and not very challenging, in many places in Mexico, English is not a language commonly used outside the classroom. Those conditions do not benefit either the learning of this language nor the possibility of putting into practice what was learned in the English classes. Hence, students cannot develop a clear perception of how capable they have been in learning English and are not motivated to continue learning it. Given the previous context, we aim to investigate what encourages and influences students' decisions to study in a country where schooling is in English.

The current study, therefore, seeks to describe the experiences of three young Mexican students who commute to an English-speaking country to to pursue high school studies. Furthermore, to identify the sense of Self-efficacy to learn English of these young students at a foreign country; how the four sources have influenced their sense of Self-efficacy to learn this language and, finally, to understand what might be influencing their interest in continuing to study abroad.

The current study sets out to answer the following questions:

- 1) Why did these young learners decide to commute to study in an English-speaking country?
- 2) What is the sense of Self-efficacy of three young cross-border commuter learners to learn English at a foreign country?
- 3) How do the four sources of Self-efficacy influence learners' sense of Self-efficacy to learn English in the foreign country?
- 4) How do these young Mexican learners describe their experience to commute to an English-speaking country to study high school?

This research contributes to a field that has not been frequently researched in Mexico: Self-efficacy beliefs of Mexican young learners to learn ESL in a foreign country. The experiences of learners who commute on a daily basis to a foreign country might orientate teachers and learners who need to cope with a new culture in a foreign language on what are the factors that might influence their sense of self-efficacy. This research could also help teachers in the design of their lessons to enhance students' self-efficacy beliefs to learn English in stay-abroad programs. Knowing the students' perceived self-efficacy in learning English may

provide insights on how their experiences studying English in their native country influenced the students' perception of learning foreign languages and cultures as well as the learning strategies and self-confidence they possess as students.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bandura defines self-efficacy beliefs as “oneself beliefs in one’s capacity to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p.3). A sense of self-efficacy for learning is crucial for learners because it motivates students to improve their competence. Students engage in activities that they believe they will perform well and obtain good outcomes. Self-Efficacy Theory is relevant to the education field since it has the potential to play a key role in the learning process by helping learner’s progress (Bandura, 1984). In the field of language learning, Self-efficacy beliefs can affect learners to think in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways which can result in successful or negative language achievements.

By exploring the self-efficacy beliefs of these young Mexican learners, we can identify the influence of the four sources on these participants’ self-efficacy levels and how they have affected their English development. Hence, in the following section the Self-Efficacy Theory is presented in a detailed way. First, Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory and its three dimensions are explained. Secondly, a description of the four informative sources of self-efficacy is mentioned. Lastly, a brief explanation of the meaningfulness of self-efficacy in second language learning in foreign countries is given.

1.1 Self-Efficacy Theory

In his theory, Bandura emphasizes peoples’ perceptions of their capabilities rather than the real capabilities they have. These perceptions, or beliefs as he defines them, may influence people’s level of motivation and affective states. Self-Efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves, persevere and behave. (Bandura, 1997) Therefore, Self-Efficacy beliefs help to determine the outcome an individual expects. Individuals who have low Self-Efficacy beliefs, doubting their capabilities in certain actions, find it difficult to remain motivated; thus, their efforts to perform this action tend to decrease or cease. Whereas individuals who have high Self-Efficacy beliefs predict better outcomes and put more effort in their tasks. In this way, it can be said that individuals with a high sense of Self-Efficacy

are more likely to view difficult tasks as challenging rather than something to be avoided whereas individuals with low levels of Self-Efficacy could be more likely to avoid these tasks thinking of possible negative outcomes. Using this theory to investigate these Mexican students' decision to study in Belize might help us determine if there is any relation between their predictions about their learning outcomes and the effort they put in their classes in Belize.

In addition, Bandura states that it is not enough to possess these capabilities, it is also necessary to organize them based on one's own Self-Efficacy beliefs. Individuals' perceptions of their capabilities would determine their expected outcomes and how much effort and time they will put into the courses of action. "However, efficacy expectations are a major determinant of people's choice of activities, how much effort they will expend, and of how long they will sustain effort in dealing with stressful situations" (Bandura, 1977, p.194).

For the present investigation, we may infer that the learners studying high school at a foreign country have a high sense of Self-Efficacy given the fact that they took the challenge of studying abroad despite the need to communicate in a foreign language they do not master. Additionally, these 3 learners face the challenges of dealing with cultural aspects as well as their academic lives given that, although their native country and the foreign country are border countries, they do not share culture, language or educational system.

According to Bandura (1997), Self-Efficacy beliefs must be organized in different dimensions which will determine a person's expected outcomes, success or failure, and they can either increase or decrease depending on each person. It is for this reason that the theorist suggests three dimensions which will differ in magnitude, generality and strength.

Magnitude refers to the level of difficulty of a task an individual believes he/she is capable of performing; it can have its limitations and vary in each person. In this research, magnitude would be represented as the difficulties these three learners have when speaking English in front of their classmates. For example, a learner who feels comfortable about what he/she is going to explain and perceives himself/herself to have a good pronunciation and the external factors such as his/her classmates being supportive, might have positive beliefs of being successful in the given task. Whereas, if the learner is doubtful about himself/herself

of being capable of performing the task and he/she has not supportive classmates, he/she might believe himself/herself of not being capable to succeed in the given task.

Generality refers to the extent to which some past experiences, either success or failure, may influence on the individual's perception of mastering a specific task or other similar tasks. Regarding the participants of this study, an example of generality of Self-Efficacy would be given if one of the learners has had good grades throughout his academic performance in his English lessons in Mexican schools, hence he would perceive the English language as a task he is capable of succeeding at. However, the learner did not take into consideration the different skills and subskills a language encompasses, and the speaking rhythm of native speakers is much faster than his schoolteachers used to speak. Then, he faces the difficulty of not being at the same level and he might switch his perception of being capable of learning English, to being not capable because the task is not as easy as he perceived it.

Finally, as for strength, it refers to the individual's determination concerning his or her perceived capabilities to complete the task. For instance, if the participants of this research have low levels of Self-Efficacy in speaking, they would expect negative outcomes when trying to establish a conversation. This might cause them to give up easily when facing obstacles; whereas a learner with high levels of Self-Efficacy in the same skill who also possesses positive outcomes expectancies, might be persistent to face the obstacles despite of the outcome turning successful or not.

Thus, when the action to be performed is categorized by level, each person's Self-Efficacy could be limited or not. Individuals can either be encouraged or not to take actions based on whether they believe their actions can produce the desired results or not. Based on Bandura's claims on effort expenditure and perception of the task as mentioned previously, it might be possible that if one of the learners has a higher sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English, he or she might be more encouraged to remain studying in this foreign country, whereas if one of the learners has a lower sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English, he or she might be more prone to quit studying over there.

1.2 Sources of Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1997) established that Self-Efficacy beliefs are constructed from four sources: a) enactive mastery experiences, b) vicarious experiences, c) verbal persuasion and d) physiological and affective states. "Efficacy beliefs are the product of cognitive processing of diverse sources of efficacy information conveyed enactively, vicariously, socially, and physiologically. Once formed, efficacy beliefs contribute to the quality of human functioning in diverse ways" (p.115). With regard to the participants of this study, we attempt to determine if those sources influenced their sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English in a foreign context.

1.3 Enactive Mastery Experiences

Enactive mastery experience is the most influential source of Self-Efficacy. It provides the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed (Bandura, 1997, p.80). Interpreting the results of one's own previous attainment in a related task or area, or mastery experience, is the most powerful source an individual will create his or her own Self-Efficacy beliefs from. This involves all the personal experiences an individual has had regarding the action or activity performed. In this research, mastery experiences will be defined as those real experiences these students may have had to use English in a real context. For example, they might have had the need or opportunity to communicate in English with a foreigner while on vacation, while playing video games, or in any other circumstance.

Bandura stated "successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy. Failures undermine it, especially if failures occur before a sense of efficacy is firmly established." (Bandura, 1997, p.80). When learners have not yet developed strong Self-Efficacy beliefs, the effects of failure can reach a detrimental level. After learners have completed a task, they must naturally interpret and evaluate their results, creating their efficacy judgements. Their interpretation of the effort they put into completing the task will determine how they create their own Self-Efficacy beliefs. For instance, if learners believe that their efforts have been successful, they will build confidence in taking similar tasks hence raising their Self-Efficacy beliefs; whereas, if they interpret their efforts did not achieve the desired result, they will weaken their Self-Efficacy beliefs.

When not having a strong sense of Self-Efficacy developed, learners' perceptions of their capabilities can be harmful in a way that they might think they are not capable of performing a task; therefore, creating efficacy judgements that will affect their willingness to perform similar tasks. If our participants have had failing experiences in English when they did not yet have a well-built sense of Self-Efficacy, this might have negatively influenced their perception of their ability to learn English.

In addition, this cognitive interpretation of the capability of learners to achieve the desired results is what causes changes in perceived Self-Efficacy beliefs rather than the outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Thus, mastery experiences are not only an individual's past experiences regarding a task to be performed but what the individual cognitively processes from the experience and interpretation of his efforts and outcomes. Therefore, in order to develop Self-Efficacy, individuals need to organize personal experiences and believe in their good capabilities to perform a certain action. Thus, knowing if our participants had successful or failing experiences and how they interpreted these experiences might help understand if their sense of Self-Efficacy changed because of those and how. If they possessed a high level of self-efficacy and faced a negative experience, they could interpret it as something positive and maintain their self-efficacy level and expend more effort when facing a similar experience in order to achieve a positive outcome.

1.4 Vicarious Experiences

The second source of efficacy beliefs, vicarious experiences, consists of learning through observation and imitation of a model who has achieved what the observer wants to learn and comparing his or her abilities with the model as a source of information in the development of Self-Efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).

Individuals often compare themselves with other people, coworkers, competitors, classmates, and so on. Having someone to compare with in the same surrounding or context of the observer, helps to develop individuals' efficacy beliefs. Surpassing associates or competitors raises efficacy beliefs, whereas being outperformed lowers them (Weinberg et al., 1979 as cited in Bandura, 1997).

The chosen model to compare to should be as similar as possible to oneself. Models can affect individuals' perceptions of their capabilities in a way that exposure to skilled models will produce confidence while learning, therefore, enhancing Self-Efficacy perception and improving performance. Similarly, if the model chosen possesses different capabilities and differs widely from the observer, the model's performances can discourage the individual when not achieving the same results, hence, diminishing his or her perception of his or her capabilities. The extent to which vicarious experiences are powerful will depend on the similarity of the observed model actions to the observer (Bandura, 1997). In the context of this research a model might be an artist, a game player, a relative, a friend, a teacher or a classmate who, from our participant's perspective, speaks good English. For instance, watching a similarly perceived classmate succeed in an exam might convince a learner who is uncertain of his capabilities to believe he is also capable of succeeding. Whereas, observing a classmate who is not similarly perceived succeed in an exam might not be enough for the uncertain learner to believe in his capabilities to perform well in the same exam. This model could also be an English teacher with a good accent or a teacher who is a native speaker of English whom these students might aspire to be like. Thus, we are interested in determining if there is a person who might influence these students' beliefs about their ability to study English.

1.5 Verbal Persuasion

The third source of information is verbal persuasion which consists of receiving opinions about one's capabilities from others. Verbal persuasions are created when an individual makes the decision to listen to the received opinions. These opinions can influence individuals in a negative or positive way (Bandura, 1994).

Receiving encouraging comments about our capabilities from people considered significant to us or those considered as our models, can contribute to the development of higher levels of Self-Efficacy beliefs in regard to our capability to perform and succeed in a certain task. "Social persuasion serves as a further means of strengthening people's beliefs that they possess the capabilities to achieve what they seek." (Bandura, 1997, p. 101). Further, Bandura mentions that when struggling with difficulties, it is easier to raise Self-

Efficacy beliefs if significant others express positive comments about our capabilities than if they convey doubts (Bandura, 1997).

In addition, if the individual feels confident with his Self-Efficacy beliefs and receives positive comments, he might be influenced on putting consistent effort to master the action. On the contrary, if the individual has high levels of inefficacy to perform the action, the positive verbal persuasion from people will not have as much effect. Moreover, the influence of negative opinions from others can have a higher impact on individuals than that of positive comments. It is much easier to weaken Self-Efficacy beliefs through negative appraisals (Bandura, 1994). However, the extent to which negative opinions can affect our beliefs in our capabilities will depend on the credibility, expertise, and one's perception of the persuader.

In terms of learning, verbal persuasion is often received through evaluation. Bandura mentions that Self-Efficacy beliefs are more influenced by social evaluations of performance attainments. Social evaluations that focus on achieved progress underscore personal capabilities, whereas evaluations that focus on shortfalls from the distant goal highlight existing deficiencies in capabilities (Bandura, 1997). For Bandura, social persuasion serves best as part of a multifaceted strategy of self-development:

In the case of the three participants of this study, we think that they might receive verbal persuasion primarily from their teachers, parents or friends too regarding the way they speak in English. We are interested in finding out if this is the case and how much this verbal persuasion influences them to build their Self-Efficacy beliefs towards learning English.

1.6 Physiological and Affective States

The fourth source of information is physiological and affective states. Physiological information includes the autonomic arousal that is associated with either being capable to perform a specific task or being afraid and self-doubt. A person with high Self-Efficacy in regard to a specific task often perceives arousal as conducive to a successful performance. Conversely, someone with low Self-Efficacy tends to view physiological arousal as a negative state that reflects personal insufficiencies in their performance (Bandura, 1997). In addition, affective states provide valuable efficacy information. Affective states are an

important source of influence among young people. People tend to expect success when they are not beset by aversive arousal than if they are tense and viscerally agitated (Bandura, 1997).

A person's judgments of their personal efficacy can also be influenced by mood states. For instance, if success is achieved when in a positive mood, learners will have a high level of perceived efficacy. Similarly, learners will retain information easier when being in the same mood state when reviewing the information as that of when they were learning it. Bandura cautions of the impact mood states can have on evaluating one's Self-Efficacy: "It is not the arousal state per se but the meaning given to it that affects judgement" (Bandura, 1997, p.112).

When performing a task, Bandura states that "physiological and affective states can have widely generalized effects on beliefs of personal efficacy in diverse sphere of functioning" (Bandura, 1997 p.106). Higher levels of physiological states associated with self-doubt may decrease one's Self-Efficacy and debilitate one's effort in performing a task. Contrary, having higher positive levels and feeling comfortable even with aversive emotion, can lead to achieving better performance. For example, in an English language classroom or context, if learners are faced with challenging tasks, high Self-Efficacy students will be more likely to experience feelings of excitement, curiosity and eagerness to face the challenge; whereas low Self-Efficacy students might be prone to experience senses of anxiety, depression, fear or feelings of self-doubt to face the challenge.

In regard to this investigation, learning English in a foreign context can provoke different moods and affective states on the learners. Children are more prone to having different mood swings and affective states when learning a language than adults do. Given that new information can be retained more easily when being in a positive mood, it is possible that these learners could have difficulties developing certain English skills when feeling in bad moods and not wanting to put the necessary effort to perform specific actions.

In this sense, Bandura stated: "the multiple benefits of a strong sense of personal efficacy do not arise simply from the incantation of capability" (Bandura, 1997 p. 115). Feeling capable of performing an action is not simply based on saying one is capable to. Developing Self-Efficacy beliefs to perform a specific task involves the integration of the four sources of Self-Efficacy information.

It is intended through this research, based on Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, to identify whether Self-Efficacy's four sources of information have influenced these three young Mexican learners' Self-Efficacy beliefs to learn English. Therefore, the dimensions and four sources of information stated above will be helpful to interpret the findings of this research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The participants of the present investigation are cross-border learners which, according to Knight (2007), “includes student and scholar mobility, as well as program and provider mobility” (p.6). Cross-border, also called commuter learners have received little consideration in the literature. To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies regarding the self-efficacy of young commuter learners to learn English in a foreign country. In this section we will review different kind of studies related to English language learners. This chapter will be divided in different sections as described below.

To better understand how Self-Efficacy influences primary and secondary school students to learn EFL, the first section of the literature review will revise some investigations that explore primary and secondary school learners’ Self-Efficacy beliefs in learning English as ESL and EFL. The findings of these studies might help understand the reasons why secondary school learners want or not to keep learning English.

Given that participants of the present investigation have gone to school and had English lessons in Mexico before going to Belize, Self-Efficacy studies conducted in Mexico can help get a better comprehension of the participants’ Self-Efficacy to learn English before and after crossing the Mexico-Belize border to learn this language. Thus, the second section of this literature review will explore Self-Efficacy regarding EFL/ESL investigations conducted in Mexico.

Further, to identify how the four sources of Self-Efficacy influence learners’ sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English in the foreign country in comparison to learning English in an English-course at school context, investigations addressing the influence of sources of Self-Efficacy in ESL/EFL will be revised in the third section.

To explore the experiences of EFL/ESL cross-border learners and identify the difficulties these students face when learning English as well as the factors associated with their decision to study abroad, studies that address Self-Efficacy in EFL learners studying abroad will be examined in the fourth section since there is a lack of studies in the field of cross-border EFL/ESL learners.

Lastly, to get a wider view on the relationship between Self-Efficacy and language achievement and how learning English influences and affects learning in English, academic outcomes research in regard to Self-Efficacy, language and academic achievement will be addressed in the final section.

2.1 Self-Efficacy beliefs to learn English of primary and secondary school learners

Anam and Stracke (2020) conducted a mixed-methods research in Indonesia to find out how learners' sense of Self-Efficacy in learning English affects their English ability and the relationship between student engagement in learning English and Self-Efficacy. A total of 516 sixth graders from 12 primary schools participated in this investigation. The participants included 194 males and 322 females, their ages were between 11 and 12 years old. To collect quantitative data a questionnaire and an English proficiency test were employed. In the other hand, for the qualitative data collection a semi-structured interview was utilized. For the interview, 12 participants were selected based on their overall Self-Efficacy scores in the Self-Efficacy questionnaire. The quantitative findings revealed a relationship between Self-Efficacy and language ability which was supported by the qualitative findings. It was also found that learners that possessed higher Self-Efficacy levels had better English achievement. These students helped their English learning process by applying cognitive strategies, putting more effort and persistence, and had better self-assessment of their learning and task performances.

In the same context, Indonesia, Desmaliza and Septiani (2018) investigated through a quantitative method, the Self-Efficacy and speaking skill of students at a lower secondary school. The participants of the study were 78 students randomly selected from eight classes which were given a Self-Efficacy questionnaire as the instrument for data collection, as well as a speaking test. The results indicated that Self-Efficacy influences student's learning result in speaking. It was also found that students with high levels of Self-Efficacy had higher scores and the students with low levels of Self-Efficacy had lower scores in their speaking performances. High Self-Efficacy beliefs helped them to perform better.

In 2015, Ersanli conducted a quantitative research whose main purpose was to investigate the relationship between the academic Self-Efficacy levels and language learning

motivation of 8th graders. The study also considered factors such as gender and parental education. The participants in this study were 257 participants (142 female and 115 male) from several different secondary schools in Turkey. Instruments utilized in this study were Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale and Language Learning Orientations Scale. Findings showed that motivation in language learning students is higher in girls but there is no difference in gender in Self-Efficacy beliefs. Further, he also found that there is a low-level negative correlation between English language learning motivation and Self-Efficacy beliefs of students, and that a high Self-Efficacy and negative outcome expectations are similarly possible. The last significant finding is the effect of parental education level on students' levels of Self-Efficacy and language learning motivations. Students whose parents are primary and secondary school graduates had higher Self-Efficacy. However, more educated parents' children had lower-levels of Self-Efficacy but distributed stronger motivation to learn English than those of less-educated parents.

In Malaysia, Mahyuddin, Elias, Sau Cheong, Fauzi Muhamad, Noordin and Chong Abdullah (2006) researched through a descriptive-correlational study, the relationship between students' Self-Efficacy and their English language achievement. The participants were 1,146 students from eight secondary schools in the Petaling district, Selangor. To measure Self-Efficacy, two scales were utilized: the Self Efficacy Scale developed by Bandura (1995) and the Self Efficacy Scale developed by Kim and Park (1997). Results showed that 51 percent of students had high Self-Efficacy while 48 percent had low Self-Efficacy. Positive correlations with few Self-Efficacy dimensions were also found: academic achievement efficacy, other expectancy beliefs and self-assertiveness with academic performance in English language. In conclusion, achievement in English language will improve when students have high Self-Efficacy in the language.

In China, Gao (2013) explored students' Self-Efficacy beliefs, English reading beliefs, and the strategies they use in English reading. For this phenomenological study, four six graders, Chinese EFL students in their first semester in junior middle school were interviewed. The participants selected obtained the highest scores in their entrance examination for school enrollment. Interviews were used as the instrument for data collection along with an open-ended questionnaire to facilitate the interviews. As for Self-Efficacy, results concluded that students with high-self efficacy beliefs can adapt better to new learning

environments and to reading beliefs and strategies, it was found that test-based instruction led the students in the study to become test-skill masters rather than comprehending the texts they read.

In 2005, Wang and Pape explored in a qualitative case study, four ESL students' Self-Efficacy beliefs and use of Self-Regulated Learning strategies and success in learning ESL. For the purpose of this study, four fifth-grade children who were learning ESL and 1 parent of each were selected as the participants. The study was conducted in the United States. Three participants were 10 years old, and 1 was 11 years old. Three of them were from China, and 1 from Taiwan. Two of the participants had been in the United States for at least 4 years and had achieved English proficiency close to that of native speakers of English. The remaining 2 participants had been in the United States for about half a year; thus, their English was still limited. All participating students attended the same elementary public school in a Midwest urban area. At least 1 parent of each of the participants had either earned or was working toward a doctoral degree. The instruments employed to gather data were an ESL Self-Efficacy Questionnaire composed of 23 items which students had to indicate how well they performed in English tasks and an ESL SRL Strategy Questionnaire composed of 15 open-ended questions. Also, three interviews with each student and one interview with each parent were conducted over 3 months. Findings revealed that there is a relationship among the children's Self-Efficacy, SRL strategies, and their success in learning English. Children's Self-Efficacy beliefs may influence the strategies they choose to learn the language and their success in learning the language. The children with high Self-Efficacy reported more SRL strategies and achieved more success in learning English than the children with lower Self-Efficacy. As for parental involvement, the participants were required by their parents to take English lessons either with a tutor at home or extra hours at school which helped understand these students SRL strategies and Self-Efficacy behaviors.

From the studies presented in this section, it is concluded that learners that possess higher Self-Efficacy levels are more likely to have better English achievement (Anam and Stracke, 2020; Desmaliza and Septiani, 2018; Mahyuddin et al, 2006). Moreover, students with higher Self-Efficacy employ cognitive learning strategies, put more effort and persistence, and have better self-assessment of their learning and task performances (Anam and Stracke, 2020; Desmaliza and Septiani, 2018; Wang and Pape, 2005). Further, Self-

Efficacy levels might be influenced by learners' parents and, interestingly, parents' educational level also seems to influence learners' senses of Self-Efficacy (Ersanli, 2015; Gao, 2013; Wang and Pape, 2005).

2.2 Self-Efficacy regarding EFL/ESL investigations conducted in Mexico

In Mexico, Rodriguez (2018) researched through an exploratory quantitative design, the sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English of secondary school Mexican students. A total of 100 students who were at the beginning of the second year at secondary school and had already taken English lessons in their first year at secondary school, participated in this study. The participants' age ranked from 12 to 16 years old. The purpose of the study was to explore the students' experiences regarding English learning and the four sources of Self-Efficacy and to establish if there were any differences between the sources of Self-Efficacy and the linguistic skills. Findings revealed that most of the students did not feel capable to perform in any English skill. Students' senses of Self-Efficacy in the linguistic skills were lower than their real capabilities, they possessed low levels of Self-Efficacy. However, their perceptions to perform in English were higher than their beliefs in individual abilities. Further, as for the four sources of Self-Efficacy, students had lived more vicarious experiences than enactive mastery experiences. This is a common problem found in English learners in Mexico, the lessons do not offer students the opportunities to experience real performances of the target language. Participants in Rodriguez's research received verbal persuasion from their teachers and very few from their parents and peers. Physiological and affective states showed the least range of correlation with the linguistic skills. These students did not report a low sense of Self-Efficacy despite not having many previous experiences in English.

During the same year, Sansores (2018) conducted a quantitative research to analyze the sense of Self-Efficacy, and the relationship of the four sources of Self-Efficacy and English skills of EFL learners. For data collection, the instrument employed was a survey with a Likert design. The participants were 233 students in the first year of secondary school. Findings revealed that speaking skill was a difficult skill for all participants; they were able to communicate but most of them had a low sense of Self-Efficacy to speak. Further, students possessed a regular capability to understand listening in English. As for reading and writing

skills, students had high Self-Efficacy levels to understand written instructions but not to understand the meanings of words in a given context. Also, in written skill, students reported to have a regular sense of Self-Efficacy to write texts with simple vocabulary. Nevertheless, they agreed on writing skill being the most difficult and they showed to have the lowest sense of Self-Efficacy in this skill. Additionally, students reported to lack real experiences with the English language and they all had their teachers as vicarious experiences. As for verbal persuasion, students reported that they did not receive positive comments from their teachers.

In 2015, Villanueva conducted a quantitative study in order to identify the sense of Self-Efficacy and the relationship with the four linguistic skills of EFL learners and the sources of Self-Efficacy. For the purpose of this research, 110 EFL learners were selected. The instrument used to collect the data was the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE). Findings revealed that students considered themselves as capable in all four English skills. Further, it was also found that students had a higher sense of Self-Efficacy in reading and a lower sense of Self-Efficacy in speaking. Results revealed that students had role models as vicarious experiences among which teachers, peers and family members were the most influential ones. As for enactive mastery experience, they had moderate experiences. As for verbal persuasion, they reported to receive positive comments from teachers and peers; as for physiological and affective states, results showed no significant influence. It was concluded that students possessed a high level of Self-Efficacy to learn English.

As it is shown, there is a lack of research regarding Self-Efficacy in learning English in Mexico. And the majority of the studies are quantitative designs. The three investigations presented above agree on Self-Efficacy having a strong influence in learners of English. It was also found that Self-Efficacy affects language achievement (Rodriguez, 2018; Sansores, 2018; Villanueva, 2015). These investigations additionally found vicarious experience to be the most influential of the sources of Self-Efficacy. This could be because of the lack of real experiences students are able to experience in Mexico, it is possible they construct their beliefs based on a model's experiences, such as teachers or peers, as these students reported. An interesting finding that these three investigations coincide on is the lack of verbal persuasion from their teachers. This might be a common problem in Mexican schools. Given the importance of verbal persuasion, as stated by Bandura, this should be considered for

further research. These investigations will help us understand the level of Self-Efficacy that students from basic educational level generally possess.

2.3 Sources of Self-Efficacy in learning English

Zhang and Ardasheva (2018) investigated through a quantitative research the degree to which four sources of Self-Efficacy, among Chinese college EFL learners predicted English Public Speaking Self-Efficacy and the degree to which the effect of these sources is influenced by learners' background characteristics such as prior EPS course experience, gender and academic major. The instruments employed for the data collection were EPS Self-Efficacy scale, sources of EPS Self-Efficacy scale and demographic questionnaire. Findings supported Bandura's theory of Self-Efficacy with Enactive Mastery Experience being the most influential source. It was found that prior English experience, gender, and academic major are factors that may impact the existence and the magnitude of the relationship between Self-Efficacy and its theoretical sources. Findings also suggest that different groups of students may respond differently to their teachers' efforts.

Afifah (2018) conducted a quantitative research to find out the level of students' Self-Efficacy and the sources of students' Self-Efficacy in learning English. 315 students on tenth grade of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Purbalingga in the academic year 2018-2019 were selected as the participants. Data was collected through closed questionnaire and survey. Results showed that the level of students' Self-Efficacy in learning English was medium. Contrary to Bandura's theory, the researcher found in this particular study that the source of students' Self-Efficacy that had the highest influence on Self-Efficacy was Vicarious experience instead of Enactive Mastery experience. This mentioned source was the third source found to influence the students' Self-Efficacy.

Yang (2017) investigated the sources of Chinese learners' Self-Efficacy in English pronunciation learning. The participants in this investigation were 90 undergraduates aging from 18-20 years old majoring in English education from a normal university in Southwest China. Out of the 90 participants, 22 were male while 68 were female. In order to gather the necessary data, a scale of sources of pronunciation Self-Efficacy was employed, as well as an adapted English pronunciation test. This investigation showed that of the four sources of

Self-Efficacy, verbal persuasion is not highly correlated with learners' pronunciation achievement and only mastery experience has the predicting power in learners' pronunciation performance. It was also found mastery experience to be the most influential source of Self-Efficacy, followed by vicarious experience. On the other hand, physiological states demonstrated to have more influence on learners' performance and their willingness to make a greater effort to achieve better performance than social persuasion did.

Zarei and Naghdi (2017) conducted a research to investigate the possible differences among Self-Efficacy sources as predictors of EFL learners' academic achievement in educational settings. The main purpose of the study was to find out which sources of Self-Efficacy are better predictors of learners' course performance. The participants involved in this research were 219 senior EFL learners. All the participants were female students and their ages ranged from 17 to 18 years. To collect data, a questionnaire of EFL Self-Efficacy sources together with Nelson English Proficiency Test were applied. It was found that of the four sources of Self-Efficacy, only enactive mastery experience affects learners' English course performance. Results also indicated that enactive mastery experience is a positive predictor of course performance and that affective states showed a better correlation with course performance compared to vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

Templin (2011) investigated the effects of the four Self-Efficacy sources on the ESL Self-Efficacy beliefs and ESL proficiency of 130 students in a university intensive ESL program. In this mixed method design, the instruments used for quantitative were demographics questionnaire, ESL Self-Efficacy Sources Questionnaire, and ESL Self-Efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire. University entrance SLEP and current TOEFL scores for all participants were also studied. As for qualitative the researcher applied an ESL Self-Efficacy Interview. Findings showed that sources of Self-Efficacy predicted Self-Efficacy beliefs and ESL proficiency; however, Self-Efficacy beliefs did not predict ESL proficiency. Although mastery experiences predicted Self-Efficacy beliefs and ESL proficiency, Self-Efficacy beliefs were not shown to mediate between Self-Efficacy sources and ESL proficiency. Out of the four sources, only mastery experiences were significant predictors of overall ESL proficiency, whereas vicarious experiences and social persuasion showed negative relationships with students' course performance. In addition, affective states showed a weak correlation with academic achievement.

Britner and Pajares (2006) conducted a quantitative study which investigated the degree to which Bandura's (1997) sources of Self-Efficacy predicted the science Self-Efficacy beliefs of middle school students. The participants were 319 students in grades 5 to 8 in a public school in a Midwestern city. The instrument that was used to collect data were Sources of Science Self-Efficacy Scale. Results showed that science Self-Efficacy is a predictor of science achievement. Another finding was that significant correlations were found between mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasions, physiological arousal and Self-Efficacy. However, mastery experience showed greater influence on Self-Efficacy. The strong influence of mastery experiences on science Self-Efficacy is similar to the influence found in mastery experiences in regard to Self-Efficacy in other academic areas.

Some of these investigations regarding the four sources of Self-Efficacy have agreed on Bandura's (1997) affirmation of Enactive Mastery experiences being the most influential source of Self-Efficacy (Britner and Pajares, 2006; Templin, 2011; Yang, 2017; Zarei and Naghdi, 2017; Zhang and Ardasheva, 2018). However, it was also found, contrary to Bandura, that despite the lack of enactive mastery experience, students can also show a high sense of Self-Efficacy due to a miscalibration in their sense of self-efficacy (Rodriguez, 2018). Moreover, Vicarious experience was found to be one of the most influential sources, learners have more vicarious models and learn from the experiences of these models (Afifah, 2018); furthermore, most of the studies presented above agree on verbal persuasion being the least influential source of Self-Efficacy in learning English. (Templin, 2011; Yang, 2017; Zarei and Naghdi, 2017). An interesting finding is that affective states can also have greater influence on performance and willingness to make greater effort (Yang, 2017; Zarei and Naghdi, 2017). Being so young, we might expect that participants of this research be influenced by verbal persuasion or vicarious experiences.

2.4 Self-Efficacy in learning English in a foreign country

In 2016, Hasan and Ali Samet studied the impact of study abroad experience on EFL learners' Self-Efficacy. The participants of the study were 181 students from 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade at the department of English Language and Literature. The participants' age ranged from 19 to 36. Out of the 181 participants, 136 were females and 45 males. It was found that study abroad experience does influence the Self-Efficacy beliefs of the students. Students with study abroad experience had higher Self-Efficacy than those without experience; further, the longer the stay in the foreign country, the higher the Self-Efficacy obtained. As for language skills, the difference in Self-Efficacy beliefs was an increase in oral skills such as speaking and listening.

In 2014, Kaypak and Ortaçtepe investigated through a mixed methods design the relationship between Turkish exchange students' beliefs about English language learning and their study abroad sojourns in ELF contexts. This involved 53 Turkish Erasmus students studying in English-medium programs across Europe. Data were collected through three instruments: language learner belief questionnaire (LLBQ), journals, and a study abroad perception questionnaire (SAPQ). Results showed no significant changes in learners' perceptions of studying abroad overall after a five-month sojourn. A relevant finding was that after the five-month sojourn, students felt more afraid of making mistakes; however, most of the students reported a decrease in fear when speaking with other second language speakers.

Cubillos and Ilvento (2013) researched the impact of study abroad experiences on self-efficacy perceptions among foreign language learners. The participants were 39 American college students taking part in both short-term and semester-long academic programs in France and Spain. The instruments employed for data collection were Self-Efficacy surveys and questionnaires which were given to them at the beginning and end of the program. Findings showed that Self-Efficacy beliefs are enhanced by study abroad experiences. As for language subskills, findings revealed that reading and listening had higher increase in Self-Efficacy beliefs. It was found that the longer the study abroad experience, the higher the Self-Efficacy beliefs. However, those students with short-term abroad experiences obtained Self-Efficacy gains despite the short length of the program and

the limited language skills. An interesting finding of this research was that personal interactions with members of the community are very present in the minds of the learners and those interactions influence their commitment to improve their target language.

Amuzie and Winke (2009) aimed to explore the effects of study abroad on beliefs. The participants of the study were 70 students, mostly from China and Korea, enrolled in general or ESL programs with other local native speakers in the United States. The instruments for data collection were Belief questionnaires. Also, learners were asked to reflect on their beliefs prior to arrival and at the time of the questionnaire in order to find whether their beliefs changed. It was found that students perceived their Self-Efficacy in pre-sojourn as significantly higher than their Self-Efficacy in mid-sojourn, meaning there was a decrease in students' beliefs in their capabilities. Furthermore, students with longer time abroad had significantly more changes in their beliefs.

Tanaka and Ellis (2003) also researched study abroad students' beliefs in an empirical study of a 15-week study-abroad program for Japanese university students. Its purpose was to examine changes in the students' beliefs about language learning and in their English proficiency. The participants were 166 Japanese students in the United States. The instrument employed was questionnaire with Likert Scale which was applied before and after the sojourn in a period of 15 weeks. Results showed significant increases in Self-Efficacy. However, no statistically significant relationship between changes in beliefs and increases in proficiency were found. Nevertheless, Tanaka and Ellis reported that their program resembled a "Japanese College overseas" (2003, p.81) more than a traditional study abroad experience, indicating that students had little contact with US native speakers.

These studies indicated that overall, a study abroad experience strengthens Self-Efficacy beliefs of the students (Cubillos and Ilvento, 2013; Hasan and Ali Samet, 2016; Kaypak and Ortaçtepe, 2014; Tanaka and Ellis, 2003). Similarly, it was found that after a short period of time, as five or six months, learners show decreases in Self-Efficacy as learners seem to possess a higher level of Self-Efficacy which does not equal their proficiency before their study abroad experience (Amuzie and Winke, 2009; Tanaka and Ellis, 2003). However, these studies also found increases in learners' self-rated autonomy; students felt less confident about their capabilities to perform in the language but felt more confident in their ability to learn independently after studying abroad. (Amuzie and Winke,

2009; Kaypak and Ortaçtepe, 2014). Additionally, study abroad experience has greater increasements in Self-Efficacy in longer sojourns (Amuzie and Winke, 2009; Cubillos and Ilvento, 2013; Hasan and Ali Samet, 2016). Interestingly, interactions with members of the host countries were found to be significant in improving language proficiency; furthermore, as for English skills, reading, listening and speaking were found to have greater increasements. (Cubillos and Ilvento, 2013; Hasan and Ali Samet, 2016; Kaypak and Ortaçtepe, 2014).

2.5 Self-Efficacy in regard to language and academic achievement

Asakereh and Dehghannezhad (2015) investigated the relationships between student satisfaction with speaking classes, speaking skills Self-Efficacy, and speaking skills achievement. One hundred Iranian EFL first year undergraduate students majoring in English language participated in the study. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 35 years; 57 of the participants were female and 43 were male. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires; a research-made and pilot-tested questionnaire for student satisfaction with speaking classes, and a questionnaire for speaking skills Self-Efficacy beliefs. Findings revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between Self-Efficacy and skills achievement. Students with high speaking Self-Efficacy achieved higher scores in speaking skills; they took more difficult tasks since they had more confidence in their speaking ability.

In the same year, Jannati, Marzaban (2015) conducted a research to find out the EFL learners' perception about their Self-Efficacy in public speaking course and to investigate the effect of high and low Self-Efficacy towards learning public speaking course. For the purpose of this study, 60 third year students of English department Galuh University were selected through the technique sampling of total population sampling. The instruments used to collect data were close-ended questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire and interview. Results showed that students' Self-Efficacy improved after learning public speaking course and the students felt confident using English in front of people. Furthermore, Self-Efficacy affected not only in public speaking course but also in the other courses.

Doordinejad, Afshar (2014) investigated the relationship between Self-Efficacy and English achievement among third grade high school students in Northern Tehran. The

participants were 400 female third grade high school students studying at 6 high schools in Northern Tehran, Iran. Foreign Language Learners' Self-Efficacy scale for Iranian Students (SEQ) contextualized Persian version, was used as the instrument for data collection. It was found that there is a moderately significant relationship between Foreign Language Learners' (EFL) Self-Efficacy and English achievement. Furthermore, it suggested that respondents with higher foreign language Self-Efficacy were likely to have higher English scores.

Similarly, in 2013 Shkullaku explored gender differences in Self-Efficacy and academic performance among Albanian students. The data was collected from 180 students from two universities in Tirana, Albania (102 females and 78 males) selected from first, second and third level studies. Universities and participants were selected randomly. The age of participants ranged from 19 to 31 years with a mean age of 22 years. The instruments employed were a questionnaire to measure Self-Efficacy, grade point average (GPA) to measure academic performance and General Self-Efficacy Scale GSE-6. Findings revealed that males and females in universities differ in Self-Efficacy and that there is no difference in academic performance between males and females. In addition, a strong positive relationship between Self-Efficacy and academic performance suggests that by improving their Self-Efficacy they can improve the academic performance.

Mahyuddin et al. (2006) developed a descriptive-correlational study to find out the relationship between students' Self-Efficacy and their English language achievement. A sample of 1,146 students from eight secondary schools in Selangor were selected. Data was collected through the use of Self Efficacy Scale developed by Bandura (1995) and the Self Efficacy Scale developed by Kim and Park (1997) to measure Self-Efficacy. Findings showed that 51% of students had high Self-Efficacy while 49% showed low Self-Efficacy. It was also found that achievement in English language will improve when students have high Self-Efficacy in the language. Further, results showed that girls had higher Self-Efficacy. This finding differed from Shkullaku's (2013) who found that males possessed a higher Self-Efficacy sense.

Alawiyah (2018) researched the significant correlation between students' speaking Self-Efficacy and their speaking achievement. The researcher also sought for the significant influence of speaking Self-Efficacy on their speaking achievement. The subjects of this study

were 103 students of all the students in sixth semester chosen by using purposive sampling technique, but there were 96 students participating when the study was conducted. To collect data, a questionnaire was used to measure students' speaking Self-Efficacy and a speaking test was conducted to know students' speaking achievement. Similar to Asakereh (2015) the collected data resulted in a significant positive correlation between Self-Efficacy and speaking achievement and it also indicated that students' speaking-Self-Efficacy influenced their speaking achievement. Further, some students did not want to speak because they did not feel confident with their capability in this skill. Students with low Self-Efficacy levels obtained negative results in their speaking skill performance.

Huang and Chang (1996) conducted a study to investigate the English as a second language learners' Self-Efficacy and its relationship with learners' achievements. Subjects were four students from the highest-level reading and writing class in Indiana University's intensive English program. For data collection, Interview in a tape-recorded session, observation, questionnaires, written question lists were used. It was found that the subjects' Self-Efficacy was generally significantly higher than their learning achievements. However, their achievements did correspond to their perceptions of their own ability. Participants' interest in class assignment topics and perceptions of the teacher's support also influenced Self-Efficacy, both negatively and positively. Required tasks and assignments were perceived as helpful in promoting persistence and aspiration. Additional factors found influencing Self-Efficacy included learner's performance, comparison with other learners, task complexity, and effort expended on a task.

The revised studies above shed light on the influence of Self-Efficacy in language achievement. (Alawiyah, 2018; Asakereh and Dehghannezhad, 2015; Doordinejad, Afshar, 2014; Huang and Chang, 1996; Jannati, Marzaban, 2015; Mahyuddin et al., 2006; Shkullaku, 2013). Achievement was found to be highly influenced by Self-Efficacy beliefs of the students; those with higher Self-Efficacy senses obtained higher scores. Further, differences in Self-Efficacy were found in relation to gender. Having one higher Self-Efficacy in males (Shkullaku, 2013) and the other one higher Self-Efficacy in females (Mahyuddin et al., 2006).

The four sections of literature reviewed above revealed that there is a gap in the literature regarding English learners in foreign countries, more specifically on commuter learners. Further, no research was found regarding ESL cross-border Mexican learners in

Belize. This is a topic worth studying since students, teachers and parents could benefit from it. By being aware of the importance of self-efficacy in young learners and how self-efficacy affects learners, parents and teachers could identify the students' levels of self-efficacy and implement strategies to help them improve their self-efficacy levels and, therefore, have better academic outcomes. Such as trying to improve or strengthen verbal persuasion and provide more opportunities to develop real mastery experiences.

Learners crossing borders to study in Belize has been occurring for around 15 years and the number of Mexican cross-border learners will continue to increase given that the opportunity to obtain good English performance and language development is higher in Belizean schools than in some Mexican border schools. As shown in the literature, Self-Efficacy beliefs of the students affect and influence achievement and performance (Alawiyah, 2018; Anam and Stracke, 2020; Asakereh and Dehghannezhad, 2015; Desmaliza and Septiani, 2018; Doordinejad, Afshar, 2014; Huang and Chang, 1996; Jannati, Marzaban, 2015; Mahyuddin et al., 2006; Shkullaku, 2013). At the same time, these beliefs are influenced by four sources of Self-Efficacy which influence learners' outcomes. "Students with positive vicarious experiences, oral persuasion, past experiences, mental and physiological states may be motivated to improve and have a positive learning experience" (Villanueva, 2015). These sources affect learners' English skill development, and it is intended through this research to find which source is the most influential.

In Mexico, a few ESL Self-Efficacy studies are found (Rodriguez, 2018; Sansores, 2018; Villanueva, 2015); however, most of them are quantitative investigations. Moreover, no studies of cross-border ESL students are found in Mexico. There are a few investigations regarding transborder students to identity formation and difficulties this type of students face (Guajardo, 2018; Orta and Falcón, 2018; Relaño and Pastor, 2007). Therefore, there is a need for a qualitative research exploring the Self-Efficacy beliefs of students who commute to Belize on a daily basis to learn English.

CHAPTER 3. METHOD

In this chapter the methodology used in this study is presented. The arguments that support the chosen approach are explained too. Besides that, the investigated participants and the context of this study are defined. Next, the instruments and the procedures to collect the data will be explained. Then, the data analysis procedure is discussed as well as the validation and reliability of the data. To conclude, a summary of this chapter is presented.

3.1 A Qualitative Research Design

The present investigation will have a qualitative case study design which, as cited in Creswell (2003), is a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. This approach is used when the topic has not been widely studied but also when we want to know the experience from participants. This is a topic that has not been searched: cross-border Mexican students studying high school in Belize, a cross-border experience that has not been registered yet. Thus, the current approach was chosen to contribute to this study in a better understanding of the participants' experiences regarding their sense of capability to learn the English language. It is expected to allow us to provide more detailed and in-depth results.

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is given in a natural setting, data is collected in the field where participants experience the issue under study. Researchers have face-to-face interaction, often over time. Data is collected through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants. This includes interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information. Qualitative research allows to understand the experiences of individuals or groups nearly as possible as its participants feel or live it by collecting the necessary data, reflecting, and interpreting it. As Creswell (2007) states "we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices" (p.40).

As said before, the relevance of employing a qualitative design also lays on the fact that the topic of study has scarcely been studied. Very little is known about Mexican students' perceptions on their capabilities to learn a foreign language in a foreign schooling context. Apart from that, and as far as we know no research has been done in regard to Mexican students who learn English as EFL/ESL in Belize. Thus, since little is known about this phenomenon, we need a detailed and deep understanding of participants' perceptions about their beliefs in their capabilities to learn English in a foreign country. Our intention is then to deeply explore the experiences of the participants from the dimensions that may arise during the research process. As Mason (2002) says:

Through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate. (p.1)

This project is also a case study. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2012). It is based on a case study design because we want to explore the experiences of a similar group of people and obtain detailed information through the use of interviews made throughout a certain period of time. The objective of this research is to interview participants at the beginning, at the middle and at the end of the school year.

Case studies are conducted to study a variety of issues. According to Duff (2008), when done well they can have high degree of completeness, depth of analysis, and readability. In addition, the cases may generate new hypotheses, models, and understandings about the nature of language learning or other processes.

Thus, this approach was chosen because it is the ideal one to capture the experiences of one or some persons of small groups. In the present study we want to explore the experiences of a small group of young Mexican children while studying in an English-speaking country; this is then a qualitative case study. These three students share certain characteristics regarding their place of origin, their mother tongue and the time when they

began to study abroad. Por favor dale format a la tesis, hay títulos y subtítulos, el siguiente (participants) es un subtítulo.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were 3 Mexican learners between the ages of 11 and 15 years. Two of the participants are female and one is a male. One of the female participants and the male participant are siblings. Apart from being around the same age and sharing nationalities, these learners share some common characteristics: none of the students speaks English or any other language aside from Spanish which is their mother tongue, all of the participants have studied English at a basic level in their previous schools and had some very basic understanding of the language when they began going to Belize. When studying in Mexico, all of them had studied at private schools in the capital city of the state.

The selected method to choose the participants for this research was purposive sampling. This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Furthermore, the chosen students ought to possess certain common characteristics, as mentioned by Dörnyei (2007). The participants selected for this study met “specific predetermined criteria” (p.128) among which were included: attending the same school in Corozal, Belize, being in high school level, coming from Mexican schools and living in the capital city of the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico.

3.3 Context

The present study was carried out in Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico. However, the school which the participants attended was in Corozal, Belize. Therefore, a brief description of both cities is given in the following paragraphs.

Chetumal

Chetumal is the capital city of the state Quintana Roo. It is located on the southern region of the state, being a border city to Belize. It operates as Mexico's main trading gateway with Belize. Its population was of 224, 080 inhabitants by 2015. (INEGI, 2016). The official language spoken is Spanish, but some of its inhabitants also speak Maya due to the influence of being on the Yucatan peninsula. Interestingly, very few people from Chetumal speak English, as a result of contact with the neighboring country.

Education System of Mexico

The education system of Mexico consists of pre-school, primary school, middle or secondary school and high school. Although pre-school is not compulsory on the first years, it is by the age of 4 and 5. Pre-school consists of two school years and children go from age 4 to 5. From ages 6 to 12, children go to primary school. It starts in grade one and concludes in grade six. Following with middle or secondary school, it is comprised of three levels: grades 1 to 3 which in the U.S educational system would equal to grades 7 to 9, and children begin at the age of 12 and usually finish by 14. The last compulsory level of school children must attend is high school, it also consists of three years and children are between 15 to 17 years. It is comprised of grades 1 to 3 which would be the equivalent to grades 9 to 12 in the U.S educational system.

Corozal Town

Corozal Town is a capital city located in Corozal, one of the six districts of Belize. Corozal Town is the closest city in Belize to the Mexican border. The population of the city has not increased much in the last ten years, from 9,400 inhabitants in 2009, it grew up to around 12,024 inhabitants in 2019.

In Belize, various languages co-exist and compete with the standard version of English, which is the country's official language. Among these languages it is possible to

find: Garífuna, Maya, Spanish, and the most spoken one, an English-based creole called Kriol. This is one of the most spoken languages and even has an English/Kriol dictionary. However, the language of instruction in Belize is English. In schools, standard English is used, and Kriol is seen by some as “broken English” (Salmon and Gómez Menjívar, 2015).

Spanish is the second language spoken by the majority of the population in Corozal Town, perhaps due to it being a city close to the Mexican border. However, as well as in the rest of the country, English is the language of instruction in schools. Given that the majority of learners in schools are native speakers of other languages spoken in Belize, such as Creole and Spanish, learners can be affected by students’ attitudes in regard to a specific language. In this respect, Balam and De Prada Perez (2017) mentioned in their study on attitudes in a code-switching context conducted in Belize:

The negative attitudes toward standard Spanish, thus, result in adolescent speakers’ avoidance of standard Spanish. This occurs even among immigrant adolescents from officially Spanish-speaking Central American countries who adapt themselves to the host culture by adopting either CS or Belizean Kriol. (p.28)

Apart from avoiding their native language, children also opt to be friends with children whose first language is the same as theirs. In this sense, Rubinstein (1979) found that:

Children between the ages of 9 and 12, attending standards three through six of primary schools in Corozal Town, show that it is likely for children to pick other children whose first language is the same as their own for friends. Thus, Spanish children (N=110) picked other Spanish children as friends in sixty-nine percent of the cases, and Creole children (N=168) picked other Creole children as friends in seventy-five percent of the cases. (1979, p.8)

This could also be the case of our participants given that the majority of the people in Corozal speak Spanish. If this is the case, it would cause the participants to have less opportunities to practice the language and listen to more colloquial words which they would not listen in class.

The Education System of Belize

The education system of Belize consists of eight years of primary school and four years of high school. Preschool Education is not mandatory, but children must be enrolled in primary school by the age of 5. Primary education is compulsory for children from 5 to 12 years. The eight years are divided into Infant 1, Infant 2, and then Standard 1 to Standard 6. Secondary education consists of Form-1 to Form 4, from 13 to 16 years of age. In comparison to the United States' educational system, Infant 1 and Infant 2 levels in Belize are equivalent to Kindergarten, and 1st Grade in the United States. Levels from Standard 1 to Standard 6 in Belize are equivalent to 2nd to 7th grade. Further, for high school levels in Belize, from the 1st Form through 4th Form, are the equivalent of 8th Grade through the 11th Grade in the United States. The school year for primary and secondary education begins in September and ends in June of the following year, having breaks in Christmas and Easter and Summer holidays which last ten weeks. Moreover, the school year is around 175 working days with five hours of classes per day. (UNESCO, 2010) A characteristic of Belize's educational system is their partnership with Churches. Most primary schools are administered by church; they are responsible for the management and maintenance of schools and for all related personnel matters (Government of Belize Language Policy, 2000).

3.4 Procedure

Data was collected in Chetumal, Quintana Roo at each participants' home. Three semi-structured interviews were designed. The first interviews were applied in September 2019, at the beginning of the school year; a second interview was conducted in February 2020 by the beginning of the second semester of the school year. The third interview took place in August, after the participants finished their academic year. In order to apply the interviews, first we asked the learners' parents for permission through a consent form in which the objective of the investigation and how data was going to be used were explained. Interviews were conducted in Spanish for the participants to feel more comfortable using their mother tongue and provide more information to the researchers. The participants' names used in the

following chapters were replaced by alias, as suggested by Creswell (2012) to protect personal information and security.

3.5 Instruments

The present study attempts to explore the Self-Efficacy beliefs and the Self-Efficacy sources' influence on the beliefs of three Mexican cross-border learners who commute to an English Speaking-country to study in high school. The instruments chosen for this study were semi-structure interviews.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews aim to engage participants and help researchers obtain additional information. According to Kvale and Steinar (1996), interviews help to understand a specific topic from the participants' point of view and uncover the meaning of their experiences. More specifically, semi-structured interviews, according to Creswell (2005) allow the participants to freely voice their experiences and minimize the influence of the researcher's attitudes and previous findings. It was intended to obtain in-depth information from the participants in order to analyze and interpret their experiences and the meaning they give to their experience studying high school as ESL cross-border learners in Belize.

A semi-structured design allows researcher to react to and follow up on emerging ideas and unfolding events (Nohl, 2009) and the interviewee and interviewers are able to better clarify the issue at hand (Adams, 2015). This instrument was chosen to allow the learners to feel more comfortable and confident to talk about their experiences in the English-speaking country. Interviews were composed by open-ended questions, based on the theory of Bandura on Self-Efficacy. Thus, this type of questions enables the researcher to establish a rapport with the participants since they both can move back or forward into their conversation whenever they feel like; thus, foster communication among them and assess what the interviewee does know or believe in (Cohen et al., 2007). On the other hand, we

also used their transcripts to verify on the improvements they reported on their performance. Interviews were conducted in Spanish.

3.6 Validation and Reliability

Validating an instrument is essential to the research. As stated by Creswell (2013), validation is an attempt to assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants (pp. 249-250). He also recommends that “qualitative researchers engage in at least two of them in any given study” (p.253). In order to validate the instrument used in this study peer review was conducted. Following Creswell (2013), we asked an expert on Bandura’s theory to check the instrument designed to collect data. Creswell defines peer review as “an external check of the research” (2013, p.251). Peer review of the instrument was employed in order to obtain constructive judgment on credibility and data interpretation. In order to accomplish reliability, the instrument was piloted with a participant with similar characteristics to the final participants. After being piloted, some adjustments were made to the guides of the interviews. Data was supervised by the thesis supervisor to avoid bias interpretation of data. First data was coded by each researcher individually and then compared each other’s codes; repeated codes were deleted, others modified and new codes emerged when doing the comparison together. Following the coding process, the codes were grouped into families and subfamilies based on our research questions and the default codes set from the self-efficacy theory.

3.7 Data Analysis

For the purpose of analyzing the data, semi-structured interviews were transcribed. Participants' parents were asked to read transcriptions in order to identify and delete any compromising information. Atlas.ti software was used to analyze the data. The very first approach to the analysis of the data was done together with the supervisor of the study.

The analysis of the data was done following Creswell (2007), first codes were organized into categories or themes (Creswell, 2007). Taking into account the objective of this study is to identify the Self-Efficacy beliefs of the participants to study English, there were preestablished categories related to these students Self-Efficacy to learn English while studying in Mexico, then during the first months at high school in Belize and at the end of the school year. Within each of these categories a set of codes was determined from the data collected. Other categories were the four sources of Self-Efficacy. Within those a set of codes related to those sources were determined too.

In order to give a clear understanding of the participants' experiences regarding their sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English as ESL as cross-border learners in a foreign country, in the following chapter it is intended to show a chronological description of the participants' experiences, beginning from their first trimester at the Belizean school and ending by their return to Mexican schools. Those extracts from the data collected will be analyzed using Bandura's Socio-cognitive theory and compared to the review of literature included in this research. When needed, transcripts were checked to verify on the improvements students explained to have achieved along their studies in Belize. Then, we will attempt to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

In this chapter, a brief description of the participants, their personalities and backgrounds regarding English is given. Furthermore, an analysis of key findings is presented and the research questions that were set out are answered. The research questions were: a) why did these young learners decide to commute to study high school in an English-speaking country?, b) What is the sense of Self-Efficacy of 3 young cross-border commuter learners to learn English at a foreign country?, c) How do the four sources of Self-Efficacy influence learners' sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English in the foreign country?, d) How do these young Mexican learners describe their experience to commute to an English-speaking country to study high school? In order to support the answers for each question, quotations from the interviews are included. Given that the purpose of this investigation is to know cross-border English learners' sense of self-efficacy, it is necessary to know about their previous knowledge of English and their personal backgrounds.

4.1 Participants' profiles

Three cross-border learners of English as a Foreign Language participated in this investigation. At the beginning of the research there were five participants but due to personal reasons they decided to leave the school where the topic being studied was carried out; therefore, only three learners remained as the participants of the present research. In order to ensure the participants' privacy, their names have been changed to aliases: Ernesto, María and Valeria.

Ernesto and María are siblings, both are Mexican and were born in Chetumal, Quintana Roo. By the time this research took place, Ernesto was 11 years old. He had English

lessons throughout his academic years at different primary schools. He seems to be an extroverted kid who enjoys talking to people and is not afraid to make mistakes. María is 14 years old. She has been studying English since she was 7 years old. Apart from having English lessons in private schools, she also had private lessons in English academies. She seems to be a shy teenager but confident when talking to other people. Both children had overall good academic grades in all of the subjects, including English. An exclusive factor they share in common, which the third participant does not have, is that they have Belizean relatives. Therefore, there might be a slight influence from their father's side of the family. However, despite having this influence the participants mentioned to not have had many experiences speaking English with their Belizean relatives. As for real experiences using the English language, these siblings have had experiences using English when travelling abroad to the United States for vacation. Thus, aside from school and private lessons they have had very few opportunities to speak to or hear native speakers of the language.

The third participant is Valeria. She is a 12-year-old girl who enjoys learning and has always had good academic grades. She is very shy to talk to other people and has expressed that she is not so talkative. Valeria has also taken English lessons at private schools since primary school but has never been to private English lessons. Although Valeria does not have native English speakers as family, she showed interest in the language and found a way to be around English by watching videos on the internet. She seems to be disciplined in her studies and chooses to spend her leisure time in learning new things. Unlike the other two participants, she did not have real experiences as travelling abroad to an English-speaking country but has had several occasions when she met a native speaker at the supermarket or on the street and she would try to answer if they had questions. It is noteworthy to mention that despite the fact that Belize is a neighboring country, these students had never visited Belize before going to school. These three participants have similar backgrounds regarding their English learning process, being mostly in a school setting, moreover all of them had the same objective: learning English in a foreign country.

In the section below, an attempt to answer the research questions is presented. The answers include quotes from the interviews and the literature review in order to support the results of the present research.

4.2 Why did these young learners decide to commute to study high school in an English-speaking country?

In order to answer this research question, families and categories identified in the data collection in regard to the participants' previous experiences before going to Belize are analyzed. These include English learning experiences in Mexico, Motivation in Self-Efficacy to learn English and Family support and personal expectations to study English in Belize.

English learning experiences in Mexico

The three participants mentioned to have had English lessons since primary school. Ernesto and Valeria had only studied English in their private schools as a regular subject, while María had taken private English lessons since the early age of 7. All participants expressed to have had good grades in English lessons and being good students. Even though they have always obtained good grades in their English classes, they still felt they were not learning the language well enough to speak it. María said: *"I started school and I was not doing so bad, I just did not, well I did learn but I did not know much (English)"* Ernesto did not think he learned well *"because I did not learn very well in school ... I was getting more or less like eight, nine ... yes, I was doing a bit well but also badly, I was getting distracted a lot."*

Similarly, Valeria expressed she was not learning much but rather the necessary to express what she meant to say *"Well, they were just words, I felt like I was not learning too much, just enough to express what I needed to say."* This feeling might be shared by many EFL learners in Mexico, given that the English subject is not seen as important as the rest of the subjects. [...] *Because sometimes I feel lessons in Mexico are too boring.* Similarly, Ernesto said: *But since the teachers do not... they do not take... the school does not take English seriously; and well, the teacher does not speak English, she speaks Spanish.* Further, Maria expressed: *Well, since they barely left homework, I did not have many things to do, but they did teach us things, such as verb tenses and so, I learned more how to speak more (more than the rest of the English skills).*

These students' comments let us know English classes are not interesting and were not productive for them. Several studies indicate that EFL teachers should have the command of the target language; give clear and interesting information to the learners in an enthusiastic way (Brosh, 1996) have positive personality traits and use modern teaching approaches (Herrera, 2017). If lessons are not interesting to students, they will not be motivated to keep learning English.

Even though these students went to private schools, English lessons did not seem to be given the importance that the subject demands, most of their teachers did not have the necessary skills or adequate level of English to teach it and lessons did not seem to be demanding. Lengeling (2010) elaborates on this problem. She states that the quality of the curricula and teaching, in Mexico, was and is very poor. She said that students are exposed to the same basic contents time and again, most teachers are poor speakers of English themselves and/or lack any English-Language Teaching (ELT) credentials, and schools face many shortcomings in infrastructure and equipment. Participants in this research noticed the lack of importance given to the subject, the lessons being taught in Spanish rather than in English and the lack of commitment from some teachers: *Because sometimes in Mexico I feel the lessons to be too boring. It was always the same, all the schools teach you in Spanish and it is too boring to listen to explanations. -Valeria*

Although these participants did not have many real experiences with the use of the English language, those experiences might have helped them to notice their English level was not as adequate as they had thought. They may also have noticed their lack of commitment to their English classes. These problems left the participants disappointed in learning English in Mexican schools; for these students, their English classes in Mexico were repetitive, boring and not challenging.

The influence of Self-Efficacy on Motivation

These students seem to have unconsciously trusted their ability to learn English. This sense of self-efficacy was based mainly in their school experiences in Mexico on the one hand,

such as their good academic grades and the success obtained in English competitions. As well as in the motivation and confidence provided by their parents. Ernesto mentioned he did study in his previous school while he was in Mexico and he competed in Spelling Bee. María commented: [...] *Well, I already know a bit more and I already saw my... what I can do. Not because I knew like... I was just arriving I knew I had to give myself my time.* -María

This belief in their ability to learn English seems to have motivated them to keep learning the language. In social cognitive Theory (1997), Bandura points out that self-efficacy can have influence on motivation. Learners who feel capable of achieving a specific goal are more likely motivated to engage in activities that improve their abilities to achieve said goal. For instance, Ernesto had always succeeded at spelling contest which made him believe he had the ability to do well in English. This belief was also present at the beginning of his school lessons in Belize where he was willing to compete in a spelling contest. As Bandura states, the obtained outcomes will affect the learner's self-efficacy belief and motivation to eventually reach their goal. Nevertheless, when Ernesto saw the difficulty of the words he needed to learn for that contest, he realized he was no table to perform well and needed to prepare better for the next year. He realized the language was not as easy as he thought when facing the same activity in a different and more demanding context.

Parental support and personal expectations to study English in Belize

Parental support

These participants had different reasons to study English in Belize among which are parents' support. María and Ernesto, siblings, had mostly been influenced by their parents' decision for them to study in Belize in order to obtain future better opportunities when looking for a job or being more academically prepared when looking for schools to study abroad.

Well, because my dad started to tell me to go because school is better there and because I was going to learn English [...] –María

I like it. And, also, to get a scholarship to go to the United States and I can go to study there ...to get better opportunities and be able to go to other schools in another place, better job opportunities and so...—Ernesto

These kids' parents had great confidence in their children's abilities to learn English, although they were clear that they had to be very supportive. They often reassured their children of their ability to learn English if they tried hard. These kids had an encouraging social environment. Social environment plays an important role in children's behavior and sense of self-efficacy through vicarious learning experiences and persuasive communication. Children are constantly interacting with their peers and teachers. These interactions can have a great impact on children when adjusting their sense of self-efficacy. Parents are part of these interactions both in and outside school. Bandura mentions that it is easier to raise Self-Efficacy beliefs if significant others express positive comments about our capabilities than if they convey doubts (1997). If children are encouraged and affirmed of their capabilities to achieve what they seek, they will more likely expend greater effort and perseverance when facing difficulties. This is the case of our participants; their self-efficacy was strengthened by the support of their parents and the favorable environment in which they lived. Thus, probably that is why they never thought of leaving school.

Deci and Ryan (1985) recognize the importance of social environments as they can either enhance or hinder intrinsic motivation. How parents motivate, encourage and communicate with their children about their academic skills and achievements might have influenced the motivation and self-efficacy of the participants of this research to decide studying school in a border country to learn English despite not having a high level of understanding of the language. Previous research has shown that children possess a greater sense of competence when their parents are more involved and have higher values in their education (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Marchant et al., 2001).

According to Schunk (1996), teachers and parents can play an important role when they encourage, persuade, and compliment students' ability for doing a task, they help them increase self-efficacy levels. This coincides with the findings of this study. These kids' parents played such an important role for them to continue studying in Belize.

Fan and Williams (2010) shed light on this matter in an investigation regarding the effects of parental involvement on students' academic self-efficacy, engagement and intrinsic motivation in which they found that students who perceived that their parents valued their education and had high expectations for their academic success were likely to feel interested, engaged and confident towards their academic endeavours. Furthermore, they found that parental advice at home improved self-efficacy towards English, intrinsic motivation in English and academic engagement. These authors also mention that it is possible that as parents' educational values and aspirations transform into their children's own values and decisions, students are more likely to become interested and engaged in pursuing the goal as their own. This might be the case in the participants of the present research. Their parents are all educated persons that had always positively advised them to learn English while being in Mexico. Two of the participants, María and Ernesto, were sent by their parents to extra private English lessons after school. Valeria's parents did not send her to extra lessons but put her in a bilingual school. They encouraged their children to go to Belize and advised them of the future benefits this opportunity would give them which now they see as their own goals to achieve.

Although Valeria's parents also encouraged her to go study in Belize, they did not extensively insist on it. She was given the opportunity and asked to decide whether she wanted or not to take the chance to study at a new school in there. Her decision to go study in Belize was strongly influenced by a personal motive. Apart from her strong dislike of English lessons in Mexico, she mentioned to like and enjoy the English language and saw it as means of understanding videos she likes to watch on the internet.

I consider it's better to learn a language rather than wasting my time watching videos... I don't know videos that...I used to watch videos of a series in Spanish and then I started watching them in English and I liked the pronunciation, so I decided to learn English-Valeria

These students were willing to get new opportunities in life and learning English would allow them to reach their goals such as travelling, understanding videos of their own interest, or getting future job opportunities. As time went by, these students seemed to enjoy learning

English, they realized they were improving, they managed to understand much more Belizean immigrants speaking to them in English while crossing the Mexican-Belizean Border. They seem to have internalized external motives and transformed them into an *identified regulation*. Deci and Ryan's (1985) explain that this kind of regulation occurs when people engage in an activity because they highly value and identify with the behavior and see its usefulness.

Thus, these participants' decision to commute daily to a foreign country to study high school in an English-speaking country, seems to be influenced by their parents, their own desire to learn English and their disappointment with the English lessons in Mexico. Parents' influence regarding English was not only found in their encouragement to study in a foreign country but also in having their children take extra private English lessons. This result goes in line with Wang and Pape (2005) who found that participants were required by their parents to take English lessons either with a tutor at home or extra hours at school. Therefore, it seems that parents' support for their children to study in Belize was also prompted by their perception of the Mexican schools' lack of commitment for students to learn English. This might also be the reason why many parents decide to take their children to study English in private lessons. It is noteworthy to mention that a deeper analysis needs to be carried out regarding parents and students' perceptions of the difficulty of learning English in Mexico as well as the importance this language is given as a subject in Mexican schools in addition to its impact on students' motivation to keep studying English.

Personal expectations to study English in Belize

All three participants always showed an interest in the language before attending school in Belize. For example: María tried to speak to native speakers when she had the opportunity to try even though she had a basic understanding of it at the time, showing interest in the language when she was younger; Ernesto confessed outside the interview he wanted to study in the US to become a marine; Valeria had an interest in watching videos in English in her leisure time.

Because I found them [the videos]. It was not for taking classes. Just because the youtubers spoke English... well, I liked watching those videos.

–Valeria

Seeing English as a mean to obtain these future opportunities is one of the common reasons why students decide to learn English. This finding might be explained by Nikolov when he says that children above 9 years old tend to see English as useful for external motives (1998). These students were willing to get new opportunities in life and learning English would allow them to reach their goals, such as getting a job, travelling to other countries or being able to better understand information from the internet. Nowadays many young people learn English by watching videos or learning songs in English, these activities are part of their daily life routine. Learning English has become part of their daily fun of these students and therefore is it a motivating activity.

4.3 What is the sense of Self-Efficacy of 3 young cross-border commuter learners to learn English at a foreign country?

Students' Self-efficacy to learn English in Mexico

In order to have a clearer understanding of the development of the participants' senses of self-efficacy, this section is divided into 2 parts: Students' Self-efficacy to learn English in Mexico and Students' Self-efficacy to learn English in Belize. This part is explained from three moments: during their first term, Self-efficacy during the second and third term at Belizean school.

While being in Mexico, these students seemed to possess a high level of confidence in their skills to learn English due to the positive experiences they have had regarding the use of the language and at school contests, in addition to the good academic grades, compliments from Mexican English teachers and support from their parents. When being asked how capable they felt to learn English while studying in Mexico, Valeria and Maria agreed they did feel capable of learning this language.

I did get like eight, nine. –Ernesto

Interviewer: Really? How much? If I were to tell you from one to ten, how capable did you feel?

Valeria: Mmm... like a nine

[...] Because in my previous school, here (in Mexico) I did study, I did compete in Spelling, I was capable of doing it. I competed for two years. -Ernesto

Having a high Self-efficacy level was what motivated Ernesto to participate at a Spelling Bee Contest in Belize. Ernesto thought Spelling Bee contests in Belize would be as easy as they were in Mexico. When he realized the list of words were very difficult, he withdrew, admitting he might not be able to do a good job in the contest. This event made him understand the difficulty of the task of learning English in a real context. Ernesto's belief on his ability to win a spelling bee contest could have been based on a wrong calibration of his abilities. This means this kid's sense of self-efficacy was not accurate to his actual English skills, his self-efficacy had been built on his good academic grades and the fact that he had always gotten a good place in English contests. When he never had the opportunity to measure his actual skills in a real English-speaking context, he might have miscalibrated again his self-efficacy to do well at a Bee contest.

Based on the confidence expressed in their interviews and on the answers themselves, we might say these students' self-efficacy to learn English was high before going to Belize. Nevertheless, this sense could have been miscalibrated (Glenberg et al. 1987) or not accurate to task performance. Given that the context was not demanding and that there was no extensive use of the language in real experiences, the participants might have misinterpreted their real capabilities to learn and use the language. The perception of their ability to learn English had been built based on the few experiences they have had regarding the use of the language, relatively easy English classes, in addition to their good academic grades and compliments from Mexican teachers. As Bandura states (1997), optimistic self-efficacy beliefs depend on the successful completion of challenging tasks; sometimes self-efficacy

belief is based on measuring the difficulty of a task. These participants' poor experiences had not allowed them to recognize what learning a foreign language required.

Even though the participants' sense of self-efficacy was poorly calibrated in relation to the development of their abilities before going to study in Belize, it can be stated that it was this high mis calibrated self-efficacy what encouraged them to study in Belize. Their parents gave them the opportunity to study in Belize, but they did not oblige them to go. Thus, it was their motivation to learn more English and their beliefs in their own capabilities to do so that helped them make the decision.

[...] A lot. And me, because I have this attitude of willingness; if I did not want to then I would not be able to do anything.

-María

[...] That I was going to learn English better (than in Mexico) because it was the opportunity I had. Well, I was going to have a different experience

-Valeria

[...] To learn English and get a scholarship to study in the United States

. -Ernesto

Students' Self-efficacy to learn English during their first term

During the first weeks in Belize, our participants had different experiences in real challenging situations. They realized learning English would be the way to access knowledge. By then they all claimed they would get lower grades than in Mexico and would also probably have trouble talking to people. During the first weeks, they began to understand the difficulty of the task: learning English in a Second Language context.

By the beginning of the first trimester, facing these new learning situations seemed to have decreased their level of self-efficacy to learn English moderately. The participants realized their understanding of the English language was not as advanced as they had thought and faced difficulties when having to communicate with others, understanding the topics being taught at school or performing required tasks for their lessons.

[...] Because I did not understand, I did not know anything

.- María

I did not understand much on the first day [...] I thought I would not learn

-Ernesto

I do understand them, but I do not like to express myself much

. - Valeria

In this sense, Bandura (1997) mentions that self-efficacy is influenced by the difficulty of the task, the amount of effort required to expend on said task and the circumstances under which it is performed. In this moment, the participants realized their English skills were not as accurate as they had perceived them to be when studying English in Mexico. When asked on a scale of one to ten how she would rate her capability to learn English during her first days in Belize, María rated a five because she did not understand the language. Contrary to María, Valeria rated her capability to learn English an eight. Ernesto did not rate his capability but mentioned he thought he would not learn anything.

Well like five because since I did not understand anything I did not know [...] -María

[...] Well like an eight. -Valeria

No, I thought I would not learn. – Ernesto

During the first days at the school participants beliefs in their capacity to learn English had decreased. When they were in Mexico, they thought English lessons were easy and they obtained good academic grades but during the first months studying in Belize, they rated their capability to learn the language between five and eight out of ten. As the participants continued attending school in Belize during their first trimester, their level of self-efficacy to learn English seemed to have decreased from high to a medium level. They realized they ought to dedicate extra hours to study English at home, they saw the need to put more effort in studying English to be able to perform well. Therefore, María and Ernesto took extra English lessons outside of school and Valeria spent more time studying English at home by herself. Going to school surrounded by native speakers of English might have caused them to realize they needed to work harder than expected.

Students' Self-efficacy during the second term

By the second trimester, participants began to understand a bit more of the language every day. This small increase in their self-efficacy level could be due to various factors: the context, their perception of the immediate usefulness of the language to learn content, and the use of self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS). The context in which they were now learning English was different from their usual English lessons in Mexico. The context stopped being favorable to obtain good academic grades and was now forcing them to have real experiences using the four linguistic skills. Since the participants were faced with the real challenges and difficulties of the English language, they began perceiving the language as more difficult than they had previously known when they were in Mexico which led them to put into practice different learning strategies to enhance their learning process.

María mentioned she had to pay attention to what the teacher was doing in order for her to retain the content being taught. Likewise, Valeria began to seek for help with one of her uncles and searched for tutorials on the internet.

I have to pay attention and see how the teacher does it so that it stays in my head [...]

–María

[...] I first started asking one of my uncles, I don't know exactly what he studied, but he knows a lot about mathematics and techniques to make equations and then I started watching tutorials on YouTube. -Valeria

Valeria shows to be able to manage her schoolwork by herself, she is determined and knows what works best for her when learning. When she does not understand a word, she seeks for help. Moreover, she mentioned she would ask her friends or teachers to help her with the meaning of the word or she searches for it online. She chooses to spend her leisure time watching videos in English because she explained she would rather spend her time learning something useful. Valeria also ponders on her progress and mistakes to perform better in future opportunities. These strategies are consistent with high self-efficacy learners.

Mmm...I keep it to myself and think how to improve. – Valeria

*Only when I understand some words or when I ask my classmates when I have doubts
[...]- Valeria*

[...] They send me the answer through text, the explanations, but it is all abbreviated so I have to search online for their meaning.. -Valeria

Similarly, María seems to put effort in her tasks and identify her struggles in English. She applied various cognitive strategies that would help her retain the words she did not understand; for instance, she would listen to a word in different conversations and assign a meaning herself according to the context in which the speakers were using it.

Well, several times they would tell me some words, but I did not understand them. So then, I listened to the sentence and figured out what would the context be for that word. I gave it my own meaning. -María

Sometimes I don't understand a word at first, but since they repeat them several times throughout the week, I give it my own meaning. -María

This strategy applied by María was also found in one of Wang and Pape's participants where she said that "she would first try to guess the meaning of an unknown word by using the context of the sentences in which it was embedded because she did not want to be distracted." (2005, p. 82). Moreover, María reported she would seek for help from her classmates when she did not understand instructions in her lessons.

I ask my classmates [...] and they tell me in Spanish. -María

Ernesto demonstrated to have a social personality who enjoys learning without fearing of mistakes. As well as Maria and Valeria, he sought for help from his friends. He also found it useful to listen to the words their classmates said, after hearing them several times he knew what the words meant.

I ask my Friends what do we have to do? [...] and they tell me what page we need to work on -Ernesto.

I don't know, I would just listen and every day I listened a bit more and I learned. -Ernesto

During this second trimester students demonstrated to have implemented strategies to help them cope with the learning of English. Employing the use of strategies in learning the language might have helped them to begin to feel more capable of learning the language. These findings coincide with those of Wang and Pape (2005), who found that children with high self-efficacy reported more Self-Regulated Learning strategies and achieved more success in learning English than the children with lower self-efficacy.

Students' self-efficacy during the third trimester

After six months of studying in Belize, starting with a high level of self-efficacy followed by a decrease in their beliefs of their capacities, these participants showed to have increased their beliefs again. By the beginning of the third trimester in Belize, as they were

experiencing more real opportunities in which they could use the four English linguistic skills, their beliefs of feeling capable to perform a task were increasing moderately. It could be stated that their sense of self-efficacy was greatly influenced by teachers and parents' support, their own perception of their English skills and a positive environment.

These participants received support in and out of Belize from their teachers, classmates and parents. Apart from giving them the opportunity to study abroad and showing them the future benefits of learning English, their parents supported them throughout the school year by constantly telling them how capable they were of achieving their goals.

My mom told me if I put effort into it I would make it . -Ernesto

My parents have helped me, my teacher too, sometimes [...] Before starting school here she would help me, although I don't need much help anymore. Also, my classmates have helped me too -María

Teachers played an important role in all the participants' process as well. They all received help from their teachers.

*[...] with my teacher [...] and when I need help with something, he helps me. Ernesto
[...] they're more comfortable speaking to me in English now. They would only ask me in Spanish before. -Valeria*

Well I told my teacher and she said to do it in Spanish [...] she gave me her phone to use the dictionary or look for words I did not know. -María

Having friends was also part of the support they received, Ernesto and María being more social had many friends that helped them with their tasks and whenever they would not understand instructions. Similarly, Valeria, although not so very social she had a group of friends that taught her abbreviations and other words she did not know that were used when texting.

If I don't understand, I ask my teacher or my classmates. -Ernesto

My teacher corrects me and if we're not in English class, I have classmates who do.
-Valeria

Apart from receiving support, these students' increase in their self-efficacy to learn English might have been influenced by the positive context in which they were able to develop actual English skills. Having the opportunity to put into practice everything they learn about the language helped them realize they were improving their English level. Noticing this increase caused them to raise their self-efficacy believing that they were capable of learning more. Participants noticed something that at the beginning of the school year, they found to be very difficult, was now much easier. Ernesto mentioned he was able to do his homework by himself which he was not capable of doing at the beginning because he did not understand the language. Valeria expressed she could now understand when her friends were speaking in groups and follow the rhythm of the conversation. María said she was doing better at reading; she could read the words when she began going to school in Belize but could not comprehend the meaning of the text, but now she was able to.

As participants were more aware of their capabilities, their sense of self-efficacy increased, they began to choose which challenges to take according to their perspective on their skills. Self-efficacy is also affected by how one interprets the obtained outcomes. These students seemed to have a better calibration of their self-efficacy based on their outcomes, knowing when they needed to put more effort and when they were good enough to take the challenge.

For instance, Valeria and Ernesto decided to take challenges which they knew they would be successful at, they trusted their capabilities thinking they were good enough. Valeria decided to participate in a school contest where they had to perform an activity, she chose to play the guitar in front of the entire school which is not common in her since she is a very shy student. Ernesto wanted to participate in a Spelling Bee contest which he used to be good at in Mexico; however, when he saw the difficulty of the words, he realized he had to study a bit more and decided to participate next year being more prepared. He identified how capable he was of achieving his goal and decided to put more effort to succeed in the

near future. María expressed she felt more capable of presenting a topic in front of her classmates because she knew how to speak English now.

I just saw it and, at first, I did not want to participate. I just noticed no one in my class was participating and I wanted to compete in a contest to create a song about Belize. But I did not know much about Belize, so I took no chances and decided to participate in that one (guitar contest). – Valeria

I wanted to compete in Spelling contest, but it was difficult, so I decided not to and wait until next year ... because I saw the words and they looked very difficult ... I am going to study and as I see the words, I am learning them. -Ernesto

not so much right now because I do know how to speak. But, when I started, yes. I would get very nervous and even start to sweat and so on. -María

Participants appeared to have gained a better understanding of their capabilities to perform in English and a better calibration of their skills to take challenging tasks. All three participants realized they were capable of doing things involving speaking, listening and reading in English which they were not capable of doing in the first term. Having this awareness of what they were achieving might have helped to raise their self-efficacy beliefs and motivate them to take challenging tasks. Although Valeria's challenging task did not involve the use of English, it demonstrated that she was gaining an overall sense of self-efficacy to perform well during this academic year, regardless of the language barrier which contributes to her sense of self-efficacy to learn English.

4.4 How do the four sources of Self-Efficacy influence learners' sense of Self-Efficacy to learn English in the foreign country?

In this section the influence of each of the four sources of Self-Efficacy to learn English in Belize is presented. Out of the four sources, verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states were the most influential sources found in these participants. Vicarious experience was found to have the least influence in them. The previous experiences in the use of English of

these students were very scarce, and not very significant for them. Thus, we might not say they had an influence on them.

Vicarious Experience

The three participants have had English lessons since they were young, therefore they had some contact with the language despite it not being directly with native English speakers. At school, they would hear their English teachers speak which we thought would have an influence and encourage them to speak English like their teachers and saw them as role models; however, the participants expressed to not like their teachers' pronunciation in English. This could be due to the fact that primary and secondary English teachers in Mexico tend to not have advanced levels of the language and most of them have never been in an English-speaking country. These students did not have much influence from someone they admired to look up to regarding the English language; however, Valeria mentioned she would like to speak English like the people in the videos she used to watch on the internet. Bandura explains that the abundant and varied symbolic modeling provided by television and other visual media is also a vicarious influence (Bandura, 1997, p. 93). In the case of Valeria, this influence can be seen as a vicarious model given that she had a perception of her English skills and instead of seeing it as a comparative or indicator of her capability in the language, the model functioned as a comparison of English skills improvement. The more she learned the language, the more she could understand what these videos were talking about. In this sense, Bandura mentions that vicarious models can also act as an influence to instill and strengthen a sense of personal efficacy while avoiding the costs of adverse social comparison; he mentions this can be achieved by maximizing the model's instructive function and minimizing its comparative evaluative function (Bandura, 1997). It acts as a medium to develop one's knowledge and skills through the aid of proficient models. Therefore, it can be assumed that Valeria's model were those people speaking on videos, who at the same time, unconsciously encouraged her to keep learning the language and improving her skills. During her time in Belize, she did not mention to have felt like speaking English like any teacher or friend.

On the other hand, María and Ernesto both mentioned to not have any specific role models neither in Mexico nor in Belize; but they liked how their teachers and some of their friends spoke the English language. Nevertheless, Ernesto did mention he had a friend whom he shared transportation with every day to go to school. He expressed he liked his friend's English pronunciation. Although he did not mention anything involving him comparing himself to his friend, he answered yes when asked if he had someone that he would like to speak English like. This friend might be a small influence for Ernesto. Ernesto did not compare himself but rather saw his friend as someone he would like to be equal or aspire to have the same English skills. According to Bandura, we seek proficient models who possess the competencies which we aspire to have. Further, these models help raise self-efficacy perceptions by transmitting knowledge and effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands. This form of aspirational modeling guides and motivates self-development (Bandura, 1997, p.88).

These students' vicarious models did seem to have had an influence on them but not a significant one. They saw them as someone they could learn from but did not refer to them frequently when being interviewed.

Verbal Persuasion

While being in Mexico, these participants did receive persuasive comments from their teachers and parents. Having these positive comments about their capability to perform in English or positive comments on how much they were learning at the time might have had some influence in their sense of self-efficacy before going to Belize. For instance, Valeria mentioned she would receive comments from her teacher telling her she was a great student, which could have had a significant influence on her perceived self-efficacy since, according to Bandura, telling people that they have the ability to do or achieve something has a greater impact than telling them they gained it by hard work (1997, p.102). María and Ernesto expressed they had positive comments from their parents. Persuasive comments do have an influence on individuals, but they are to be well contextualized comments. Bandura mentions verbal persuasion can encourage self-change if the positive feedback is within realistic

bounds (Bandura, 1997) given that when persuaded people tend to be more persistent and put sustain their efforts for a longer period of time when encountering difficulties.

During their academic year in Belize, only two of the participants, María and Ernesto, mentioned to have had positive feedback from their teachers and friends as well as from their parents. On the other hand, Valeria mentioned she did not receive comments from her teachers but that they spoke to her in English all the time without using Spanish which caused her to believe her teachers considered she understood more of the language. In this sense, Bandura points out that the persuasory efficacy appraisals have to be weighted in terms of who the persuaders are, their credibility, and how knowledgeable they are about the nature of the activities (Bandura, 1997, p. 104). Given Valeria's personality and her high efficacy academic skills, she seemed to have understood this as the way her teachers were telling her that she was good at learning English. Being those comments from her teachers, Valeria might have given them more value.

María and Ernesto did have a few comments from their teachers about having improved their skills in the language; however, it seems that their parents' support and positive feedback is what influenced their sense of self-efficacy the most. Both students mentioned they could not have done it without their parents' support; not only did they support them by giving them the opportunities to learn the language but also by encouraging them with positive comments throughout their academic year in Belize. They received positive comments letting them know they were capable of accomplishing their goal. Nevertheless, telling them that they are capable of performing a task will not make them be able to, they must possess the required skills or believe they can do it. When learners' self-efficacy is high, they tend to put more effort and achieve greater results. Thus, we might say that verbal persuasion did have a medium influence on these students' self-efficacy to continue learning English in Belize.

Physiological and Affective States

Physiological and affective states affect positively or negatively how individuals judge their personal efficacy. These states can be positive or negative but one's perceptions

on how the states will affect, either with a positive or negative impact on our judgements can vary significantly depending on several factors, for example, the way we interpret it. "It is not the arousal state per se but the meaning given to it that affects judgement" (Bandura, 1997, p.112). No equal performance will affect students in the same way, each one of them will give their physiological and affective states a different cognitive meaning when creating their judgement.

By the beginning of the first trimester in Belize, María and Ernesto expressed to have had experienced a positive emotional state such as excitement for learning a new language, having a new experience, as well as negative emotional states such as feeling nervous and being shy to speak English which caused them to think they would fail their subjects since they would not be able to understand. Valeria, on the other hand, mentioned she could understand people and did not feel nervous at first; she commented that she felt joy because she did not feel nervous to learn a new language: "*Only joy, learning other languages did not make me feel nervous*". Likewise, she was aware she would not have the capability to obtain high academic grades as in Mexico, but contrary to Mary and Ernesto's answers, she did not think she would fail the subjects, instead she believed she would have a poorer performance. The three students faced the same situation of not having an advanced level of the language and having to learn content in English, in addition to English. Nevertheless, not all of them perceived the task with the same difficulty, probably due to their own personality and perception of their self-efficacy.

They all experienced fear of the unknown context they would be facing in this new school. However, these negative emotional states seem to not have had a negative influence in any of them. None of the participants mentioned to feel the need of quitting and going back to Mexico. This might be due to their perception of their self-efficacy to learn the language was high, they felt capable of learning the language and were able to cope with their emotions to get through the bad experiences. At this moment, perhaps it is relevant to comment on the case of two Mexican siblings (a girl and a boy) who went to study in Belize at the same time María, Ernesto and Valeria did, but who did not stay, they only spent two months over there. They came back to enroll in a Mexican school. Those young people felt a lot of pressure in the school compound and had many problems to understand their classes.

Interestingly, both had always studied at private school and had taken a few classes in English at school.

Apart from their sense of self-efficacy, other factors such as their personality might have had an influence in their behavior and choices. For instance, María felt shyness and was used to get sweaty hands when presenting in front of everyone but when she began having more friends and feeling more comfortable in the context and her abilities, she stopped feeling nervous and experiencing these disturbing physical states. Ernesto, on the other hand, has a more extrovert personality; even though he would feel nervous, he was not afraid to try and did not experience many physiological states. His young age may have been a factor, in addition to his personality, in not being afraid of being judged if he did not know something in English.

As for Valeria, she seems to be more introverted and would not have much participation in class in Mexico or Belize, but it seems to be that her positive perception of her capabilities is what allows her to overcome feeling nervous.

It might be possible that in addition to their personalities, their positive emotional estate, the excitement they experienced to learn the language for their future goals would outweigh the negative emotional states they encountered. The participants started feeling more capable of using and learning the language and eventually stopped feeling nervousness as they used to in the first days.

[...] That I can do my homework by myself now because it is something I could not do before. – Ernesto

I do not get nervous in class because I know it is normal for something to go wrong and the same thing can happen to my classmates. – Valeria

These students did not perceive their negative physical emotions as something bad. Nor as something that would prevent them from trying again, they experienced them as part of the learning process. These findings go in line with those of Rodriguez (2018) and Sansores (2018) who found that secondary school studying in Mexico students do not feel fear or stress when performing reading, writing and listening in English; the participants of their studies showed to be more upset only when speaking. Even though Sansores and Rodriguez' findings coincide with those of this study, there is still a wide difference among them because their

students were learning English in Mexico, not in an English' speaking environment. We thus think that the fact of not experiencing fear or stress in both cases might be due to their short age. This lack of fear or negative emotions found within English learners is explained by Bandura when says that the information conveyed by physiological states and reactions is not a diagnostic of personal efficacy, but it affects perceived self-efficacy through cognitive processing. This cognitive processing is affected by different factors, as Bandura explains: such as cognitive appraisal of the sources of physiological activation, its intensity, the circumstances under which the activation occurs and construal biases (p. 107, 1997).

At the end of the last trimester, when participants were feeling more capable and had realized they were understanding more, they had to switch to virtual lessons due to SARS COVID-19. This pandemic could have had an influence in their physiological and affective states, making them feel more or less nervous or experiencing different emotions. Remarkably, Valeria and Maria found virtual lessons easier for them. María expressed she felt classes were easier, sitting online classes helped her increase her overall average. *I feel like online lessons are easier than face to face. [...] That helped me to raise my overall grade because they would leave homework and I'd always do it [...]at home, you feel more confident and so on, I think so and it was easier for me to do it that way.* Valeria said she liked it more than her regular lessons because it helped her be more organized with her time: Contrary to the two female participants, Ernesto did not like virtual lessons. He mentioned he preferred face-to-face lessons and that he was not learning much. Despite feeling they learned more or less content in virtual lessons, they did not mention to feel more or less motivated or capable in regard to English learning.

Physiological and affective states seem to be a strong influential source of self-efficacy in these students' English learning process. The participants showed to employ learning strategies when having negative outcomes, in order to improve, which might have helped them cope well with emotions of fear and excitement and remain motivated and eager to keep learning English in Belize instead of quitting. They learned to manage their negative physiological states such as feeling nervous and having sweaty hands through their affective states and motivation to learn until they felt comfortable and more capable.

Mastery Experiences

All three participants had few opportunities to experience real use of English in Mexico. Even though Chetumal is a border city with Belize where English is the language of instruction, having had experiences in the use of English with Belizeans is difficult to find among Mexicans. These students had been in very few real situations in which they would have had to speak in English to a foreigner in Mexico or abroad.

María and Ernesto had the opportunity of travelling to the USA with their parents when they were younger. During this trip, Ernesto did not mention to have had the experience of talking to a native speaker, but María said she tried to speak to a girl she met at a swimming pool while being in USA, she asked her if she spoke Spanish. Despite the interaction being basic, she showed interest and confidence in her speaking skill when she did not have an advanced level of English. Bandura explains trying hard and failing under optimal conditions signifies limited capability; failing in tasks one considers easy have a negative effect on perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). This experience shows Maria was confident in her capability to speak the language to a certain extent. She believed she could ask a question but not hold a long conversation. Having no positive outcomes could have lowered her perceived self-efficacy when she had a similar situation in Mexico, and she did not try to speak the language because she felt shy:

[...] Although the other time we went to a place and there were some people who had arrived, they were French and only knew how to speak English, but I did not say anything. I was just looking at them and they went to call someone, I do not know where he was from, so he could translate for them. and so. [...] No, I was shy. -María

Contrary to María and Ernesto, Valeria had not had the opportunity of travelling abroad; however, she mentioned to have had situations where she had to speak to foreign people in Mexico. She reported to have experienced several situations as such but there was not much communication. Valeria mentioned she stumbled upon a foreigner and had to speak to him, but he did not understand her. Interestingly, despite not being understood she tried again when facing another similar situation, which was not successful either, but it demonstrates

she was not afraid to try again to speak the language. This might mean that not being successful in her first try to speak English did not have a bad impact on her.

Two of the participants had the opportunity to travel abroad and live that experience of seeing and hearing everything in a language they had a basic knowledge of. Ernesto seems to not have had any enactive mastery experience regarding the use of English, he was very young at the time and did not have the opportunity to speak to anyone around him. María did have an experience in a real context which showed she was confident in her skills, she tried to speak the language only to ask a basic question since that is what she felt comfortable with. Perhaps not having more knowledge of the language to follow a conversation did have an impact on her perceived self-efficacy in English skills when she heard native English-speakers in Mexico but did not try to speak to them. On the other hand, Valeria had the opportunity to speak to English speakers in Mexico twice, similarly to María she tried but was not understood. However, that experience did not have a negative impact on her given that when faced to native English speakers again she tried to speak to them. Both had a similar situation and despite Valeria having no success at all in the first experience she had, her perceived self-efficacy was still high, showing to be confident enough in her skills.

All these students had scarce opportunities to put into practice their knowledge of English, besides that, they were not successful. Nevertheless, these past experiences did not have a negative impact on their self-efficacy to continue trying and learning English. Not having succeed in using English do not necessarily mean these students did not have the knowledge or skills needed to speak it, since having the knowledge and skills does not necessarily mean one will achieve our goals. We need to believe in our ability to do it and this perception in one's abilities is influenced and affected by several factors such as the difficulty of the task, the amount of effort they expend, the amount of help from others, the context amongst others. These students might have been affected by the context in which they were to speak English. During the period they studied in Belize and while crossing the border daily, these students faced short experiences in which they had to interact in English. As they explained they felt more confident each time.

These findings coincide with those of Rodríguez (2018) in which mastery experiences was found to not be a strong influential source in secondary school students in Chetumal, Quintana Roo. Rodríguez also found that the participants of his study did not have much

contact with the English language, which was also the case in the present research. This lack of contact with the language might be a common fact in Mexican EFL learners given that children are not exposed to native speakers of the language.

Enactive mastery experiences and vicarious experiences were the least influencing sources of self-efficacy among these students, mainly because they were not exposed in contexts where they could experience the use of English, and probably because these kids did not have well trained English teachers in their previous schools in Mexico. Among the other two sources, verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states were the most influential ones in these student's sense of self-efficacy to learn English. Regarding verbal persuasion, these findings coincide with those Sansores' (2018) who found that that his participants did have a great influence from verbal persuasion, his findings showed that verbal persuasion was the second most influential source in self-efficacy.

4.5 How do these young Mexican learners describe their experience to commute to an English-speaking country to study high school?

When being asked how they would describe their experienced they inevitably compared their classes in both countries. All three agreed that their classes in general were more advanced than in Mexico.

Regarding the English lessons in Mexico Maria mentioned she did not like them; she preferred her lessons of any subject to be in English because she considered she had to pay more attention to learn the content when they were taught in English. *To me, it being in another language was more efficient [...] I like them more in English.* She also perceived English lessons in Belize were more advanced than in Mexico. Valeria and Ernesto agreed on the same fact.

[...] English lessons I like them more over there (in Belize) because they were more advanced. – Maria

[...] It was more difficult in Corozal. It is more advanced there and all subjects are in English. – Ernesto

I like the classes in Belize more... because they speak more in English and sometimes here in Mexico teachers do not teach so well. – Valeria

The three participants also perceived English lessons in Mexico to be easier and shared the same concept of their teachers. They agreed on teachers not speaking English in class, instead they would speak Spanish and lessons are less demanding and strict than in Belize.

It is not like here in Mexico that they skip classes and so, no. They attend school, everyday and actually teach.– Maria

Everything is translated [...] rarely in English.– Ernesto

Here in Mexico sometimes the teachers in the schools do not teach that well. The class is very organized. So, they are specific topics per class and if those topics end the class ends [...] But I think it did help me more because over there they speak in English mostly and here in Mexico sometimes the teachers in the schools do not teach that well. – Valeria

They also perceived teachers in Belize as more strict but supportive and encouraging towards them. María and Ernesto expressed teachers are strict but also encouraging, they gave them positive comments about their academic performance.

Well, some teachers are strict, others not so much, but most of them are. [...] “Ay estoy muy orgullosa de ti porque lo hiciste bien y sacaste buen promedio”. -Maria

One was very strict. She would not let me speak in Spanish, only English. Yes, all of them were good. They even congratulated me on my grades. -Ernesto

Similarly, Valeria mentioned teachers are strict, but they do socialize with the class therefore it is not boring: *Teachers in Belize are strict but they do interact with the students so it is not*

so boring. She also regarded her teachers as supportive that would give her positive feedback: I think the teachers motivated me to keep studying and try to do better.

Regarding support, the three participants mentioned to have received support from their friends, their parents and teachers. Having friends played an important role in Valeria's experience. Her friends helped her throughout this process since she did not have to socialize much with other people. In this case, her shy personality could have been something that hindered her performance or willingness to try; however, her beliefs in her capacity in addition to the support received from her friends helped her: *"my classmates because they would choose me for teamwork projects"*. María and Ernesto did mention to receive support from their friends, but they considered more valuable the support received from their parents. María mentioned she could not have done it without them, and Ernesto said his mother was always encouraging him and believing he could do it: *"because she tells me I can achieve it, that if I learn I will have good job opportunities when I grow up. Speaking two languages helps you in life."*

A highlighting point in these students' experiences was that they all agreed on having learned much more and that the lessons being in English helped them most:

*Yes, I learned a lot. I do not think I could have learned as much somewhere else. -
María*

That they spoke in English all the time when I spoke to my friends. – Ernesto

*Well I do think it is better to learn English in a school where only English is spoken.
-Valeria*

Being exposed to the language every day, for long periods of time, helped them to understand and speak the language faster than they did when they were studying in Mexico. Unfortunately, once they finished their first year studying in Belize, these kids were not able to continue studying there because of the SARS-COVID19 pandemic, these students had to

go back to study in Mexico. When interviewed, it was revealed that they preferred to continue studying in Belize rather than return to Mexico. None of the students mentioned to like studying in Mexico, in fact, María said she would like to live in Belize to have the chance to continue learning English, *“If they tell me ‘hey would you go live in Belize to go to school while the pandemic is over? I would say yes. It will not be forever, just a little while, I like that school and the classes, the English language, I liked everything’*. Ernesto was given the option of studying in Belize’s school virtually at the same time as in Mexico and even though he would have more homework to do, he accepted. *“I said yes, and they spoke to the principal, and they accepted me to end the school year over there.”* Valeria expressed she would like to continue learning the language but not in traditional face-to-face lessons, rather by reading or speaking to native speakers.

As per their advancements in English, these students considered to have improved mostly in reading and speaking skill. María believed her knowledge of English now is a 8.5 out of 10 and her capability to keep learning the language is a 10 because she realized it is not as difficult as she perceived and she can keep learning many things *“I think a 10 because I realized it is not so hard and I can keep learning many things.”* She mentioned she improved. Ernesto considered he knows 40% of English and he believes on a scale of 1 to 10 his capability to learn English is a 9. *“I think like a 9 because I already know and if I keep learning, I will be able to learn it completely, all of it.* Valeria said she does not know how much of the language she knows but in a scale of 1-10 she considers her capability a 9 because she is satisfied with what she knows *“Well I think like a 9. I’m satisfied with what I know.”* As a result of having studied in Belize for a year, and going back to studying in Mexico, these students once again experienced an increase in their sense of Self-efficacy in learning English. This time they expressed feeling even more confident in learning English than at the end of their third semester studying in Belize.

Lastly, when asked what disadvantages or dislikes they had during the academic year Valeria and María did have interesting comments. María mentioned she did not like some differences in culture which is something that was expected. She expressed people were too straight forward to say things; however, she did not let it affect her.

Moreover, commuting to study was also a shared dislike these participants had. María expressed she was tired of commuting every day, and having to wake up early but she said it

was worth it, and emphasized that she felt satisfied with the progress she made: *“By the end of the school year, I felt very satisfied and also sad because I achieved what I wanted but I could not go but I do feel satisfied and I realized all those times that I had to go and come back very tired , travelling every day was worth it.”*. Unlike Maria, Valeria said she would not like to go back to study in Belize as she did not like having to travel so long every day, she was tired of how time consuming it was.

In general, we might say that the three participants described their experience as challenging and one in which they learnt a lot, more than they did in Mexico. It was a good experience, one that Maria and Ernesto would love to experience again but Valeria would not. It was an experience that allowed them to realize many aspects of their capability to learn English and other subjects, but also of the schools’ systems they had been in before going to study in Belize. Nowadays, Maria and Ernesto are looking for options to study abroad in the future, meanwhile, they continue taking private English classes. Valeria decided not to enroll in face-face schools and continues to study high school in virtual mode.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to find the sense of self-efficacy of three young cross-border students who decided to commute to study English in Corozal, Belize, as well as to find which source of self-efficacy was the most influential in their sense of self-efficacy in learning the language. Further the objective of this study was to find what caused these students to make the decision of commuting to attend high school in an English-speaking country and how do these young learners describe their experience.

With regards to the sense of self-efficacy these students had the analysis revealed that students' sense of self-efficacy was high when studying English in Mexico and decreased during the first months when learning English in Belize. Further, this sense of self-efficacy showed an increase after the first half of the academic year.

These young cross-border students had developed a high sense of self-efficacy to learn English when studying in Mexico mainly due to a miscalibration of self-efficacy. Students were given positive comments from their teachers about their English performance as well as high academic grades regarding their performance in the English class. These forms of verbal persuasion and the insufficiently challenging nature of English-learning tasks led them to believe they had a high knowledge of the language. These facts contributed to their miscalibration of their capacity to learn the language. When facing the real challenge of using their English skills in a real context, students realized they were not as capable as they thought they were. Going to school surrounded by native speakers of English required them to work harder and put more effort than expected, causing their high level of self-efficacy developed in Mexico to decrease moderately. After a couple of months students showed to implement strategies to help them cope learning English which helped them to begin to feel more capable of learning the language. They appeared to gain a better understanding of their capabilities to perform in English and a better calibration of their skills to take challenging tasks. Having this awareness of what their capabilities were and what they were achieving helped to raise their self-efficacy beliefs and motivated them to keep undertaking challenging tasks.

Concerning which source of self-efficacy was the most influential in their sense of self-efficacy to learn the English language, it was found that verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states were the most influential sources, contrary to vicarious experience which was found to have the least influence in them. Verbal persuasion was found to be a strong influence in self-efficacy through the participants' parents in the case of Maria and Ernesto and through their teachers in the case of Valeria. The participants had received positive feedback and comments from these people around them whom care about and their comments had an impact on them and which helped to have positive emotions and turn negative ones into positive. María and Ernesto had notable support and encouraging comments from their parents throughout their process of commuting daily to learn the English language. On the other hand, Valeria had more positive verbal persuasion from her teachers in Mexico who aided in her development of her self-efficacy, encouraging her to believe in her capabilities. Thus, physiological and affective states had a strong influence in the participants' self-efficacy beliefs. These participants showed to use their negative experiences to turn them into positive ones remaining motivated to learn the language throughout their academic year. Both of these sources, Verbal persuasion and Physiological and Affective states seem to go hand in hand having an impact on the students' English learning experience and seem to be related with one another.

By contrast, vicarious experience was the least influencing source of self-efficacy in the three participants. María and Ernesto did not have solid vicarious models, they did like how some of their teachers and friends spoke the language but those did not seem to have had a clear and definite influence on them. Valeria did have a more significant influence of vicarious models, she liked how some *youtubers* spoke the language and was motivated to understand what they were saying, however, she always had an inner motivation to learn the language. Lastly, enactive mastery experience was the least influential source of self-efficacy in these students. This lack of real experiences thus explains why these students did not have strong beliefs in their ability to speak in real context when they came to Belize and had to speak English in a real context. Thus, this fact can be explained by Banduras' statement when he explains that enactive mastery experience is the most influential source. However, this was not the case in the present study. This is understandable in light of the fact that in the place where these students live, it is not common to meet native English speakers with whom

to speak. And the opportunities that may exist to practice English with Belizeans are not taken advantage of due to the belief that their English variant is not correct.

Regarding what caused these students to make the decision to study in a foreign country, data revealed that their decision was mostly influenced by their parents, followed by their own desire to learn the language, motivated by future goals and highly influenced by their disappointment with the English lessons in Mexico. Both parents and children were disappointed with the English lessons taught in Mexico and noticed the lack of importance given to the subject as well as the poor preparation and commitment of secondary school English teachers. These children's parents had sent their kids to private English lessons in order for them to learn the language. Therefore, it seems that parents' support for their children to study in Belize was also prompted by their perception of the Mexican schools' lack of commitment for students to learn English. Additionally, children were motivated to study in a foreign country with the means of learning to obtain future opportunities in life such as travelling, going to school in USA and having a good job.

Lastly, participants described their experiences with positive comments. They all agreed on improving their English skills and preferred being in contact with the language on a daily basis. Students who study abroad often learn faster being immerse in the language with a real context. María and Ernesto showed to have support from their teachers but mostly from their parents. On the other hand, Valeria expressed to have support from her teachers, but it was mainly her own desire to learn the language. Some aspects of the way Belizean students interact among them seem to have discouraged Valeria from continuing to study there, in addition to the fact of having to spend a lot of time traveling every day. This might have been due to her personality; perhaps she could not adapt as well as Maria and Ernesto to the school, hence not being motivated to keep commuting. Moreover, it might be her own high sense of self-efficacy to cause her to believe she can still learn the language without needing to go to the school. All three participants experienced a change in their sense of self-efficacy throughout the year they studied in Belize. Based on the achievements obtained in Mexico, they started feeling very capable, later when they had to perform in English in real contexts their sense decreased and, in the end, after some failures, they again felt capable of learning not only English, but others subjects too. According to Hasan and Ali Samet (2016)

the longer the stay in the foreign country, the higher the Self-Efficacy obtained, hence having a high sense of self-efficacy to learn English. On a scale of 1 to 10, Maria rated a 10 and Valeria and Ernesto a 9. It can be then concluded that these students' self-efficacy beliefs to learn English was stronger than their accurate capacity and that it was the main reason why they decided to go to study in Belize and what kept them trying till they reached their academic objective.

5.1 Limitations

Among the limitations of this study, one of them was that the results were based on the participants' beliefs only, but they were not compared with their actual grades or performance which could have helped to confirm whether the students were or not as self-efficacious as they perceived they were. Additionally, a second limitation was the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were interviewed face to face in two of the interviews but the third one had to be done online via Zoom. Lastly, the limited number of participants and not having many studies related to our research topic brought some limitations to the analysis.

5.2 Recommendations

In this study, the self-efficacy beliefs of cross-border students was addressed. It is noteworthy to mention that the lack of studies in Mexico regarding self-efficacy in secondary school and cross-border students imposed some limitations to the research. It is recommended that a deeper analysis needs to be carried out regarding parents and students' perceptions of the difficulty of learning English in Mexico as well as the importance this language is given as a subject in Mexican schools. In addition, we recommend to study the impact of English classes taught at private and public schools on students' motivation to keep studying English. Also, cross-border students from Chetumal commuting to Belize might be more more numerous than what the scant attention paid to them in the scholarly literature might suggest. Therefore, further research would help better understand these students' experiences in order to better

serve their educational needs. Further research in self-efficacy to learn English of students who commute to Belize might help determine the relationship among the students' sense of self-efficacy, their decision to study abroad and their motivation to remain learning the language in Belize. The results of these studies would also allow us to determine which are the sources of self-efficacy that best promote the construction of a high sense of self-efficacy, and which impair said sense of self-efficacy to learn English. Additionally, comparing the self-efficacy beliefs of students to their actual grades or employing a measuring instrument would help give more a different and enriching experience of their advancements not only in their development of self-efficacy but also in their language skills.

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