

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF TEACHER L2 USE ON LEARNER SELF-EFFICACY PERCEPTIONS: THE CASE OF CHILEAN ELEMENTARY EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract: Self-efficacy perceptions on second language settings have been linked to several aspects including learner performance in linguistic tasks, willingness to communicate, and language learning strategy use. These firmly place self-efficacy as a variable affecting cognitive and contextual aspects in language learning settings. However, the amount of L2 used by teachers needs to be researched in their own right, since an approach that makes the L2 compulsory in the language classroom may affect learners' perceptions of their ability to learn the new language. This relationship becomes even more relevant in low-level EFL school settings where teachers are more willing to use the learners' L1 in their lessons. Thus, to assess the impact of teacher L2 use on the self-efficacy of primary EFL learners, the present study investigated 58 Chilean 6th-grade EFL students' self-efficacy beliefs in two contexts: L2-Only instruction (i.e., an approach where lessons are delivered solely in the L2), and L1-L2 instruction. Findings revealed that learners in the L2-Only group did not significantly decrease their self-efficacy when compared to the L1-L2 group, and that the L1-L2 group displayed significantly higher scores in the reading and writing components. It is argued that contextual aspects that include the nurturing of self-efficacy need to be considered to make informed decisions on whether to use the L1 and the L2 in the language classroom.

Keywords: Chilean EFL learners, L2-Only instruction, self-efficacy beliefs, use of L1

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Individual differences, such as aptitude, learning styles, personality, attitude, motivation, anxiety, and learners' beliefs have been found to influence the process of learning (Brown, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Regarding

learners' beliefs, learners typically hold opinions on how EFL instruction should be delivered to them so that they can understand and learn from the input. These ideas are frequently based on previous learning experiences and assumptions regarding the type of instruction that is more appropriate for them. As Bandura (1994) stated, it is important for an individual to feel capable of doing something in order to be able to perform it. He relates this disposition with the concept of "self-efficacy", or the perceptions that an individual has in relation to his/her abilities to complete a task. Bandura argues that "people with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided" (p. 2). Conversely, individuals who are not sure about their capabilities may see difficult tasks as personal threats, and thus display a weak commitment to the pursued goals. When the concept of self-efficacy is applied to language learning, it draws from the idea that learning a new language may intimidate students if they do not feel able to complete linguistic tasks. Thus, it has been documented that self-efficacy perceptions toward linguistic skills in a second language are related to how well these learners perform in tasks (Mills et al., 2006; Moreno & Kilpatrick, 2018). Self-efficacy beliefs can influence learners' willingness to communicate (Al-Amrani, 2019) and is associated with learners' classroom familiarity (Leeming, 2017). Furthermore, self-efficacy has also been linked to a better use of language learning strategies (Montaño-González & Cancino, 2020; Uçar, 2016). These findings place self-efficacy as a factor affecting cognitive and contextual aspects in language learning settings.

However, the question remains as to how self-efficacy perceptions are influenced by language learning environments where learner performance may be reduced, that is, language learning settings where interaction occurs solely in the L2. Although cognitive and contextual aspects of self-efficacy have been researched in EFL settings (Al-Amrani, 2019; Leeming, 2017; Moreno & Kilpatrick, 2018), no studies have assessed the extent to which using the L2 exclusively in the classroom (i.e., an L2-Only approach) can influence learners' self-efficacy toward their linguistic abilities. This is relevant to EFL teachers, as it is argued that the difficulty in handling L2 linguistic tasks can hinder learners' perception of their ability to learn the new language. Conversely, teachers who avoid interacting in the L2 will prevent learners from accessing L2 input, which will obstruct language learning. In this respect, the literature has yielded diverging perspectives. Positions advocating for L2-Only classroom environments that regard the teacher as the main target language source in EFL settings suggest that learners need to be exposed to as much L2 input as possible

(Cancino & Díaz, 2020; Turnbull, 2001). This view is in contrast with studies reporting a limited use of L2 in EFL language classrooms (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Grant & Nguyen, 2017). Interestingly, Cancino and Díaz (2020) suggest that learners' L2 proficiency level is a factor that can explain the extent to which the L2 is used in the EFL classroom, since school teachers in low-level classes are more willing to use the learners' L1 in their lessons. Still, using the L1 has been consistently discouraged in the literature, as it precludes learners from being exposed to an L2 environment and discourages L2 use (Promnath & Tayjasanant, 2016).

In the Chilean context, policy guidelines have encouraged EFL school teachers to teach without using the L1 (Ministerio de Educación, 2019); however, although teachers use the L2 to provide short and immediate feedback, they frequently deliver explanations and instructions to low-level learners in the L1, which reduces opportunities to produce language (Cancino & Díaz, 2020). It becomes relevant to assess the perceived ability of learners in such learning environments when teachers use the L2 exclusively, since their low proficiency may prevent them from receiving adequate input, which can hinder their understanding and consequently lower their self-efficacy levels. Thus, the purpose of the present study is to assess the extent to which elementary EFL learners' self-efficacy levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking are influenced by the approach to teaching the L2, namely, an L2-Only approach, and an L1-L2 approach. The main research question put forward in this study is as follows:

What is the impact of an L2-Only approach on the self-efficacy of primary EFL learners?

LITERATURE REVIEW

L2-Only Instruction

The amount and the complexity of the L2 used by teachers to give instructions and explain the context may be problematic for learners (Scrivener, 2005), an idea that has been researched primarily from a linguistic approach. For example, Zhao and Macaro (2014) sought to find whether L1 or L2 vocabulary explanations would lead to a better retention of target lexical items by 148 Chinese undergraduate learners in three groups receiving vocabulary explanations (L1 feedback, L2 feedback, and no feedback). Results revealed that some form of lexical focus is helpful for students since the group that underperformed in a vocabulary test was the one that did not receive lexical

feedback. Regarding the use of L1 and L2, students who received L2 explanations did not perform better than the group that received L1 lexical explanations. The researchers argue that using the L1 is more straightforward for learners, as they can relate the L1 lexical item to its L2 counterpart. In line with this, Joyce (2018) investigated the effects of using L1 translations versus L2 definitions in L2 vocabulary development. He asked 47 Japanese EFL university freshmen to learn 200 lexical items over a 10-week period. These participants were divided into two groups; one group worked with L1 lexical definitions and the other received L2 definitions. Results from a vocabulary post-test showed that when L2 vocabulary is assessed through an L1 translation, test scores are significantly higher than when it is evaluated by means of an L2 definition. These results contribute to the idea that using the L1 in the classroom can yield language development and that learners may find it problematic to process L2 input with no L1 scaffolding.

The findings suggesting that there is value in using the L1 in the classroom seem to clash with the perceptions toward its use reported by EFL teachers. For example, Scott and De la Fuente (2008) acknowledge that language teachers are in general agreement that “the target language should be used as much as possible in the FL (foreign language) classroom” (p. 100), and that their success is often related to their ability to conduct a whole lesson in the target language. In a study that sought to research the role of the L1 with L2 learners and to acknowledge the effects of prohibiting its use when learners are working collaboratively in L2 tasks, Scott and De la Fuente (2008) asked 24 modern language students whose L1 was English to participate. They were studying either French or Spanish as an L2 and were divided into two groups. Participants in the first group were allowed to discuss tasks in their L1, while participants in the other group were asked to only use L2 in class. The results indicated that all the participants relied on L1 translations to perform the tasks, and that participants who were required to use the L2 simplified their vocabulary choices when completing the tasks. These results underscore the idea of the tension between using the L1 to facilitate certain cognitive processes and avoiding it to follow the standards of what a “good EFL teacher” should be with respect to L2 use.

Self-efficacy

Research has shown that L2 communicative confidence is built on two aspects: the level of anxiety L2 learners have and how competent they feel about their L2 ability (Clément et al., 2003). Furthermore, positive attitudes are

strongly linked with learners' willingness to keep learning the foreign language (i.e., Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Hence, it has been argued that being successful in language learning is also related to self-esteem. As Brown (2000, p. 145) states, "no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself, and belief in your own capabilities for that activity". He subdivides self-esteem into three types. General self-esteem refers to one's own worth across life situations, and is typically resistant to change. Situational self-esteem is related to one's self-appraisals toward specific life situations. Finally, task self-esteem refers to tasks done in a particular situation such as learning a subject matter. Two other constructs related to self-esteem and L2 learning have been put forward in the literature: self-concept and self-efficacy. While both constructs focus on personal competence perceptions, an important difference lies in the nature of their orientations (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Mercer, 2008; Thompson et al., 2022). Self-concept beliefs are associated with the evaluation of one's own abilities in comparison with others toward the creation of self-worth and competence standards (Parker et al., 2014). These beliefs integrate the perceptions that individuals hold about themselves and the perceptions that others have about them. Research has supported the role of self-concept as a non-cognitive factor that contributes to later achievement (Marsh, 2007; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Thompson et al., 2022).

The notion of self-efficacy was coined by Bandura (1994), who defines it as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p. 2). An individual who has a strong sense of self-efficacy increases her human accomplishment and personal well-being in a number of ways, since self-efficacy perceptions determine the way the person thinks, feels, behaves and motivates herself. An individual's levels of self-efficacy are developed by means of varied sources. Bandura (1994) identified four essential aspects: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and self-judgment. Mastery experiences are based on the level of success a person has in accomplishing tasks. Failure undermines self-efficacy when it occurs before a strong sense of self-efficacy has been developed. In contrast, success strengthens efficacy perceptions. Vicarious experiences refer to efficacy perceptions provided by social models. A person's success in certain situations increases the observers' beliefs that they are capable of succeeding in such activities. Social persuasion is related to the idea that skill development and a sense of personal efficacy can also be nurtured by means of social context. If an individual is

persuaded by other people that she possesses the capabilities to accomplish and master certain tasks, she will put more efforts in achieving those tasks. Finally, self-judgment is affected by affective states. According to Bandura (1994), people see their anxiety and stress reactions as a manifestation of vulnerability to poor performance. Thus, reducing people's stress reactions and misinterpretations of their physical and emotional states can help boost self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994).

Self-efficacy Beliefs and Learning

Self-efficacy perceptions have been found to strongly influence individual behavior, participation, and success in academic tasks. Considering Bandura's four essential factors in self-efficacy growth, it can be argued that self-efficacy perceptions are developed at school, since it is a setting where thinking skills are evaluated and compared. Indeed, Bandura (1994, p. 11) referred to schools as agencies for cultivating self-efficacy, as "students' belief in their capabilities to master academic activities affects their aspirations, their level of interest in academic activities, and their academic accomplishments".

Several authors have assessed the extent to which Bandura's theorized sources of self-efficacy explain learners' self-efficacy perceptions toward academic achievement. Britner and Pajares (2006) investigated how these self-efficacy sources predict learners' self-efficacy in science classes. The researchers assessed the sources of science self-efficacy in 319 learners from 5th to 8th grade by means of a self-efficacy that consisted of four subscales assessing mastery experiences, social persuasions, physiological states, and vicarious experiences. Results showed that these sources can determine and shape learners' self-efficacy beliefs, and that science self-efficacy is an important predictor of science achievement. Since self-efficacy influences academic achievement, a reduction of confidence in primary school settings can impinge negatively on students' high school and college achievement.

Also focusing on Bandura's self-efficacy traits in academic environments, Joët et al. (2011) administered French and math self-efficacy questionnaires to 395 3rd grade primary school students in France. Academic achievement and self-regulated learning beliefs were evaluated in both subjects. Findings showed that students with low self-efficacy displayed low self-regulated learning beliefs and poor academic achievement. In math, specifically, females reported lower self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning beliefs than males. In relation to academic achievement in math, males were more successful. In French, the level of self-efficacy in males was higher than in females, even when the academic

achievement of the females was superior than the males. Regarding Bandura's (1994) sources of self-efficacy, all four sources influenced the variation in self-efficacy and self-regulated learning in maths. In French, all but vicarious experiences were connected with learners' French self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning. In line with this, Pajares et al. (2007) examined the influence of Bandura's self-efficacy sources on students' writing self-efficacy beliefs and academic level (elementary, middle, and high). A writing self-efficacy questionnaire was administered to 1256 participants from 4th to 11th grade. Results indicated that the four sources of self-efficacy significantly correlated with writing self-efficacy, and that participants who had higher levels of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and social persuasions, displayed stronger writing self-efficacy and were better writers according to their teachers.

Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Foreign Language Learning

Learners' self-efficacy beliefs are particularly relevant in foreign language learning (Sardegna et al., 2018; Woodrow, 2011; Zabihi, 2018). For instance, Mills et al. (2006) studied the relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety, and French as a foreign language proficiency in reading and listening skills in 95 college students. Results showed that learners' self-efficacy perceptions toward reading in French were closely related to their reading proficiency. Interestingly, self-efficacy beliefs regarding listening were positively associated with listening proficiency only in female participants. Focusing on how variables such as self-beliefs have an impact on students' willingness to communicate, Al-Amrani (2019) found that the degree of willingness to communicate in English can vary depending on how self-beliefs are processed in different learning contexts and how the interlocutor behaves. Thus, students displayed higher willingness to communicate when talking to friends than when doing so with strangers. These results contribute to the idea that the more familiarized students become with the classroom, the higher their self-efficacy perceptions toward English language learning (Leeming, 2017). This idea is also explored by Moreno and Kilpatrick (2018), who analysed the role of self-efficacy beliefs in EFL classroom practice by means of several qualitative tools (interviews, classroom observation, and reflections). Data was collected over 18 months, and analysis suggested that self-efficacy in the EFL classroom is related to practice, and that other factors such as peer familiarity and grading may also play important roles.

Self-efficacy perceptions in EFL settings have also been researched with a focus on language learning strategies. Montañó-González and Cancino (2020) explored the relationship between language learning strategies and self-efficacy

in sixty-two Chilean EFL learners. They used a strategy questionnaire, a self-efficacy questionnaire, and interviews with participants displaying specific self-efficacy profiles. Quantitative results indicated a significant relationship between participants' use of language learning strategies and their self-efficacy across linguistic skills, findings that are in line with other studies addressing the relationship (Uçar, 2016). Qualitative findings mirrored quantitative results, as they suggested that learners that use learning strategies also display a heightened sense of self-efficacy. In sum, these studies suggest that self-efficacy is a variable that can affect and be affected by cognitive and contextual aspects in the EFL classroom. In the present study, it is argued that the impact of the type of language used in the classroom needs to be documented as one of such aspects.

METHOD

Research Design

This study followed a quasi-experimental design, as the research question posited sought to statistically assess the impact of an independent variable (type of L2 approach) on a dependent variable (self-efficacy). To this end, the researchers used convenience sampling methods to gain access to two intact groups of 6th graders. These groups were chosen because of their similar characteristics regarding number of students in each group, course level, baseline proficiency, and lesson content. Each group received a specific treatment. The experimental group (n=29) was labelled the L2-Only group, in which the L2 (English) was the only language used by the teacher to deliver the lessons. The control group (n=29) was labelled the L1-L2 group, in which the teacher used the L1 (Spanish) and the L2 to conduct the lesson.

Participants and Context

Participants in the study were 58 Chilean 6th grade EFL learners in a subsidized school that mostly serves socially disadvantaged children and teenagers at primary and secondary levels. The school provides technical-professional education by means of vocational training in two areas: cookery and technical drawing. The institution receives a full subsidy from the Ministry of Education, and it follows the Ministry's educational program at all levels and with all subjects. Accordingly, the school curriculum includes 3 modules (45 minutes each) of EFL from 5th to 8th grades. Textbooks and audio-visual materials are provided by the Ministry of Education, and class size typically ranges from 29 to 45 students.

Being proficient in English is essential for greater employment opportunities in EFL contexts such as the Chilean one. This also facilitates “fair access to knowledge and progression through to higher study” (Matear, 2008, p. 134). According to Glass (2008), Chile’s aim of becoming a bilingual country has been embraced for the last 25 years. Government programs have been introduced over the last few years promoting EFL teaching and learning in the country and making EFL a compulsory subject in Chile from 5th grade to 12th grade. However, learners in this school typically use the L2 only to convey specific functions such as greetings and asking for a bathroom break, and to understand one-word instructions, short classroom commands, and immediate feedback. Thus, they are used to receiving teacher input in the L1, which takes the form of content explanations, examples, complex instructions, jokes, and further topic-related information.

In order to control for baseline L2 proficiency, an adapted version of the Pre-A1 Starters Proficiency test developed by Cambridge English (n.d.) was administered. This test contains topics and items that are tailored to children, and it was used to assess listening, writing, and reading skills. A t-test was run with the data collected from both groups, which showed that the L2-Only group ($M = 13.24$) and the control group ($M = 11.90$) were not significantly different in terms of their baseline language proficiency ($p > .05$). Although this proficiency test does not provide a proficiency level range, the mean scores (out of 45 points) suggest that these learners displayed lower-level proficiency.

Self-efficacy Scale

The instrument used to measure the learners’ self-efficacy level was an adapted version of the questionnaire of English self-efficacy (QESE) scale designed by Wang (2004)¹, whose original aim was to evaluate young Chinese English Language Learners’ self-efficacy beliefs of English in the United States. The QESE scale consists of 32 items which are measured on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*I cannot do it at all*) to 7 (*I can do it very well*). The original scale measures language learners’ self-efficacy beliefs in relation to listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The QESE scale has been applied in different contexts to measure students’ perceptions of their capabilities in EFL tasks in academic undergraduate contexts (Kim et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2014;

¹ The modified version of the QESE scale can be found at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MC-4fKbnR0BZJ7DtrtzWvBKpRWRBGe-/edit?usp=sharing&oid=102075656332997739618&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Wang et al., 2018). In order to ensure that the participants understood the scale's instructions and items, this instrument was translated into the participants' L1 (Spanish). The back-translation technique advised by Brislin (1970) was used. That is, the original questions were translated into Spanish and then again into English in order to assess that the target version was equivalent to the source. As the original version of the QESE scale was developed to assess undergraduate students, modifications were made to contextualize the items of the scale for secondary 6th grade EFL learners. For example, the sentence "*If you have any questions, raise your hand and ask the teacher, please*" was added in the instructions. Also, the pronoun of the questions was changed from "You" to "I" to help students in their reflections. Hence, instead of using "*Can you...?*", items started with "*I can...*". Finally, certain items were deleted due to the EFL nature of the context in which participants are immersed. Thus, questions such as "*Can you read English newspapers?*", "*Can you understand American TV programs?*" and "*Can you understand radio programs in English speaking countries?*" were deleted. Finally, the word "*instructor*" was replaced by "*teacher*", and the word "*university*" by "*school*". Once the items and layout of the questionnaire were modified, the translated scale was examined and discussed with another researcher to further validate the translations. The adapted version of the QESE scale consisted of 21 items measuring self-efficacy perceptions of EFL learners in reading (items 1, 5, 7, 10, and 18), listening (items 2, 9, 15, 17, 19, and 20), speaking (items 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, and 21), and writing skills (items 3, 12, 14, and 16). Cronbach's alpha values for the adapted version of the instrument were between .6 and .7, which suggest an acceptable level of reliability.

Study Procedures

One week before administering the QESE questionnaire, the researcher piloted the QESE with 40 5th grade students, whose age was similar to the study participants and who had received similar EFL instruction. Based on the students' responses on the pilot study, neither the layout nor the items needed to be modified to increase clarity, and the amount of time given to answer the QESE (20 minutes) was adequate. However, the pilot participants evidenced some issues with the instrument's instructions, so the researcher made sure to repeat the instructions orally and check the participants' comprehension before they completed the questionnaire.

Once consent was secured from the school administration and the participants' parents, the Cambridge Pre-A1 Starters test was administered to control for proficiency. Then, the QESE was administered as a pre-test to both

the experimental and control group. A teacher in the institution was instructed to carry out the lessons in both groups. Students from the experimental group were told they would be taught a textbook unit where the teacher would exclusively use the L2. Contents, examples, instructions, commands, and questions were delivered in English. Students were allowed to use the L1 to speak to the teacher and their classmates; however, they were encouraged to use English. More specifically, the six lessons in the experimental group were delivered in the following manner. Lessons were delivered in the L2, with the teacher explaining the unit and providing L2 examples on the board. The main topic of the unit was means of transportation, and the objective was to recognize the characteristics of several transportation systems. The teacher was asked to use pictures to explain the contents and make drawings and use body language to clarify confusing concepts or ideas. She was also instructed to use gestures, body language, and intonations to convey vocabulary meanings. The content of the lessons involved vocabulary activities, listening exercises, and the creation of drawings related to transportation means that were posted on the classroom walls. Learners in the L1-L2 group were taught the same unit, but received regular instruction, that is, the teacher used the L1 when she deemed necessary. The teacher was instructed to change her use of the L2 only in the experimental group, but not to change her attitude or demeanour toward the lessons. Once the class treatment was delivered over the six weeks, participants in both groups completed the QESE as a post-test. The data was analysed with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were computed for each self-efficacy skill. Mixed ANOVAs were run for each skill separately to identify significant interactions in the self-efficacy pre- and post-tests scores displayed by participants in both groups.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics for Overall Self-efficacy

Table 1 presents overall descriptive statistics for the pre-test and post-test self-efficacy scores in the QESE scale.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for self-efficacy in pre and post QESE questionnaires

	Group	Mean	SD	n
Pretest QESE	L2-Only	3.84	.76	29
	L1-L2	3.74	.97	29
Posttest QESE	L2-Only	3.94	.90	29
	L1-L2	4.26	1.02	29

Participants in the experimental (L2-Only) group did not noticeably improve their self-efficacy perceptions from the pre-test ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .76$) to the post-test ($M = 3.94$, $SD = .90$), which suggests that overall, the intervention did not modify their reported self-efficacy. In the control (L1-L2) group, there is a noticeable difference between pre-test scores ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .97$) and post-test scores ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.02$). It is evident that the overall self-efficacy of the control group (L1-L2 group) increased. As the control group's self-efficacy pre-test scores were slightly lower than the scores for the experimental group, learners in the control group increased their scores in the post-test in more than half a scale point (.52).

Descriptive Statistics for Self-efficacy in the Four Skills

Pre- and post-test scores obtained by the experimental and control group in relation to self-efficacy in the four linguistic skills in the QESE questionnaire can be seen in Table 2 in the next page.

When comparing self-efficacy mean scores in the four skills, there are a number of findings worth noting. Post-test data showed increases in all the skills, across groups. However, self-efficacy gains were larger in the L1-L2 group than in the L2-Only group, across skills. For example, listening self-efficacy scores in the L1-L2 group went from $M = 3.77$ ($SD = 1.05$) in the pre-test to $M = 4.21$ ($SD = 1.04$) in the post-test. In writing self-efficacy, these scores went from $M = 3.76$ ($SD = 1.18$) to $M = 4.27$ ($SD = 1.16$). In relation to the speaking skill, it is interesting to notice that self-efficacy increased more in the L1-L2 group. The L1-L2 group scored $M = 3.65$ ($SD = 1.11$) in the pre-test, a value that increased in the post-test ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.08$).

The skill in which the mean scores varied the most from pre-test to post-test in the L1-L2 group was reading self-efficacy. Participants' scores showed a difference of .62 scale points between pre-test ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.09$) and post-test scores ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.20$). This is in contrast with the negligible gain

made by learners in the L2-Only group (.01) in the same self-efficacy skill. Overall, the pre-test and post-test QESE scores did not vary greatly in the experimental group.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of self-efficacy in four skills

Test	Skill	Group	Mean	SD	n
QESE pre-test	Listening	L2-Only	3.79	.93	29
		L1-L2	3.77	1.05	29
	Writing	L2-Only	4.08	1.02	29
		L1-L2	3.76	1.18	29
	Reading	L2-Only	4.11	.97	29
		L1-L2	3.81	1.09	29
	Speaking	L2-Only	3.52	.86	29
		L1-L2	3.65	1.11	29
QESE post-test	Listening	L2-Only	3.91	1.06	29
		L1-L2	4.21	1.05	29
	Writing	L2-Only	4.09	1.11	29
		L1-L2	4.27	1.16	29
	Reading	L2-Only	4.12	.99	29
		L1-L2	4.43	1.20	29
	Speaking	L2-Only	3.72	.93	29
		L1-L2	4.19	1.08	29

Mixed ANOVA Results

To statistically assess the impact of an L2-Only approach on the self-efficacy of these learners, a mixed ANOVA (group x time) was run with the QESE pre-test and post-test data (Table 3 below).

Table 3. Mixed ANOVAs (group x time) for self-efficacy in each skill

Skill	F	Sig.	η^2
Listening	1.70	.197	.030
Writing	4.14	.047	.069
Reading	7.48	.008	.118
Speaking	1.79	.186	.031

A significant group*time interaction was observed, $F(1, 56) = 4.86, p = .032$, and descriptive statistics suggested that the L1-L2 (control) group made significant gains in the post-test. To further identify differences in terms of linguistic skills in the control group, four mixed ANOVAs were run (Table 3). Significant differences in the control group were found for the reading skill – $F(1, 56) = 7.48, p = .008, \eta^2 = .12$ – and the writing skill – $F(1, 56) = 4.14, p = .047, \eta^2 = .069$ –, with the reading skill data yielding the highest Partial Eta squared, which suggests a medium to large effect size. Group differences in speaking and listening skills were not significant in QESE pre-test and post-test data.

Discussion

The research question posed for the present study sought to assess the impact of an L2-Only approach on the self-efficacy of secondary EFL learners. Data analysis showed that the application of an L2-Only approach in the language classroom did not increase learners' self-efficacy overall, and that an approach that included L1 use was able to significantly affect this trait. When analysing the differences between the groups in relation to each skill along with their effect size values, it can be stated that the most important changes occurred in relation to the reading skill, as the control group's reading self-efficacy significantly increased in comparison to the experimental group. Learners who receive L1 input are provided with more straightforward explanations, not only regarding specific vocabulary, but also in relation to more complex ideas, which can lead to vocabulary gains as part of reading tasks (Zhao & Macaro, 2014). Lower proficiency level learners such as the ones participating in the present study may need teacher L1 input and L1 encouragement to understand written texts and consequently increase self-efficacy. As Bandura (1994) stated, social persuasion can be used to strengthen people's self-efficacy beliefs. In the L1-L2 group, L1 input was used by the teacher to highlight the capabilities that learners had to accomplish L2 reading tasks, which may have increased their perceptions and their efforts toward completing such tasks. This was less frequent for speaking and listening tasks, as the teacher focused on textbook exercises and activities. Although it has been found that learners' self-efficacy perceptions toward reading skills is closely related to their reading proficiency (Mills et al., 2006), the use of the L1 may also increase the levels of familiarity with the tasks that are completed by low proficiency learners (Leeming, 2017), which can in turn increase self-efficacy perceptions. Learners in the L1-L2 group received encouragement in the L2 and were able to share personal experiences with the

teacher, aspects that affected their level of familiarity with the teacher and the tasks. Participants in the L2-Only group may have struggled with written sentences that were neither introduced nor discussed by means of L1 input. In contrast, the L1-L2 group received L1 instructions, explanations, and direct translations of word meanings, and this may have increased their reading self-efficacy.

Relevant gains in the L1-L2 group were also related to writing skills, as learners in this group significantly improved their self-efficacy perceptions in this measure. When learners receive L1 input on specific vocabulary, they feel more able to complete written tasks. According to Scott and De la Fuente (2008), L2 learners rely on L1 translation to perform L2 tasks, which may only take place in an environment that allows for L1 use. The L2-Only group may have perceived L2 explanations of grammar and vocabulary in writing tasks as ambiguous and complex. While this did not reduce their writing self-efficacy, it did not increase after six lessons. The finding that differences between groups were not significant for listening and speaking skills may be explained by the low proficiency level of the participants; tasks involving listening or speaking tasks were not prominent in the tasks and activities completed by both groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study sought to investigate 58 Chilean 6th grade EFL students' self-efficacy perceptions in two types of instruction approaches (L2-Only, and L1-L2 use). Findings revealed that the L1-L2 group's self-efficacy significantly increased in the post-tests in two measures, namely, reading and writing. That is, learners who received instructions and explanations in the L1 perceived themselves as being more self-efficacious in reading and writing than learners whose lessons were delivered entirely in the L2. As Bandura (1994) states, self-efficacy beliefs are developed to some extent by mastery experiences, which implies that the higher the level of success a person has in accomplishing a task, the higher the level of self-efficacy he/she will develop in relation to the task. In a learning environment that prevents teachers and learners from using the L1 – and particularly at lower proficiency levels – mastery experiences may be less frequent due to the syntactic and lexical complexity of teacher output. The possibility for learners to be part of a lesson that incorporates the L1 when the teacher provides instructions and word meanings may have positively influenced the self-assessment of these learners' writing and reading skills.

Regarding the limitations of the study, the inclusion of semi-structured interviews with learners from both groups was an initial goal of this research, as this would have included the voices of the participants and shed more light on their perceptions towards L1 and L2 use in the EFL classroom, particularly with respect to components of self-efficacy such as vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1994). However, the social crisis in Chile, which was followed by Covid-19 restrictions made it difficult to arrange such interviews. Moreover, even though studies have reported direct links between self-efficacy and learning in general educational contexts (Agustiani et al., 2016; Ahmad & Safaria, 2013; Kim et al., 2019), understanding self-efficacy and EFL learning in lower proficiency contexts will require a focus on the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and actual language learning proficiency under the two learning environments identified.

Implications for Pedagogy

Self-efficacy perceptions are a relevant aspect in EFL learning. The linguistic approach the teacher uses to teach the L2 can indeed affect learners' self-efficacy beliefs toward the language, which can in turn modify their attitudes toward the language, and their learning. The context in which learning takes place is an important feature when assessing the methodology through which the foreign language will be taught. Language teachers may benefit from being aware of the amount of L2 being used in their lessons, and the ways in which it is used. L1 explanations in certain contexts may be more meaningful to learners, particularly when they display low proficiency. It is also important to consider the strategies and materials that will be helpful for students to recognize meanings and understand topics. The use of the L2 is indeed relevant to language learning, but it must be carefully delivered in order for it to become meaningful feedback to learners. Low proficiency learners may abandon the task of making sense of what the teacher is saying, which can prompt feelings of frustration and reduced self-efficacy. As has been stated, learners' self-efficacy is also influenced by the familiarity that learners experience in the classroom (Al-Amrani, 2019; Leeming, 2017), which may be strongly influenced by the language in which the teacher communicates. In these EFL learners, exclusive use of the L2 did not increase their self-efficacy. Even though the L2 may help learners to receive adequate input to support acquisition, contextual aspects need to be considered to make informed decisions on how to use the L1 and the L2 in the EFL language classroom.

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