Comparing the Academic Self-Efficacy of English Language Learners Taking College Prep ESL, English Composition I, or English Composition II Courses at a U.S. Community College: A Quantitative Causal-Comparative Study

by

Shada Aweina

Liberty University

A Quantitative Dissertation Presented in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative, causal-comparative study investigated the academic self-efficacy of English language learner college students. The main objective was to determine whether there were differences in academic self-efficacy among English language learners enrolled in different English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. The study aimed to understand how confident English language learners feel about their abilities to perform various academic behaviors at different English course levels and how they perceive their ability to transfer and utilize language and academic skills within different levels of English courses. Using the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, data was collected from a sample of 138 English language learner college students in northern Virginia, who were evenly divided into three groups. The study analyzed the data using a one-way ANOVA with three groups at the alpha < 0.05 level. The study revealed that English language learners enrolled in college prep ESL courses demonstrated significantly higher levels of academic self-efficacy compared to their counterparts in college English composition II courses. No significant difference was observed in academic self-efficacy between English language learner students enrolled in college English composition I courses and the ones in college prep ESL or college English composition II courses. Further discussion highlighted how self-efficacy was developed among English language learner students, suggesting that factors beyond their proficiency in English, such as individual learning experiences and instructional contexts, could have influenced their academic self-efficacy beliefs. Implications of the research for stakeholders along with study limitations and recommendations for future research are addressed.

Keywords: English language learners, academic self-efficacy, college English courses

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the cherished memory of my beloved parents, Muna Alhashimy and Sabeeh Alsaedi (may they rest in peace). To my parents, as I write these words, my heart aches with a longing to share this significant moment with you. Though you may no longer walk beside me, your presence is felt in every word written, every idea explored, every milestone achieved, and every beat of my heart. This dissertation is not just a result of years of academic work, it is a way to honor the love and support you gave me that shaped my life. You believed in me even when I did not, supported my dreams with endless encouragement and selfless sacrifices. Your love, wisdom, and strength taught me the value of persistence and determination and instilled in me the belief that no dream is too big, and no obstacle is too daunting to overcome. Your love remains the compass that leads me through the challenges and successes of life. Thank you for the countless sacrifices you made, for the unconditional love you showered upon me, for believing in me, for inspiring me, and for shaping me into the person I am today. This dissertation is a testament to your enduring legacy, guiding love, and a promise to honor your memory in all my endeavors. I love you always and forever!

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To my dearest siblings, thank you for always being with me, effortlessly bridging any distance between us with your enduring love and care. Your encouraging words have been a constant source of inspiration, lifting me up each time I stumbled and restoring my strength. I love you all deeply and send my thanks with all my love to you!

To my beloved husband, Rod, and our daughters, Rula and Raniah Aweina, thank you for your unlimited support, love, patience, and understanding throughout this journey. Your belief in me has filled me with the strength and motivation needed to cross every challenge and reach this significant milestone. Rod, you have been my constant source of strength, and your limitless support has made all the difference. Rula, your lovely smile, positivity, and dedication have always fueled me with the energy to persist. Raniah, your willpower, commitment, and determination have continuously inspired me to move forward. Together, you have shown me that with the love and support of family, anything is possible. I am blessed to have each of you in my life, and I could not have achieved this milestone without you. Thank you for always standing by my side, supporting my dreams, and keeping me focused on the light at the end of the tunnel. Eventually, I realized that you have been that light, illuminating my path all along. You are my treasure in this world, and I'm proud to have such treasure. I love you so much!

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List of Abbreviations

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES)

ENG 111 – English Composition I Course (ENG-111)

ENG 112 – English Composition II Course (ENG-112)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

English Language Learner (ELL)

ESL 51 – Composition III Course (ESL-51)

ESL 52 – Reading III Course (ESL-52)

ESL 95 – Writing Support Course (ESL-95)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

United States Department of State (DOS)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative, causal-comparative study was to investigate the academic self-efficacy of English language learner (ELL) college students to determine whether there were differences in academic self-efficacy among ELLs enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep English as a second language (ESL), college English composition I, or college English composition II. This chapter provides background information on ELL students, English language education, and their impact on society. The background also includes an overview of the theoretical framework for this study. Then, the problem statement that examines the scope of the recent literature on the study topic is presented. The purpose of this study is also discussed, followed by the significance of the current study. Finally, the research question is introduced, and definitions pertinent to this study are provided.

Background

As a country established and developed by immigrants, the United States has a lengthy background in ESL education (Cavanaugh, 1996). Over time, English has proven to be a powerful tool for bridging cultural gaps (Bacquet, 2020). In today's world, students worldwide are increasingly focused on improving their English proficiency for improved outcomes (Blackmore et al., 2017). With the number of U.S. residents who speak a language other than English at home rising from 58.2 million in 2011 to over 67 million in 2021 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021), the proportion of ELLs will likely continue to grow. This demographic shift is reflected in U.S. higher education institutions, where ELL student numbers have more than tripled over the past four decades, from approximately 300,000 in 1981 to over 900,000 in the 2021 academic year (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2022).

ELLs represent a rapidly growing diverse student population in U.S. higher education institutions (E. S. Park, 2019; Peng & Patterson, 2022). This population includes adult immigrants, the children of immigrants who hold permanent residency in the U.S., and international students who come to the U.S. temporarily for educational purposes (E. S. Park, 2019). ELL students bring numerous advantages to U.S. institutions and students, such as financial contributions through tuition fees, academic advancement, increased cultural awareness, and varied campus experiences (C.-h. Wang et al., 2018).

However, ELLs pursuing higher education often encounter challenges compared to their native English-speaking peers due to differences in language, socialization, and academic skills (James Hartshorn et al., 2019; Trenkic & Warmington, 2019). They usually find it challenging to communicate effectively and express themselves in English (Ma, 2022; Namaziandost et al., 2020), and they often require support to achieve the necessary level of English proficiency to excel academically and professionally (Shi, 2018a). These challenges may lead to avoidance of interactions due to the psychological or linguistic barriers they encounter (Ma, 2022) and can significantly impact ELLs' self-efficacy, motivation, and academic performance (D. Lee et al., 2021). Therefore, given the importance of this field and the ongoing growth of ELLs in U.S. higher education institutions, various laws, regulations, studies, and theories have been developed to enhance ESL education for language learners, stakeholders, and society.

Historical Overview

ESL education roots trace back to the first North American settlements, where it played a significant role (Cavanaugh, 1996). Early settlers realized the need for a united community and recognized the importance of literacy education in achieving it (Cavanaugh, 1996). In 1642, Massachusetts passed a law requiring children to be taught how to read, mainly to understand

religious principles and the essential laws of the country (Monaghan, 1988). Later, the Dutch residents of New Amsterdam and Lutheran Swedes established their schools, which, over time, became integrated into the surrounding English-speaking community (Cavanaugh, 1996). In 1647, every town was mandated to have a teacher responsible for teaching English reading and writing (Carleton, 1961). While challenges like the diversity of languages and religions among immigrants and westward migration complicated establishing a uniform education system, early colonial leaders continued to promote widespread literacy (Cavanaugh, 1996).

In the 18th century, leaders like Benjamin Franklin highlighted the significance of Americanization through education, believing that teaching English was essential for political reasons (Cavanaugh, 1996). The American Revolution further emphasized the necessity of providing secular schools to all citizens, as industrial accidents and production costs created a sense of urgency for everyone to learn English (Cavanaugh, 1996). After the revolution, it became necessary to ensure that all citizens learned English and had a common understanding of the republican government through public schools (Cavanaugh, 1996).

In the 1830s and 1840s, leaders like Horace Mann campaigned to establish free public schools (Carleton, 1961; Groen, 2008). In 1853, W.C. Larrabee proposed an Americanization policy to assimilate Indiana's diverse immigrant populations into united people with shared interests (Cavanaugh, 1996). In 1889, the Compulsory Education Law was passed, requiring mandatory attendance and English-only instruction in American schools (Cavanaugh, 1996).

In 1917, a bill was passed that became law, which involved testing immigrants for their literacy (Cavanaugh, 1996). After World War I, the dominant view was that immigrants needed to learn English to understand the U.S. Constitution and government and assimilate into American culture (Cavanaugh, 1996; R. E. Park, 1926). In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed the

Bilingual Education Act, recognizing the need for effective ESL education for non-English speakers to prevent poverty and cultural isolation caused by inadequate English training (Sung, 2017). During the 1970s, researchers emphasized the study of non-linguistic outcomes of learning a second or foreign language (Ferris, 2018; C. Wang et al., 2013).

Preparing for the 21st century, the National Standards in Foreign Language Education (1996) developed the “five Cs” statements, highlighting the importance of focusing on communication, communities, comparisons, connections, and culture in foreign language education. The main objective of these standards was to provide a clear outline of what language learners could do and what actions they needed to take to show improvement in each measure (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 2023b). The project further explained how learners who demonstrate progress in these five areas can meet their objectives and use foreign languages (Moss & Gambrell, 2023).

Later, the National Council for State Supervisors for Languages and ACTFL presented “Can-Do Statements” to guide language learners on how to set language and intercultural learning goals and track their progress toward achieving them (ACTFL, 2023a). These statements clearly describe how learners can use their language skills and cultural understanding to demonstrate their intercultural communicative competence across various levels and approaches (ACTFL, 2023a). The Can-Do statements, along with the five-Cs framework, have been closely linked to the ACTFL (2012a) Performance Descriptors for Language Learners and ACTFL (2012b) Proficiency Guidelines 2012 to continue providing valuable tools for evaluating and assessing language learners' abilities (ACTFL, 2023a; Moss & Gambrell, 2023).

Social Impact

In modern society, English has become an essential global language for business, economic, political, and cultural communication (C. Wang & Sun, 2020; X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). It fosters relationships and enables intercultural interactions between individuals, societies, and the environment (X. Chen et al., 2022). Thus, it is essential to examine the ability of ELLs to carry out diverse tasks in U.S. higher education classrooms due to their active involvement in various societal activities such as working, voting, and participating in civic and social events (E. S. Park, 2019), which significantly contribute to U.S. economy, education, and society.

Performing various tasks using English improves ELLs' employability and academic success in the United States. English proficiency is often a job requirement in countries such as China, while English-speaking countries prioritize it for college admission and the work hiring process (Robles, 2012; C. Wang & Sun, 2020). In a survey of roughly 50 business executives, verbal and nonverbal communication are deemed the top soft skills necessary in the workplace and global business environment (Cavanagh et al., 2019; Robles, 2012). It is a crucial interpersonal skill and a critical factor in preventing tragedies and disasters within the financial industry, healthcare, and the broader environment, whereas the absence of such communication has been a significant contributor to these incidents (Robles, 2012). Thus, students worldwide prioritize international studies to enhance their English ability and secure higher-paying job opportunities after graduation (Blackmore et al., 2017). Mastering English competence allows graduates aiming for positions in English-dominant organizations to be capable of presenting themselves proficiently in English; otherwise, they may fail in the hiring process (Clokie & Fourie, 2016).

ELLs in higher education are vital contributors to the economy and international competitiveness of the United States. They significantly contribute to the U.S. economy through tuition and workforce engagement (E. S. Park, 2019; C.-h. Wang et al., 2018). For example, during the 2021-2022 academic year alone, international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities contributed $33.8 billion to the U.S. economy and supported 335,423 jobs, those studying at U.S. community colleges contributed $1.3 billion to the U.S. economy and supported 6,095 jobs, and those who enrolled in English language programs at U.S. colleges and universities contributed $241.9 million to the U.S. economy and supported 2,250 jobs (United States Department of State [DOS], n.d.).

Moreover, the inclusion of ELL students is essential for the progress of U.S. education and society. They bring numerous benefits to American universities, including financial contributions through tuition fees, academic contributions, cultural awareness, and diverse experiences (C.-h. Wang et al., 2018). Many educational programs rely on ELLs' engagement in research, as their varied perspectives can contribute to the global nature of American classrooms and enhance the standard of teaching, research, and discourse on campus (Institute of International Education, 2017). Their diverse viewpoints and experiences improve American universities and local communities, broaden U.S. students' perspectives, and strengthen American institutions' competitive advantage in the global economy (DOS, n.d.). ELLs' developed skills and abilities prepare them to become future leaders capable of collaborating across languages, cultures, and boundaries to address common world issues (DOS, n.d.). Developing the ability to communicate in English would allow access to various academic resources (X. Chen et al., 2022) and promote active community engagement that fosters social connections and contributes to building a more unified community (Cavanagh et al., 2019).

This highlights the growing demand for proficient English-speaking college students and emphasizes the need to understand instructional factors, like self-efficacy, which can enhance ELLs' public speaking skills (X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019) and contribute to improved course performance and outcomes (Cavanagh et al., 2019). High self-efficacy in English communication promotes individuals' active learning, leading to a confident and skilled workforce capable of applying skills acquired in academic environments to various life, educational, and professional situations (Cavanagh et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical framework is based on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT), which emphasizes the significance of students' self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1986), cognitive processes and social interactions play a vital role in shaping individuals' beliefs, ideas, and actions. SCT highlights the role of social influences in shaping individuals' behavior and perception and provides valuable insights into how individuals learn from and interact with their environment (Bandura, 1986). During the development of SCT, Bandura's (1977, 1982, 1997, 2004) research has emphasized the importance of self-efficacy beliefs and their relationship with behavior, indicating that perceived self-efficacy is central to motivation, behavior, and achievement (Bandura, 1977, 1982).

Bandura's research on self-efficacy has been expanding for over 20 years, with many related studies emerging from his social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997; Bandura et al., 1999; Zimmerman, 2000). Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as "a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Such beliefs can be developed from mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states and can significantly influence individuals' behavior, motivation, level of

success, emotional states, choice of activities, effort, and persistence (Bandura, 1977; Bandura et al., 1999; Schunk, 1989; Zimmerman, 1995). Perceived self-efficacy reflects individuals' ability to perform various tasks, focusing on individuals' assessments of what they can do instead of what they will do (Bandura, 2006). This belief has comparable effects across ethnicity, gender, and social class factors (Bandura et al., 1999). Bandura (1997) emphasized the significance of self-efficacy for advanced undergraduate or graduate courses or professional use, indicating that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be healthier, more productive, and generally more successful than those with lower self-efficacy beliefs.

Self-efficacy has been recognized as a crucial psychological factor positively impacting students' academic achievement across disciplines, including language learning in college settings (Anam & Stracke, 2020; Y. Wang, Shen, & Yu, 2021). It is essential in shaping ELLs' overall academic achievements (Shi, 2021), language proficiency (Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019), and motivation (Habók & Magyar, 2020). Self-efficacy predicts achievement in all language skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Nguyen & Habók, 2022). Language learners with high self-efficacy beliefs tend to be more motivated to take on and put effort into challenging tasks, persist in facing challenges, and experience less stress when faced with difficult situations; conversely, those with low self-efficacy may avoid challenging tasks, give up quickly, and feel discouraged, anxious, or overwhelmed when faced with complex tasks (Alrabai, 2018; Anam & Stracke, 2020; Z. Liu, 2022).

As stated, the issue of ELLs' development is not current in the U.S. educational system, and their impact on U.S. cultural, societal, and economic advancement is widely acknowledged. As one of the most impactful factors in positive psychology, self-efficacy has become a topic of interest among second language acquisition scholars (Goetze & Driver, 2022). While prior

research has explored the effects of self-efficacy on ELLs' academic development in different fields (Goetze & Driver, 2022), there is still a lack of research on ELL self-efficacy in general and in performing multiple academic tasks across various educational levels.

Problem Statement

Numerous studies have acknowledged the essential role of self-efficacy in ESL education and its association with ELL language attainment, academic performance (e.g., Alrabai, 2018), motivation (e.g., Anam & Stracke, 2020), involvement (e.g., Z. Liu, 2022), self-regulated learning (e.g., D. Lee et al., 2021), and language anxiety (e.g., Bensalem, 2018). Moreover, ESL scholars have examined the overall language proficiency self-efficacy of ELLs (e.g., C. Wang & Sun, 2020), and specific English skill self-efficacy, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and their impact on ELLs' English achievement (e.g., Kitikanan & Sasimonton, 2017). Research has also investigated ELL student self-efficacy beliefs in U.S. (e.g., Shi, 2018a, 2021) and international (e.g., Alrabai, 2018) college English programs.

However, there is a lack of literature that examines the ELL population (David & Kanno, 2021; Ferris, 2018), a dearth of empirical research publications on ELLs' higher education experiences and outcomes (E. S. Park, 2019), and few self-efficacy research applied to the field of language learning (Alrabai, 2018; Nguyen & Habók, 2022). Most existing studies focus only on ELLs in ESL classes, and it is relatively rare to find studies involving post-ESL program surveys, which would offer objective insights into ELL academic satisfaction with language learning experiences and preparedness for further education (Ferris, 2018). Significant gaps in the literature have been found in addressing ELLs' needs at higher education institutions, and there is a serious need to find effective ways to support the success of ELLs as they transition to college-level studies (D. Lee et al., 2021). A gap in the literature is identified in understanding

the academic self-efficacy beliefs of ELLs in diverse educational levels and regional backgrounds (Alrabai, 2018).

Alrabai (2018) called for further research exploring ELLs' academic self-efficacy in various educational levels and regional backgrounds. Ma (2022) called for studies examining the association between positive emotional constructs, like self-efficacy, and language proficiency in writing, reading, and listening. Similarly, Shi (2021) called for research investigating factors affecting college ELLs' self-efficacy and their correlation with proficiency in ESL classroom settings. Therefore, examining ELL college students' academic self-efficacy across various college English course levels can contribute to addressing this gap.

Research confirmed that students (e.g., Cavanagh et al., 2019) and ELL students (e.g., Chauvin et al., 2020) with high levels of self-efficacy can achieve success in both academia and the workplace along with developing motivation to learn and transfer academic competencies to various life, educational, and professional environments (Cavanagh et al., 2019; Chauvin et al., 2020). However, the problem is that the literature has not fully addressed how self-efficacious ELLs feel about performing various academic behaviors in different college English course levels and how they perceive their ability to transfer and utilize the acquired language and academic skills in different educational programs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative, causal-comparative study was to investigate the academic self-efficacy of ELL college students to determine whether there were differences in academic self-efficacy among ELLs enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. The independent variable was the level of academic English course, comprising three groups: college prep ESL,

college English composition I, and college English composition II. The dependent variable was the college academic mean self-efficacy scores of ELLs.

The independent variable was the level of academic English course that ELL students were enrolled in during the spring semester of the 2024 year. This categorical variable comprised three academic English course groups: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. College prep ESL is an advanced ESL writing and reading course level within the college ESL program, designed to enhance ELL students' English writing and reading skills and prepare them for success in college-level courses (J. Lee, 2021). College English composition I is a foundational college-level English composition course, designed to develop undergraduate students' skills in expository writing and familiarize them with critical thinking and the essential principles of academic writing (Spence, 2018). College English composition II is an intermediate college-level English composition course, designed to engage students in advanced techniques within the writing processes and products, focusing on conducting primary and secondary research, constructing extended texts, and enhancing critical reading skills (Hess, 2000).

The dependent continuous variable was the college academic mean self-efficacy scores of ELLs as measured by the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (Owen & Froman, 1988). College academic self-efficacy refers to college students' confidence in their ability to perform various academic behaviors (Owen & Froman, 1988).

The population of the study included ELL college students. ELLs are students whose primary language is not English and acquiring English language skills and knowledge, regardless of their participation in a language program (NCES, 2023b). For this study, ELL students were selected from three different academic English course levels offered by the college academic

programs and were evenly divided into three groups: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II.

Significance of the Study

Self-efficacy, one's beliefs in the ability to perform tasks, is essential in promoting ELLs' motivation and academic success (Shi, 2018a). It has consistently been identified as a motivational factor that predicts performance, persistence in learning behavior, and goal achievement in various domains, including language learning (Chauvin et al., 2020). Individuals with high self-efficacy are more motivated to learn and succeed in academia and the workplace and are more willing to transfer academic competencies to various life, academic, and professional environments (Cavanagh et al., 2019; Chauvin et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding the college academic self-efficacy of ELLs in academic ESL program and college-level English composition courses is significant for both ELLs and educators.

Focusing on self-efficacy would assist ELLs in achieving the English proficiency required for practical use in daily and academic communication (Shi, 2018a). It would also assist teachers in improving their approaches to teaching communicative language and designing their curriculum (Ma, 2022), providing appropriate language instruction (Shi, 2018b), enhancing students' communication skills (Cavanagh et al., 2019; Ma, 2022), facilitating the transfer of these skills, and preparing students for success at school, at work, and in life (Cavanagh et al., 2019).

Understanding the academic self-efficacy of ELLs would assist in determining how self-efficacious ELLs feel about performing various academic behaviors in different college English course levels, how they perceive their abilities to transfer and utilize the acquired language and academic skills in different educational programs, and how well they are prepared to understand

course materials, communicate with course instructors and peers, and participate in multiple academic and social contexts using English. It would also help identify weaknesses from language insufficiency that ELLs may encounter at different educational levels. This knowledge would empower educators' ability to plan better practices, equip ELLs with practical tools that enhance their academic self-efficacy, and create a supportive learning environment that promotes students' educational needs and prepares them for success in academic and professional pursuits.

This study holds significance for educational stakeholders who seek to make evidence-based decisions for the most effective and efficient educational setting for all learners. It offers valuable insights into the academic self-efficacy of ELLs taking English courses in U.S. colleges at various educational levels. The study outcomes contribute to the existing literature on understanding ELL college students' self-efficacy and academic success, as well as the literature related to the development of educators' instructional practices and the improvement of college ESL programs, leading to ELLs' academic and professional development as well as instructional and ESL program improvement.

Research Question

RQ: Is there a difference in college academic mean self-efficacy scores among English language learners enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II?

Definitions

1. *College Academic Self-Efficacy* - College academic self-efficacy refers to college students' confidence in their ability to perform various academic behaviors (Owen & Froman, 1988).

2. *College English Composition I* - College English composition I is a foundational college-level English composition course, designed to develop undergraduate students' skills in expository writing and familiarize them with critical thinking and the essential principles of academic writing (Spence, 2018).
3. *College English Composition II* - College English composition II is an intermediate college-level English composition course, designed to engage students in advanced techniques within the writing processes and products, focusing on conducting primary and secondary research, constructing extended texts, and enhancing critical reading skills (Hess, 2000).
4. *College Prep ESL* - College prep ESL is an advanced ESL writing and reading course level within the college ESL program, designed to enhance ELL students' English writing and reading skills and prepare them for success in college-level courses (J. Lee, 2021).
5. *English as a Second Language (ESL) Program* - ESL program is an academic language program that provides "intensive instruction in English for students with limited English proficiency" (NCES, 1999, p. 350).
6. *English language learner (ELL)* - ELLs are students whose primary language is not English and acquiring English language skills and knowledge, regardless of their participation in a language program (NCES, 2023b).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review presents the essential aspects of ELL college student development, describes ELL self-efficacy and the factors that influence it, and reviews the relationship between ELL students' self-efficacy and academic success. The chapter opens with the theoretical framework. This study is grounded in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory that favors a causation model involving individuals' self-efficacy beliefs and the effect of this belief on motivation, well-being, and success. A thorough review of the literature pertinent to ELL college students, college ESL programs, factors affecting ELL students' academic success, motivational approaches for ELL students, self-efficacy in educational contexts, and self-efficacy of ELLs in academic contexts and its relation to their academic success complete the chapter which ends with a summary.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory

This study incorporates Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT). The theory suggests that cognitive processes and social interactions affect individuals' beliefs, ideas, and actions (Bandura, 1986). SCT highlights the role of social influences in shaping individuals' behavior and perception (Bandura, 1986). It provides insights into how individuals learn from their environment and interact with it, indicating that individuals possess cognitive abilities to self-organize, self-reflect, self-regulate, and control their goals based on the changes in their surrounding environment (Bandura, 1982, 1997, 2004; Bandura et al., 1999). Bandura's SCT provides a theoretical basis for the belief that self-efficacy positively impacts academic success

by enhancing learners' sense of well-being and their ability to persist in confronting challenging academic tasks, leading to more efficient use of acquired knowledge and skills (Bandura, 2011).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is “a belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). It is central to motivation, behavior, and achievement and could significantly influence subsequent achievement (Bandura, 1977, 1982). Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to be motivated to take on challenging tasks, persist in facing obstacles and setbacks, and experience less stress and anxiety when faced with difficult situations; in contrast, those with low self-efficacy may avoid challenges, give up quickly, and feel anxious or overwhelmed when faced with complex tasks (Bandura, 1977, 1982).

Through literature, self-efficacy is defined as an individual’s belief in the ability to successfully perform a specific task or accomplish a particular goal (Zimmerman, 2000). In academics, perceived self-efficacy is individuals’ assessment of their ability to plan and carry out actions that lead to achieving specific educational goals (Bandura, 1977; Schunk, 1989). Self-efficacy is not a fixed characteristic and can be obtained through learning (Bandura, 1982; Butler, 1998).

Therefore, prioritizing the acquisition and development of self-efficacy within individuals and communities is crucial (Butler, 1998; X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). The significance of self-efficacy lies in its role in helping individuals achieve their goals and overcome learning challenges (Alrabai, 2018; X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019) as well as in easing the transfer of skills from one situation to another, such as transitioning from an educational to a professional

work environment (Bandura et al., 1999; Cavanagh et al., 2019; Morin & Latham, 2000; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Sources of Self-Efficacy

Bandura believes that perceived self-efficacy is derived from four primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1977; Bandura et al., 1999; Claxton & Dolan, 2022; McAuley et al., 2011).

Mastery Experiences. Mastery experiences, or past performance accomplishments, are the foundation of Bandura's self-efficacy philosophy (Usher, 2009). These experiences are considered the most influential among the four self-efficacy sources and the most significant cause of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2004; El-Abd & Chaaban, 2021; Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019; Usher, 2009; Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021; Webb-Williams, 2018; X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019).

Mastery experiences are past success or failure experiences in a particular field that often influence individuals' long-term beliefs (Bandura, 1977; Usher, 2009; X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). These experiences are connected to people's awareness of their ability to perform a particular task effectively. They are influenced not only by individuals' perceptions of their knowledge but also by the task's difficulty level and the effort they are willing to put forth to complete it (X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). Successful experiences increase individuals' self-efficacy, while failures decrease it (Webb-Williams, 2018; X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). When students achieve success, they develop a strong belief in their abilities. They are more likely to self-regulate their learning, such as monitoring their behavior, considering what factors influence their behavior, and evaluating the impact of their actions (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994).

Self-efficacy and personal accomplishments can create a cycle; as such, increased self-efficacy leads to successful performances, boosting one's self-efficacy in a particular field (Bandura, 1977; Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021). For example, if individuals complete a difficult task, they are more likely to believe they can achieve similar functions in the future, leading to increased self-efficacy and vice versa (Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021). Certain kinds of performance accomplishments appear to have a more profound effect on self-efficacy than others (Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021). For instance, early or severe failure can significantly weaken one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021). Likewise, an easy success followed by loss can promptly discourage individuals and reduce their self-efficacy (Bandura, 2004). Conversely, an individual's self-efficacy beliefs can rapidly improve by achieving personal success in a particular field (Bandura, 1977).

Vicarious Experiences. The second source of self-efficacy is vicarious experiences (Alrabai, 2018; Bandura, 1977). These experiences are defined as individuals' observation of and comparison to others with similar abilities succeeding or failing at a task, leading them to develop a belief that they can also achieve similar outcomes (Alrabai, 2018; Bandura, 1977; Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021; Wilde & Hsu, 2019). That is, observing someone else with comparable capabilities succeed in completing a task can increase an individual's self-efficacy, while watching someone else fail can decrease it (Bandura, 1977; El-Abd & Chaaban, 2021; Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021). While performance accomplishment is considered the primary and the most influential source of self-efficacy, it is followed by vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1977; El-Abd & Chaaban, 2021; Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021). Although vicarious experiences impact self-efficacy, they are not as influential as personal experiences because they are based on observational experiences, not personal accomplishments (Bandura, 1977).

Social Persuasion. The third source of self-efficacy is social persuasion (Bandura, 2004; El-Abd & Chaaban, 2021). Social persuasion, also known as verbal persuasion, is defined as suggestions, feedback, or words of encouragement that individuals receive from others to help them overcome challenges that they may have faced in the past (Alrabai, 2018; Bandura, 1977). Social persuasion can increase individuals' persistence in the face of challenges and self-doubt, leading them to apply more effort to achieve success (Bandura, 2004). Positive feedback and encouragement can increase an individual's self-efficacy and achievements, while negative feedback and criticism can decrease them (Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021). Although social persuasion impacts individuals' self-efficacy, it is less impactful than mastery and vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1977; Webb-Williams, 2018).

Physiological and Emotional States. Physiological and emotional states refer to the impact of anxiety, stress, vulnerability, tension, or depression on one's belief in the ability to succeed in a specific field (Bandura, 1977, 2004). Individuals' ability to manage their emotional stress reactions, such as anxiety, during task performance is connected to their physiological and affective state (Webb-Williams, 2018). Individuals often judge their ability to perform well in challenging or stressful situations, leading to increased feelings of vulnerability and decreased confidence in the ability to accomplish a task (Bandura, 2004). For example, in physical activities, people usually read their emotional states, such as fatigue, aches, and pains, as signs of low physical ability (Bandura, 2004). Positive emotions can increase an individual's self-efficacy, while negative emotions can decrease it (Wangwongwiroj & Yasri, 2021).

Impact of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is crucial in affecting student engagement, level of effort, performance, and choices regarding courses and future career paths (Webb-Williams, 2018). It significantly

predicts academic achievement in various environments and groups (Ayllón et al., 2019). As Bandura et al. (1999) stated, self-efficacy beliefs have comparable effects across ethnicity, gender, and social class factors, and these factors often become less predictive of outcomes when self-efficacy beliefs are controlled. Students perceived self-efficacy influences the career paths they pursue, the college programs they consider, and the career options they explore more than their actual academic performance (Bandura et al., 2001). Individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to set motivating goals and be committed to achieving them, expect positive results, cope with obstacles, and find ways to overcome them (Bandura, 2004; Usher, 2009). Bandura (1991, 2004) suggested that self-efficacy beliefs significantly impact individuals' behavior, motivation, and level of success. These beliefs can control individual functioning through cognitive, motivational, emotional, and selection processes (Bandura, 2004).

Cognitive Processes. Cognitive strategies, like goal setting and dedication, can be influenced by individuals' level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982; Shi, 2018a). Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to picture successful outcomes and set sound goals, perceiving challenges as manageable to overcome (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). That is, when individuals establish high goals for themselves, their self-efficacy has both direct and indirect effects on their performance accomplishments; conversely, individuals who possess a low level of self-efficacy tend to imagine situations of failure and focus on potential obstacles, leading them to establish lower goals and ultimately achieving lower outcomes (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zimmerman et al., 1992).

Motivational Processes. Self-efficacy plays a significant role in determining individuals' motivation levels, as their level of persistence is often based on their belief in their ability to attain their goals (Bandura, 2004; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Self-efficacy is an essential factor in

motivation that can generate, enhance, and sustain motivation (Cave et al., 2018; Schunk, 1991). Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are determined and motivated to achieve their goals and overcome difficulties, while those who lack confidence in their ability to achieve specific outcomes, their motivation to persist and overcome obstacles can be weakened or eliminated (Bandura, 1977, 2000; Cave et al., 2018; El-Abd & Chaaban, 2021).

Affective Processes. Self-efficacy impacts individuals' affective processes (Webb-Williams, 2018). Individuals often base their decisions on their perception of control over stressors and their ability to manage them (Webb-Williams, 2018). This can result in developing a feeling of stress or confidence in overcoming negative thoughts when faced with challenging tasks (Bandura, 2004). Individuals with confidence in their ability experience less stress and anxiety when faced with difficult situations; conversely, individuals with low self-efficacy may avoid challenges, give up quickly, and feel anxious or overwhelmed when faced with demanding tasks (Bandura, 1982, 2004; Cavanagh et al., 2019).

Selection Processes. Self-efficacy influences the process of selecting activities and learning environments, which in turn impacts the acquisition of knowledge and the development of specific skills over others (Bandura, 2004). Individuals tend to choose activities and environments that align with their perceived competence and capabilities (Bandura, 2004). The level of self-efficacy can come with significant stressors that people may be hesitant to accept; as a result, they often choose easy or mediator activities that they could manage directly to avoid the performance expectations and complex duties that accompany personal control (Bandura, 2000).

Self-Efficacy and Language Learning

In language learning, self-efficacy studies revolve around various factors, including language learning strategies, language anxiety, motivation, and language achievement (Asakereh & Dehghannezhad, 2015). Studies indicated significant correlations between self-efficacy levels and successful performance in language learning tasks across various foreign language domains (e.g., P.-H. P. Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009). Research revealed that learners with higher self-efficacy develop higher language proficiency (e.g., Asakereh & Dehghannezhad, 2015; Hetthong & Teo, 2013; P. P.-H. Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Mills et al., 2006; Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019), lower foreign language anxiety (e.g., Bárkányi, 2021), effective use of language learning strategies (e.g., Magogwe & Oliver, 2007), and willingness to engage in and put forth more effort when faced with complex tasks (e.g., Anam & Stracke, 2020). Although students may receive the same language input, differences in self-efficacy can explain why some are more successful than others in learning a new language (Kutuk et al., 2022a).

Therefore, the impact of self-efficacy must be considered. It focuses on one's future potential (Marsh et al., 2019) and shapes students' academic and career paths (Bandura et al., 2001). Higher student self-efficacy leads to enhanced academic achievement and successful completion of educational requirements, increased consideration of various career options, and a greater ability to persist through challenges in college and career pursuits (Bandura et al., 2001). Thus, understanding students' self-efficacy beliefs is crucial, given the significance of self-efficacy in promoting students' academic and social success (X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019).

Related Literature

English Language Learner College Students

ELLs are a growing diverse student population in U.S. higher education institutions (E. S. Park, 2019; Peng & Patterson, 2022; Shi, 2018b; I. Wang et al., 2017). Their level of academic

English proficiency is often considered insufficient by the college they attend to enable them to succeed in regular college courses (David & Kanno, 2021). As a result, they are often placed in college ESL programs to improve their English language skills and learning outcomes (E. S. Park, 2019). However, the study of ELLs attending community colleges and the impact of ESL programs on them has received limited attention (David & Kanno, 2021). Likewise, second-language learning and teaching research did not provide efficient solutions for enhancing language learners' motivation, autonomy, and performance (Shi, 2021). This can be related to the need to address students' unique learning needs, as well as their self-efficacy and goals (Shi, 2021). There is a serious need to find effective ways to support the success of ELLs as they transition to college studies (D. Lee et al., 2021). Also, it is essential to comprehend their experiences and the factors influencing their learning process to foster supportive learning environments that meet their goals and promote their academic success (Peng & Patterson, 2022). Therefore, understanding ELLs' characteristics and needs can help teachers tailor their instruction to meet students' individual needs and goals and help them succeed in their language learning journey (E. S. Park, 2019; Peng & Patterson, 2022).

English Language Learner Characteristics

ELLs are students whose primary language is not English and acquiring English language skills and knowledge, regardless of their participation in a language program (NCES, 2023b). Their colleges often consider their academic English proficiency inadequate to enable them to succeed in regular college courses (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019). When English learners decide to pursue higher education and still require English language support, a typical approach taken by colleges is to offer ESL coursework in language learning programs (E. S. Park, 2019; Raufman et al., 2019). Participation in such programs can improve ELL students'

English reading, writing, listening, and speaking proficiency and academic learning outcomes (David & Kanno, 2021; NCES, 2023b).

The population of ELLs in community colleges presents significant heterogeneity (David & Kanno, 2021). ELLs come from diverse cultural backgrounds (Peng & Patterson, 2022) and vary in race, gender, age, primary language, citizenship status, and educational background (E. S. Park, 2019). Their English proficiency can vary from beginners to advanced, age can vary from recent high school graduates to older adults, and educational backgrounds also differ significantly, ranging from individuals with advanced degrees to those with limited or no formal schooling; goals are also diverse, ranging from pursuing a four-year college degree to simply improving English proficiency for daily communication or career advancement (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019; Raufman et al., 2019). The ELL student population in U.S. community colleges and elsewhere primarily includes adult immigrants, children of immigrants, and international students (David & Kanno, 2021; J. Lee, Kim & Su, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019; Raufman et al., 2019).

Adult Immigrants. Adult immigrants are students who have moved from another country to the United States and have obtained permanent residency. They are older and may or may not have received English language instruction in their home country's educational institutions. Such students usually travel to school, attend school part-time, have dependents, and have work and family responsibilities. These factors can make it challenging to stay dedicated to their education and achieve academic goals (J. Lee, Kim & Su, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019; Raufman et al., 2019).

Children of Immigrants. Children of immigrants are students who were either born in the U.S. or a foreign country but have raised and attended some levels of U.S. K-12 schooling.

They may be younger and proficient in spoken English. However, they may require additional assistance to fully comprehend and participate in English-based courses due to interference from their first language and speaking a language other than English at home. These students are more likely to be the first in their families to attend college, move frequently, attend schools with fewer resources, and require support to access courses taught in English (J. Lee, Kim & Su, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019; Raufman et al., 2019).

International Students. International students are individuals who have traveled to the United States from another country to pursue a postsecondary education. Usually, these students have finished their high school studies in their home country and hold a secondary diploma. They are temporarily present in the United States (J. Lee, Kim & Su, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019; Raufman et al., 2019).

These variations can influence ELLs' experiences, motivation, progress, and attitudes toward learning English (E. S. Park, 2019; Peng & Patterson, 2022). For example, cultural identity is linked to motivation in learning ESL and language competence; solid cultural identity may reduce English proficiency, but the motivation to learn English could lessen this influence (Peng & Patterson, 2022). Meanwhile, female students are found to progress further than male students in the ESL sequence, while male students placed in ESL programs with a high school diploma are more likely to achieve English 101 than male students without a high school diploma; still, this linkage does not exist among female students placed in ESL program (E. S. Park, 2019).

Despite these variations, ELL students commonly share one goal, as they primarily strive to attain a level of English proficiency that would enable them to communicate confidently and effectively with English-speaking individuals (Ma, 2022; Namaziandost et al., 2020). They often

desire meaningful interactions and deeper engagement with the English-speaking community (X. Chen et al., 2022; Namaziandost et al., 2020; Zhai & Razali, 2022).

English Language Learners' Objectives

Attaining communicative competence stands as the ultimate objective for individuals learning a second language (Bárkányi, 2021; Kabir & Sponseller, 2020), as well as an essential aspect of the desired outcomes for ELLs (X. Chen et al., 2022; Namaziandost et al., 2020).

Communicative competence in English involves using the four English language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Chauvin et al., 2020). These skills find practical application in people's daily lives, such as engaging in conversations that involve listening and speaking (Chauvin et al., 2020). However, even though acquiring all four English skills is essential (Robert & Meenakshi, 2022), speaking is considered the most significant for ELLs (Robert & Meenakshi, 2022; Tan et al., 2020).

ELLs' primary goal in learning English as a second or foreign language is to effectively communicate in conversations using English (Bárkányi, 2021; X. Chen et al., 2022; Ma, 2022; Metwally et al., 2022; Namaziandost et al., 2020; Zhai & Razali, 2022). They often prioritize speaking fluency that would allow them to effectively communicate with others and meaningfully express their thoughts without interruptions or barriers in various academic and social situations (X. Chen et al., 2022; Ma, 2022; Namaziandost et al., 2020; Robert & Meenakshi, 2022; Tan et al., 2020).

This prioritization may come from the primary purpose of learning a language, which is to communicate meaningfully using the language (Metwally et al., 2022). Since speaking is the primary means of communication, it is considered the most crucial skill for ELLs (Ma, 2022; Robert & Meenakshi, 2022). This preference may also come from the growing need for

individuals who can engage with people from diverse cultural backgrounds in today's globalized world (Sardegna et al., 2018). Employers, for example, believe that individuals can acquire knowledge of various writing styles through on-the-job tasks, but the ability to communicate in multiple languages, self-confidence, and positive attitudes are crucial employability skills (Zainuddin et al., 2019).

Thus, college ESL programs are found to provide language coursework for ELL students to assist them in overcoming language barriers and prepare them for success in college-level studies and professional pursuits (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019).

College English as a Second Language Programs in U.S. Colleges

College ESL programs are academic language programs that provide “intensive instruction in English for students with limited English proficiency” (NCES, 1999, p. 350). College ESL coursework aims to strengthen and improve ELLs' academic English writing, reading, listening, and speaking proficiency and prepare them for college-level studies and professional pursuits (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019).

ESL programs involve students whose primary language is not English, and the college considers their English proficiency needs improvement to succeed in college-level courses (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019). Colleges test the English language proficiency of ELLs through placement tests administered by the college to place them at the level appropriate to their English proficiency in the college ESL program (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019). When students take the ESL placement test, their test score is the main factor determining which coursework level they will start in the ESL program (E. S. Park, 2019).

The average length of ESL programs in U.S. colleges differs depending on the state. For example, Arizona, Florida, and Illinois have programs that last more than four semesters, while

Tennessee and Minnesota have programs that last for just over two semesters (David & Kanno, 2021). The credit hours also vary, with some programs requiring just over 15 credit hours while others require more than 40 (David & Kanno, 2021).

However, when U.S. ELLs attend college, they prefer enrolling in two-year community colleges rather than four-year colleges (David & Kanno, 2021). This preference is due to the conflict between ESL programs that offer support to ELLs and the extended duration of these programs, which can hinder ELLs from accessing college-level courses (David & Kanno, 2021).

While ESL coursework at U.S. colleges has the potential to enhance ELLs' academic English proficiency and, subsequently, promote their success in further college educational programs, there are several factors related to ESL coursework requirements that may hinder ELLs' college progress, retention, and graduation (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019). Such aspects include the placement process that may be confusing or inaccurate, the extended ESL coursework sequences that may discourage students from continuing their studies, and the ESL course content that may lack context and relevance to the academic language tasks that ELLs need to complete in their disciplinary courses (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019). This can lead students to face the challenge of meeting ESL course requirements before moving on to college-level classes (David & Kanno, 2021).

Moreover, diverse languages in the classroom can have positive and negative implications for students (Shi, 2018b). On one hand, English that naturally evolves into a common language among students from various countries can foster connections; however, in a highly linguistically diverse classroom, students who cannot comprehend each other may experience limited peer support (Shi, 2018b).

Factors Affecting English Language Learners' Academic Success

The academic success of ELLs is affected by many learning challenges compared to their peers who are native English speakers (James Hartshorn et al., 2019; D. Lee et al., 2021; Peng & Patterson, 2022; Trenkic & Warmington, 2019; C.-h. Wang et al., 2018). These challenges involve academic, cultural, institutional, linguistic, personal, and social factors, which vary depending on the student's background and current educational environments (D. Lee et al., 2021).

ELLs face difficulties adapting to new educational and social environments due to feelings of alienation, limited social support, language barriers, culture shock, and academic challenges (J. Lee, Kim & Su, 2021; Peng & Patterson, 2022; C.-h. Wang et al., 2018). They usually find it challenging to communicate in various social and academic contexts due to the variety of linguistic and academic skills (Trenkic & Warmington, 2019), including English proficiency, learning styles, the ability to acquire the language, educators' teaching approaches, course curriculum, and learning environments (Abdullah et al., 2019; Namaziandost et al., 2020).

Despite these challenges, ELLs' level of English proficiency remains a reliable predictor of their success in English-speaking college environments (Neumann et al., 2019). English proficiency is crucial for comprehending and navigating different societal, cultural, and academic aspects (E. S. Park, 2019). Limited English proficiency presents a major obstacle for ELLs in achieving academic goals in the United States, impacting their self-efficacy and ability to participate in academic activities fully (Shi, 2018b, 2021; C.-h. Wang et al., 2018), engage in class discussions, express themselves when asking or answering questions (Shi, 2021), and achieve social inclusion (Alzouebi et al., 2020).

However, achieving English competence is a complex psychological process that contains language skills, cognitive abilities, and emotional characteristics (Xu et al., 2022). It

involves the skills to convey both direct and indirect meanings and the efficacy to apply language knowledge in diverse situations to achieve multiple objectives (Cong & Li, 2022). Language learners encounter challenges in attaining such proficiency and confidence in the language due to the interplay of internal factors like learning behavior, motivation, and personality types and external factors like socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds and their exposure to the language (Getie, 2020). These variables can influence language learners' endeavors, leading to communication fear when using a foreign language for various purposes (Cong & Li, 2022).

Although ELLs reported a lack of interactions with and knowledge of native English speakers and expressed a desire for deeper engagement with them (I. Wang et al., 2017), they find it challenging to express themselves clearly and effectively through speech using English (Meenambal & Meenakshi, 2022). They often report low confidence in their ability and low willingness to communicate in English due to a fear of negative evaluations and judgments by others, which in turn hinders their learning and disrupts their transition into U.S. colleges and universities (Shirkhani & Mir Mohammad Meigouni, 2019; I. Wang et al., 2017). Even though ELLs need to transfer their language knowledge into practice, they may hesitate to apply it (I. Wang et al., 2017).

However, students' involvement goes beyond the standard concept of being fully immersed in the learning process (Mercer, 2019) and deeply involved in activities within the scope of instruction and education (Z. Liu, 2022). An involved student is entirely passionate and committed to their education, and without such engagement, achieving a meaningful education is unlikely (Y. Wang, Derakhshan, & Zhang, 2021). Individual characteristics like attitudes,

beliefs, and motivation significantly influence learning outcomes in both academic and organizational environments (Bell et al., 2017).

Motivational Approaches for English Language Learners

The demotivating situations that ELLs often encounter may hinder their ability to sustain the positive cognitive state necessary for attaining their intended learning goals (Cave et al., 2018). Thus, cognitive interventions could be essential to reduce the negative cognitive state they may encounter, such as a lack of self-efficacy (Cave et al., 2018). Therefore, studies that focus on positive emotions in English and foreign language classrooms, such as academic engagement, emotion regulation, resilience, well-being (e.g., Y. Wang, Derakhshan, & Zhang, 2021), enjoyment (e.g., Jin & Zhang, 2018; Y. Wang, Derakhshan, & Zhang, 2021; L. Zhang & Tsung, 2021), motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 2020; Le-Thi et al., 2022), and grit (e.g., Alamer, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2022; Y. Wang, Derakhshan, & Zhang, 2021), have gained popularity and are gaining more attention concerning language learning outcomes (Goetze & Driver, 2022).

As one of the most influential factors in positive psychology, significant predictors of students' academic success, and constructive feeling that encourages learners' academic involvement, self-efficacy belief has been the topic of research interest in various language contexts, such as language proficiency, language-specific skills, age groups, and language educators and learners (Goetze & Driver, 2022; Z. Liu, 2022). Learners' emotional states toward their abilities can strongly influence their motivation to pursue more challenging tasks or engage in advanced activities (Malureanu et al., 2021). Self-efficacious students demonstrate greater enthusiasm and cognitive engagement when participating in classroom activities (Z. Liu, 2022).

Self-Efficacy in Academic Contexts

Self-efficacy is one of the most impactful factors in positive psychology (Goetze & Driver, 2022) and is considered one of the most significant predictors of learners' academic achievement (Z. Liu, 2022). Learners with higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate positive thinking, expect successful outcomes, and confront challenges with determination (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Self-efficacy belief plays a vital role in motivating students and impacting their engagement, effort, and performance, as well as their decisions regarding course selection and future career paths (Webb-Williams, 2018). It involves students' ability to regulate their choice of activities and their continuous engagement and determination to persist and complete assignments or academic activities (Mercer, 2019).

Self-efficacy plays a significant role in determining the level of cognitive and physical effort individuals invest in their activities, how long they persist when confronted with challenges, and their levels of learning and achievement (Jia, 2022). It involves the feeling of self-assurance in one's abilities and willingness to pursue further education or engage in challenging tasks rather than simply being interested in general duties (Han & Wang, 2021).

Numerous research studies have explored the correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and learning outcomes, observing that students with higher self-efficacy tend to demonstrate more remarkable persistence in overcoming challenges than their peers with lower self-efficacy levels (e.g., Grigg et al., 2018; Malureanu et al., 2021). The strength of learners' interest in engaging in challenging activities can be strongly linked to their emotional states, such as self-efficacy beliefs regarding their abilities (Malureanu et al., 2021).

Regarding language learning, self-efficacy has become a topic of interest in the second language acquisition field for almost thirty years, with a consistent level of attention (Goetze & Driver, 2022). Despite limited research in the second language acquisition domain and the lack

of studies that focus on the self-efficacy beliefs of language learners, there is an increasing focus on self-efficacy research within educational settings among language educators (e.g., Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019; Fathi, Derakhshan & Arabani, 2020; Hoang & Wyatt, 2021; Liang et al., 2022) and language learners (e.g., Elahi Shirvan et al., 2018; Fathi, Derakhshan & Torabi, 2020).

Self-Efficacy Beliefs of English Language Learners in Academic Contexts

With the emergence of the positive psychology movement in second language acquisition in recent years, self-efficacy has been explored in various ESL contexts, such as target languages, language proficiency levels, and language-specific skills (Goetze & Driver, 2022). Also, there has been a growing focus on integrating both affective and cognitive factors and their connection to language-related outcomes (Ma, 2022). Confidence in using English for academic learning is crucial for language learners' academic success (C.-h. Wang et al., 2018).

Research in the second language domain found that self-efficacy is strongly associated with ELLs' academic performance (e.g., Alrabai, 2018; Asakereh & Yousofi, 2018), motivation (e.g., Bai & Wang, 2021; Cave et al., 2018; Habók & Magyar, 2020), cognitive and motivational engagement (e.g., Anam & Stracke, 2020), class comprehension, class engagement, second language achievement (e.g., Young Kyo, 2022), involvement (e.g., Z. Liu, 2022), self-regulated and learning strategies (e.g., Abbasi & Nosratinia, 2018; Bai & Wang, 2021; Habók & Magyar, 2020; D. Lee et al., 2021; Zahidi & Ong, 2023), English self-efficacy, self-efficacy in using English to learn, academic self-efficacy (e.g., C.-h. Wang et al., 2018), English language proficiency (e.g., Kitikanan & Sasimonton, 2017; Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019; Zahidi & Ong, 2023; X. Zhang, Ardasheva, Egbert, & Ullrich-French, 2019), and foreign language anxiety (e.g., Bensalem, 2018).

Research revealed that highly efficacious language learners are more likely to be motivated to take and put effort into challenging tasks, persist in facing challenges, and experience less level of anxiety when faced with difficult situations, while those with low self-efficacy may avoid challenging tasks, give up rapidly, and feel overwhelmed when faced with difficulties (Alrabai, 2018; Anam & Stracke, 2020; Z. Liu, 2022). Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to persist through complex language learning tasks, leading to greater success in the learning process (Goetze & Driver, 2022), and show less anxiety compared to those with lower self-efficacy who tend to show more concern, mainly speaking anxiety (Bárkányi, 2021).

English Language Learners' Self-Efficacy and Academic Achievements

The main goal of any educational system is to help students achieve academic success, and everyone involved in education works hard to assist learners in reaching high levels of academic achievement (S. Wang et al., 2022). It is noteworthy to mention that, in general, academic achievement refers to the result of learning and is usually evaluated through classroom grades, assessments, and external achievement tests (Gajda et al., 2017). However, regarding language education, academic achievement refers to the overall accomplishment of learners in a language course, recognizing that differences among language learners can have a significant impact on their academic achievement (S. Wang et al., 2022).

Considering the value of self-efficacy in achieving positive academic outcomes, numerous studies in the field of language education have investigated the correlation between the self-efficacy beliefs of ELLs and their academic achievements, observing statistically significant positive relationships between the two variables (e.g., Alrabai, 2018; Asakereh & Yousofi, 2018; Kutuk et al., 2022a; Y. Wang, Shen, & Yu, 2021; Young Kyo, 2022).

For example, Alrabai (2018) investigated the relationship between English self-efficacy and academic performance in the four language skills of 221 Saudi English as foreign-language undergraduate students in the English language program. The study revealed a positive association between students' English self-efficacy and language proficiency, indicating that learners' beliefs about language acquisition have positively influenced their self-efficacy and language performance (Alrabai, 2018).

Another study by Asakereh and Yousofi (2018) examined the relationship between reflective thinking, general self-efficacy, self-esteem, and academic achievement of 132 Iranian second-year English as foreign-language university students. The study revealed statistically significant positive relationships between general self-efficacy, self-esteem, and academic achievement. However, self-esteem was found to be a stronger predictor than self-efficacy of students' academic achievement, and no association was found between reflective thinking and the other variables of the study among the study participants (Asakereh & Yousofi, 2018).

Moreover, Y. Wang, Shen, and Yu (2021) explored the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, academic emotions, and language proficiency test scores of 300 Chinese English as foreign language undergraduate students. The study revealed positive associations between participants' self-efficacy and positive emotions (enjoyment and pride) and overall language test scores and negative relationships between participants' self-efficacy and negative emotions (anger, anxiety, and shame), indicating that students with high levels of self-efficacy experienced the most positive emotions, the least negative emotions, and scored highest in overall language tests, including the listening and reading subtests (Y. Wang, Shen, & Yu, 2021).

English Language Learners' Self-Efficacy and Language Proficiency

Language proficiency has been closely linked to ELLs' level of self-efficacy, which influences their academic motivation and achievement (Anam & Stracke, 2020; D. Lee et al., 2021; Shi, 2018a, 2018b, 2021; C.-h. Wang et al., 2018). Learners who feel their English proficiency is insufficient tend to experience tension and anxiety, impacting their motivation, self-confidence, self-image, and self-efficacy and hindering their ability to learn effectively (Stander, 2022). Therefore, numerous second-language acquisition studies have explored the relationship between ELLs' self-efficacy in English language proficiency and other academic factors (e.g., Bai et al., 2019; Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019; C. Wang & Sun, 2020).

For example, Ngoc Truong and Wang (2019) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy, English language proficiency, and prior learning experiences of 767 Vietnamese first-year college students. The study results revealed a significant positive correlation between participants' self-efficacy beliefs, English language proficiency, and previous learning experiences, indicating that students' English and prior learning experiences can predict their self-efficacy beliefs (Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019).

Moreover, Kitikanan and Sasimonton (2017) explored the relationship between self-efficacy and the overall achievement in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills of 36 Thai fourth-year English major university students. The study results found a positive association between self-efficacy for each skill and overall achievement, suggesting that boosting students' self-efficacy in any of the four language skills could enhance the learners' overall second language attainment (Kitikanan & Sasimonton, 2017).

Other studies investigated English skill-specific self-efficacy of ELLs, including reading (e.g., H. Li et al., 2022; McLean & Poulshock, 2018; Shehzad et al., 2019), writing (e.g., Bai & Wang, 2021; J. Chen & Zhang, 2019; Golparvar & Khafi, 2021; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Sun et al.,

2021; Wilby, 2022), listening (e.g., Demir, 2017; Fathi, Derakhshan & Torabi, 2020; Payaprom, 2023), and speaking (e.g., Demir, 2017; X. Zhang, Ardasheva, & Austin, 2020), and their relationship to other academic factors.

For example, studies found positive relationships between writing self-efficacy and second language writing achievement (e.g., Sahril & Weda, 2018). Others found that general writing self-efficacy is crucial in motivating language learners to undertake integrated writing tasks (e.g., Wilby, 2022). In addition, X. Zhang, Ardasheva, and Austin (2020) found a significant correlation between self-efficacy and speaking proficiency. Moreover, Payaprom (2023) found a significant positive correlation between ELL students' comprehension ability, listening metacognitive awareness, and self-efficacy beliefs, suggesting that improving metacognitive awareness in listening could enhance students' listening skills and boost their self-efficacy for listening tasks (Payaprom, 2023).

Others found that self-efficacy plays a significant role in predicting the language proficiency of ELLs. For instance, Golparvar and Khafi (2021) examined the predictive role of second language writing self-efficacy in the summary writing strategies used by English as a foreign language undergraduate university student and their performance in reading-to-write tasks. The study results showed that writing and performance self-efficacy significantly predicted summary writing performance; linguistic self-efficacy predicted discourse synthesis and source use strategies; and self-regulatory and performance self-efficacy predicted metacognitive process of planning and evaluation. Likewise, Karbakhsh and Ahmadi Safa (2020) found that self-efficacy predicts second language achievement in listening, speaking, reading comprehension, and grammar of English as foreign language undergraduate English students.

English Language Learners' Self-Efficacy and Learning Environments

Due to the influential role of self-efficacy in motivating, influencing, and shaping the overall academic achievements of ELLs, researchers in the field of second language acquisition studied the effects of self-efficacy on language learners in different learning classroom environments.

For example, Naghsh Daemi et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between English as foreign language learners' academic self-efficacy and classroom learning environment, including student cohesiveness, teacher support, involvement, investigation, task orientation, cooperation, and equity. The study results revealed a positive significant relationship between participants' self-efficacy and classroom environment in all areas, indicating that English as foreign language learners with high academic self-efficacy tended to rank higher in all seven classroom environment categories than those with low academic self-efficacy. Moreover, the study's findings revealed that the relationship between self-efficacy and task orientation was the highest, followed by student cohesiveness, while the relationship between self-efficacy and cooperation was the lowest (Naghsh Daemi et al., 2017).

Additionally, with the emergence of flipped, blended, and fully online teaching approaches, researchers were concerned about how the transition from conventional teaching techniques to blended or fully online learning could impact ELLs' language development and self-efficacy (Chuang et al., 2018; Mohd Zamri & Narasuman, 2023; Su et al., 2018; Wicaksono et al., 2023).

For example, Chuang et al. (2018) conducted a study to examine how self-efficacy beliefs impact the learning outcomes of ELLs in a flipped classroom setting for vocational education. The findings showed that learners with high self-efficacy beliefs demonstrated more significant improvement in test scores between pre-and post-tests. The study suggested that self-

efficacy beliefs are crucial in enhancing ELLs' learning outcomes in a flipped classroom (Chuang et al., 2018).

Mohd Zamri and Narasuman (2023) explored the relationship between blended learning and students' self-efficacy and how these variables impact the development of English language proficiency of ELL college students. The study results revealed a positive relationship between blended learning, self-efficacy in English language learning, and language proficiency, indicating that blended learning significantly contributes to ELLs' self-efficacy in English language learning and language proficiency (Mohd Zamri & Narasuman, 2023).

Su et al. (2018) examined the relationship between self-regulation and self-efficacy of ELLs in online settings. The study found positive correlations between online self-regulated English learning and English language self-efficacy, stating that self-evaluation was identified as one of the strongest predictors of participants' self-efficacy in English listening, speaking, and reading. At the same time, learners' environment structuring can significantly impact students' self-efficacy in both speaking and writing, and goal setting only seems to affect their self-efficacy in writing. Learners with advanced English proficiency tended to view themselves as more capable of self-evaluating their learning processes, organizing their learning environment, and establishing instructional goals than their peers (Su et al., 2018).

Moreover, Wicaksono et al. (2023) investigated the effectiveness of self-efficacy on English as a foreign language students' academic resilience and academic motivation in an online self-assessment method. The study found that students with high self-efficacy beliefs showed more confidence in their skills and did better in class, indicating that self-efficacy is influential in advancing students' intellectual strength and encouragement in an online assessment. The study's findings, along with Heydarnejad, Ibrahim et al. (2022) and

Heydarnejad, Tagavipour et al. (2022) findings, agreed that methods of assessment could influence students' motivation and self-efficacy (Wicaksono et al., 2023).

English Language Learners' Self-Efficacy and the Use of Self-Regulated Strategies

Self-regulated strategies are techniques and skills that individuals use to manage and control their thoughts and behaviors to achieve goals and overcome challenges that may arise in various contexts (D. Lee et al., 2021; Rose et al., 2018). These strategies enhance learners' academic achievement and help them overcome language learning challenges (Z. Wang et al., 2022). Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in ELLs' self-regulation processes, which, in fact, positively impacts students' academic success in college settings (D. Lee et al., 2021).

Studies found significant relationships between ELLs' self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated strategies (e.g., Abbasi & Nosratinia, 2018; Bai & Wang, 2023; Habók & Magyar, 2020; D. Lee et al., 2021; Su et al., 2018; Zahidi & Ong, 2023), language learning strategies (e.g., Afshar & Jamshidi, 2022; Bai & Wang, 2021; Shi, 2018a; Stander, 2022; Z. Wang et al., 2022), self-regulated learning (e.g., Bai & Guo, 2018), oral communication strategies (e.g., Shirkhani & Mir Mohammad Meigouni, 2019), and goal orientations (e.g., Shi, 2021).

For instance, Bai and Wang (2023) investigated the relationship between motivational beliefs, like self-efficacy and self-regulated learning, and ELLs' English language learning achievements. Results found a positive relationship between self-efficacy in English language learning and learners' use of self-regulated learning strategies, including monitoring, effort regulation, and goal setting and planning, indicating that these strategies significantly contribute to learners' success in learning English.

D. Lee et al. (2021) found that self-efficacy significantly predicted ELL college students' use of self-regulated learning strategies. The study results also revealed a statistically significant

difference in adopting self-regulated learning strategies among ELL college students with high and low self-efficacy (D. Lee et al., 2021). Additionally, Afshar and Jamshidi (2022) found that self-efficacy, use of language learning strategy, and autonomy were significant positive predictors of ELLs' achievement.

Bai and Guo (2018) explored how adopting self-regulated learning strategies influences students' self-efficacy in English writing within the context of English as a foreign language in Hong Kong. The study findings demonstrated that using self-regulated learning strategies had significant and positive associations with students' self-efficacy in English writing. In contrast, using planning and self-monitoring techniques had a more substantial predictive effect on students' self-efficacy in English writing (Bai & Guo, 2018).

Shi (2018a) conducted a study exploring the relationship between self-efficacy and strategy use of college-level ELLs at a university in the United States. A positive self-efficacy was observed among these students regarding their English learning proficiency. The study also revealed a positive relationship between ELL self-efficacy and their use of cognitive, compensation, memory, metacognitive, and social strategies, indicating that ELLs with positive self-efficacy were more likely to use compensation, social, and metacognitive strategies, which contributed to ELLs' academic improvement (Shi, 2018a).

Sardegna et al. (2018) study results showed that ELLs with high levels of self-efficacy tended to find methods to enhance their pronunciation abilities and actively select a broader range of strategies to implement for pronunciation improvement. The researchers have also revealed a significant and negative association between self-efficacy and negative affect, indicating that students who were pleased and confident about their pronunciation skills experienced low anxiety, worries, or nervousness (Sardegna et al., 2018).

Moreover, research has also revealed positive correlations between self-efficacy and oral communication strategy use. For example, Shirkhani and Mir Mohammad Meigouni (2019) examined the relationship between ELLs' oral communication strategy use, self-efficacy beliefs, and communication apprehension. The study found a significant positive association between ELLs' oral communication strategy use and their self-efficacy beliefs and a significant negative relationship between learners' use of communication strategies and their communication apprehension level. In other words, the study found that employing communication strategies was likely to boost learners' self-efficacy and reduce their communication apprehension. The researchers argued that when learners choose effective communication strategies, they tend to be more self-efficacious and skilled in communication, leading to success in learning a foreign language (Shirkhani & Mir Mohammad Meigouni, 2019). Likewise, Abbasi and Nosratinia (2018) found a significant and positive correlation between ELLs' self-regulation, use of oral communication strategies, and self-efficacy. However, the study revealed that self-efficacy had no significant impact on predicting the use of verbal communication strategies among ELLs (Abbasi & Nosratinia, 2018).

Another study by Z. Wang et al. (2022) discovered correlations between applying listening, speaking, and reading strategies and developing self-efficacy in these skills. The researchers claimed that using listening strategies positively influenced students' self-efficacy in speaking, reading, and writing, while employing reading strategies enhanced students' belief in their writing abilities (Z. Wang et al., 2022).

Moreover, a positive relationship between ELL self-efficacy and mastery goal orientation was found in Shi's (2021) study, demonstrating that mastery goals could enhance ELLs' self-efficacy and increase their motivation toward language learning. The study indicated mastery-

goal-orientated students tended to be more interested in language learning, focused on developing skills and knowledge, and developed positive emotional states and self-perceptions (Shi, 2021).

Sources of Self-Efficacy and English Language Learners' Self-Efficacy

The relationship between sources of self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, and English proficiency of ELLs was confirmed through studies. For instance, Zheng et al. (2017) studied the predictive roles that five sources of self-efficacy, including mastery experience, modeling experience from others, self-modeling experience, social persuasion, and physiological state, can have on English as a foreign language learners' academic self-efficacy and language proficiency. They found that sources of self-efficacy played a significant positive role in predicting learners' academic self-efficacy and English proficiency; however, physiological states were seen as a negative predictor for explaining learners' achievements in English listening and reading (Zheng et al., 2017).

Additionally, Shehzad et al. (2019) found that all Bandura's four hypothesized self-efficacy sources were significantly associated with reading self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension, indicating a significant positive correlation between reading self-efficacy beliefs and mastery experience, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion, and a significant negative correlation between physiological state and reading self-efficacy beliefs (Shehzad et al., 2019).

Another positive correlation was discovered between Bandura's sources of self-efficacy, including enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion, and learners' self-efficacy in English public speaking (e.g., X. Zhang, Ardasheva, Egbert, & Ullrich-French, 2019). These three sources of self-efficacy were also determined to be significant predictors of learners' English public speaking self-efficacy (e.g., X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). However,

both studies found that physiological and affective states were not significantly related to public speaking self-efficacy (e.g., X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019; X. Zhang, Ardasheva, Egbert, & Ullrich-French, 2019).

English Language Learners' Self-Efficacy and Anxiety

Anxiety is a negative affective factor that can harm one's ability to learn a second language and be a barrier to effective communication (Stander, 2022; Toyama & Yamazaki, 2021). Feelings of shyness, low confidence, and fear of failure and performance are common causes of anxiety (Zayed & Al-Ghamdi, 2019). Anxiety emerges as a highly significant factor within the domain of second language acquisition (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2018; Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2021; Fathi, Derakhshan & Torabi, 2020; Kasbi & Elahi Shirvan, 2017; Saghafi & Elahi Shirvan, 2020), and as one of the most experienced negative feelings in the contexts of language learning (Aydin, 2018; Hu et al., 2021; Russell, 2020; Teimouri et al., 2019; Ulupinar, 2018).

Various studies have identified several affective factors contributing to foreign language anxiety (Ma, 2022), such as limited self-confidence (e.g., Suparlan, 2021; Tridinanti, 2018), reduced self-efficacy (e.g., Bensalem, 2018), inadequate practice (e.g., Bárkányi, 2021; Suparlan, 2021), insufficient language proficiency (e.g., Suparlan, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2019), fear of making mistakes (e.g., Suparlan, 2021), language barriers, perceived discrimination, cultural background influences (e.g., Shan et al., 2020), and negative perceptions of teachers regarding learners' academic performance (M. Liu & Wu, 2021). Therefore, affective factors should be carefully considered to promote students' desire to use the language (J. S. Lee & Lee, 2020).

The relationship between ELLs' levels of self-efficacy, anxiety, and attainment is documented in many studies related to the second language acquisition field, indicating that high

self-efficacy beliefs can develop language attainment and reduce the level of anxiety (Bensalem, 2018; Kutuk et al., 2022b; Zhao, 2022). When ELLs feel that their knowledge of English is insufficient, their tension and anxiety increase, negatively impacting their motivation and self-efficacy level necessary for successful language acquisition and attainment (Kutuk et al., 2022b; Stander, 2022).

For example, Zhao (2022) explored the relationship between foreign language anxiety, self-efficacy, and academic achievement of 200 first-year university students in different majors. The study results showed a negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and learning achievement and a significant negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and self-efficacy, indicating that the anxiety level of participants who passed an English final exam was significantly lower than that of participants who failed the exam. In comparison, the self-efficacy level of the passing group of participants was significantly higher than that of those who failed.

Moreover, Bensalem (2018) examined the relationship between five variables, including self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, gender, knowledge of a third language, experience abroad, and the level of anxiety among English as foreign language university students taking ESL courses at different levels at three universities. Results revealed a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety, indicating that self-efficacy had the most significant correlation with foreign language anxiety among the five variables. ELLs with high self-efficacy tended to experience lower anxiety levels and were less likely to suffer from foreign language acquisition (Bensalem, 2018).

Summary

The review of the literature explored English language learners' essential aspects and factors that affect their academic development. The theoretical framework of Bandura’s social

cognitive theory built on individuals perceived self-efficacy was initially explored. The subsequent section synthesized recent literature on English language learners' essential aspects, describing their characteristics and goals. Also, a general analysis of U.S. college ESL programs was provided, including the benefits and drawbacks of these programs and their effects on college students' persistence, followed by a description of factors affecting ELLs' academic success and motivational approaches contributing to their development. The academic self-efficacy of ELLs and its correlation with language proficiency and academic success was thoroughly discussed.

Through reviewing the literature, self-efficacy was identified as one of the most impactful psychological factors that enhance students' and language learners' academic success, assist goal achievement, and facilitate the transfer of skills across various contexts (Alrabai, 2018; Anam & Stracke, 2020; Bandura et al., 1999; Cavanagh et al., 2019; Morin & Latham, 2000; Y. Wang, Shen, & Yu, 2021; Wood & Bandura, 1989; X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). However, most current literature examined ELL self-efficacy within a language or post-ESL academic program, emphasizing ELLs' English language proficiency and language achievement. A gap in the literature was identified comparing the academic self-efficacy of ELLs taking academic English courses at different course levels. This study aimed to address this gap by enabling ELL college students to assess their confidence in their ability to perform various behaviors across diverse academic English courses, including ESL courses. Therefore, this quantitative, causal-comparative study aimed to investigate the academic self-efficacy of ELL college students to determine whether there were differences in academic self-efficacy among ELLs taking academic English courses in three different course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative, causal-comparative study was to investigate the academic self-efficacy of ELL college students to determine whether there were differences in academic self-efficacy among ELLs enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. This chapter introduces the study's design, including complete definitions of all variables, followed by the research question and its corresponding hypothesis. The participants, setting, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis are presented.

Research Design

A quantitative, nonexperimental, causal-comparative research design was used in this study to investigate the academic self-efficacy of ELL college students to determine whether there were differences in academic self-efficacy among ELLs taking academic English courses in three different course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. This design is appropriate for the study as it allows researchers to identify causal relationships between groups of individuals with several levels of an independent variable to determine whether they vary on a dependent variable (Gall et al., 2007).

A quantitative design is a research method based on the belief that social phenomena are objective and relatively stable across contexts. It involves gathering numerical data on observable behaviors and using statistical analysis to describe and explain these phenomena (Gall et al., 2007). Nonexperimental research is a quantitative correlational approach used to predict future outcomes or explore potential causal relationships among variables measured at different points in time (Gall et al., 2007). A causal-comparative design is a type of quantitative,

nonexperimental investigation that explores the potential causes and effects of a personal characteristic by comparing individuals who have it with those who do not or have it to a lower level (Gall et al., 2007).

The quantitative, nonexperimental, causal-comparative research design is suitable for measuring the independent variable in nominal or ordinal categorical data scales, categorized as either present or absent in groups or at multiple levels (Gall et al., 2007). In this design, the independent variable naturally occurs, in which researchers cannot manipulate the independent variable but rather measure its effect on the dependent variable (Gall et al., 2007; Warner, 2021). Although this design does not provide robust conclusions about cause and effect, it is helpful for initial exploratory investigations when manipulating the independent variable is impossible (Gall et al., 2007; Warner, 2021). It enables researchers to examine the differences between each group and the overall effect of the independent variable (Gall et al., 2007).

The causal-comparative research design is suitable for the present study as it would help identify causal relationships between naturally occurring groups with different levels of an independent variable to determine variations on the dependent variable (Gall et al., 2007). Notably, this research design would enable the researcher to identify potential causal relationships between the independent and dependent variables by comparing existing categorical groups and assessing differences in the continuous dependent variable.

The quantitative, causal-comparative research design is the most suitable approach to answer the research question about differences in college academic self-efficacy among English language learners enrolled in three different academic English course levels for several reasons. It enables the researcher to create two or more groups and analyze them to investigate potential factors affecting a phenomenon's outcomes and examine the behaviors, cognitive processes, and

characteristics of individuals without any intervention or influence from the researcher (Gall et al., 2007). Numerous quantitative studies used the causal-comparative design to gain an initial understanding of the impact that an independent variable with two or more groups has on a dependent variable when manipulating the independent variable is impossible (e.g., Garza-Reyna, 2019; Orongan et al., 2019; Rovai & Gallien, 2005; Rovai et al., 2005). For example, Garza-Reyna (2019) used this design to compare and investigate the college readiness of ELLs educated in two different bilingual educational programs. Orongan et al. (2019) used this design to investigate how students' cognitive attributes and physical aspects in a laboratory classroom environment impact their science academic performance. For the present research study, the causal-comparative design would allow the researcher to explore whether differences exist in college academic self-efficacy scores among English language learners in three academic English course levels by identifying potential variations in self-efficacy levels and whether the level of academic English course impacts students' self-efficacy beliefs.

The independent variable was the college academic English course level that ELL students were enrolled in during the spring semester of the 2023-2024 school year. This categorical variable comprised three academic English course level groups: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. College Prep ESL is an advanced ESL writing and reading course level within the college ESL program, designed to enhance ELL students' English writing and reading skills and prepare them for success in college-level courses (J. Lee, 2021). College English Composition I is a foundational college-level English composition course, designed to develop undergraduate students' skills in expository writing and familiarize them with critical thinking and the essential principles of academic writing (Spence, 2018). College English Composition II is an intermediate college-

level English composition course, designed to engage students in advanced techniques within the writing processes and products, focusing on conducting primary and secondary research, constructing extended texts, and enhancing critical reading skills (Hess, 2000).

The dependent continuous variable was the college academic mean self-efficacy scores of ELLs. ELLs are students whose primary language is not English and who are acquiring English language skills and knowledge, regardless of their participation in a language program (NCES, 2023b). College academic self-efficacy refers to college students' confidence in their ability to perform various academic behaviors (Owen & Froman, 1988).

Research Question

RQ: Is there a difference in college academic mean self-efficacy scores among English language learners enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II?

Null Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant difference in college academic mean self-efficacy scores among English language learners enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II, as measured by the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES).

Setting and Participants

The participants for the study were drawn from a convenience sample of ELL students located at a community college in northern Virginia during the spring semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. The sample consisted of preexisting, naturally occurring groups. This section thoroughly describes the study population, setting, and participants, including the sampling technique and sample size.

Population

For this study, a convenience sample was drawn from ELL students at a state community college in a suburb of northern Virginia within the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. The college is a large, public, open-admission, 2-year, multi-campus community college. As of fall 2022, the college comprised a total of 51,896 undergraduate student population, of which 52% were female and 48% male students. 77% of the college students were 24 years old or younger, while 23% were 25 years old or older. Regarding attendance, 26% of students were enrolled in full-time courses, while 74% enrolled in part-time courses. Regarding student distance education status, 27% enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, 27% registered in some but not all distance education courses, and 46% not enrolled in any distance education courses. Among the students, 33% identified as white, 23% as Hispanic/Latino, 17% as Asian, 14% as black or African American, 5% as belonging to two or other racial backgrounds, and 5% had undisclosed race or ethnicity. Furthermore, 4% of the college students were classified as U.S. nonresidents (NCES, 2023a). The college offers diverse academic programs and courses serving the needs of its student population at six campuses (NCES, 2023a). Each campus has several buildings housing classrooms, administrative offices, and student support services. It offers various academic programs and in-person, hybrid, and online courses, including English language courses designed to meet the needs of ELL students.

Setting

The setting for this study involved surveying ELL students enrolled in the college various academic programs taking academic English courses that were delivered in person. The study population included 18 years or older ELL students who attended college prep ESL, English composition I, or English composition II courses in person at four college campuses during the

spring semester of the 2024 year. ELL students were chosen as the population of this study for various reasons related to their shared experiences with English language learning at different levels of English courses, proficiency assessments, and program/course placement procedures. Participation in the study was voluntary. Therefore, the sample comprised ELL students who met participation eligibility and expressed willingness to participate. The sample was evenly divided into three groups: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. These groups were categorized based on the academic English course level. The setting section provides a detailed description of the college academic programs, English proficiency assessment, and placement procedures for ELL students, and it also identifies the English courses where the study was conducted.

The College Academic Programs

The college offers various academic programs of study, including certificate and associate degree programs, to local, in-state, out-of-state, and international students. It also offers a college ESL program for students whose primary language is not English and whose English proficiency needs improvement to enable them to succeed in college-level studies (NCES, 2023a).

The college certificate program is an academic program that grants an award to students upon the satisfactory achievement of a sub-baccalaureate program of studies, typically requiring less than two years of full-time postsecondary education (NCES, 1999). The associate degree program is an academic program that grants students a degree awarded upon completing a sub-baccalaureate program, typically requiring a minimum of two years or the equivalent of full-time study at a college level (NCES, 1999). The college certificate and associate degree programs serve all undergraduate students, traditional and non-traditional, including ELLs. College

traditional students are students who graduated from U.S. high schools and are directly enrolled in college certificate or degree programs. In contrast, non-traditional students are students who typically work full-time and often have dependents to care for (Baruah et al., 2022).

The college ESL program is a for-credit, academic language program that provides "intensive instruction in English for students with limited English proficiency" (NCES, 1999, p. 350). The program is designed to improve ELL students' academic English skills and support them in building the literacy and critical thinking skills necessary for success in college-level English (The College Catalog, 2023-2024). The college ESL program consisted of four levels of English language instruction, ranging from level 2- Low-Intermediate ESL to level 5-College Prep ESL. Students at level 2 or 3 must take English reading, composition, and oral communication coursework to pass to the next ESL level. In contrast, students at level 4 or 5 must only take reading and composition courses to pass to the next level. Students in levels 4 and 5 can concurrently enroll in college-level courses in various disciplines; however, they must complete the level 5, college prep ESL, coursework to be eligible to enroll in college-level English composition I (ENG-111) course (The College Catalog, 2023-2024). The college ESL program also offers a writing support (ESL-95) course that is paired with ENG-111 course at the college level. These two courses combined are designed only for ELL students who are progressing but have not yet attained native-like fluency that allows them to excel in college-level English composition courses without additional writing support from the college ESL program (ESL Professor, personal communication, March 1, 2024).

English Proficiency Assessment and Placement Procedures for ELL Students

The college's approach for determining the placement of all incoming ELL students into appropriate academic English courses was based on student's test scores in one of the college-

approved tests. ELL students who completed high school in the U.S. were assessed based on their reported high school GPA, SAT, or ACT scores. A GPA of 3.0 or higher or specific SAT/ACT scores allowed direct placement into college-level ENG-111 courses. Otherwise, they could opt for the college's English placement test for score improvement or directly enroll in the college-level ENG-111 course paired with the ESL-95 course (Associate Dean, personal communication, March 4, 2024). ELLs who have not completed high school in the United States and international students were assessed based on their scores in standardized tests like TOEFL, IELTS, Duolingo, ACT, SAT, or the college's English placement test. These scores determined their placement into English courses, whether they enrolled in the ENG-111 course, ENG-111 paired with the ESL-95 course, or the appropriate level of the college's ESL program.

Identified College English Courses

The present study population included ELL students who were 18 years or older, attending academic English classes in person at four campuses of the college, and enrolled in one of the college academic programs taking college prep ESL, English composition I, or English composition II course during the spring semester of the 2024 year. Identified courses were taught by different instructors and delivered in person at four different campuses of the college. The four college campuses chosen for the study were labeled with pseudonyms A, B, C, and D. Pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity.

College Prep ESL Course. College prep ESL is an advanced ESL writing and reading course level within the college ESL program, designed to enhance ELL students' English writing and reading skills and prepare them for success in college-level English (J. Lee, 2021). College prep ESL integrates tasks like understanding written requirements, multiple drafting, using feedback to revise, and improving critical reading skills to correct errors in academic texts (J.

Lee, 2021). In college prep ESL, ELL students must take two courses: ESL 51 – Composition III (ESL-51) and ESL 52 – Reading III (ESL-52).

ESL-51 is a 5-credit ESL writing course, designed to prepare ELL students for academic writing through intensive practice in the writing process, prioritizing the development of ideas in increased length and complex essays while emphasizing the use of proper syntax and language. ESL-52 is a 5-credit ESL reading course designed to enhance ELL students' reading comprehension and expand their vocabulary to a level contributing to success in the college's various disciplines. Completion of these courses is required for ELL students placed in the college ESL program before enrolling in ENG-111 course (The College Catalog, 2023-2024).

ELL student participants were selected from two ESL-51 courses offered at campus B and two ESL-52 courses offered at campuses A and D. They were categorized within the college prep ESL group. The researcher chose ELL students enrolled in the for-credit ESL courses because they aim to enhance English proficiency for college-level English, unlike non-credit courses (E. S. Park, 2019). Moreover, the researcher selected students in the college prep ESL level as successful completion of this level indicates their readiness for college-level English (Spence, 2018), and it is a prerequisite for students who were placed in the ESL program to enroll in the college-level ENG-111 course. The researcher selected participants from both ESL-51 and ESL-52 courses because they work together to achieve the primary goals of the college prep ESL level, which is to enhance ELL students' critical thinking skills and prepare them for success in various college disciplines. To prevent duplicate survey responses from individual students, the researcher selected students enrolled in ESL-51 courses at a campus different from the ones attended by ELL students in ESL-52 courses. This approach helped prevent survey duplication since students might be enrolled in both courses during the semester.

English Composition I Course. English Composition I (ENG-111) course is a foundational college-level English writing course, designed to develop undergraduate students' skills in expository writing and familiarize them with critical thinking and the essential principles of academic writing (Spence, 2018). It is “the first college-level English course” and mandatory for all undergraduate students pursuing a degree, regardless of their academic field or primary language (J. Lee, 2021; Spence, 2018, p. 62-63).

The college offers two sections of the college English Composition I course. One is the ENG-111 course, designed for all undergraduate students, traditional and non-traditional, including ELL students who have attained native-like fluency in English. The other is the ENG-111 paired with ESL-95 course, designed only for ELL students who are progressing but have yet to attain native-like fluency that allowing them to excel in the ENG-111 course without additional ESL writing support (ESL Professor, personal communication, March 1, 2024). After all, the objectives and requirements of the ENG-111 course are the same for all undergraduate students, native and non-native English-speaker students, regardless of the course section, with or without ESL-95.

ENG-111 course is a 3-credit, college-level course that is designed to establish the groundwork for undergraduate students' writing works in subsequent content courses by enhancing their understanding of rhetoric, critical thinking, and reading skills through the integration of various practices that focus on refining their composing processes and familiarizing them with communication principles (J. Lee, 2021; Spence, 2018). ESL-95 course is a 3-credit writing support course offered by the college’s ESL program and is paired with ENG-111 course. ESL-95 serves as a bridge course designed to enhance the language proficiency of ELL students who are progressing but have not yet attained native-like fluency

that allows them to excel in the ENG-111 course without ESL writing support (ESL Professor, personal communication, March 1, 2024). ESL-95 course provides targeted writing assistance for ELL students to equip them with the skills necessary to engage in and effectively complete the ENG-111 course. Each ENG-111 course paired with the ESL-95 course is designed for ELL students to ensure targeted instruction. These courses combined are facilitated by instructors trained to teach both ENG-111 and ESL-95 courses to ensure solid and practical support for ELL students. Completing ENG-111 or ENG-111 paired with ESL-95 course is a prerequisite for all students, including ELL students, to enroll in college English composition II courses.

ELL student participants were selected from four ENG-111 courses offered at campuses A and B, and two ENG-111 paired with ESL-95 courses offered at campuses B and C. They were categorized within the college English composition I group. The researcher selected ELL students enrolled in ENG-111 courses due to the requirement of this course across nearly all 2- or 4-year degree programs (Spence, 2018), which facilitated the availability of ELL students and the process of identifying them. Additionally, successful completion of ENG-111 is mandatory for all undergraduate students, including ELLs, to progress to the English Composition II course (Spence, 2018).

English Composition II Course. English Composition II (ENG-112) is an intermediate college-level English writing course designed to engage students in advanced techniques within the writing processes and products. It focuses on conducting primary and secondary research, constructing extended texts, and enhancing critical reading skills (Hess, 2000). It is the second required written communication curriculum for undergraduate students pursuing a degree in various academic fields (Hess, 2000).

At this English level, the college offers ENG-112 courses for all undergraduate students,

including ELL students. ENG-112 course objectives are differentiated from those of its prerequisite, ENG-111 course. ENG-112 is an intermediate 3-hour credit college-level English composition course, designed to further advance students' academic writing skills, focusing on critical essays, argumentation, and research (The College Catalog, 2023-2024). In this course, students enhance these abilities by analyzing texts and engaging in various practices with locating, evaluating, integrating, and documenting sources and refining their writing for better style and usage (The College Catalog, 2023-2024).

ELL student participants were selected from eleven ENG-112 courses offered at campuses A and B and were categorized within the college English composition II group. The researcher selected ELL students enrolled in the ENG-112 courses due to the requirement of this course in nearly most college degree programs in various academic fields (Hess, 2000), which facilitated the availability of ELL students and the process of identifying them. Moreover, the course objectives, aimed to further advance students' writing skills, mandate that undergraduate students, including ELLs, complete the ENG-111 course before enrolling in the ENG-112 course (The College Catalog, 2023-2024).

To identify eligible students within each course, the researcher asked course instructors, verbally and in writing, to inform their class students that only 18 years or older ELL students were considered eligible to receive survey forms and participate. All identified students were verbally introduced to the research topic and purpose by their course instructors and in writing through the student consent form. Instructors distributed survey materials to their eligible students. They asked them to read the student consent form and, if willing, complete the survey outside of class hours and return it to their course instructors within a 10-day timeframe.

Participants

The study participants were drawn from a convenience sample of ELL students enrolled in various academic programs at a community college located in northern Virginia and attended English courses delivered in person during the spring semester of the 2024 year. The sample was convenient for two reasons: it was located near where the researcher lived, and the researcher was familiar with the site (Gall et al., 2007). The research objectives and the characteristics of the target population drove the choice of convenience sampling method. The research objectives were to investigate the academic self-efficacy of ELL college students taking college prep ESL, English Composition I, and English Composition II courses offered by the college educational programs, which made participants available and easy to reach. The researcher chose participants who attended courses delivered in person due to the anonymous nature of the study. ELL students were chosen as the population of this study for various reasons related to their shared experiences with English language learning, proficiency assessment, and course placement procedures.

The researcher recruited the students with the cooperation of the college associate deans of the Languages, Arts, and Social Sciences division and course instructors at four campuses. The division associate deans were chosen due to their expertise and understanding of the ELL population under study. They helped the researcher facilitate contact with instructors and obtain their consent to administer the procedure described below within their respective classes. The study topic and purpose were introduced to the sample through course instructors and student consent forms provided by the researcher. Participation was completely anonymous, and no personal identifiable information was collected. The data collection process took place entirely outside class time to avoid using class hours. All data collection materials, including consent

forms and survey questions, were distributed by course instructors to the sample in hardcopy formats to avoid technical issues that may arise and to encourage students who have difficulty navigating or accessing online materials to participate. Moreover, each student participant who completed and returned the survey to their instructor received a gift card as a reward of appreciation for their valued participation in the study.

The sample for this study was identified through the convenience sampling method. 203 ELL students were considered eligible to participate in the study and received survey forms. 153 ELL students participated and answered survey questions. Fifteen student participants were removed from the sample due to errors or inconsistent survey answers. 138 students made up the study sample.

The Sample Size

The number of participants sampled was 138 students, which exceeded the minimum required to determine a medium effect size. According to Gall et al. (2007), 126 students is the minimum required for a one-way ANOVA with three groups when assuming a medium effect size with a statistical power of .7 at the alpha $\alpha = .05$ level.

The Sample Demographic Information

The sample comprised 138 ELL students enrolled in various academic English course levels offered by the college academic programs. Of the sample, 37 (27%) were enrolled in the college ESL program, 10 (7%) in certificate programs, 82 (60%) in associate degree programs, and 6 (4%) in other programs, while 3 (2%) did not disclose this information. 46 (33%) of the sample were receiving English instruction at the college prep ESL level, 37 (27%) received English instruction at the college prep ESL level, 50 (36%) did not receive English instruction at the college prep ESL level, and 5 (4%) did not disclose this information. The average age of the

sampled students ranged from 18 to 24, with 98 (71%) falling within this range. The age distribution included 98 (71%) aged 18 – 24, 25 (18%) aged 25 – 34, 10 (7%) aged 35 – 44, 5 (4%) aged 45 and older. The sample's ethnicity and gender data were not collected due to the survey's anonymity nature.

The Sample Groups

The sample consisted of three preexisting, naturally occurring groups of ELL students who attended in-person courses at four campuses of the college. The sample included 18 years old and older ELL students enrolled in one of the college academic programs taking college prep ESL, English composition I, or English composition II courses during the spring semester of the 2024 year. The sample was categorized based on the academic English course level and divided into three groups: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English Composition II.

College Prep ESL Group. This group consisted of 46 naturally occurring ELL students enrolled in the college ESL program's level 5-College Prep ESL, attending in-person classes. 31 student participants were selected from ESL-51 courses, and 15 from ESL-52 courses. Within this group, 33 (72%) were enrolled in the college ESL program, 3 (6%) in certificate programs, and 10 (22%) in associate degree programs concurrently with the ESL program. All 46 (100%) were receiving English instruction at the college prep ESL level. The average age of participants within this group ranged from 18 to 24, with 26 (57%) falling within this range. The age distribution included 26 (57%) aged 18 – 24, 12 (26%) aged 25 – 34, 6 (13%) aged 35 – 44, 2 (4%) aged 45 and older.

College English Composition I Group. This group consisted of 45 naturally occurring ELL college students who attended in-person classes in one of the college's academic programs.

18 student participants were selected from ENG-111 section, and 27 from ENG-111 paired with ESL-95 section. Within this group, 4 (9%) were enrolled in the college ESL program, 6 (13%) in certificate programs, 33 (73%) in associate degree programs, and 2 (5%) in other programs. 29 (64%) received English instruction at the college-prep ESL level, 13 (29%) did not receive English instruction at the college-prep ESL level, and 3 (7%) did not disclose this information. The average age of participants within this group ranged from 18 to 24, with 28 (62%) falling within this range. The age distribution included 28 (62%) aged 18 – 24, 12 (27%) aged 25 – 34, 3 (7%) aged 35 – 44, 2 (4%) aged 45 and older.

College English Composition II Group. This group consisted of 47 naturally occurring ELL college students who attended in-person classes in one of the college's academic programs. All student participants in this group were selected from ENG-112 courses. Within this group, 1 (2%) were enrolled in certificate programs, 39 (83%) in associate degree programs, and 4 (9%) in other programs, while 3 (6%) did not disclose this information. 8 (17%) received English instruction at the college-prep ESL level, 37 (79%) did not receive English instruction at the college-prep ESL level, and 2 (4%) did not disclose this information. The average age of participants within this group ranged from 18 to 24, with 44 (94%) falling within this range. The age distribution included 44 (94%) aged 18 – 24, 1 (2%) aged 25 – 34, 1 (2%) aged 35 – 44, 1 (2%) aged 45 and older.

A breakdown of these groups by level of academic English and selected courses is described in Table 1.

Table 1

English Language Learner Groups by Level of Academic English and Courses

	Groups by Level of Academic English			
	College Prep ESL	English Composition I	English Composition II	Total

English Course	ESL-51	31	0	0	31
	ESL-52	15	0	0	15
	ENG-111	0	18	0	18
	ENG-111+ ESL-95	0	27	0	27
	ENG-112	0	0	47	47
Total		46	45	47	138

Instrumentation

The College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES) developed by Owen and Froman (1988) was used in the present study (see Appendix A for the instrument). The purpose of this instrument is to measure college students' confidence in their ability to perform various college-level academic behaviors (Owen & Froman, 1988).

The development of the instrument stemmed from the lack of self-efficacy instruments that accurately focus on self-efficacy measurements (Owen & Froman, 1988). According to Owen and Froman (1988), "Nearly all studies, however, have focused on the content of self-efficacy rather than its measurement. Sometimes the measurements are so casual or confounded that one wonders what is being assessed" (p. 2). Thus, Owen and Froman (1988) developed CASES following Bandura's (1977, 1984, 1986) guidelines for self-efficacy measurement, arguing that "Researchers, editors, reviewers, and readers untrained in measurement promote an ambiguous literature that can do great damage to a promising theory" (p. 4).

The instrument has achieved good recognition in academic literature and was used in numerous studies (e.g., Đokic et al., 2021; Hanley et al., 2015; L. Li et al., 2020; Parmaksiz, 2023; Turgut Atak & Meriç, 2022). The CASES instrument does not have any subscales. Even though a two-subscale version was tested on 21 data sets with confirmatory factorial analysis, it was concluded that the entire instrument was the best fit for the data rather than two subscales (S. V. Owen, personal communication, August 4, 2023).

The questionnaire underwent a development process and validation (Owen & Froman, 1988). First, three university faculty members specialized in education and psychology collaborated to develop a list of standard and frequent academic behaviors demonstrated by college students. Then, the list was refined with the feedback of seven graduate teaching assistants who offered suggestions. Later, the revised checklist was distributed to 93 undergraduate students studying educational psychology, who were asked to rate the importance of each behavior for academic success using a 5-point Likert scale, with five indicating "extremely important." Any behavior with an average rating of less than 3.0 was removed from the list (Owen & Froman, 1988, p. 4). This process resulted in a final set of 33 items with no specific order or hierarchy. The revised items covered a range of behaviors, from specific examples like "attending class consistently in a dull course" to more general actions like "understanding difficult passages in textbooks" (Owen & Froman, 1988, p. 4). Finally, the researchers added a 5-point Likert scale instruction to evaluate students' confidence in doing each behavior. The scale ranged from "Very Little" to "Quite A Lot," without any additional labeling (Owen & Froman, 1988, p. 4).

The reliability of CASES was tested twice over an 8-week interval. The internal consistency estimates for the two occasions found Cronbach's alpha of .90 and .92, indicating high reliability. Additionally, the stability estimate over the eight weeks was found to be .85 (Owen & Froman, 1988).

CASES instrument consists of 33 can-do questions to measure college students' confidence in their ability to perform various college academic behaviors (Owen & Froman, 1988). It is estimated that students take approximately five minutes to complete the instrument (Owen & Froman, 1988). The questionnaire uses can-do questions to concentrate on students

perceived self-efficacy rather than their intention (Owen & Froman, 1988). CASES uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from "A," representing "quite a lot" of confidence, to "E," meaning "very little" confidence; responses "B," "C," and "D" on the scale were not directly labeled but were positioned as a range between "A" and "E" (see Appendix A).

The scoring of CASES is calculated as A (quite a lot) = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E (very little) = 1 (S. V. Owen, personal communication, August 4, 2023). CASES scoring procedures advise researchers to calculate the mean scores across all items rather than using a total score (S. V. Owen, personal communication, August 4, 2023). Using a mean score by averaging across the items is favored for two reasons: first, it helps compensate for missing data, and second, it presents the overall result in the same metric as the original response scale, typically ranging from 1 to 5, which makes it easier to interpret the overall score (S. V. Owen, personal communication, August 4, 2023).

The researcher conducted the scoring of CASES procedures as advised by the author of the instrument (S. V. Owen, personal communication, August 4, 2023). The researcher scored students' responses to CASES items as A ("quite a lot") = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E ("very little") = 1. The researcher then entered the data on an Excel spreadsheet to calculate each participant's mean score using Excel equations for mean calculation. The researcher calculated the mean self-efficacy score for each student based on their responses to the instrument's statements.

The mean student score ranges from 1 to 5 points (S. V. Owen, personal communication, August 4, 2023). A score of five is the highest possible score, meaning that students possess a very high level of college academic self-efficacy. In contrast, a score of one is the lowest possible score, meaning that students have a very low level of college academic self-efficacy

(see Appendix B for complete CASES scoring instructions). According to S. V. Owen, the CASES assessment was administered to 3149 undergraduate students at the University of Connecticut over five years; the mean student score was 2.8, with a standard deviation of 0.65 (personal communication, August 4, 2023).

Permission to use CASES in the present study was requested from Owen and Froman (1988) and granted on Friday, August 4, 2023 (see Appendix C for permission to use CASES instrument).

Procedures

Approvals for conducting the current study were received from the Liberty University (LU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix E for LU IRB approval) and from the site IRB (see Appendix F for the site IRB approval). Participants in the study were 18-year-old or older ELL college students, so parental permission was not required.

After IRB approvals were received, the researcher emailed the site associate deans of the Languages, Arts, and Social Sciences division at four campuses, requesting their support in facilitating contact with the identified course instructors and obtaining their consent to administer the procedure. In the email, the researcher asked the associate deans to distribute a research assistance request letter to instructors of the identified courses. The research assistance request letter included information about the research topic and purpose, the data collection procedure, the target population for each group, participants' eligibility and rights, and the time student participants needed to complete the survey. According to Owen and Froman (1988), it is estimated that students take approximately five minutes to complete the instrument.

After the associate deans emailed the research assistance request to instructors, the researcher met with each course instructor to obtain their consent to assist in recruiting students

from their classes to participate in the study. The researcher informed each course instructor that the data collection procedure involved 18-year-old or older ELL students completing hardcopy, anonymous surveys outside of class time.

The researcher provided each course instructor who agreed to participate with hard copies of the survey materials to distribute to their students, along with a sheet that provided instructors with directions for the data collection procedure. Survey materials included the student consent form (see Appendix G for student consent form) and the survey, which consisted of two parts: demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D for demographic questionnaire) and the CASES instrument.

The student consent form was to introduce students to the study's objectives, survey procedures, and participant eligibility and rights. It informed students that participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, they have the right to choose or not to choose to participate, their decision whether to participate will not affect their current or future relations with their college and instructors or their status and grades in the course, and they are welcome to discontinue participation at any time. The student consent form also informed students that all their feedback will be anonymous, and all completed forms will be stored securely. All digital data will be stored on a password-locked computer, and hardcopy data will be stored in a locked file cabinet where only the researcher can access records. After five years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded. The form also notified students that completing and returning the survey will indicate that they have read the consent information and would like to participate in the study.

The survey consisted of a demographic questionnaire and the CASES instrument. The demographic questionnaire was used to collect demographic information about the participants,

particularly to determine their English course experience, program enrollment, and age. CASES was a five- to ten-minute survey consisting of 33 multi-choice questions designed to measure how confident college students feel in their ability to perform various academic behaviors (Owen & Froman, 1988).

The researcher asked instructors of the identified courses to distribute the student consent and survey forms to their eligible students, ELL students who were 18 years or older, and then ask them to do the following tasks outside of class hours:

- Read and keep the student consent form and, if willing
- Complete a hard copy, 5–10-minute survey and return it to their course instructors within a 10-day timeframe.

Student participants needed to keep the student consent form as their responses were anonymous, and they would require it to claim a thank-you reward detailed below. The researcher advised each instructor to contact the researcher directly through email or phone text message to collect the completed surveys at a convenient time.

To encourage participation, the researcher granted each course instructor a $25 Amazon gift card for every class where they facilitated the data collection process to express appreciation for their valuable assistance in administering the data collection process in their classes. Also, the researcher granted each student participant a $10 Amazon gift card as a thank-you reward for their participation. Student participants received the Amazon gift card award after completing the survey and submitting it to their course instructor.

To maintain the anonymity of participants' feedback and to ensure that each participant received a $10 Amazon gift card, each participant was assigned a unique number printed on both the student consent form and the survey. Once the researcher collected the completed surveys

from instructors, the researcher provided instructors with gift cards and a list of the corresponding unique numbers of the completed surveys. Instructors then distributed the gift cards to their students with matching numbers on the student consent forms.

Data Analysis

After receiving completed surveys, the researcher scored students' responses to CASES items and entered the data into an Excel spreadsheet. Using the Excel formula for mean calculation, the researcher calculated the mean self-efficacy score for each student based on their responses to the instrument's statements. The researcher analyzed data using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29.0.2.0. The research question was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA with three groups at the alpha $\alpha = .05$ level.

A One-way ANOVA is the appropriate statistical technique that examines whether there is a significant difference among the means of two or more categorical, independent groups on a dependent variable. It is reasonably robust to the violations of normality assumption, which is essential when dealing with data, even if the data is not perfectly normally distributed. One-way ANOVA also allows for multiple comparisons between groups, which enables the researcher to compare each group to every other group to determine which groups have significantly different means. Additionally, it provides a p-value, which can be used to determine whether the differences between means are statistically significant (Gall et al., 2007; Warner, 2021). A One-Way ANOVA requires five assumptions to be met, including the assumption of one continuous dependent variable, one independent variable with two or more categorical independent groups, independent observations, no significant outliers, normal distribution, and homogeneity of variance (Gall et al., 2007; Warner, 2021).

The research question and its corresponding hypothesis compared one independent variable of three categorial groups on a continuous dependent variable. The independent variable was the levels of college English courses, which were divided into three independent categorial groups: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. The dependent variable was the college academic mean self-efficacy scores of ELLs as measured by CASES. The goal was to generate a medium effect size with a statistical power of .7, interpreted through the partial eta square ($\eta 2$) (Gall et al., 2007).

The researcher performed visual data screening on the independent variable, including sorting the data for each variable and checking for any missing and inaccurate entries. The researcher utilized Box-and-whiskers plots to identify any extreme outliers on each independent variable to test the assumption of no significant outliers in the three independent groups in terms of the dependent variable. Since extreme outliers violate the assumption of normality and can lead to severe problems in data analysis, they must be identified, dropped, and reported since the means will not be robust against extreme outliers (Warner, 2021).

Since ANOVA requires the assumption of normality and equality of variance to be met, two statistical tests were used to test the assumptions of normality and equality of variance. Since the sample size was greater than 50 participants, the researcher used the Kolmogoreov-Smirnov test to test the normality of variance and ensure that the dependent variable was approximately normally distributed for each independent variable group. When the sample size reaches 50 or more, it is recommended to use the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method for testing the normality assumption (Mishra et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the researcher utilized Levene's test of homogeneity of variance to test the assumption of the equality of variances and ensure that the variance is equal in each independent variable group.

After ensuring ANOVA assumptions were met, the researcher utilized ANOVA with three groups at the alpha $\alpha = .05$ level to see if there was a difference in academic self-efficacy among English language learners in college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II groups. Consequently, the researcher performed a post hoc Tukey test to identify differences among all possible pairs of group means (Warner, 2021).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative, causal-comparative study was to investigate the academic self-efficacy of ELL college students to determine whether there were differences in academic self-efficacy among ELLs enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. The independent variable was the level of academic English courses, and the dependent variable was the college academic mean self-efficacy scores of ELLs, as measured by the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale. A One-way ANOVA with three groups at the alpha $\alpha = .05$ level was used to test the hypothesis. This chapter presents the findings of this study. It opens with the research question and null hypothesis, followed by data screening, descriptive statistics, and assumption testing. The chapter concludes with the study results.

Research Question

RQ: Is there a difference in college academic mean self-efficacy scores among English language learners enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II?

Null Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant difference in college academic mean self-efficacy scores among English language learners enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II, as measured by the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES).

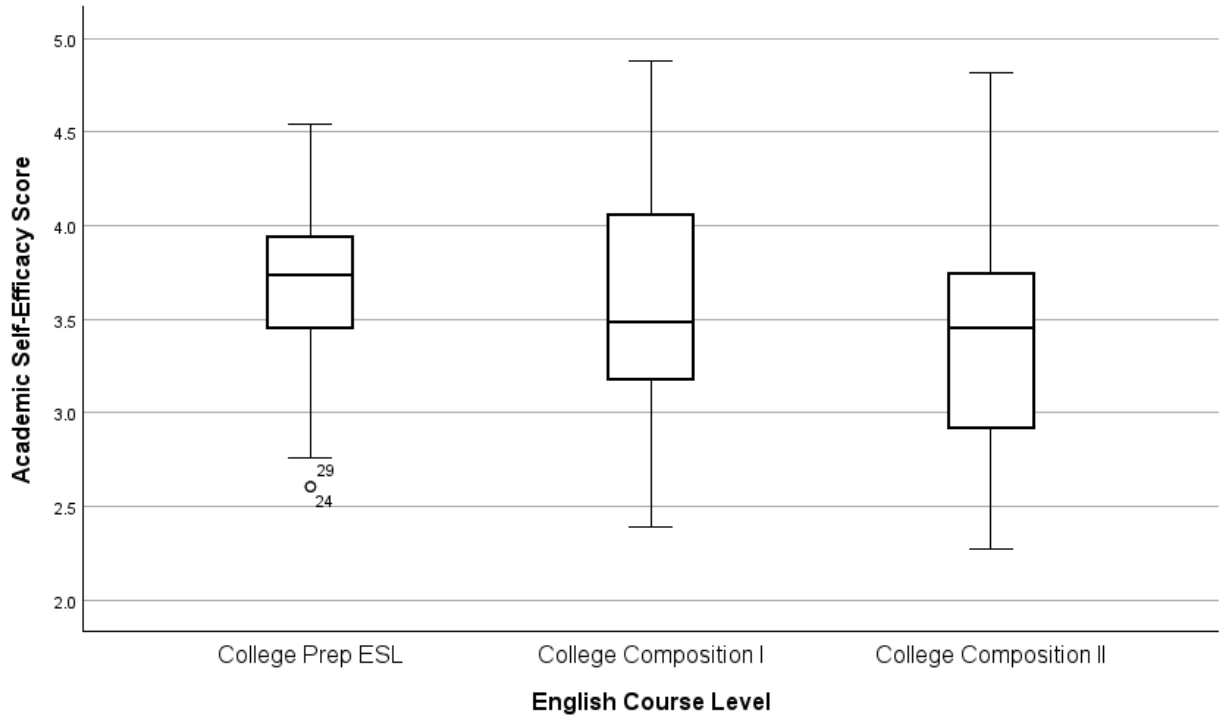
Data Screening

The research question and hypothesis compared the college academic mean self-efficacy

scores of ELL students who took courses at different academic English levels: college prep ESL, English Composition I, or English Composition II. A total of 153 ELL students participated and answered survey questions. Data screening was conducted on each group's dependent variable. The researcher sorted the data on each variable and scanned for errors or inconsistencies. A total of 15 surveys with data errors or inconsistencies were identified and removed from the sample. Among them, 11 were removed from the college prep ESL group because participants' names were revealed, which contrasted with the anonymity nature of the study; additionally, one was removed from the English Composition I group, and three were removed from the English Composition II group due to inaccurate responses to survey questions that prevented the researcher from calculating survey scores properly. As a result, 138 students made up the study sample. Box and whiskers plots were used to detect extreme outliers on each dependent variable. No extreme outliers were identified. See Figure 1 for box and whisker plots.

Figure 1

Box-and-Whisker Plots



Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were obtained on the dependent variable for each group. The sample consisted of 138 student participants. The mean student score on the CASES ranges from 1 to 5 points (S. V. Owen, personal communication, August 4, 2023). A score of five is the highest possible score, meaning that students had a very high level of college academic self-efficacy, while a score of one is the lowest possible score, meaning that students had a very low level of college academic self-efficacy. The total mean self-efficacy score for English language learner students was 3.54 (*SD* = *.55*). The mean scores for the groups were 3.66 (*SD* = .47) for college prep ESL, 3.58 (*SD* = .61) for college English composition I, and 3.38 (*SD* = .56) for college English composition II. Descriptive statistics for each group can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics[a]

English Course Level		*n*	Minimum	Maximum	*M*	*SD*
College Prep ESL	Academic Self-Efficacy Score	46	3	5	3.66	.468
	Valid N (listwise)	46				
College Composition I	Academic Self-Efficacy Score	45	2	5	3.58	.614
	Valid N (listwise)	45				
College Composition II	Academic Self-Efficacy Score	47	2	5	3.38	.555
	Valid N (listwise)	47				

a. No statistics are computed for one or more split files because there are no valid cases.

Assumption Testing

Assumption of Normality

One-way ANOVA requires the normality assumption to be met (Warner, 2021). Since the sample size was greater than 50 participants, the researcher examined the assumption of normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the assumption of normality was met for all groups: college prep ESL (p = .100), college English composition I (p = .200), and college English composition II (p = .200). See Table 3 for Tests of Normality.

Table 3

Tests of Normality

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	English Course Level	Statistic	*df*	Sig.	Statistic	*df*	Sig.
Academic Self-Efficacy Score	College Prep ESL	.119	46	.100	.956	46	.082
	College Composition I	.078	45	.200*	.980	45	.626
	College Composition II	.086	47	.200*	.979	47	.554

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Assumption of Homogeneity of Variance

One-way ANOVA requires the assumption of homogeneity of variance to be met (Warner, 2021). The researcher used Levene's test for homogeneity of variance to examine whether there were violations of the homogeneity of variance assumption across groups. No significant violation was found. The test results revealed that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met where (p = .095). See Table 4 for Levene's test of Equality of Error Variance.

Table 4

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a,b]

		Levene Statistic	*df1*	*df2*	Sig.
Academic Self-Efficacy Score	Based on Mean	2.390	2	135	.095
	Based on Median	2.355	2	135	.099
	Based on Median and with adjusted *df*	2.355	2	133.831	.099
	Based on trimmed mean	2.458	2	135	.089

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Dependent variable: Academic Self-Efficacy Score

b. Design: Intercept + English_Level

Results

The researcher utilized a one-way ANOVA with three groups at the alpha α =.05 level to examine if there was a difference in academic self-efficacy among English language learners enrolled in college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II courses. The independent variable was the levels of academic English courses, and the dependent variable was the college academic mean self-efficacy scores of ELLs, as measured by the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale. The researcher rejected the null hypothesis at the 95% confidence level where $F(2, 135) = 3.22$, p = .043. Partial eta square equaled (η^2_{part} = .046). The effect size was medium. There was a statistical difference in academic mean self-efficacy score

among English language learners enrolled in college prep ESL (*M* = 3.66, *SD* = 0.47), college English composition I (*M* = 3.58, *SD* = 0.61), and college English composition II (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = 0.56) courses. See Table 5 for Tests of Between-Subjects Effects.

Table 5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Dependent Variable: Academic Self-Efficacy Score

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	η^2_{part}
Corrected Model	1.936[a]	2	.968	3.218	.043	.046
Intercept	1727.488	1	1727.488	5743.409	<.001	.977
English_Level	1.936	2	.968	3.218	.043	.046
Error	40.605	135	.301			
Total	1769.165	138				
Corrected Total	42.541	137				

a. R Squared = .046 (Adjusted R Squared = .031)

As a result, the researcher performed a post hoc test using Tukey HSD to make all possible pairwise comparisons among the groups' mean scores. The test results revealed that students in the college prep ESL group (*M* = 3.66, *SD* = 0.47) had significantly higher academic self-efficacy than students in the college English composition II group (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = 0.56). However, no significant difference was observed in academic self-efficacy between the college English composition I group (*M* = 3.58, *SD* = 0.61) and the college prep ESL group (*M* = 3.66, *SD* = 0.47), or the college English composition II group (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = 0.56). See Table 6 for multiple comparisons of group means with 95% confidence intervals.

Table 6

Multiple Comparisons
Dependent Variable: Academic Self-Efficacy Score
Tukey HSD

(I) English Course Level	(J) English Course Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
College Prep ESL	College Composition I	.08	.115	.760	-.19	.35
	College Composition II	.28*	.114	.040	.01	.55
College Composition I	College Prep ESL	-.08	.115	.760	-.35	.19
	College Composition II	.20	.114	.194	-.07	.47
College Composition II	College Prep ESL	-.28*	.114	.040	-.55	-.01
	College Composition I	-.20	.114	.194	-.47	.07

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square(Error) = .301.

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This study addressed a gap in the literature by understanding the academic self-efficacy of English language learners in diverse English course levels. This chapter opens by discussing how the gap in literature was addressed, followed by a discussion of the study's implications and limitations. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this quantitative, causal-comparative study was to understand if variations exist in academic self-efficacy among ELLs enrolled in different academic English course levels, including college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II. In this section, the study hypothesis, theory, literature, and other studies are discussed in consideration of the findings resulting from the study investigation into the academic self-efficacy of ELL students across different levels of English courses.

The null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference in mean self-efficacy scores among English language learners who take courses in various academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, or college English composition II, as measured on the CASES. To understand how academic self-efficacy was distributed among English language learners at different academic English levels, the continuous dependent variable of the mean self-efficacy score was measured for each of the nominal categories on the independent variable of English course level. A one-way ANOVA with three groups was conducted at the alpha < 0.05 level. A significant difference was found between groups in different English course levels, $F(2, 135) = 3.22$, $p = .043$, and post hoc Tukey test for multiple comparisons of group means revealed a statistically significant difference ($p = .04$) between ELL

students in the college prep ESL group (M = 3.66, SD = 0.47) and those in the college English composition II group (M = 3.38, SD = 0.56). No significant difference was observed in academic self-efficacy between ELL students in the college English composition I group (M = 3.58, SD = 0.61) and those in the college prep ESL group (M = 3.66, SD = 0.47) and college English composition II group (M = 3.38, SD = 0.56).

The results of this study suggest that the level of academic English courses could be a result of how self-efficacy is developed among ELL students. It reveals that as ELL students progress to a higher level of academic English courses, academic self-efficacy tends to remain consistent or decline. The study findings imply that ELL students' academic self-efficacy beliefs may be influenced by factors beyond their acquired English proficiency level, such as individual differences in learning experiences and instructional environments. Various factors such as students' preparedness, course design, individual prior learning experiences, observations, feedback, and interactions within learning environments could have contributed to these fluctuations in self-efficacy among ELL students in different academic course levels.

Bandura's (1986) social cognitive framework emphasized triadic reciprocity, suggesting that learning results from the interplay between thoughts, behaviors, and the environment. Individuals learn by interacting with their surroundings and possess cognitive abilities for self-organization, reflection, and goal control (Bandura, 1982, 1997, 2004; Bandura et al., 1999). Moreover, social and contextual factors, such as feedback and instructional conditions, can influence students' self-efficacy beliefs in postsecondary writing contexts (Mitchell et al., 2019, 2023; Schunk & Swartz, 1993). Bandura (1977) defined academic self-efficacy as students' confidence in their ability to accomplish academic tasks. It is not a fixed characteristic and can be developed through learning (Bandura, 1982). Studies by Bandura (1977), Bandura et al.

(1999), and Zimmerman (1995) stated that self-efficacy is developed from four primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states.

The most influential source is mastery experience or past performance accomplishment (Bandura, 1977, 2004). The time of success or failure can play a crucial role in shaping individuals' self-efficacy, as experiencing failure early or severely can greatly reduce self-efficacy and significantly influence long-term beliefs (Bandura, 1977). Hence, the level of support provided to an ELL student in their English course could affect the self-efficacy level reported by the student, as it may be directly associated with the level of initial success they experienced.

The second influential factor in the development of self-efficacy is vicarious experiences or observing others with similar abilities succeed or fail in a task, especially in the face of challenges (Bandura, 1977). In the U.S., ESL courses are occupied by only students whose native language is not English and whose language proficiency needs improvement to succeed in college-level courses (David & Kanno, 2021; E. S. Park, 2019), while first-year college composition courses are inhabited by an increasingly mixed population of native English students, non-native English students, and those in between (Costino & Hyon, 2011). Therefore, the number of peers with similar abilities available to ELL students in different English course levels could have played a significant role in the results of this study.

The third source of self-efficacy is social or verbal persuasion, defined as suggestions, feedback, or words of encouragement that individuals receive from others to help them overcome challenges (Bandura, 1977, 2004). For this reason, the amount of supportive feedback an ELL student receives from instructors or peers in their English course could impact the level of self-efficacy the student reports, as it could be directly linked to instructors and peers’ perceptions of

ELL students' abilities in performing academic tasks which in turn could influence ELLs' affective states and academic behavior.

The fourth source of self-efficacy is emotional states, which refer to the impact of anxiety, stress, vulnerability, or tension on one's belief in the ability to succeed in a specific field (Bandura, 1977, 2004). For this reason, the amount of stress or vulnerability an ELL student may feel in an English course environment could impact the student's self-efficacy level as it could be directly linked to their level of interaction with instructors and peers within the course environment.

College Prep ESL vs. College English Composition II

The significant difference (p = .04), suggesting that ELL students in the college prep ESL group (M = 3.66, SD = 0.47) have statistically higher academic self-efficacy beliefs than those in the college English composition II group (M = 3.38, SD = 0.56), is consistent with Bandura's theoretical framework and the existing literature.

The study findings support Bandura's (1977) theoretical framework, emphasizing mastery and vicarious experiences' significant role in affecting students' self-efficacy. Two studies by Shi (2018a, 2021) highlighted the significance of supportive instructional environments in promoting high interest, motivation, and expectation among ELL students enrolled in ESL programs, leading to high self-efficacy beliefs. Shi (2021) explained that ESL courses integrate targeted strategies that improve students' confidence and academic skills, thus enhancing self-efficacy. Moreover, Ngoc Truong and Wang (2019) highlighted the significance of prior English learning experiences in fostering high self-efficacy among ELL students enrolled in ESL classrooms. Ngoc Truong and Wang (2019) found that ELL students who had more opportunities to practice their English with others or learn English in language classes

demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs than their counterparts who had lower opportunities to learn and/or practice their English skills.

Conversely, ELL students in college English Composition II courses may confront greater linguistic and academic challenges without the same targeted support. While these students could have advanced to a higher level of English proficiency, they may still encounter language barriers and academic expectations that could undermine their confidence in their abilities. Bandura (2000) stated that the level of self-efficacy can come with significant stressors that people may be hesitant to accept; as a result, they often choose easy or mediator activities that they could manage directly to avoid the performance expectations and complex duties that accompany personal control. Meenambal and Meenakshi (2022) stated that non-native English students find it challenging to express themselves clearly and effectively through speech using English. Several studies found that non-native English students often experience anxiety and feel hesitant to apply their English knowledge into practice due to lack of interactions with and knowledge of native English speakers (I. Wang et al., 2017), perceived incompetence compared to peers, embarrassment, inadequate preparation, fear of making mistakes, and fear of negative evaluations and judgments by others (Suparlan, 2021). Perceived discrimination, however, Shan et al. (2020) found to be the highest source of anxiety among international students.

Bandura's (1986) social cognitive framework highlighted the role of reciprocal interactions between learners' thoughts, behaviors, and environment in influencing self-efficacy beliefs. Studies (e.g., Shan et al., 2020; Suparlan, 2021; I. Wang et al., 2017) emphasized the negative impact of perceived bias and discrimination on non-native English students. I. Wang et al. (2017) found that ELL students reported low confidence in their ability and low willingness to communicate with native English speakers due to perceived bias and discrimination, avoidance

behaviors, and low English proficiency; on the other hand, native English speakers reported that they viewed ELLs with mild accents as more intelligent and educated and expressed more interest in engaging in social interactions with them than heavy-accented ELLs. I. Wang et al. (2017) concluded that the more ELLs attribute their communication concerns to native English speakers' bias, the more likely they would avoid interacting with them. Therefore, the negative effects of perceived bias and discrimination on non-native English students could have contributed to lower academic mean self-efficacy scores among ELLs in college English composition II courses.

College English Composition I vs. College Prep ESL

No significant difference was found in academic mean self-efficacy scores between ELL students in the college English composition I group (M = 3.58, SD = 0.61) and those in the college prep ESL group (M = 3.66, SD = 0.47).

The consistency in academic self-efficacy between these two groups provides valuable insights into the dynamics of academic self-efficacy and the influence of instructional environments supported by Bandura's theoretical framework and the literature related to ELLs' self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura's (1986) theory suggested that social and learning environments can significantly impact individuals' self-efficacy. Bandura's theory was supported by several studies (e.g., Dorman & Adams, 2004; Naghsh Daemi et al., 2017) that highlighted the positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and classroom learning environments. Dorman and Adams (2004) found that equity, task orientation, cooperation, and teacher support have positively influenced students' academic self-efficacy. Naghsh Daemi et al. (2017) further identified task orientation as the most influential factor affecting ELL students' academic self-efficacy. Therefore, the supportive nature of the learning environment, particularly in college

prep ESL courses and ENG-111 paired with ESL-95 writing support courses, may have contributed to the consistency in academic self-efficacy observed between ELL students in college English composition I and college prep ESL groups. These courses were enhanced with specialized instructors and peer support, creating encouraging environments for ELL students to develop and maintain high levels of self-efficacy.

Bandura's (1977, 2004) theory emphasized the role of mastery experiences in shaping self-efficacy beliefs. The similarities between these two groups suggest that both groups may have comparable mastery experiences or access to language-supportive resources. The majority (60%) of students in the college English composition I group received writing support from the ESL program while enrolled in the ENG-111 course, which indicates a continuity of support and preparation for academic writing tasks. Additionally, a significant portion (64%) of students have completed college prep ESL coursework before enrolling in the English Composition I course, further enhancing their mastery experiences and self-efficacy beliefs.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the college ESL program in preparing ELL students for course placement in college English Composition I is evident. Ferris (2018) highlighted the positive impact of ESL classes on ELL students' subsequent success in writing-intensive courses. This preparation, coupled with ELL students' reported awareness of similarities and differences in writing assignments between college prep ESL and English composition I courses found in the J. Lee (2021) study, could have contributed to the consistency in academic self-efficacy observed between these two groups in the current study.

College English Composition I vs. College English Composition II

No significant difference was found in academic self-efficacy between ELL students in the college English Composition I group ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.61$) and those in the English

Composition II group (M = 3.38, SD = 0.56).

Limited direct comparative studies examining the academic self-efficacy of ELLs across different educational levels (Alrabai, 2018; Ferris, 2018), specifically exploring the self-efficacy of ELL students in college English composition II courses, presented a challenge in interpreting these findings. However, despite the scarcity of examining this phenomenon, the consistency observed in academic self-efficacy between the two groups could provide valuable insights into the influence of mastery experiences and social and instructional environments on ELL students' academic self-efficacy beliefs in different levels of college composition courses.

Bandura's (1977, 2004) theoretical framework and the existing literature related to ELLs' academic self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., Shehzad et al., 2019; X. Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019; X. Zhang, Ardasheva, Egbert, & Ullrich-French, 2019; Zheng et al., 2017) suggested that prior learning experiences play a crucial role in shaping self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, the consistency observed in academic self-efficacy between college English composition I and English composition II groups could be attributed to shared experiences of college-level instruction and exposure to college-level course environments among ELLs in these two groups. ELL students in both groups had received college-level instruction and experienced college-level course environments in English composition I courses. This suggests that exposure to college-level instruction and course environments, regardless of prior ESL course experience, may contribute to the steadiness of academic self-efficacy among ELL students in college English Composition I and English composition II groups.

Implications

This study added valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge by addressing a significant gap in the literature concerning the academic self-efficacy beliefs of ELLs across

various college English course levels. Alrabai (2018) called for further research exploring ELLs' academic self-efficacy in various educational levels and regional backgrounds. Similarly, Shi (2021) called for research investigating factors affecting college ELLs' self-efficacy and their correlation with proficiency in ESL classroom settings. The problem has been that while the existing literature strongly supports the claim that students (e.g., Cavanagh et al., 2019) and ELL (e.g., Chauvin et al., 2020) with high self-efficacy beliefs demonstrate outstanding achievements in academic settings and the workplace along with developing motivation to learn and transfer academic competencies across diverse life, educational, and professional contexts, the literature has not addressed how self-efficacious ELLs feel about performing various academic behaviors in different college English course levels and how they perceive their ability to transfer and utilize the acquired language and academic skills in various educational levels. Therefore, this study addressed this gap by investigating the academic self-efficacy among ELLs enrolled in different academic English course levels: college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II.

The results of this study are valuable for stakeholders, including educators and policymakers, in higher education contexts. It provides valuable insights into the dynamics of academic self-efficacy among ELLs and highlights the influence of prior experiences and instructional environments on ELL students enrolled in different college English course levels. The research findings show a notable trend: as ELLs advance into more advanced academic English courses, their academic self-efficacy either remains consistent or declines. These findings indicate that the academic self-efficacy of ELLs could be impacted by factors beyond their English proficiency levels in academic English courses. It suggests that functional and

supportive learning environments could have played a crucial role in promoting academic self-efficacy among ELLs.

The findings of this study have significant implications for understanding the self-efficacy beliefs of ELLs and the effectiveness of college ESL programs in addressing their academic needs. Specifically, the research revealed that ELL students enrolled in college prep ESL courses demonstrated higher self-efficacy beliefs than those in English Composition II courses. This difference in self-efficacy suggests that the support provided within ESL programs plays a crucial role in enhancing ELL students' confidence in their academic abilities. Despite being enrolled in an ESL program, which is designed for ELLs whose English proficiency is insufficient, ELL students demonstrated improved confidence in their capability to perform various educational tasks. This highlights the effectiveness of ESL programs in creating supportive learning environments designed to meet the unique needs of ELL students.

Moreover, the findings of this research suggest significant implications for both instruction and institutional policy in supporting ELL students in college composition courses. The college's approach of providing targeted ESL writing support alongside regular English composition I courses has shown promise in maintaining consistent self-efficacy beliefs among ELL students transitioning into college-level composition I courses. The integration of ESL writing support and college-level composition I courses (ESL-95 with ENG-111) demonstrates a practical approach addressing the needs of ELL students. By pairing these courses and ensuring they are facilitated by instructors trained in both English composition and ESL instruction, the college creates a supportive environment favorable to the academic success of ELLs.

However, while this approach has facilitated the transition of ELLs into college-level English Composition I, it also raises concerns about the potential impact on ELL’s self-efficacy

beliefs in subsequent courses, particularly in English Composition II. Placing ELL students in ESL classroom environments for English Composition I and ESL writing support courses could potentially reduce ELL students' self-efficacy beliefs when transitioning to English Composition II courses, where students are fully immersed in the college-level composition instructional system and engage with native English-speaking peers.

To address this issue, institutions must reconsider the separation of native and non-native English-speaking students into separate English Composition I section. Instead, a more inclusive approach that combines native and non-native English-speaking students in the same English Composition I section while separately providing targeted ESL writing support courses for ELLs who need additional ESL support can be more beneficial. This approach could ensure that ELL students receive the necessary support and foster a collaborative learning environment where the interests and needs of all students are addressed.

Furthermore, collaboration between ESL and English composition instructors is essential in developing best instructional practices for addressing the diverse needs of ELL students in college-level English composition courses. While differing instructional concepts can hinder such collaboration, promoting productive collaboration is crucial in advancing effective educational strategies for supporting ELL students in college English composition courses.

In conclusion, the study findings provide implications for educational interventions to support ELL students in various English course environments. Understanding the impact of targeted instructional practices and supportive learning environments on self-efficacy can inform the design and implementation of ESL programs. It emphasizes the importance of providing resources and employing instructional strategies designed to meet the diverse needs of ELL students across different instructional contexts. The study highlights the essential role of ESL

programs in enhancing the self-efficacy of ELL students. It emphasizes the necessity of effective implementation of supportive resources and instructional practices to address their academic needs in college-level courses. These insights can inform the development of interventions to foster ELLs' self-efficacy and academic success in higher education contexts.

Limitations

There were several limitations that need to be addressed regarding both the internal and external validity of the current study. The use of convenience sampling method threatens internal validity, as the sample of ELL students enrolled in different academic English course levels could not be representative of the entire ELL student population at the college. The sample included ELL students enrolled in college prep ESL, college English composition I, and college English composition II courses within a two-year community college setting, potentially yielding results not entirely reflective of those for ELL students attending different courses at the college or similar courses in four-year institutions. The survey instrument used in the present study was administered to students between spring semester weeks 4 and 9, excluding those who withdrew from their courses prior to or enrolled after this timeframe. Due to the anonymity of the study, the study considered students who attended the identified courses in person, excluding students enrolled in fully online courses. The sampled students may have taken college courses in more than one mode of instruction or taken multiple courses within the same mode of instruction; however, the present study did not consider number of courses taken as a factor in students' self-efficacy levels.

Regarding external validity, the research findings have limited generalizability as the sample selected represents one defined population (Gall et al., 2007). Specifically, the sample comprised ELL students enrolled in academic English courses at one community college in

northern Virginia. As a result, the study outcomes may not be associated with ELLs in other educational contexts or geographical locations. The study findings can only be generalized to the students enrolled at the one community college used in the investigation and lack generalizability beyond the specific context of the college or the demographic characteristics of the sampled ELL students. The observed variations in academic self-efficacy may not apply to ELL students in different educational environments or cultural contexts.

To address validity concerns, the researcher acknowledged the present study's internal and external validity limitations and provided contextual information about the sample and setting to facilitate the interpretation and application of findings to other contexts. Moreover, researchers could employ random sampling techniques or ensure that the sample is drawn from a comprehensive list of all eligible ELL students to enhance representativeness (Gall et al., 2007). Additionally, conducting similar studies across diverse settings can help validate the generalizability of results (Gall et al., 2007).

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study provides valuable insights into the academic self-efficacy beliefs of English language learners across various college English course levels, thereby addressing a significant gap in the literature. To further expand the knowledge in this field, future research studies are encouraged to address questions that have emerged during the development of this study and any limitations identified. Future studies exploring the following questions can contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the development of more inclusive and effective educational practices tailored specifically to the diverse needs of learners.

- Qualitative studies search deeper into the findings of this study, exploring the observed higher levels of academic self-efficacy among English language learners in college prep ESL courses compared to those in college-level composition courses.
- Research similar to the present study employs random sampling techniques to ensure that the sample is drawn from a comprehensive list of all eligible ELL students, enhancing representativeness.
- Studies similar to the present study comparing the differences in self-efficacy among ELL students in academic English courses based on students' category (e.g., graduated from U.S. high schools vs. those who did not vs. international students), institutional contexts (e.g., two-year community college vs. four-year university), course learning environment (e.g., classrooms with a mix of native and non-native-English students vs. classrooms of only non-native-English students), or prior experiences (e.g., years of English learning).
- Comparative studies extend the analysis to compare academic self-efficacy not only between college prep ESL and college English composition groups but also across different levels of English language proficiency or academic programs. This could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing ELL students' academic self-efficacy.
- Studies investigate the effect of instructors or peers' perceptions on ELL students' academic self-efficacy beliefs in different academic English courses.
- Studies investigate the role of social support networks, within and outside of the academic environment, in shaping ELL students' academic self-efficacy. This could

include examining peer relationships, family support, and interactions with academic advisors or mentors.

- Studies employ pre-tests and post-tests to track the development of ELL students' self-efficacy at the beginning and end of an academic English course within a semester. This could provide insights into the observed differences whether students' self-efficacy persists or changes over a semester.
- Longitudinal studies track the changes in self-efficacy among the same groups of ELL students over three semesters as they transition from college prep ESL to subsequent English Composition courses. This could provide insights into how academic self-efficacy develops and evolves throughout the college experience for ELL students, and whether interventions or support programs have long-term effects.
- Studies investigate whether academic English course placement influences or predicts ELL students' self-efficacy beliefs in subsequent college-level English composition courses.

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APPENDIX A: College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES)

From Owen & Froman (1988), reproduced with permission.

College Questionnaire

DIRECTIONS. We are interested in learning more about you to help us improve our program. Your responses are anonymous and will not be shown to others. **Do not sign your name**. We hope you will answer each item, but there are no penalties for omitting an item.

How much confidence do you have about doing each of the behaviors listed below? Circle the letters that best represent your confidence.

	A	B	C	D	E	
	Quite A Lot		*CONFIDENCE*			Very Little

Lots				Little	
A	B	C	D	E	1. Taking well-organized notes during a lecture.
A	B	C	D	E	2. Participating in a class discussion.
A	B	C	D	E	3. Answering a question in a large class.
A	B	C	D	E	4. Answering a question in a small class.
A	B	C	D	E	5. Taking "objective" tests (multiple-choice, T-F, matching)
A	B	C	D	E	6. Taking essay tests.
A	B	C	D	E	7. Writing a high quality term paper.
A	B	C	D	E	8. Listening carefully during a lecture on a difficult topic.
A	B	C	D	E	9. Tutoring another student.
A	B	C	D	E	10. Explaining a concept to another student.
A	B	C	D	E	11. Asking a professor in class to review a concept you don't understand.
A	B	C	D	E	12. Earning good marks in most courses.
A	B	C	D	E	13. Studying enough to understand content thoroughly.
A	B	C	D	E	14. Running for student government office.
A	B	C	D	E	15. Participating in extracurricular events (sports, clubs).
A	B	C	D	E	16. Making professors respect you.
A	B	C	D	E	17. Attending class regularly.
A	B	C	D	E	18. Attending class consistently in a dull course.
A	B	C	D	E	19. Making a professor think you're paying attention in class.
A	B	C	D	E	20. Understanding most ideas you read in your texts.
A	B	C	D	E	21. Understanding most ideas presented in class.
A	B	C	D	E	22. Performing simple math computations.
A	B	C	D	E	23. Using a computer.
A	B	C	D	E	24. Mastering most content in a math course.
A	B	C	D	E	25. Talking to a professor privately to get to know him or her.
A	B	C	D	E	26. Relating course content to material in other courses.
A	B	C	D	E	27. Challenging a professor's opinion in class.
A	B	C	D	E	28. Applying lecture content to a laboratory session.
A	B	C	D	E	29. Making good use of the library.
A	B	C	D	E	30. Getting good grades.
A	B	C	D	E	31. Spreading out studying instead of cramming.
A	B	C	D	E	32. Understanding difficult passages in textbooks.
A	B	C	D	E	33. Mastering content in a course you're not interested in.

Thanks for your help!

APPENDIX B: CASES Scoring Instructions

From Owen & Froman (1988), reproduced with permission.

Scoring Considerations. Many measurement specialists suggest creating a total scale score by summing the item responses. But whenever there are missing data, the sum score is incorrect. That is, a person who omits an item or two gets a lower score, but it is simply an artifact of missing data and not actually "less" of whatever the scale is measuring.

There are two reasons to prefer a mean score, averaging across the items. One, it compensates for missing data. On a 33-item scale, the person who skips two items has her mean calculated on 31 items, and there is no penalty for missing data. Second, it puts the overall score in the same metric as the original response scale, usually 1-5. I have a pretty good sense what an overall score of 4.0 means on a 5-point scale, but it is confusing to think of what a total score of 132 refers to on the 33-item scale. (Those two scores are actually equivalent if there are no missing data).

A couple of years ago, a doctoral student using CASES doubted that there was only one overall dimension. I combined 21 data sets and did a series of exploratory factor analyses. A 2-factor structure looked good, implying two subscores. However, when I tested both the 1-factor model and the 2-factor model with confirmatory factor analysis, it was the 1-factor model that showed the best fit with the data.

So, we stick with the original scoring protocol, which is to calculate mean scores across all the items. Below are some summary data from our large CASES data file, so you can get a sense of how University of Connecticut undergraduate students scored across a 5-year period.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
c1	3147	1	5	2.72	1.130
c2	3143	1	5	2.89	1.155
c3	3141	1	5	3.13	1.177
c4	3139	1	5	2.59	1.188
c5	3142	1	5	2.56	1.126
c6	3141	1	5	2.82	1.092
c7	3135	1	5	2.89	1.070
c8	3140	1	5	2.78	1.047
c9	3140	1	5	3.10	1.083
c10	3138	1	5	2.83	1.073
c11	3144	1	5	2.91	1.087
c12	3141	1	5	2.79	1.042
c13	3142	1	5	2.72	1.025
c14	3130	1	5	3.40	1.301
c15	3141	1	5	2.74	1.350
c16	3133	1	5	2.63	1.117
c17	3147	1	5	2.34	1.500
c18	3142	1	5	2.45	1.335
c19	3124	1	5	2.55	1.169
c20	3135	1	5	2.70	1.056
c21	3128	1	5	2.65	1.076
c22	3137	1	5	2.46	1.423
c23	3134	1	5	2.87	1.254
c24	3133	1	5	2.83	1.204
c25	3128	1	5	2.87	1.132
c26	3126	1	5	2.86	1.110
c27	3134	1	5	3.14	1.193
c28	3109	1	5	3.03	1.012
c29	3134	1	5	2.75	1.144
c30	3130	1	5	2.72	1.115
c31	3137	1	5	2.93	1.083
c32	3131	1	5	2.91	.904
c33	3135	1	5	2.95	.916
CASES	3149	1.19	4.91	2.8041	.65143
Valid N (listwise)	2911				

APPENDIX C: Permission to Use CASES Instrument

04 August 2023

Dear Researcher,

Thank you for your inquiry about the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES). You are welcome to use CASES. I've included a copy of the scale below. Here are a few summary points about the scale.

Items are scored as A ("quite a lot") = 5…E ("very little") = 1. On the other hand, because we read from left to right, data entry is faster letting A = 1, and E = 5. If you enter data with A = 1, then let the computer recode the values so that A becomes 5, B becomes 4, etc. In calculating an overall CASES score, we prefer calculating a mean rather than a sum.

You may wish to modify questionnaire instructions to best fit your application. For example, if you need informed consent, you might say something like "Filling out this questionnaire is completely voluntary and confidential. There are no penalties for not participating, and you may quit at any time."

The next page shows the CASES items. Following that is a conversation about scoring CASES, plus some normative data.

Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely,

Steven V. Owen, Professor (retired)
Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics
University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

Internet: 

OR 

APPENDIX D: Demographic Questionnaire

Dear Participants,

Please respond to the following questions regarding your demographic information. It is assured that your answers will be kept confidential and only revealed to the researcher conducting this study. **Do NOT write your name.**

1. **Please mark the statement that applies to you:**
   - ☐ I'm currently enrolled in the college ESL program, *or*
   - ☐ I have taken and completed ESL level 5 courses at the college ESL program, and I'm currently enrolled in the ENG-111 or ENG-112, *or*
   - ☐ I did not and was not required to take ESL level 5 courses at the college ESL program, and I'm currently enrolled in the ENG-111 or ENG-112 course, *or*
   - ☐ I prefer not to answer

2. **Please write the name of the academic program(s) you are currently enrolled in.**
   - ☐ College ESL program.
   - ☐ Certificate: _____
   - ☐ Associate-Degree: _____
   - ☐ Other Program(s): _____

3. **Your Age**
   - ☐ 18 – 24 years
   - ☐ 25 – 34 years
   - ☐ 35 – 44 years
   - ☐ 45 years and over
   - ☐ I prefer not to answer.

APPENDIX E: LU IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 13, 2023

Shada Aweina
Sara Geary

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-734 Comparing Academic Self-Efficacy of English Language Learners Taking Courses in College ESL, Certificate, or Associate-Degree Programs: A Quantitative Causal-Comparative Study

Dear Shada Aweina, Sara Geary,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(i), Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your Information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX F: Site IRB Approval

[redacted]

January 17, 2024

Shada Aweina
Ph.D. Candidate
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24515

Dear Shada,

Your proposal, *Comparing Academic Self-Efficacy of English Language Learners Taking Courses in College ESL, Certificate, or Associate-Degree Programs: A Quantitative Causal Comparative Study,* has been approved. Participation in any research project is purely voluntary. Ensure the participants are aware of their options. Please send any changes in your research methodology and final report once complete.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]

APPENDIX G: Student Consent Form

Student Consent Form

Comparing the Academic Self-Efficacy of English Language Learners Taking College Prep ESL, English Composition I, or English Composition II Courses at a U.S. Community College: A Quantitative Causal-Comparative Study

Shada Aweina
Doctoral Candidate, School of Education
Liberty University

Invitation: You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, a college student whose native language is not English, and currently enrolled in

- the college ESL program taking ESL courses at the final level, level 5, *or*
- one of the college academic programs taking ENG 111 - College Composition I Course, *or*
- one of the college academic programs taking ENG 112 - College Composition II Course.

Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

The purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to gain an initial understanding of English language learner college students' confidence in their abilities to perform various academic activities in different academic English course levels.

Your involvement: If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following outside of class hours:

1. Complete the demographic information portion of the hardcopy survey.
2. Complete the College Questionnaire, a five to ten-minute, 33-question, multi-choice hardcopy survey on how confident you feel in performing various academic tasks.
3. Return the completed survey to your instructor within a 10-day timeframe and keep the student consent form (this document), as you will need it to claim a thank-you gift card reward explained in the compensation section below.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, the study outcomes will be helpful to instructors and administrators as they design future courses similar to the ones you are enrolled in.

Risks: The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Data Security: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous, which means the researcher will not be able to link your responses to the specific participants who provided the data.

- Digital data will be stored on a password-locked computer, and hardcopy data will be stored in a locked file cabinet. After five years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.

Compensation: Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. After completing and submitting the survey to your instructor, you will receive a $10 Amazon gift card as a thank-you reward for participating in this study. Please keep the student consent form, as you will need it to claim the thank you reward. Each participant will be assigned a unique number printed on both the student consent form and the survey. Once the researcher collects the completed surveys from your instructor, to maintain your anonymity, the researcher will provide your instructor with gift cards along with a list of the corresponding unique numbers of the completed surveys. The instructor will then distribute the gift cards to student participants who have matching numbers on the student consent forms.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, your college, or your status and grades in your course. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey, and your relationships will not be affected either way.

How to withdraw: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions about the Study: The researcher conducting this study is Shada Aweina. You may ask any questions you may have. If you have any questions, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Sara Capwell-Geary, at [redacted].

Contacts and Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant:
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is [redacted]; our phone number is [redacted], and our email address is [redacted]

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent: I am over the age of 18, have read this form, and agree to participate in this study. Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. Please keep this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above. After you have read the consent form, please complete and return the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.