

Self-Efficacy and Attitude Towards Communicative Language Teaching of Elementary School Teachers: Basis for a Professional Development Program

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Article Details:

Received: 5 September 2026

Revised: 10 September 2026

Accepted: 14 September 2026

Published: 29 September 2026

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Recommended Citation:

Esteban, M. J. D., & Guillermo, R. V. (2026). Self-Efficacy and Attitude Towards Communicative Language Teaching of Elementary School Teachers: Basis for a Professional Development Program. *The International Review of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(11), 101-108.

<https://doi.org/10.67167/vertex.728>

Index Terms:

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Elementary school teachers, English language teaching, Professional development program, Self-efficacy, Teacher attitudes, Teacher training, Quantitative descriptive-correlational research

Abstract. This study examined the self-efficacy and Communicative Language Teaching attitudes of elementary school English teachers in the Echague East District, Schools Division of Isabela, aiming to determine their level of self-efficacy, attitudes toward CLT, differences across profile characteristics, and the relationship between self-efficacy and CLT attitude, with findings serving as the basis for a proposed contextualized professional development program. Employing a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the study involved 89 elementary teachers who completed a standardized questionnaire, with data analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, t-test, Analysis of Variance, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Results revealed that the teachers possessed a high level of self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management, and likewise demonstrated favorable attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching. Significant differences emerged when teachers were grouped according to years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and training or seminars attended, with those having more experience, higher educational qualifications, and greater participation in professional development activities exhibiting stronger self-efficacy and more positive CLT attitudes. Furthermore, a significant positive relationship was established between self-efficacy and CLT attitude, indicating that teachers who were more confident in their teaching abilities were more inclined to implement communicative and learner-centered approaches in the classroom. Based on these findings, a contextualized professional development program was proposed to further enhance teachers' instructional competence and the effective implementation of Communicative Language Teaching.

Introduction

The shift toward learner-centered education has placed communicative competence at the core of language instruction worldwide. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes meaningful communication, authentic language use, learner interaction, and collaborative learning rather than rote memorization of grammatical rules. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) integrated CLT into the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum to equip learners with twenty-first-century language skills. Despite this policy direction, the implementation of CLT remains inconsistent due to contextual, instructional, and teacher-related factors. Among these factors, teacher self-efficacy and attitudes toward CLT serve as major determinants of classroom practice. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute actions required to achieve specific outcomes. Teachers with high self-efficacy demonstrate greater confidence in engaging learners, managing classrooms, and executing innovative instructional strategies. Concurrently, teachers' attitudes toward CLT—encompassing beliefs regarding group work, grammar integration, error correction, and teacher-student roles—dictate the degree to which communicative principles are applied.

Despite extensive promotion, a gap persists between CLT policy and practice. Implementation is frequently constrained by large class sizes, examination-oriented curricula, limited resources, and inadequate instructional confidence. While teacher self-efficacy and CLT attitudes have been researched independently, limited studies examine their direct relationship among elementary school teachers within the Philippine basic education context, particularly across demographic variables such as sex, educational attainment, teaching experience, and training exposure.

Research Questions

1. What is the demographic profile of the teachers in terms of sex, years of teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and English teaching training/seminars attended?
2. What is the self-efficacy level of elementary teachers across student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management?
3. What is the attitude of elementary teachers toward CLT regarding group/pair work, the place of grammar, student/teacher roles, peer/teacher correction, and instructional methods?
4. Is there a significant difference in teacher self-efficacy based on their demographic profile?
5. Is there a significant difference in CLT attitude based on their demographic profile?
6. Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitude toward CLT?
7. What professional development program can be designed based on the findings?

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize demographic profiles and quantify levels of teacher self-efficacy and CLT attitudes. Correlational and inferential statistics were applied to assess differences and relationships among variables without experimental manipulation.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

The respondents of this study were elementary school teachers of 10 selected schools from the Echague East District, Echague, Isabela, specifically those handling the English subject. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was utilized to select the sample respondents randomly. The total teacher population from the ten participating schools was 115, from which 89 teachers were selected as respondents using proportional allocation to ensure that each school was fairly represented based on its actual teacher population.

Research Instruments

This study employed two standardized survey instruments to gather the data needed to address the research objectives. The first instrument was the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), while the second was the Communicative Language Teaching Attitude Scale (COLTAS) developed by Eveyik (1999). Both instruments have been widely used in educational research and were adapted to suit the context of the present study while retaining their original constructs and content validity. Before the actual data collection, the adapted instruments underwent pilot testing to determine their reliability and internal consistency. The responses obtained during the pilot testing were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis yielded an overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.952 for the 58-item questionnaire. The obtained coefficient of 0.952 demonstrates excellent internal consistency, indicating that the items consistently measure the constructs of teacher self-efficacy and attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching. This high reliability confirms that the instrument was suitable for use in the actual conduct of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the administration of the survey questionnaires, permission was secured from the Schools Division Office, District Office and school heads of the participating schools. After approval, data collection was conducted. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of responses were strictly observed.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical standards in conducting educational research. Respondents were informed about the objectives of the study before participation. Informed consent was secured, and anonymity was maintained by excluding identifying information from the data collection process. The respondents were also given the freedom to withdraw from participation at any stage of the study without penalty.

Data Analysis

The study employed several statistical tools using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Prior to the actual administration of the research instruments, a pilot test was conducted to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was computed, and the instrument obtained coefficients ranging from 0.88 to 0.94 across the different sub-scales, namely Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management. These values indicate high reliability, suggesting that the items included in the questionnaire were internally consistent and appropriate for use in the study.

Descriptive statistical tools were utilized to determine the profile of the respondents and the level of teacher's self-efficacy. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to summarize the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and training or seminars attended.

For the inferential analysis, several statistical tests were applied to determine the relationships and differences among the variables. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used to determine the significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their instructional performance. The obtained correlation coefficients, such as 0.31 and 0.48, were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. In addition, the t-test for Independent Samples was utilized to determine whether significant differences existed in the level of efficacy when respondents were grouped according to variables such as sex and educational attainment (Bachelor's versus Master's degree holders). Furthermore, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to identify significant differences in teacher efficacy when respondents were grouped according to years of teaching experience and the level of training or seminars attended.

Results and Discussion

This study examined the self-efficacy and attitudes of elementary school teachers toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Echague East District, Isabela. It also described teachers' demographic profile in terms of sex, years of teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and English-related training. Findings revealed that teachers generally demonstrated high self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management, along with favorable to very favorable attitudes toward CLT. Significant differences in self-efficacy and CLT attitudes were found based on teaching experience, educational attainment, and participation in professional development. Moreover, a significant positive relationship existed between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes toward CLT, indicating that greater teaching confidence was associated with stronger support for communicative, learner-centered instruction. These findings provided the basis for a contextualized professional development program to further strengthen teachers' instructional competence and effective CLT implementation.

Profile of Teachers

The findings revealed that most respondents were female, confirming the continued predominance of women in elementary teaching, a trend consistent with previous studies (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; UNESCO). However, research suggests that teacher effectiveness is influenced more by experience and context than by sex (Lazarides et al., 2020).

Most teachers had 6–10 years of teaching experience, indicating a predominantly early- to mid-career workforce. This level of experience is associated with stronger teaching confidence developed through classroom practice (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005), although self-efficacy may stabilize without ongoing professional development (Springer, 2024).

More than half of the respondents had earned a master's degree, reflecting continued professional growth. Higher educational attainment has been linked to greater instructional competence (Cheung, 2008; Yang & Villanueva, 2023), although advanced degrees alone do not guarantee improved teaching effectiveness.

Most teachers had attended district-level English-related trainings, highlighting the accessibility of local professional development. Such training enhances teachers' instructional competence and self-efficacy (Suico, 2020; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009), though its impact may be limited by classroom and institutional constraints (Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Li, 1998).

Overall, the respondents were predominantly female, experienced, academically qualified, and professionally engaged, providing a favorable context for implementing Communicative Language Teaching while underscoring the need for sustained institutional support.

Level of Efficacy of Elementary Teachers

The teachers demonstrated a very high level of self-efficacy, with an overall mean of 3.53 (Completely Confident). Among the three dimensions, instructional strategies obtained the highest mean (3.59), followed by student engagement (3.52) and classroom management (3.46), indicating strong confidence in planning instruction, engaging learners, and managing classroom environments.

Teachers were most confident in helping students understand unfamiliar words, applying varied instructional strategies, and motivating learners, while meeting the needs of struggling readers received the lowest, though still high, rating. These findings support Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977), which posits that teachers with strong efficacy beliefs are more likely to implement effective instructional practices and persist in addressing learning challenges. The results are consistent with Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and Zee and Koomen (2016), who found that high teacher self-efficacy is associated with effective instruction, positive classroom management, and greater student engagement.

The attitude of elementary teachers towards Communicative Language Teaching Group/Pair Work

Teachers showed a favorable attitude toward group and pair work, with a mean of 2.95, indicating support for collaborative learning in English classes. They strongly agreed that group work creates a motivating environment for using English and helps develop learners' oral communication skills, while disagreeing with statements that pair work is ineffective. These findings reflect teachers' recognition of collaborative learning as a key component of Communicative Language Teaching. The results support Richards (2006) and Littlewood (2011), who emphasized that pair and group work promote meaningful interaction, learner participation, and communicative competence.

Place of Grammar in the Classroom Setting

Teachers demonstrated a favorable attitude toward the place of grammar in language teaching, with a mean of 3.02. They agreed that grammar should be integrated into communicative activities rather than taught as an end in itself, while still recognizing the value of explicit grammar instruction. These findings indicate support for a balanced approach that develops both grammatical accuracy and communicative competence. The results align with Celce-Murcia (2007) and Richards and Rodgers (2014), who emphasized that grammar is most effective when taught within meaningful communication contexts.

Student and Teacher Roles

Teachers demonstrated a favorable attitude toward student and teacher roles ($M = 3.25$). They strongly agreed that teachers should design learner-centered activities based on students' needs and encourage peer correction, while still valuing teacher guidance in classroom interaction. These findings indicate support for a balanced, learner-centered approach consistent with Communicative Language Teaching, where teachers act as facilitators while providing appropriate instructional support (Nunan, 2004; Richards, 2006).

Peer or Teacher Correction

With respect to peer or teacher correction, the respondents obtained a mean of 3.03, interpreted as Favorable. The highest-rated indicator was "I believe pupils need immediate teacher feedback on their English accuracy" with a mean of 3.33 (Very Favorable). This suggests that teachers highly value timely corrective feedback to improve learners' language performance. The statement "Teacher correction should occur only when necessary for effective communication" also received a favorable rating (3.16), indicating that teachers acknowledge the importance of maintaining the flow of communication during classroom interaction. Meanwhile, the statement "Pupils should not be allowed to correct their peers' mistakes due to their limited understanding of the language" obtained the lowest mean of 2.57, implying that teachers are relatively open to peer correction despite recognizing its limitations.

The findings support Lyster and Ranta (1997), who concluded that appropriate corrective feedback contributes to language development without discouraging learner participation. Likewise, Ellis (2009) emphasized that corrective feedback is most effective when it supports communication rather than interrupts it excessively.

Instructional Method

Teachers demonstrated a favorable attitude toward instructional methods ($M = 3.23$). They strongly supported learner-centered instruction and the use of meaningful, context-based language activities while recognizing the value of teacher guidance when needed. These findings are consistent with Richards and Rodgers (2014) and Brown and Lee (2015), who emphasized that effective Communicative Language Teaching balances learner autonomy with appropriate teacher facilitation.

Overall, teachers exhibited a favorable attitude toward Communicative Language Teaching (Grand Mean = 3.07). Student and teacher roles received the highest rating, followed by instructional method, peer or teacher correction, place of grammar, and group/pair work. The findings indicate that teachers generally support learner-centered, communicative instruction while valuing grammar, corrective feedback, and teacher guidance. This supports the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014) and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977), suggesting that confident teachers are more likely to implement communicative teaching practices effectively.

Difference on Self-Efficacy of Teachers Based on Profile Sex

When grouped according to sex, female teachers generally reported higher self-efficacy than male teachers across all dimensions. Significant differences were found in selected indicators of student engagement and instructional strategies, particularly in adapting teaching strategies, improving oral reading fluency, and adjusting reading materials, all favoring female teachers. No significant differences were observed in classroom management, although female teachers consistently obtained higher mean scores. Overall, teachers were Completely Confident, but the consistently higher ratings among female teachers suggest stronger perceived teaching efficacy. These findings are consistent with Nankani and Kaur (2026) and Holzberger and Prestele (2021), who reported that female teachers often demonstrate higher teaching confidence, while emphasizing the need for equitable professional development to strengthen self-efficacy across both sexes.

Years of Teaching Experience

Teachers generally demonstrated high self-efficacy regardless of teaching experience; however, significant differences were observed in selected indicators of student engagement, instructional strategies, and particularly classroom management, where teachers with 16–20 years of experience consistently reported the highest confidence, while those with 1–5 years obtained lower ratings. These findings suggest that teaching experience strengthens confidence in managing classrooms, adapting instruction, and responding to learners' needs through accumulated mastery experiences. The results support Bandura (1997) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), while also highlighting that continuous professional development remains essential in sustaining teacher self-efficacy across all career stages.

Highest Educational Attainment

Teachers demonstrated high self-efficacy regardless of educational attainment. However, teachers with master's degrees reported significantly higher confidence in selected aspects of student engagement and instructional strategies, particularly in using students' errors as learning opportunities, differentiating instruction, and adapting teaching based on learners' needs. No significant differences were found in classroom management, indicating that both bachelor's and master's degree holders were equally confident in managing classrooms. These findings suggest that graduate education enhances specific instructional competencies, while practical teaching experience remains essential in developing overall teaching confidence.

Training/Seminars Attended in Teaching English

Teachers who attended regional-level English trainings consistently reported the highest self-efficacy across student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Significant differences favored regional training participants in selected indicators related to engaging learners, differentiating instruction, and motivating students, suggesting that higher-level professional development strengthens teaching confidence. Although all groups were Completely Confident, regional-level training had the greatest positive influence on teachers' perceived efficacy. These findings underscore the importance of providing equitable access to advanced professional development to enhance instructional competence and effective classroom practice.

Difference on Communicative Language Teaching Attitude (CLT) of teachers in Terms of Their Profile Sex

Teachers demonstrated favorable to very favorable attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) regardless of sex. Across the five dimensions, only one indicator under Place of Grammar—judging learners primarily by grammatical correctness—showed a significant difference, with female teachers placing slightly greater emphasis on grammatical accuracy. All other indicators yielded no significant differences, indicating that male and female teachers shared comparable views on collaborative learning, learner-centered instruction, corrective feedback, and instructional methods. Overall, the findings suggest that sex does not substantially influence teachers' attitudes toward CLT, reflecting their shared readiness to implement communicative and learner-centered language teaching approaches.

Years of Teaching Experience

Teachers across all experience levels demonstrated favorable to very favorable attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). However, more experienced teachers consistently showed stronger support for group work, learner-centered instruction, communicative grammar teaching, balanced corrective feedback, and student autonomy, while novice teachers tended to favor more teacher-centered and accuracy-focused approaches. These findings suggest that teaching experience strengthens teachers' confidence and alignment with CLT principles, highlighting the need for continuous professional development and mentoring to support beginning teachers in implementing communicative, learner-centered practices.

Highest Educational Attainment

Teachers demonstrated favorable to very favorable attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) regardless of educational attainment. However, teachers with master's degrees consistently showed stronger support for collaborative learning, learner autonomy, and communicative instructional methods, with significant differences observed in selected indicators of group/pair work, student and teacher roles, and instructional methods. These findings suggest that advanced education strengthens teachers' alignment with CLT principles by enhancing pedagogical knowledge and confidence in implementing learner-centered instruction, while highlighting the need for continuous professional development for all teachers.

Training/Seminars Attended in Teaching English

Teachers demonstrated favorable to very favorable attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) regardless of training level. However, those who attended regional-level English trainings consistently showed stronger support for collaborative learning, communicative grammar instruction, learner autonomy, and learner-centered teaching, with significant differences observed in selected indicators of group/pair work, place of grammar, student and teacher roles, and instructional methods. These findings suggest that advanced professional development strengthens teachers' attitudes toward CLT and reinforces the importance of providing equitable access to high-quality training opportunities.

Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Communicative Language Teaching Attitude of Elementary Teachers

The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) across all dimensions. Teachers who were more confident in engaging students, implementing instructional strategies, and managing classrooms were also more likely to demonstrate favorable attitudes toward learner-centered and communicative teaching practices. The strongest relationships were observed in classroom management, followed by instructional strategies and student engagement, indicating that teacher confidence plays a crucial role in adopting CLT. These findings support Bandura (1997) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), highlighting self-efficacy as a key factor in promoting effective communicative language instruction and underscoring the need for professional development that strengthens both teaching confidence and CLT implementation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that elementary teachers in Echague East District generally possess high levels of self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. They also demonstrate favorable to very favorable attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), indicating openness to learner-centered and communicative approaches. However, differences in self-efficacy and CLT attitudes are significantly influenced by professional and demographic factors such as years of teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and training/seminars attended. Teachers with more experience, higher qualifications, and greater exposure to training consistently showed stronger confidence and more positive attitudes toward CLT. Finally, the study established a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and CLT attitudes, affirming that teachers who are more confident in their teaching abilities are also more inclined to adopt communicative and learner-centered practices. These findings highlight the importance of professional development programs that simultaneously strengthen teacher efficacy and

reinforce CLT principles. In alignment with the findings and conclusions of this study, and to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) within the primary sector, the following recommendations are put forward. (1) For Teachers. Teachers should actively participate in professional development programs that focus on CLT strategies. This recommendation is based on the finding that teachers already exhibit favorable attitudes toward CLT, and continuous training will sustain and further enhance their confidence and competence in communicative approaches. (2) For Administrators. School administrators should provide structured mentoring and supervision to support teachers in classroom management and instructional innovation. The study showed that differences in self-efficacy and CLT attitudes were influenced by teaching experience and educational attainment. Mentoring can help less experienced teachers build confidence and align their practices with communicative principles. (3) For Teacher Training Programs. Training institutions should design modules that integrate self-efficacy enhancement with CLT pedagogy. This recommendation is supported by the result that teachers who attended more training/seminars demonstrated stronger self-efficacy and more favorable CLT attitudes. Embedding CLT-focused strategies into training curricula will ensure teachers are equipped with both confidence and competence. (4) For Policy Makers. Policies should prioritize equitable access to advanced studies and sustained professional development opportunities. The basis for this recommendation lies in the finding that teachers with higher educational attainment and longer teaching experience exhibited stronger efficacy and CLT attitudes. Providing scholarships, graduate study opportunities, and continuous training will ensure that all teachers—regardless of profile—develop the confidence and skills necessary to implement CLT effectively. (5) For Future Researchers. Further studies should include classroom observations and qualitative interviews to complement survey data. While this study established a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and CLT attitudes, qualitative insights would provide deeper understanding of how these constructs translate into actual classroom practices, especially in rural and resource-constrained contexts.

Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to the faculty members, research adviser, and panelists for the valuable guidance, encouragement, and constructive suggestions throughout the completion of this study. Their expertise and support greatly contributed to the improvement and success of the research.

The researcher also extends heartfelt appreciation to the administrators and teachers of the participating schools in Echague East District, Echague, Isabela for their cooperation and participation during the data gathering process. Their willingness to contribute made this study possible.

Special thanks are also given to the institution for providing academic support, learning resources, and opportunities that helped strengthen the researcher's knowledge and skills in conducting this study. Lastly, the researcher is deeply grateful to all individuals who offered technical assistance, encouragement, and support throughout the entire research journey.

Funding

This research received no external funding from any public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agency, and no organization provided financial support for the conduct of the study, authorship, or publication of this article.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.