

An Assessment of the English Language Proficiency and Self-Efficacy Beliefs of English Teachers with Short-Term Teaching Certification Program

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Abstract

Ongoing debates surrounding the effectiveness of the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) continue to raise concerns about teacher quality and preparedness in the Philippine education system. These concerns are reflected in the country's declining performance in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), where learning gaps have been linked to limitations in teacher competence. Within this context, this study examined the English language proficiency and teaching self-efficacy of non-education graduates who completed a short-term Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) and were designated to teach English in basic education institutions within the National Capital Region (NCR). Employing a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, the study assessed English proficiency using CEFR-aligned language assessments and measured teaching self-efficacy through Karas' (2019) English Language Teacher Sense of Efficacy Beliefs Scale (EL-TSES). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation.

Results indicated that most respondents demonstrated intermediate to upper-intermediate English proficiency (B1–B2), with stronger performance in listening, speaking, and writing than in reading. Teachers reported generally high teaching self-efficacy; however, lower self-efficacy levels were observed in the domains of language instruction, assessment, and instructional materials development. Correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between English language proficiency and teaching self-efficacy. The findings suggest that while the short-term CTP provides access to the teaching profession, it may be insufficient in developing advanced English proficiency and comprehensive instructional competence. The study recommends targeted language enrichment, data-driven professional development, and curricular review of certification programs to better support non-education English teachers. Future research may employ larger samples and longitudinal designs to further examine changes in proficiency and self-efficacy over time.

Keywords: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), English Language Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale (EL-TSES), English Language Proficiency, Teacher Certification Program*

INTRODUCTION

The need for educational reform in the Philippines has become increasingly urgent as the country's global educational rankings have declined. This underscores the necessity for a thorough examination of factors affecting teaching quality and the preparation of educators to foster effective student development. Existing literature identifies challenges such as inadequate teacher training, resource constraints, and regional disparities in educator competencies, emphasizing the critical need for targeted improvements within the education system (Bautista & Aranas, 2023; PBEd, 2020 as cited in Filoteo, 2021).

Efforts to professionalize teaching through initiatives like The Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994 and the Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) are commendable. However, gaps remain, particularly in understanding the effectiveness of these programs for non-education graduates. Unlike studies focusing on education degree holders, little research has explored the outcomes of CTP graduates who lack formal education training but are certified to teach. This gap is significant considering the program's objective to equip individuals with essential teaching skills and prepare them for licensure examinations, such as the LET.

Recent discussions by Pizarra and Velasco (2023) emphasized the crucial role of English proficiency among teachers, directly influencing student learning outcomes. They affirmed that proficiency in English facilitates effective communication in the classroom and enhances instructional quality and student performance. More research studies indicate that there is a strong connection between teachers' proficiency in English, and their self-efficacy in teaching toward academic achievements of students (Barni et al., 2019; Wang, 2021).

With all the connections stated, this research explores the experiences of English teachers who completed their CTP and understand how their proficiency with the English language, efficacy in teaching, and their acquired CTP competencies align to their actual teaching practices. With such factors as perceived indicators for this study, the study aims to produce enhancements on the curriculum of the teacher certification program, improving also how the said program will prepare and effectively produce teachers who are non-education majors, delivering quality English education to its stakeholders—students.

This study aims to examine the English language proficiency and teaching self-efficacy of non-education graduates who completed a short-term Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) and are designated to teach English in basic education institutions within the National Capital Region (NCR). Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the English language proficiency levels of English teachers with CTP in terms of:
 - 1.1 Speaking;
 - 1.2 Listening;
 - 1.3 Writing (grammar and vocabulary); and
 - 1.4 Reading?
2. What is the level of teaching self-efficacy of English teachers with CTP in terms of:
 - 2.1 Classroom Proficiency;
 - 2.2 Learner-Focused Instruction;
 - 2.3 Assessment;
 - 2.4 Language Instruction;
 - 2.5 Culture; and
 - 2.6 Materials?
3. Is there a significant relationship between English language proficiency and teaching self-efficacy of English teachers with CTP?

Literature Review

English Teaching Competencies in the 21st Century

In the contemporary global education landscape, teaching competence is increasingly framed within the demands of 21st-century learning, which emphasizes adaptability, critical thinking, communication, and lifelong learning (Reimers, 2021). Scholars argue that effective instruction requires teachers to possess a diverse set of competencies that extend beyond content mastery to include pedagogical, interpersonal, and contextual skills (Mangonon, 2021). This perspective underscores the role of teachers as facilitators of learning who bridge classroom instruction with real-world applications.

Teaching competence is commonly understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing subject matter knowledge, instructional planning, communication skills, and classroom management (Sarkate, 2020). However, disparities in competence often emerge due to differences in teachers' academic preparation. Fernandez (2018) noted that non-education graduates frequently encounter challenges in pedagogy and instructional strategies, largely due to limited exposure to practice teaching. Consequently, Haron et al. (2021) emphasized the need for deliberate pedagogical development to ensure that teachers can design engaging and effective learning experiences.

Licensure, while indicative of minimum professional standards, does not necessarily equate to teaching competence. Abao et al. (2023) observed that possession of a teaching license signifies baseline qualification rather than instructional mastery. Moreover, education graduates tend to demonstrate stronger pedagogical foundations than non-education graduates, raising questions about comparative teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Fernandez, 2018).

Non-Education Graduates in the Philippine Teaching Context

Historically, the Philippine education system has been dominated by education graduates. In recent years, however, non-education graduates have increasingly entered the profession, bringing diverse experiences and perspectives that contribute to the evolving educational landscape. This shift highlights the importance of examining the effectiveness of non-education graduates, particularly in relation to the adequacy of certification pathways in preparing them for classroom teaching.

The Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) serves as a formal mechanism for enabling non-education graduates to meet professional teaching standards. Policy frameworks, such as CHED Memorandum Order No. 30 s.2004, mandate that non-education teachers demonstrate competencies comparable to those of Bachelor of Elementary Education and Bachelor of Secondary Education graduates. These include foundational literacy, communication skills, critical thinking, pedagogical competence, classroom management, ethical practice, and engagement in lifelong learning.

While non-education graduates contribute valuable disciplinary expertise, studies emphasize the necessity of targeted training and professional development to strengthen their pedagogical competencies (Abao et al., 2023). Ensuring instructional quality therefore requires examining whether certification programs such as the CTP adequately address the specific demands of classroom teaching, particularly in subject-specific contexts such as English.

Teaching Competencies of English Teachers: Education vs. Non-Education Majors

Research comparing education and non-education graduates presents mixed findings. Wong (2020) reported that education graduates generally exhibit higher teaching competence and more positive attitudes toward teaching. In contrast, Nurlaelawati (2019) found that non-education graduates can also demonstrate teaching competence, often shaped by prior academic mentorship rather than formal pedagogical training. These findings suggest that multiple pathways may lead to teaching expertise.

Individual characteristics further mediate teaching effectiveness. Catolos (2019) identified age, length of service, and undergraduate specialization as factors correlated with teaching performance among non-education graduates. Similarly, Fernandez (2022) highlighted the potential of non-education majors when supported by sufficient education units, while emphasizing the need for continued investigation into how training programs optimize teacher competence across both groups.

Despite their potential, non-education graduates face persistent challenges. Somosot (2023) identified difficulties in syllabus design, assessment, grading, and instructional planning—competencies aligned with DepEd Order No. 42 s.2017. These challenges underscore the importance of structured support systems to enhance instructional effectiveness.

*Key Domains of Teaching Competence**Classroom Management*

Classroom management is a foundational component of effective teaching, directly influencing student engagement and academic achievement (Levings, 2020). However, non-education graduates frequently struggle with managing learner behavior and sustaining classroom engagement (Ketchumpol, 2021). Lagria (2021) further documented challenges related to student misbehavior, absenteeism, and non-compliance, emphasizing the need for targeted training in classroom management strategies.

Content Knowledge

Content mastery is critical to teaching performance, particularly in subject-specific areas such as English (Sukma, 2022). Effective instruction requires not only subject knowledge but also the ability to communicate content clearly and meaningfully (Sewell, 2023). Fernandez (2019) noted that non-education graduates often experience difficulty translating content knowledge into effective instruction, negatively affecting student learning outcomes.

Motivation and Learner Engagement

Maintaining learner motivation is essential in diverse classrooms. Santisima (2022) found that insufficient training limits non-education graduates' ability to adapt instruction to students' interests, language proficiency, and cultural backgrounds. Malgapo and Ancheta (2020) further emphasized the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in sustaining student motivation and engagement.

Pedagogical Training and Lesson Planning

The lack of formal pedagogical training presents a significant barrier for non-education graduates. Biku (2018) identified inconsistencies in instructional delivery, unclear learning objectives, and weak assessment practices. Mordeno (2022) and Rose and Sughrue (2019) advocated for continuous professional development to address these gaps. Lesson planning remains a persistent challenge, with studies citing overly complex or misaligned plans that fail to meet learner needs (Ketchumpol, 2021; Co et al., 2021).

English Language Proficiency and Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy, grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, refers to educators' beliefs in their capacity to perform teaching tasks effectively. High self-efficacy is associated with stronger instructional practices, better classroom management, and improved student outcomes (Goddard et al., 2004; Tschanne-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

For English teachers, language proficiency is a critical determinant of self-efficacy. Butler (as cited in Matsumura, 2022) noted that inadequate English proficiency can undermine instructional confidence. Faez et al. (2019) identified a moderate relationship between language proficiency and teacher self-efficacy, while Matsumura (2022) demonstrated that improved proficiency enhances teachers' effectiveness across instructional roles. Similar findings were reported by Wang (2021) and Zhang (2019) in non-native English-speaking contexts, reinforcing the need for targeted language proficiency training.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the English language proficiency and teaching self-efficacy of non-education graduates who completed a short-term Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) and were designated to teach English in basic education. The design was appropriate for describing existing levels of proficiency and self-efficacy and for determining the relationship between these two variables without manipulating any conditions.

Population and Sampling

The participants of the study were 50 elementary English teachers teaching in public and private basic education institutions within the National Capital Region (NCR). All participants were non-education degree holders who completed a short-term teacher certification program lasting six months or less and had at least one year of teaching experience.

A purposive sampling technique with a snowball component was utilized due to the specificity of participant characteristics. This approach ensured that respondents met the inclusion criteria relevant to the research objectives.

Participants

Participants met the following inclusion criteria:

1. Non-education degree holders who completed a teacher certification program
2. Designated to teach English in basic education (Grades 1–6)
3. Teaching in public or private schools within NCR
4. Completion of a certification program lasting less than six months
5. Graduation from the program between 2020 and 2024
6. At least one year of teaching experience
7. Willingness to participate

Respondents from the quantitative phase informed the selection of qualitative informants, who were randomly chosen from the survey participants.

Research Instruments

Two standardized instruments were used in this study: (a) English Language Proficiency Assessment (CEFR-aligned), in which, participants' English proficiency was measured using CEFR-aligned assessments covering reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Proficiency levels were classified according to CEFR descriptors ranging from A1 to C2. (b) English Language Teacher Sense of Efficacy Beliefs Scale (EL-TSES), where in teaching self-efficacy was measured using Karas' (2019) 26-item EL-TSES, which consists of six domains: classroom proficiency, learner-focused instruction, assessment, language instruction, culture, and materials. The instrument demonstrated high internal consistency, with an overall Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .97$ in the pilot testing.

Reliability Analysis

A pilot test involving 30 non-education English teachers was conducted to assess the reliability of the EL-TSES in the Philippine context. Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was $\alpha = .97$, indicating excellent internal consistency. Reliability coefficients for all subscales exceeded acceptable thresholds and were comparable to those reported by Karas (2019).

Data Collection Procedure

After securing permission to use the research instruments, the online survey was administered via Google Forms. The survey included a consent form, demographic questions, CEFR self-report items, and the EL-TSES. Recruitment materials were disseminated through social media platforms.

From the survey respondents, eight participants were selected for interviews. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or online, lasted 45–90 minutes, and were audio-recorded with consent. Transcripts were returned to participants for member checking.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 25. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation) were used to determine levels of English proficiency and teaching self-efficacy. Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to examine the relationship between English language proficiency and teaching self-efficacy. A six-point Likert scale interpretation was used for the EL-TSES.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were upheld through informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Participants were assigned codes, allowed to withdraw without consequence, and informed of data storage and deletion procedures. All data were securely stored and scheduled for deletion three to five months after study completion.

RESULTS

English Language Proficiency of CTP-Trained English Teachers

Results showed that most respondents demonstrated intermediate to upper-intermediate English proficiency (B1–B2) based on CEFR standards. The majority of teachers were classified at the B1 level in reading (38%), while B2 proficiency was most common in listening (42%), writing (46%), and speaking (44%). None of the respondents reached the C1 or C2 proficiency levels.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Levels

Overall, respondents reported high self-efficacy in using English as a medium of instruction and in classroom proficiency. Higher mean scores were observed in the domains of classroom proficiency, learner-focused instruction, and culture. In contrast, lower mean scores were recorded in language instruction, assessment, and materials development, indicating comparatively weaker confidence in these instructional domains.

Relationship Between English Proficiency and Teaching Self-Efficacy

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between English language proficiency and teaching self-efficacy. Teachers with higher CEFR proficiency levels tended to report higher levels of teaching self-efficacy across multiple domains, suggesting that language proficiency contributes to instructional confidence.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that non-education graduates who completed a short-term Certificate in Teaching Program generally possess functional English proficiency, falling within the B1–B2 range of the CEFR. While these levels allow for basic instructional communication, they fall below the advanced proficiency (C1) typically expected of English language specialists. This result is consistent with prior studies reporting similar proficiency levels among Filipino English teachers.

From a theoretical perspective, limited language proficiency may constrain opportunities for mastery experiences, which Bandura (1997) identifies as a key source of self-efficacy. Teachers who lack advanced proficiency may experience difficulty modeling complex language structures, providing corrective feedback, and delivering higher-order language instruction.

The self-efficacy findings further support the task-specific nature of self-efficacy. Respondents demonstrated higher confidence in classroom interaction and general instruction but lower confidence in assessment design, instructional materials development, and advanced language instruction. These areas require deeper pedagogical knowledge and content integration, which may not be sufficiently addressed in short-term certification programs.

The positive correlation between English proficiency and teaching self-efficacy reinforces existing literature suggesting that stronger command of the language of instruction enhances teachers' instructional confidence. This relationship underscores the importance of integrating language proficiency development into teacher preparation and professional development programs, particularly for non-education graduates assigned to teach English.

Overall, the findings suggest that while the Certificate in Teaching Program provides access to the teaching profession, its short-term nature may limit its effectiveness in developing advanced language proficiency and comprehensive instructional competence. Strengthening both language and pedagogical preparation is essential to support effective English teaching in basic education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to improve the preparation and support of non-education graduates who completed a short-term Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) and are designated to teach English in basic education.

First, schools should implement targeted English language enrichment programs, particularly focusing on reading comprehension and advanced language use. Although teachers demonstrated functional proficiency in English, continuous language development aligned with CEFR standards is necessary to strengthen their ability to model accurate and effective language use in the classroom.

Second, it is recommended that schools regularly assess teachers' self-efficacy and provide focused professional development in areas where confidence is lowest, particularly in language instruction, assessment, and instructional material development. At the same time, existing strengths in classroom management, learner-focused instruction, and cultural responsiveness should be sustained through ongoing support.

Third, the Certificate in Teaching Program should be restructured to emphasize practical teaching experiences. The inclusion of teaching practicums, classroom observations, mentoring, and reflective activities will help ensure that certification functions as a capacity-building program rather than solely a credentialing requirement. Schools may also offer supplemental training to address subject misalignment and skill gaps among English teachers.

Fourth, the CTP curriculum should be strengthened by incorporating explicit training on classroom management, assessment literacy, language scaffolding, inclusive education, and digital pedagogy. These areas directly respond to the challenges teachers face in real classroom contexts and are essential for effective English instruction.

Fifth, teacher development should extend beyond certification through structured mentoring, peer collaboration, and experiential learning opportunities. School-based training programs aligned with teachers' immediate classroom needs will help build practical competence and professional confidence.

Finally, this study proposes two enrichment initiatives—Project ELEVATE and Project INSPIRE—designed to address gaps in English proficiency and teaching self-efficacy among CTP-trained teachers.

Future research is encouraged to involve larger samples, multiple regions, and longitudinal or tracer study designs to further examine the long-term effectiveness of short-term teacher certification programs.

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