

Evaluating English Language Learning through a Non-Credit Course: A CIPP Model Study in Higher Education

Padam Pandey, Hari Prasad Bashyal, Surya Prasad Dhakal
Lecturer, Mahakavi Devkota Campus

Abstract

English language proficiency is increasingly recognized as an essential skill for academic success and professional advancement in higher education. However, many university students continue to experience difficulties in developing effective communicative competence through traditional credit-based courses alone. This study evaluates the effectiveness of a Non-Credit English Language Course implemented at Mahakavi Devkota Campus, Sunwal, Nepal, to improve students' language acquisition. The research employed a quasi-experimental mixed-method design involving 25 bachelor-level students. Quantitative data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests, while qualitative insights were obtained through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The evaluation was guided by the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) model developed by Daniel L. Stufflebeam. The findings indicate that the non-credit course provided a supportive and interactive learning environment that encouraged active participation and practical language use. Students demonstrated improvement in their post-test performance and reported increased confidence in speaking English. The study suggests that supplementary non-credit language programs can serve as an effective complement to traditional language instruction, particularly in community-based higher education institutions where students may have limited exposure to communicative English.

Keywords: *Non-credit course, English language acquisition, CIPP evaluation model, communicative language learning, higher education, supplementary language programs*

Introduction

English has become a dominant language of international communication, higher education, research, and professional interaction. In an increasingly globalized world, proficiency in English enables students to access academic resources, participate in scholarly discourse, and pursue educational and career opportunities beyond their local contexts. Consequently, universities across the world have placed considerable emphasis on English language education as an essential component of students' academic and professional development (Naka & Spahija, 2022).

Despite the widespread inclusion of English in educational curricula, many university students continue to experience difficulties in developing effective communicative competence. Although learners often study English for several years, they frequently struggle to use the language confidently and appropriately in real-life situations. Researchers have attributed this gap to several factors, including examination-oriented instruction, limited opportunities for meaningful communication, large classroom settings, and teaching practices that emphasize grammatical knowledge over practical language use (Khan

et al., 2025). As a result, many students acquire theoretical knowledge of English without developing the communicative skills necessary for academic and professional success.

To address these challenges, educational institutions have increasingly introduced supplementary language-learning initiatives such as workshops, language-support programs, and non-credit courses. Unlike traditional credit-bearing courses, non-credit programs generally provide greater flexibility in instructional design and place stronger emphasis on learner participation, communicative practice, and skill development (Arena, 2013; Grzybowski, 2023). Such interventions create opportunities for students to engage in authentic language use in a supportive environment that is less constrained by formal assessment requirements.

Mahakavi Devkota Campus, a community-based higher education institution in western Nepal, serves students from diverse linguistic, educational, and socio-economic backgrounds. Many students enrolled in bachelor-level programs at the campus have limited exposure to English outside formal classroom settings. Although English is taught as part of the regular curriculum, faculty observations and classroom experiences suggest that many learners continue to face challenges in speaking, writing, and using English effectively for communication. Recognizing this need, the campus implemented a Non-Credit English Language Course designed to strengthen students' communicative competence through interactive and learner-centered instructional activities.

While previous studies have highlighted the importance of communicative approaches and supplementary language-learning opportunities, empirical research on non-credit English language interventions in Nepali higher education remains limited. Existing studies have largely focused on classroom pedagogy, curriculum implementation, or language proficiency in formal academic courses. Comparatively little attention has been given to the systematic evaluation of short-term non-credit language programs, particularly within community-based higher education institutions. Furthermore, few studies have employed comprehensive evaluation frameworks that examine not only learning outcomes but also the contextual and instructional factors influencing program effectiveness.

To address this gap, the present study evaluates a Non-Credit English Language Course implemented at Mahakavi Devkota Campus using the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation framework developed by Stufflebeam (2003). The CIPP model provides a comprehensive approach to examining educational interventions by assessing the needs that justify a program, the resources and strategies used in its implementation, the instructional processes involved, and the outcomes achieved. By applying this framework, the study seeks to generate a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of intervention.

This study contributes to the growing literature on supplementary language-learning programs in higher education by providing empirical evidence from a Nepali community-campus context. Specifically, it investigates how a non-credit English language intervention was designed and implemented, explores participants' experiences, and evaluates its impact on students' language learning. The findings may offer useful insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers seeking effective strategies to strengthen English language education and support students' communicative competence in higher education.

Literature Review

The literature review provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for the present study. It examines key scholarly perspectives on English language learning in higher education, the role of non-credit and supplementary language programs in enhancing learners' communicative competence, and the application of program evaluation frameworks in educational settings. Particular attention is given to the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model as a comprehensive approach to evaluating educational interventions. Reviewing these areas helps establish the conceptual basis of the study and identify the gap

that the present research seeks to address.

English Language Learning in Higher Education

English has become the dominant language of international academic communication and research dissemination. In many countries, particularly those where English is taught as a foreign language, proficiency in English is widely regarded as a key factor in academic success and professional mobility (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). Universities increasingly require students to access scholarly materials, participate in academic discussions, and produce written work in English. Consequently, developing adequate English proficiency has become a central objective of higher education systems worldwide.

Despite years of formal instruction, however, many university students continue to experience difficulty in achieving communicative competence in English. Researchers have frequently attributed this problem to the nature of traditional language teaching approaches, which often emphasize grammatical knowledge and examination performance rather than practical language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In large and exam-oriented classrooms, students may have limited opportunities to practice speaking or engage in meaningful interaction. As a result, learners may develop passive knowledge of the language but lack confidence in real-life communication.

This challenge is particularly evident in contexts where English functions as a second or foreign language but is not widely used in everyday communication. In such environments, students' exposure to authentic language use is limited, and classroom instruction alone may not be sufficient to support the development of communicative competence (Harmer, 2015). Consequently, many institutions are exploring alternative or supplementary strategies to strengthen language learning outcomes.

Non-Credit and Supplementary Language Programs

One approach that has gained attention in recent years is the introduction of supplementary learning programs such as workshops, training sessions, and non-credit language courses. These programs are designed to complement formal curricula by providing additional opportunities for skill development and communicative practice. Unlike traditional credit-bearing courses, non-credit programs often emphasize flexibility, learner participation, and practical language use rather than formal assessment.

Research suggests that such programs can contribute positively to students' language development by creating a more supportive and interactive learning environment. For instance, communicative activities such as role plays, group discussions, and task-based exercises encourage learners to use language actively and collaboratively (Ellis, 2003). These approaches are consistent with communicative language teaching principles, which emphasize meaningful interaction as a central component of language acquisition.

Furthermore, supplementary language programs may be particularly beneficial for students who require additional support beyond the formal curriculum. Studies have shown that learners who participate in extracurricular language activities often demonstrate improvements in confidence, motivation, and communication skills (Littlewood, 2004). By providing opportunities for practice in a less formal and more engaging environment, non-credit courses can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical language use.

However, the effectiveness of such programs may vary depending on how they are designed and implemented. Institutional resources, teaching strategies, and learner characteristics all influence the outcomes of language interventions. Therefore, systematic evaluation is necessary to assess whether these programs achieve their intended objectives.

Program Evaluation and the CIPP Model

Program evaluation plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of educational initiatives. It involves the systematic collection and analysis of information to assess how well a program meets its objectives and how it can be improved (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). Among various evaluation frameworks, the CIPP model - which stands for Context, Input, Process, and Product - has been widely used in educational research.

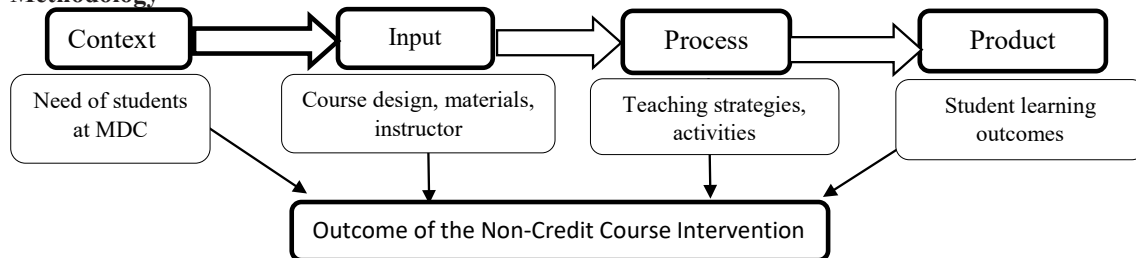
The CIPP model provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating programs at different stages of development. Context evaluation examines the needs and conditions that justify the program, while input evaluation focuses on the resources and strategies used in its design. Process evaluation assesses how the program is implemented, and product evaluation measures the outcomes and overall effectiveness of the intervention (Stufflebeam, 2003). Because it considers both implementation and outcomes, the CIPP model is particularly useful for evaluating educational programs that involve complex instructional processes.

Research Gap

Although supplementary language programs have been widely discussed in language education literature, relatively little research has examined their implementation in community-based higher education institutions in Nepal. Many such campuses serve students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds where exposure to English outside the classroom is limited. In these contexts, non-credit language courses may provide valuable opportunities for improving students' communicative competence.

However, empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of these initiatives remains limited. In particular, few studies have applied systematic evaluation frameworks such as the CIPP model to examine how non-credit language programs function in these institutional settings. Therefore, the present study seeks to evaluate a Non-Credit English Language Course implemented at Mahakavi Devkota Campus using the CIPP framework to better understand its design, implementation, and outcomes.

Methodology



Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental mixed-method research design to evaluate the effectiveness of a Non-Credit English Language Course implemented at Mahakavi Devkota Campus. The study integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention and its outcomes. Quantitative data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' improvement in English language proficiency, while qualitative data were gathered through interviews and document analysis to explore learners' experiences and perceptions of the course.

The evaluation of the program was guided by the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) model developed by Daniel L. Stufflebeam. This framework allowed the researchers to examine the educational context, the design of the intervention, the implementation process, and the learning outcomes associated with the course.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at Mahakavi Devkota Campus, a community-based higher education institution located in Sunwal Municipality of Nawalparasi West, Nepal. The campus serves students from diverse socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds, many of whom have limited exposure to English outside the classroom.

A total of 25 bachelor-level students from the BBS and B.Ed. programs participated in the study. These students voluntarily enrolled in the Non-Credit English Language Course. Prior to the intervention, two preliminary tests were conducted to assess students' existing language proficiency and to identify those who required additional support in developing their English communication skills.

The Intervention Program

The intervention consisted of a Non-Credit English Language Course designed to enhance students' communicative competence. The course was conducted over a period of 30 days, with one hour of instruction each day.

The instructional approach emphasized communicative and interactive learning strategies rather than traditional lecture-based teaching. Various activities such as role plays, group discussions, presentations, and interview simulations were incorporated into the course to encourage active participation and practical language use. The course was designed to create a supportive learning environment where students could practice English without the pressure of formal examination.

Data Collection

Multiple sources of data were used to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. First, pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure changes in students' English language proficiency before and after the intervention. These tests provided quantitative evidence regarding the impact of the course on students' learning outcomes.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the course instructor and a group of participating students. These interviews helped explore learners' expectations, experiences, and perceptions of the non-credit course.

In addition, document analysis was conducted to review course materials, instructional plans, and related institutional documents to better understand the design and implementation of the program.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the collected data. Quantitative data obtained from the pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to identify changes in students' performance after the intervention.

Qualitative data from interviews and documents were analyzed through thematic analysis. The analysis focused on identifying patterns related to the four components of the CIPP model—context, input, process, and product. This approach allowed the researchers to examine not only the outcomes of the course but also the factors that influenced its implementation and effectiveness.

Results / Findings

The findings of the study are presented according to the four components of the CIPP evaluation framework: Context, Input, Process, and Product. This structure allowed the researchers to examine the educational environment in which the intervention was implemented, the design and resources of the program, the instructional process, and the learning outcomes achieved by the participants.

Context Evaluation

The context evaluation examined the learning environment and the needs that led to the implementation of the Non-Credit English Language Course. Interviews with students and instructors revealed that many learners at Mahakavi Devkota Campus faced considerable challenges in using English effectively for communication. Although students had studied English for many years in school, their exposure to practical language use was limited.

Participants reported that traditional classroom instruction often focused primarily on completing the syllabus and preparing for examinations. As a result, students had limited opportunities to engage in interactive activities such as discussions, presentations, or collaborative tasks that encourage active language use. Several students also indicated that they felt hesitant to speak English in class due to fear of making mistakes.

Another issue identified during the context analysis was the diversity of students' linguistic and educational backgrounds. Many learners came from rural areas where opportunities to practice English outside the classroom were minimal. Consequently, the need for supplementary learning opportunities that could provide additional practice and confidence-building experiences was widely recognized by both students and instructors.

These findings highlighted the relevance of introducing a non-credit language course that could create a more supportive and practice-oriented learning environment.

Input Evaluation

The input evaluation focused on the design and resources used for the intervention program. The Non-Credit English Language Course was designed as a short-term intensive program aimed at improving students' communicative competence. The course was conducted over a period of thirty days, with one hour of instruction each day.

The instructional design emphasized communicative language teaching principles and encouraged active learner participation. Rather than relying solely on lecture-based teaching, the course incorporated a variety of interactive activities intended to promote language practice. These activities included role plays, group discussions, interviews, short presentations, and collaborative tasks.

Course materials were prepared by the instructors to support these activities and to address the specific needs of the participants. The content focused on practical language functions such as introducing oneself, expressing opinions, asking questions, and participating in everyday conversations. This approach aimed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical language use.

Students reported that the course structure provided them with opportunities to practice English in a more relaxed and supportive environment compared with their regular classes. The flexibility of the non-credit format allowed the instructor to focus more on communication skills rather than examination requirements.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation examined how the course was implemented and how students responded to the instructional strategies used during the intervention. Classroom observations and interview responses indicated that the interactive teaching methods played an important role in engaging students in the learning process.

Activities such as group discussions and role plays encouraged students to actively participate and communicate with their peers in English. Many participants reported that these activities helped them overcome their hesitation and gradually develop confidence in speaking the language. The collaborative nature of the tasks also created a supportive learning environment where students could learn from one

another.

Another significant aspect of the implementation process was the emphasis on practical communication rather than grammatical accuracy alone. The instructor encouraged students to express their ideas freely and provided constructive feedback to help them improve their language use. This approach helped reduce students' anxiety about making mistakes and motivated them to participate more actively in classroom activities. Overall, the process evaluation indicated that the interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies contributed positively to students' engagement and motivation during the course.

Product Evaluation

The product evaluation indicated that the intervention contributed positively to students' English language learning. The mean score increased from 18.48 (SD = 1.66) in the pre-intervention tests to 20.92 (SD = 2.25) in the post-intervention tests, representing an average improvement of 2.44 points. The paired-samples correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between pre- and post-test scores ($r = .634$, $p = .001$), indicating consistency in participants' performance across the two testing occasions. Furthermore, the paired-samples t-test demonstrated that the improvement was statistically significant, $t(24) = -6.94$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the observed gains were unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In addition to the test results, qualitative feedback from students also supported these findings. Many participants reported increased confidence in speaking English and greater willingness to participate in classroom discussions. Students noted that the opportunity to practice English regularly during the course helped them improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, and ability to express ideas more clearly.

However, some challenges were also identified. Due to the limited duration of the program, certain language skills, particularly writing, received less attention compared with speaking and interaction activities. Additionally, variations in students' prior language exposure influenced the degree of improvement observed among participants.

Despite these limitations, the overall findings suggest that the Non-Credit English Language Course had a positive impact on students' language learning experiences and contributed to the development of their communicative competence.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the Non-Credit English Language Course positively influenced students' language learning experiences and communicative competence. The significant improvement in post-test scores indicates that supplementary language interventions can effectively support students whose language-learning needs are not fully addressed through conventional classroom instruction. This finding is consistent with previous studies demonstrating that structured language interventions and supplementary programs contribute to improvements in learners' language proficiency and academic performance (Erdogen & Mede, 2021).

One of the most notable findings was the positive impact of communicative and interactive learning activities on students' confidence and participation. The course emphasized group discussions, role plays, presentations, and collaborative tasks, creating opportunities for meaningful language use. Students reported increased confidence in speaking English and greater willingness to participate in classroom interactions. Similar findings have been reported in studies showing that communicative language teaching and authentic collaborative tasks enhance learners' self-efficacy, speaking proficiency, and willingness to communicate (Karnchanachari, 2020). These findings support the view that language learning is facilitated when learners actively engage in meaningful communication rather than merely studying linguistic forms.

The study also highlights the importance of a supportive learning environment in reducing

learners' anxiety. Many participants initially expressed hesitation about speaking English because of fear of making mistakes. However, the non-credit course provided a relatively low-pressure environment where students were encouraged to communicate freely and receive constructive feedback. This finding aligns with research indicating that supportive instructional environments and motivational interventions can enhance learners' self-confidence while reducing language anxiety (Wagle, 2024). The increase in students' confidence observed in this study may therefore be attributed not only to language practice but also to the psychologically supportive nature of the learning environment.

Another important finding concerns the value of supplementary learning opportunities outside the formal curriculum. The participants frequently noted that regular academic courses were often examination-oriented and provided limited opportunities for communicative practice. The non-credit course complemented the formal curriculum by creating additional space for interaction and skill development. Previous research similarly suggests that alternative and supplementary language-learning programs can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical language use by providing authentic communicative experiences (Littlewood, 2004; Ellis, 2003).

The application of the CIPP evaluation framework further contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the intervention. Rather than focusing solely on learning outcomes, the framework enabled the study to examine the contextual needs of learners, the instructional design of the program, the implementation process, and the resulting outcomes. Similar applications of the CIPP model in English-language program evaluation have demonstrated its usefulness in identifying both strengths and areas for improvement in educational interventions (Erdogen & Mede, 2021). In the present study, the model helped reveal how contextual challenges, instructional strategies, and learner engagement collectively influenced program effectiveness.

Despite the positive outcomes, the study identified certain limitations. The intervention was relatively short in duration and involved a small number of participants from a single institution. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted with caution and may not be generalizable to all higher-education settings. Nevertheless, the significant quantitative gains and positive qualitative feedback suggest that well-designed non-credit language programs can serve as a valuable complement to formal English language instruction, particularly in community-based higher education institutions where opportunities for communicative language use are limited.

Conclusion and Implications

This study examined the effectiveness of a Non-Credit English Language Course implemented at Mahakavi Devkota Campus with the aim of enhancing students' communicative competence. Using the CIPP evaluation framework developed by Daniel L. Stufflebeam, the research analyzed the context, design, implementation, and outcomes of the intervention. By combining quantitative and qualitative data, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of how supplementary language programs can support English language learning in higher education.

The findings indicate that the non-credit course created valuable opportunities for students to practice English in a more interactive and supportive learning environment. The improvement observed in the post-test scores suggests that the intervention contributed positively to students' language development. In addition, qualitative feedback from participants revealed increased confidence in speaking English and greater willingness to participate in communicative activities. The interactive teaching strategies used in the course, such as group discussions, role plays, and presentations, appeared to play a significant role in encouraging learner engagement and reducing anxiety associated with language use.

At the institutional level, the results of the study highlight the potential of non-credit courses as an effective complement to traditional credit-based language instruction. Such programs can provide flexible learning opportunities that emphasize practical communication skills and learner participation. For

community-based higher education institutions serving students from diverse linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds, supplementary language programs may help address gaps in students' prior language exposure and support their academic development.

Nevertheless, the study also identified certain limitations. The short duration of the intervention limited the extent to which all language skills could be developed equally, particularly writing skills. Furthermore, differences in students' previous learning experiences influenced the level of improvement observed among participants.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of similar non-credit language programs and examine their effectiveness across different institutional contexts. Expanding the duration of such interventions and incorporating digital learning resources may also enhance their potential to support students' language development.

Overall, the study suggests that well-designed non-credit language courses can play a meaningful role in strengthening English language acquisition in higher education settings.

References

- Arena, M. L. (2013). The crisis in credit and the rise of non-credit. *Innovations in Higher Education*, 38(4), 369–381. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-012-9249-5>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Erdogan, G., & Mede, E. (2021). The evaluation of an English preparatory program using CIPP model and exploring A1 level students' motivational beliefs. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 8(1), 40-55. <https://doi.org/10.22555/joceed.v8i1.109>
- Graddol, D. (2006). *English next: Why global English may mean the end of "English as a foreign language"*. British Council.
- Grzybowski, A. (2023). A case study of noncredit to credit pathways at community colleges. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island).
- Harmer, J. (2015). *How to teach English* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Karnchanachari, S. (2020). Promoting communicative self-efficacy and a positive attitude towards English language learning through a collaborative authentic task. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 13(1), 210–224. <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/237847>
- Khan, A., Hassan, N., & Cheng, L. (2025). Investigating the contextual factors mediating washback effects of a learning-oriented English language assessment in Malaysia. *Language Testing in Asia*, 15(1), 20 - 30. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-025-00359-8>
- Littlewood, W. (2004). The task-based approach: Some questions and suggestions. *ELT Journal*, 58(4), 319–326. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/58.4.319>
- Naka, L., & Spahija, D. (2022). Impact of English language as a human capital in the higher education institutions' development strategy. *Corporate and Business Strategy Review*, 3(2), 262–272.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (2003). The CIPP model for evaluation. In T. Kellaghan & D. L. Stufflebeam (Eds.), *International handbook of educational evaluation*, 3(1), 31–62. Springer.
- Stufflebeam, D. L., & Shinkfield, A. J. (2007). *Evaluation theory, models, and applications*. Jossey-Bass.
- Wagle, B. D. (2024). Learning English through non-English subjects: A survey on Nepalese EFL students. *The Batuk*, 10(1), 93–106.