

Stakeholders' Perceptions on Supplementary English Classes to Basic-Level Students

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Abstract

Nepali school education has long faced a significant gap in students' English language proficiency, largely due to variations in how English is taught—either as a compulsory subject or as a medium of instruction—along with several contextual challenges. Many remote community schools have introduced supplementary English classes to help basic-level learners improve their proficiency. This study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of head teachers, English language teachers, students, parents, and school management committee chairs regarding supplementary English classes in basic-level community schools of Nepal. Guided by a phenomenological design within an interpretative paradigm, the study purposively selected ten participants from two community schools in Birendranagar Municipality. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, audio-recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed. Findings indicate that supplementary English classes are viewed as highly beneficial, especially for students with weak English backgrounds. These classes provided additional time, practice, and feedback, enabling learners to reinforce classroom learning and reduce language-related difficulties. Stakeholders emphasized that such classes should be institutionally supported and funded by the local government to ensure equitable access. The study suggests that supplementary English classes can help bridge English language proficiency gaps in low-resourced community schools. It highlights the need for policy-level and institutional support to sustain such initiatives and reduce socio-cultural and linguistic disparities among schools and students.

Keywords: Community schools, English language proficiency, English teachers, school management committee, supplementary classes

Introduction

Basic-level students (Grades 1–8), English teachers, head teachers, school management committee (SMC) chairs, and parents are key stakeholders in school education whose collaboration shapes an effective English learning environment (Timsina, 2021). Their collective engagement also influences how supplementary English classes are delivered in schools. These classes, conducted before or after regular school hours, provide additional instructional time for students who struggle with foundational English language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and oral communication. Although Nepal's national curriculum does not formally mandate such extra classes, many community schools have introduced them locally with support from parents and SMCs. In this context, this study

explores the experiences and practices of supplementary English classes for basic-level learners.

English is taught as a compulsory subject from early grades to the higher levels in Nepal (Kandel, 2015). However, there are structural differences in how it is used across schools. Privately owned institutional schools largely adopt English as the medium of instruction, and some urban community schools do so partially, while most government-funded community schools teach English only as a subject prescribed by the curriculum. These variations have created noticeable gaps in students' English language proficiency, with learners in Nepali-medium community schools generally performing weaker. Supplementary or remedial English classes thus serve as an avenue to address these gaps by providing more time for repetition, practice, and teacher feedback, thereby reducing anxiety and improving learning confidence.

The growing importance of English for employment, mobility, and access to opportunities has also contributed to an increased demand for English learning among students and parents in Nepal (Kandel, 2015; Parajuli, 2024). Yet supplementary classes alone are insufficient to address deeper systemic challenges. As highlighted by Manandhar et al. (2024), effective English teaching in Nepal requires trained teachers, appropriate pedagogical strategies, adequate resources, strong stakeholder collaboration, and better management—especially within the current dual education system that perpetuates inequality and linguistic marginalization.

The context of Birendranagar Municipality in Surkhet district mirrors these national disparities. While private and urban community schools use English as the medium of instruction, many low-resourced remote community schools lack comparable facilities and pedagogical support, widening the proficiency gap between learners (Giri & Gnawali, 2025). Consequently, such schools often rely on supplementary English classes to bridge students' foundational learning needs. These efforts also align with broader pedagogical goals: supplementing classroom exposure can enhance intercultural communicative competence (Garner & Sharma, 2022) and support students' academic, social, and cultural identity development (Bist & Kandel, 2024; Kramsch, 2014).

International studies similarly suggest the value of supplementary classes where regular instruction is insufficient. During events such as pandemics or school closures, supplementary programs have been shown to address learning loss and provide equitable support (Singh & Hashim, 2025). In Nepal, pandemic-era challenges pushed teachers to adopt new roles, tools, and technologies (Pandey, 2024), further highlighting the need for additional English support, especially for diverse learners in large, mixed-ability classrooms.

Research across contexts also indicates that supplementary classes or tutoring benefit learners with lower proficiency and help address issues of accessibility and equity (Husna et al., 2022, 2025; Nie & Mavrou, 2025; Dao et al., 2024). In Nepal, although comprehensive studies on supplementary English classes are limited, available literature indicates that collaboration among teachers, school leadership, and parents is essential to overcome contextual barriers in English learning (Timsina, 2021). Persistent challenges such as uneven distribution of

teaching resources (Giri & Gnawali, 2025), inadequate training, and lack of ICT integration (Paudel, 2022; Kandel, 2023) further justify the need for structured supplementary support.

Taken together, the reviewed literature establishes the rationale for this study: while supplementary English classes are increasingly practised across Nepali community schools, empirical insights into stakeholders' perceptions and experiences remain scarce. Therefore, this study explores how head teachers, English teachers, students, parents, and SMC chairs perceive the necessity and usefulness of supplementary English classes in basic-level community schools in Birendranagar Municipality.

Accordingly, this study seeks to explore how key educational stakeholders- head teachers, English teachers, students, parents, and school management committee chairs- perceive and respond the sense of supplementary English classes for basic-level students in community schools of Birendranagar Municipality, Surkhet.

Methods

This study explored the lived experiences of SMC chairs, parents, head teachers, English teachers, and students regarding the significance of supplementary English classes in community schools of Nepal. A phenomenological research design grounded in the interpretative research paradigm (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018) was employed to capture stakeholders' perceptions, understandings, and sense-making of such classes. This approach enabled an in-depth examination of both the perceived benefits and challenges associated with supplementary English classes.

A total of ten participants were purposively selected from two community schools in Birendranagar Municipality, Karnali Province. These schools were chosen because they conducted supplementary English classes before and/or after regular school hours for basic-level students. The sample comprised altogether ten participants, belonged to two head teachers, two English language teachers, two students, two SMC chairs, and two parents.

Rapport with the participants was maintained through regular phone calls and face-to-face communication. The purpose of the study was clearly explained, and participants voluntarily agreed to take part and provided informed consent for audio recording. To safeguard confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned (SMC1 & SMC2 for SMC chairs; P1 & P2 for parents; H1 & H2 for head teachers; T1 & T2 for teachers; and S1 & S2 for students).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in the Nepali language. The interview guidelines facilitated elicitation of rich, in-depth information from each stakeholder group. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim in Nepali and subsequently translated into English. The English transcripts were carefully reviewed, coded, and analyzed thematically. Codes were clustered into categories and refined through an iterative process of comparison and synthesis to generate the final themes.

Figure 1 presents the thematic network, illustrating how meaning was constructed through the six stages of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

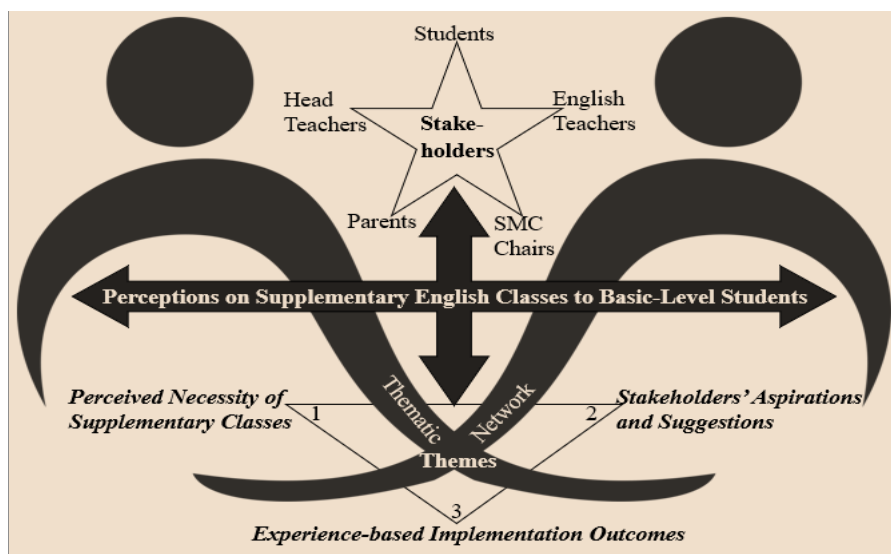


Figure 1: Thematic Network of the Study

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study are organized into three interrelated themes that collectively illuminate how stakeholders perceived, experienced, and envisioned the role of supplementary English classes for basic-level students in community schools of Nepal.

Perceived Necessity of Supplementary Classes

Stakeholders widely expressed that supplementary English classes were essential in addressing the gaps in English proficiency among basic-level learners in community schools. Head teachers noted that many students struggled with English due to mixed-ability classrooms and limited exposure, reflecting similar structural challenges outlined by Kandel (2015), including large class sizes, insufficient instructional time, and the persistent disparity created by Nepal's dual education system. H1 emphasized this linguistic disadvantage, noting that *"English is a second language, so students find it difficult to learn. Their English background is also different."*

Teachers involved in supplementary teaching echoed this concern. Drawing from his practical experience, T1 explained that *"extra English classes are necessary... English is not our mother tongue, so there are many difficulties."* His explanation reinforces the role supplementary classes play in offering necessary linguistic support for non-native learners. This aligns with August's (2018) assertion that effective language learning requires environments attuned to students' varied linguistic progress and challenges.

SMC chairs also recognized the value of supplementary classes, particularly for students who struggled to keep up during regular school hours. SMC2 noted that *"these classes are helpful for weak students to maintain their academic level... not all students are at the same proficiency level."* Parents held similarly positive views. P2 emphasized that *"in regular classes, students only learn curriculum-based knowledge, but in extra classes, they learn*

additional English language skills.” Students themselves affirmed the importance of such classes. S1 remarked that *“extra English classes are necessary for basic-level students like us,”* reflecting the additional support and clarity they received.

These perceptions resonate with Kardiansyah and Qodriani’s (2018) findings that extracurricular English activities significantly enhance learners’ communicative competence and second language acquisition. Together, the stakeholders’ views underscore the necessity of supplementary English classes as a targeted intervention for addressing proficiency gaps in resource-constrained schools.

Experience-Based Implementation Outcomes

Stakeholders also reported observing tangible improvements in students’ learning through supplementary classes. Head teachers noted that these classes helped make English instruction more manageable and engaging. As H1 put it, *“they get extra time for English and are more motivated to learn,”* indicating increased learner engagement. H2 elaborated on the limitations of regular lessons, stating that *“teaching English only for 45–50 minutes is not enough... the weaker students fall behind.”* This aligns with Bist and Kandel’s (2025) assertion that increased exposure to English literacy practices strengthens learners’ linguistic competencies.

SMC chairs shared similar experiences. SMC1 observed noticeable improvements in students’ performances, explaining that *“before and after joining the extra class, I have found differences in their performances; it is fruitful.”* Students echoed this, describing supplementary classes as meaningful spaces for extended practice. S2 recounted that *“in extra class, we learn many things like translating Nepali into English... we practice writing a lot and also get opportunities to speak.”* These experiences show that supplementary classes played a critical role in developing writing fluency, comprehension, and communicative confidence.

Teachers used supplementary time to address specific learning challenges. T1 highlighted students’ struggles with *“vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar... conversation is also a challenge,”* which supplementary classes allowed him to target. T2 stressed the importance of repeated exposure from an early age, noting that *“basic level students need more exposure from their teachers from the early grades.”*

These reflections collectively support Kandel and Bist’s (2024) emphasis on identifying learner needs and providing differentiated support in EFL settings. Supplementary classes appeared to bridge learning gaps by providing targeted, skill-specific instruction that regular classes could not always offer due to time constraints.

Stakeholders’ Aspirations and Suggestions

In addition to identifying benefits, stakeholders shared aspirations for enhancing the quality and sustainability of supplementary English classes. Teachers highlighted the need to integrate ICT-based materials and interactive methods to increase engagement. T1 explained that extra class time allows teachers to *“use audio-video and other attractive digital and colourful materials,”* supporting Kandel’s (2014) advocacy for ICT integration in ELT.

SMC chairs advocated for identifying learners' proficiency levels to tailor assistance accordingly. SMC2 stated that *"the teacher should identify students' learning levels and confirm who needs additional support,"* emphasizing a diagnostic and differentiated approach to supplementary learning.

Parents focused on access and equity, stressing that financial barriers should not prevent weaker learners from receiving support. P1 recommended that *"the school and government should manage unpaid classes for the needy students if possible,"* aligning with Nepal's policy of free basic education.

Stakeholders further emphasized sustainable scheduling, consistent monitoring of learning outcomes, and the need for continuous teacher professional development. Their aspirations indicate a shared understanding that supplementary classes must extend beyond additional time, incorporating enriched pedagogy, learner-centered approaches, and sustained institutional support.

Conclusion and Implications

This study explored the perceptions and experiences of head teachers, English teachers, students, parents, and SMC chairs regarding supplementary English classes in low-resourced community schools of Nepal. The findings revealed that many basic-level students face persistent challenges in English learning due to limited exposure, heterogeneous proficiency levels, and structural constraints within regular classroom instruction. Supplementary English classes emerged as a valuable intervention, providing additional instructional time, targeted support, and meaningful practice opportunities that helped learners strengthen their language skills and confidence.

Stakeholders unanimously recognized the benefits of these classes, reporting noticeable improvements in students' performance, engagement, and communicative abilities. Their shared insights underscore that effective supplementary English classes require active collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, and local authorities. Importantly, these classes not only address immediate learning gaps but also contribute to equitable learning opportunities in multilingual and underserved educational contexts.

While the findings offer valuable insights into community-driven strategies for enhancing English instruction, the study is limited by its small sample size and localized scope. Further research—which could include classroom observations, longitudinal tracking, and mixed-method approaches—would strengthen understanding of supplementary classes as a long-term intervention in English language teaching across Nepal.

The findings carry several important implications for practice and policy. Schools and local governments should consider institutionalizing supplementary English classes, particularly for students with weak proficiency, and ensure such programs remain accessible and affordable. Teachers require training and resources—especially ICT tools and interactive materials—to maximize the effectiveness of extra classes. Diagnostic assessments can help identify learners who need targeted support, while sustained coordination among teachers, parents, and school management is essential for monitoring progress. At the policy level, these insights highlight

the need for adaptive, context-sensitive ELT practices that address linguistic diversity and resource inequities across community schools.

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