



## **Setting and Resources in ESP Programme Delivery: A Context-Input Evaluation at Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo**

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### ***Article history:***

**Submitted:** Nov. 30, 2025

**Revised:** Dec. 20, 2025

**Accepted:** Dec. 25, 2025

### ***Keywords:***

ESP Programme, Context-Input evaluation, Curriculum Development, Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Burkinabe Faso

### ***Abstract***

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as a universal teaching approach, is essential to African higher educational institutions in enabling students' academic and future professional achievements. This paper attempts to evaluate both Context and Input of seven ESP programmes at Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo (UJKZ). The context dimension enquires about the institutional policy, programme's goal, and learner need, whereas Input investigates the characteristics of the human resources and instructional materials available. The study was based on Stufflebeam's (1971) CIPP evaluation model and used a mixed-method approach, i.e. quantitative and qualitative. Findings showed that programme context and input at UJKZ, on a whole, were adequate in some respects but insufficient in others, particularly regarding teacher training and authentic materials. It was therefore recommended that the latter be improved by providing ESP teacher with adequate training and developing sufficient and up-dated authentic aids and materials which meet learners' needs.

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## Introduction

The systemic connection of the countries in the world in the 1980s (McGrew) along with the development of the global economy, has fostered the use of English for intercultural communication (Mackey). As a matter of fact, English has become more demanded for globalized academia and employment markets. The need to access the world news in specialized domains like business, economy, science and technology has given way to the integration of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) into African higher education. Hutchinson and Waters defined ESP as “an approach to language teaching” (1987 19). They advocated two main dimensions of ESP: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) or for vocational purposes (EVP). Whereas knowledge from EAP allows students to achieve their academic tasks better, EOP/EVP provides them with adequate language skills in order to communicate effectively in their prospective workplaces (Dovey).

At Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo (UJKZ), in Burkina Faso, ESP originated in the 1960s and was concerned with such disciplines as engineering, law, and medicine. Nowadays ESP programmes, in general at UJKZ, have been extended to the fields of economy, business, science and technologies. Their introduction to Bachelor and Master students is significant as they can equip them with the key to easily access scientific information and get better job opportunities as they graduate. Indeed, ESP students who can explore English documentations are likely to acquire more insights in their fields of study and become successful. Besides, in Burkina Faso many Non-governmental organizations and multinational firms most often use English for work purposes as they communicate with their Headquarters abroad or with their local and international partners (Coleman). In this regard, those international companies hire Burkinabe graduates who are fluent in English and who have a good command of that language in their domains of specialization. To provide students with the appropriate language skills—e.g., academic and target workplace language needs—(Richards), the ESP teaching/learning environment and resources at UJKZ, therefore, should be adequate. Evaluation, most often, is the common practice that allows the researchers to determine the strengths and weaknesses of an educational intervention in relation to students' needs (Dudley-Evans and St

John; Richards). In this paper two main types of needs are dealt with: subjective needs and objective needs (Brindley). The former corresponds to what the student wants to or should learn so that s/he performs better in the academia; the latter, also called 'necessities' by Hutchinson and Waters, refers to the language skills learners should master for them to be capable of communicating with people in their future professional settings.

However, at UJKZ, no ESP students' needs have been systematically assessed so far. In other words, no ESP programme has yet been subject to evaluation to show how effective the current courses environment and resources are with regard to the stated objectives and the students' wants and necessities. In response to this state of affairs, the present study was carried in order to investigate the aforementioned ESP programmes dimensions by applying the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) model Stufflebeam established in 1971. The assessment was restricted to the programme *context* and *input* since the latter have been considered as the foundation of the curriculum as a whole (Johnson). The study attempted to answer the following questions: How adequate are the Context and Input of the ESP programmes at UJKZ with respect to learners' academic and professional needs? How can the findings guide future curriculum development and policy reform? The present research findings will give valuable insights into the adequacy of the pedagogical resources and the conditions in which ESP courses are delivered at UJKZ. They will also provide higher educational stakeholders and curriculum developers with evidence-based recommendations.

## 1. Literature Review

### 1.1. Meaning and Purpose of Educational Programme Evaluation

An educational programme is a document which is referred to as "... a coherent, organized and structured whole, composed of objectives, activities and means" (Mizikaci 41). Whereas a programme is an integrated part of a curriculum, a course is at the center of both of them (Brown). Concerned with evaluation, it is a systematic process whereby we determine the extent to which aspects of a programme, a curriculum or of a course fulfil the beneficiaries' needs (Hutchinson and Waters). Brown and Alderson and Beretta distinguish two types of evaluation that are formative and summative. Whereas formative evaluation occurs as the course unfolds (Mohamadi),

summative evaluation is conducted after a given educational intervention is completed (Richards). The main purpose of evaluating a programme is to improve it by making decisions based on salient information about the types of the resources available. However, programme evaluation should not only account for instructional materials or methods; it should also consider the institutional setting and support as a whole (Dudley-Evans and St John). In other words, ESP programme evaluation is a context-sensitive process made up with multiple continuous events.

### **1.2. ESP programme evaluation: trends in Africa and globally**

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as a sub-area of Applied Linguistics, is an approach to English language teaching (Hutchinson and Waters). It aims to build learners communicative or pragmatic ability in a particular discourse setting. The need to acquire specialized or global business knowledge in English (Teodorescu) gave way to the birth of ESP in Africa a decade after its establishment in the western countries in the nineteen sixties (Swales). As a matter of fact, within the decade 1970-80, ESP got an impetus as a discipline of research in the domain of English language teaching (ELT) in the universities all over the world. Consequently, there had been an increase in the demand for teaching English for professional purposes. This went along with an ongoing search of teaching theories and materials that serve the learner's interests best (Strevens; Swales; Brindley; Salager-Meyer). In a similar vein, through the British Council's project, British scholars developed at that time student-centred ESP teaching curricula in their universities and particularly in the British colonies in Africa (Johns) (also see Wilkins; Munby; Hutchinson and Waters, and Breen; Allen). Since then, various evaluation research has been carried out in order to check the worthiness of ESP programmes as they are delivered in educational settings in general.

The first evaluation work traces back to the late nineteenth century by the American psychologist Joseph Mayer Rice. The study laid the foundations of empirical educational evaluation that inspired Rice's followers throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Indeed, as maintained by Anthony and Basturkmen, programme evaluation in western and eastern countries, for the sake of quality assurance, has long been considered as a key activity of educational curriculum design. This activity is most often based on the assessment of learners' needs,

including the review of the available teaching resources and the observation of the learning process (Graves; Nation & Macalister). Such data are collected to inform the content of the programme which complies with the job market demands. In this respect, from the year 2000 onward, the ESP programmes evaluation studies conducted abroad have more importantly addressed teaching approaches in higher educational settings. Most of them were concerned with English for engineering, medical studies, sciences and technology, and for education or teaching. Furthermore, research has been more oriented to students' needs assessment.

In 2009, using a mixed-approach, Chen investigated twenty English training courses' goals, resources, implementation and outcomes at an educational Institute, in Taiwan. The study was intended to determine the extent to which those courses met the targeted teachers-trainees' interests. Yet, the results of the research revealed a mismatch between the courses' goals and the students' academic and vocational expectations as a whole. Preview to Chen's work, Rahimy enquired about the adequacy of the medical terms, grammatical items included in the Medical Sciences students' English textbooks at Tonekabon, in Iran. Although the content of the identified textbooks was partly helpful to the improvement of the learners' grammatical competence, they remained inappropriate to English for medical studies.

Meanwhile, Anwar, and Alfehaid, from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia respectively, advocated quality education through the assessment of students' 'want' and 'lack'. The purpose of both studies was not only to enhance students' proficiency in the four skills but to provide frameworks for ESP practitioners' training as well. As opposed to Anwar's work, the results of Alfehaid's evaluation study at the Health Sciences Colleges showed that the target ESP programme, to certain extent, met students' needs. Yet, the entire ESP curriculum of the Colleges and mainly the pedagogical materials still should be adapted to the learners' future professional discourse requirements based on the four skills.

From Anwar and Alfehaid's analysis, it is clear the four skills are relevant in the ESP domain. Among them, speaking and listening seem to be the most significant skills the learner should master (Hewings; Feak) for communication purposes. Meanwhile, learners view writing as "the skills causing them the least difficulty" (Jordan 51). However, "least difficult" "...

does not mean that students have no problems at all with reading" (51). As a matter of fact, the four skills will benefit ESP students only if those skills are included in the teaching programme according to their subjective and objective needs (Brindley; Hutchinson and Waters). For Brindley, subjective needs correspond to students' learning expectations; they stand for the knowledge or competence students want or desire to acquire along with anything they think they lack in their learning process. Meanwhile, he defines subjective needs as the observable skills required from the learner to achieve specific academic or occupational tasks. They correspond to the ability to functionally use language in writing, reading, or analysing specialized texts or in making presentations. Brindley's subjective needs can be equated with Hutchinson and Waters' notion of "necessities". Yet, the latter emphasise more competences students must acquire in order to perform well communicative tasks in the academia or in their future workplaces. All the three need-types should be considered in ESP programme evaluations.

With regard to the usefulness of some aspects of the ESP programmes in western/eastern countries, one can argue that Anthony and Basturkmen's valuable viewpoint about the quality assurance in educational system and evaluation can be partly maintained. Some other areas of the programmes need to be enhanced. In Africa, however, more rigorous works should be done to ensure quality outcomes in ESP programme evaluation and implementation. In fact, the results of programme evaluations conducted in African countries like Algeria, Nigeria, Ghana, and Ethiopia demonstrated that ESP programme design and evaluation framework is at a large scale irrelevant or inappropriate (Cherchab; Abubakar; Boateng; Asrat). In other words, the related ESP courses are not successfully implemented due to inadequate teaching materials, lack of skilful teachers, and insufficient institutional support. Moreover, in African universities, ESP is not considered as a professional field of its own as it is given low impetus. This state of affairs is more appealing to Francophone African context where English is used as a foreign language (EFL) and for professional or occupational purposes. A case in point is Burkina Faso, a country in which few educational programme evaluations have been carried out. Until the year 2020, no formal ESP programme evaluation study had been conducted at Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo (UJKZ), in Ouagadougou. Yet, some research was done with regard to

aspects of the secondary school teaching programmes such as learners' needs, the content of the syllabi along with the enclosed materials (see Sawadogo; Pare; Toe; Ye). Even though those studies were informative, they were not based on a comprehensive and systematic evaluation framework or model. Above all, few accounts were made about the programme setting/context and input.

### **1.3. Context evaluation studies: role of institutional policies, language environment, learner profiles.**

As the first of the four components of the CIPP model, 'context' stands for the setting or environment in which a particular programme or course operates. To evaluate such a context is to identify programme's goals, students' needs, opportunities and constraints and judge them in relation to the objectives and assessed needs (Stufflebeam). In the context of ESP, evaluation studies account for the institutional policies which define the status of ESP and the type of means allotted for its implementation. In addition, a suitable language policy environment with specific objectives and adequate sufficient institutional support is fundamental to enhancing programme effectiveness. Besides, handling well the following learner profile is essential: proficiency or study level, field of study, future occupational expectations, and gender. Yet, research conducted in Sudan (Ali and Salih) and in Niger (Mahamane) brought out that the key factor to disengagement and low achievement resides in the mismatch between students' needs and course design. Context or environment analysis, therefore, should be at center stage of any activity of programme evaluation.

### **1.4. Input evaluation studies: teaching staff competence, material adequacy, infrastructure**

Input evaluation aims to determine the extent to which the resources and strategies of the institution meet programme goals. Such an evaluation dimension in ESP most often accounts for the adequacy of teaching materials, instructor qualification, and course environment. These evaluation data are significant in that they inform curriculum and course design about the types of resources that fit into learners' expectations and necessities. For instance, students expect that the ESP teacher has a good command of both language

pedagogy and target content subject (Johns and Dudley-Evans and Gatehouse). However, to Boateng, this is not the case in many African universities as most teachers are more exposed to English for general purposes than to ESP methodology. Material adequacy is another common issue since few ESP materials are produced locally. As a matter of fact, instructors are compelled to resort to generic textbooks, the content of which does not concur with students' disciplines. Furthermore, poor infrastructure, such as large classes, insufficient library resources and limited access to ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools, further hamper the quality of the input. As a result, input evaluation highlights how poor resource can hinder the implementation of a programme and its expected outcomes.

### **1.5. The CIPP model in language education: relevance for holistic evaluation**

Daniel Stufflebeam is the initiator of the CIPP model which is a relevant evaluation framework used to portray the significant elements of a programme. The model plays an important role in language programme assessment; it helps triangulate insights from needs analysis, resource investigation, course implementation, and learning product. Indeed, evaluations of educational interventions, centred on CIPP categories, are viewed as inclusive because it permits to handle, at a time, key components of a programme including the teaching/learning environment and resources (Brown; Hashemi). Most importantly, the flexibility of the model— to consider both formative and summative assessment— makes it a powerful tool in the improvement of the quality of ESP programmes through time and space. Although the CIPP framework is well-known worldwide for its accuracy and appropriateness to language education, evaluation research combining both context and input aspects in African higher education remains uncommon. Few scholars view learner needs, teaching resources, and institutional policies as a system which determines quality programme outcomes (Zhang *et al.*; Beyer & Almeroth; Ulum; Al-Kinani *et al.*). A case in point is Francophone Africa, where ESP methodology within such a setting is still underexplored by researchers. Consequently, as one of the first in Francophone West Africa, the current study seeks to address this gap by applying the CIPP model's Context and Input dimensions to evaluate the ESP programmes at Université

Joseph Ki-Zerbo (UJKZ). It equally offers empirical evidence to guide curriculum improvement and policy reform.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research design**

Documentation (of existing information), interviews, and questionnaires are three of the seven categories of an evaluation activity which were maintained by Nunan (1992, p. 199). These three instruments are at the center of the mixed-method design (i.e. quantitative and qualitative approach). On that basis, the targeted institution context and the ESP programmes input involving learner profile, and the available resources were examined. Even though the approach is qualitatively dominant, both qualitative and quantitative insights are considered complementary and enhance the validity and reliability of the study; whereas quantitative method provides wide data, qualitative one yields in-depth information. In short, the adopted mixed-method approach helped to triangulate data from student and teacher questionnaire surveys (quantitative) as well as from interviews and document analysis (qualitative). This permits to handle the actual state of ESP delivery at Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo (UJKZ).

### **2.2. Sampling methods**

The research was conducted at UJKZ, in Burkina Faso, in the academic year 2020-2021. It addressed 433 students, 07 ESP teachers, 06 subject specialists, and administrators (i.e. programme coordinators or Heads of departments ( $n= 06$ )) from the four Research and Training Units (or 'UFR'). Those participants were selected on the basis of purposive and stratified sampling methods. The first one is a non-probability sampling method whereby participants were selected according to specific knowledge or characteristics (as department Heads, current students, excellent program alumni) relevant to the objectives of the study. The second one, however, is a probability sampling strategy. It was used to randomly sample the target population in terms of subgroups or strata based on characteristics each subgroup shared in common (e.g.: strata by gender, study level, UFR). The two methods permitted to get representation from key stakeholder groups. The research addressed both current students and alumni ( $n= 06$ ) as well as full- and part-

time ESP and subject-specific teachers who had varying amounts of ESP training.

### **2.3. Instruments and procedure**

Instruments like questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data in order to ensure data validity and reliability. Documentary sources also served as a means to gather complementary in-depth information about the ESP programmes context and input at UJKZ. Students and teachers were surveyed using structured questionnaires that were composed of fifty-seven (57) items, and the following six main sections: Background information, Importance of ESP and general needs, Course aims and objectives, Course content and materials, Self-evaluation of skills, Open-ended questions. The items were measured by using Likert three-point scales (i.e. Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree; or Very Important, Partially Important, Somewhat Important). The questionnaires were pilot-tested before they were administered. The pretest phase included a small group of ten students and two ESP teachers who were randomly sampled.

The main purpose of the pilot study was to refine the questionnaire items after checking their wording, clarity, and related response variability. This permitted to get valuable insights into targeted students' perceptions of the degree of relevance of the course, and their satisfaction with the resources. As for the teacher questionnaire, it mainly enquired about the adequacy of the programme input like the infrastructure, teaching resources, and training. In addition, teachers and administrators took part in semi-structured interviews whereby the researcher deeply probed their opinions about the perceived needs, as well as the way the institution implemented policy, and the challenges it encountered. Due to time and distance constraints, the interview was conducted face-to-face and on telephone. It was recorded with the participants' consent before being transcribed verbatim and analysed. Both the questionnaires and the interviews were administered after the completion of the ESP courses and their assessment. Furthermore, course syllabi, pedagogical materials, and policy statements were reviewed to assess the correlation of these institutional documents with learners' needs and the programme goals.

## 2.4. Data analysis methods

Quantitative data drawn from the questionnaire items were analysed with Kobo Toolbox and Software Package R and were processed by making use of descriptive statistics based on such dimensions as frequencies, percentages, and means. The application Kobo Toolbox was chosen because of its flexibility in generating and analysing questionnaire data in terms of frequency and percentage. R was also selected because it displays similar characteristics in addition to being complementary Kobo collect Toolbox and more amenable. As far as the data (qualitative) from the interviews and review of institutional documents are concerned, they were thematically analysed. The analysis was based on the following mixed-approach coding process reflecting the CIPP framework: deductive-inductive approach. The first coding, which is deductive, examined context and input categories altogether. Meanwhile, the inductive coding is applied to either targeted category for deep scrutiny. This enabled the identification of salient and various programme insights from documentary research and the participants' perspectives as well.

In doing so, context codes included adequacy of learning setting, programme goals, and learner needs. Meanwhile, input codes involved resources available, course syllabi content, and infrastructure quality. Besides, the use of multiple data sources and Cronbach's Alpha highlighted the consistency of the results and the reliability of the study. Concerned with Cronbach's Alpha, it was applied to questionnaire scales to test their reliability and internal consistency. The results of the test were .796, .922, .781 and matched respectively with students, alumni, and ESP teachers' total number of questionnaires closed items. In this respect, the items were considered as consistent since the Cronbach's Alpha values were closer to 1. Research ethics was also considered and approved by the authorities of UJKZ. Before data collection, the researcher let the students know that their participation was voluntary and would firstly receive an informed consent from them. He thereby ensured them about the confidentiality and anonymity of their identity and the information they would provide. Data were stored securely on a computer and were only used for academic research purposes.

## 3. Research findings

### 3.1. Context Evaluation Results

*Context evaluation* involved the presentation and analysis of the following dimensions: institutional policy/environment, programme goal, and learner need. The evaluation study attempted to answer the following question: *How adequate are the Context of the ESP programmes at UJKZ with respect to learners' academic and professional needs?*

### **3.1.1. *Institutional policy and learning environment***

Relying on data from interviews and official documents, ESP was part of the mission of UJKZ since it was included in the language curriculum as a subject or a content-discipline. Yet, as maintained by the Department Heads and the instructors' interviewees, ESP policy framework was not formally established to control its planning, design, implementation, and evaluation. As to align asides Boateng and Asrat, they argued that ESP benefited weak institutional support and its status was not made as clear as distinct from General English (GE). This idea was supported by the interviewee-administrators for whom GE and ESP methodology overlaps and as such this might hinder ESP implementation and its outcomes at UJKZ. With regard to learning environment, it was considered as adequate at the face of it. However, classrooms were crowded in general with up to 1000 students. As explained in detail in the Input subsection, some facilities of the context were to certain extent inappropriate for a successful implementation of language training programmes as a whole.

### **3.1.2. *ESP Programmes Goals***

With regard to the goals of the target ESP programmes, data yielded by the interviews with the Heads of departments, at UJKZ, were alike. They argued that the programmes aimed to provide learners with knowledge of English which matches with their fields of study. To them, this requires the acquisition of adequate technical English terminology for students to be lexically competent. In this respect, it can be argued that the main goal of ESP programmes at UJKZ is to enhance students' linguistic and communicative competences. In addition to providing learners with the subject-specific vocabulary, their grammatical competence in the four language skills, i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, should be equally developed. The subject specialists-interviewees maintained similar stance in that ESP

programmes should strengthen students' language skills. It was in this regard that the targeted students' needs, or reasons for English learning (Hutchinson and Waters) were analysed as the results display it in the sub-section below.

### 3.1.3. Learner Needs

Needs assessment is one of the core aspects of ESP methodology and should come first in language programme design (Dudley-Evans and St John; Basturkmen). That is why in the present study, the researcher found it necessary to identify students' needs or expectations before the concerned ESP courses were implemented. Focus was on learners' academic and professional or occupational needs. Data were gathered from the perspectives of the learners/alumni, ESP instructors, including subject specialists.

#### 3.1.3.1. Learners' Current or Academic Needs

According to the research findings, most students agreed on the significance of English for specific purposes (ESP) in their academic studies. Their needs are summarized in Table 4.1; meanwhile, Table 4.2 displays the degree of importance of the four skills.

**Table 4.1. Summary responses on students' academic English needs**

You need ESP in order to:	Students' responses in %			Instructors' responses in %		
	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
improve general English knowledge or proficiency	86.3%	11.4%	2.2%	57.1%	42.8%	-
carry out further studies in English speaking countries	64.8%	30.4%	4.7%	42.8%	57.1%	-
access English information in specialised fields	90%	09%	0.9%	85.7%	14.2%	-
participate in conferences and summer universities	62.1%	31.9%	5.8%	42.8%	57.1%	-
pass English proficiency tests: TOEFL, TOEIC	55.4%	32.5%	11.6%	14.2%	85.7%	-
<b>Mean percentage</b>	<b>71.7%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>48.5%</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: field research data, 2020.

According to Table 4.1, on average, 71.7% of respondents agreed on the importance of the five listed academic needs. Whereas the needs "access English information in specialised fields" (90%; f= 389) and "improve general English knowledge or proficiency" (86.3%; f= 360) were highly ranked by the students, they

considered “*pass English proficiency tests*” (55.4%;  $f= 239$ ) as the least important need. In a similar vein, 85.7% of the instructors partially agreed about the significance of ESP course for English proficiency exams. Consistent with the information above was nine students’ viewpoints about the importance of English for their academic achievement, during an interview. Ninety per cent (90%) of those students advocated that ESP was useful to them in facilitating access to English information about their study fields and in making them perform better. The latter was also congruent with 85.7% of ESP instructors’ standpoints as displayed in Table 4.1.

Concerned with the four English language skills, students, in their questionnaire, had to assess the importance of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing for their current studies. Relying on the summary of their responses in Table 4.2, students at UJKZ outranked ‘reading’ (85.6%;  $f= 361$ ) and ‘listening’ (85.2%;  $f= 358$ ) as “Very important” and “Mostly important” skills altogether. Indeed, students’ willingness to improve their English listening and speaking skills matches with their most significant general academic needs previously discussed.

**Table 4.2. Summary responses on degree of importance of four skills**

Language skills	Students' responses in %			Instructors' responses in %		
	Very important	Mostly important	Somewhat important	Very important	Mostly important	Somewhat important
	100%	≥50%	<50%	100%	≥50%	<50%
<b>Listening</b>	47.7%	37.5%	14.8%	43%	28.5%	28.5%
<b>Speaking</b>	54%	29.7%	16.3%	57.1%	42.9%	-
<b>Reading</b>	51.3%	34.3%	14.4%	57.3%	28.5%	14.2%
<b>Writing</b>	48.4%	33.2%	18.4%	71.4%	14.4%	14.2%

Source: field research data, 2020.

According to their ESP instructors, however, writing skill was emphasized at 71.4% (and at 85.8% with ‘Very’ and ‘Mostly’ important scales put together), representing the most relevant of all in their students’ studies. This was actually appealing as the instructors might not be content with their students’ writing performance. Besides, ESP instructors might show that written exams were common in that context and developing writing skills would, therefore, enhance students’ academic achievement (see Brindley; Hutchinson and Waters). Furthermore, the instructors significantly rated ‘Reading’ and ‘Speaking’ higher than fifty percent as indicated in Table 4.2. Above all, they

ascribed much more value to 'speaking' (at 100%) with the scales 'Very Important' and 'Mostly Important' put together. This could be equated with 83.3% ( $f= 5$ ) of the interviewees subject specialists' standpoints who also advocated "Speaking" and "Writing" as the most relevant skills students, at UJKZ, should develop.

### 3.1.3.2. *Students' Future or Professional Needs*

In the questionnaire about their future career's language needs, 99 % ( $f= 117$ ) of the students' acknowledged the significance of English in their prospective career. Concerned with the alumni, they all ( $f= 6$ ; 100%) agreed on the relevance of English in their current workplaces.

**Table 4.3. Summary responses on students' future career English needs**

You need ESP in order to:	Students' responses in %			Instructors' responses in %		
	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
communicate with native speakers of English.	68.7%	27.1%	4.1%	85.7%	14.2%	-
communicate in your workplace.	71.2%	26.8%	1.9%	85.7%	14.3%	-
increase your employment opportunities.	85.1%	13.6%	1.2%	100%	-	-
Mean percentage	75%	22.5%	2.4%	90.4%	9.5%	-

Source: field research data, 2020.

In their questionnaire, students also had to give their preferences related to three professional English general needs, following the Likert scales agreed, partially agreed or disagreed. In view of Table 4.3 above, a mean of 75% and 90.4% of the students and their instructors, respectively, agreed on the fact that ESP can permit students to get jobs and to interact with their colleagues, including English natives. The most important of English for occupational purposes (EOP) need that students themselves (85.1%;  $f= 368$ ) and their instructors (100%;  $f=7$ ) highly rated was the increase of students' "...employment opportunities".

With regard to the stimulated recall interviews, the finding highlighted various needs from the students' perspectives. In fact, 9 of 9 students considered ESP as an opportunity for them to make progress in their prospective careers. One of them maintained that as a future bilingual assistant the mastery of specialized English would enable her to discuss her

“...*projects with [her] English collaborators or [to do] translation*” (Translated). In the meantime, another student stated that he was “... *obliged to master English...*” since he desired to work in the Public Relation sector. Relying on the present interview data, one can argue that the good command of English as an international language can provide better job opportunities to students in the world market (Mackey; Coleman); its bad command otherwise may be penalizing.

The importance of the four language skills in the students’ future career was equally enquired from the instructors’ and the students’ own perspectives. The responses in Table 4.4 highlight that students considered speaking (70.5%) and listening (70.1%) skills very important for their target occupational purposes as they are ranked higher than the other two skills. Their stimulated recall interviews provided with similar data wherein speaking was ascribed ultimate value at 100% ( $f=9$ ) as compared to listening (33.3%;  $f=3$ ). In a same vein, the graduates highly rated listening ( $f=6$ ; 100%) and speaking ( $f=6$ ; 100%) as the most commonly skills required in their current jobs, altogether with reading and Writing (83%;  $f=5$ ).

**Table 4.4. Summary responses on the importance of four skills in students’ future career**

Language skills	Students’ responses in %			Instructors’ responses in %		
	Very important	Mostly important	Somewhat important	Very important	Mostly important	Somewhat important
	100%	≥50%	<50%	100%	≥50%	<50%
<b>Listening</b>	<b>70.1%</b>	20.6%	5.8%	57.1%	42.8%	-
<b>Speaking</b>	<b>70.5%</b>	19.7%	7.1%	<b>85.7%</b>	14.2%	-
<b>Reading</b>	62.2%	24.6%	10.2%	28.57%	42.8%	28.5%
<b>Writing</b>	61.7%	21.2%	10.2%	<b>71.4%</b>	14.2%	14.2%

Source: field research data, 2020.

Although the majority of students found oral skills relevant in their prospective professional discourse community, it is worth noting, however, that some others might consider reading and/or writing (rated above fifty percent in Table 4.4) as very important (see Brindley; Hutchinson and Waters). Thereby, their instructors strengthened their standpoints by giving more prominence to speaking (85.7%), in addition to writing (71.4%). By comparing those results to the students’ aforementioned academic needs, it can be inferred that listening, speaking (see Hewings; Feak), and writing (see Jordan)

remained students' most relevant but challenging needs in ESP, at UJKZ.

### **3.2. Input Evaluation Results**

*Input evaluation* of the ESP programmes at UJKZ (Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo) attempted to answer this question: *How adequate are the Input of the ESP programmes at UJKZ with respect to learners' academic and professional needs?* In this respect, the following were enquired: instructors and students' profiles, course materials, including the syllabi content, facilities and instructional time resources. The summary of the findings is presented in the next subsection.

#### **3.2.1. Instructors' and students' profiles**

The targeted students and ESP instructors' characteristics, at UJKZ, were informed by interview and survey (i.e. questionnaires) data. As previously mentioned in Section 3.2., 433 students partook the study; they were composed of 141 female and 292 male. Whereas 297 of them were bachelor students, 136 were at Master level. Relying on those students' needs illustrated earlier, they had various language expectations and necessities, as well as different proficiency levels. Concerned with ESP instructors, 7 (male= 6; female = 1) took part in the study. The majority of them ( $f=4$ ) were aged between 20 and 30 years old which corresponded to an average of 46.5%. Among them, we could identify 4 part-time and 3 full-time ESP instructors. In terms of experience, 6 instructors had taught ESP for 2 to 15 years. Meanwhile, one had about 25 years of teaching experiences. Besides, they all were graduated, 6 held a Master degree and 1 was a Ph.D. However, only 2 instructors were trained in ESP methodology.

#### **3.2.2. Course Materials**

Finding from Department Heads' (HDs) interviews and syllabi analysis permitted to shed light to the instructional materials allotted to ESP programmes, at UJKZ. Data revealed that the same course materials were made available both for ESP and General English programmes. They are listed as follows according to the HDs' perspectives and their percentage: boards (100%), overhead projectors (33.3%), cassette players (16.6%), computer labs (16.6%), textbooks (16.6%), and course handouts (16.6%). In this regard, in their interviews, (50%;  $f=3$  of 6) of the HDs maintained that the

pedagogical materials and aids were lacking or insufficient. In fact, one of them put that “No materials are specifically available for the English course. We received some audio devices but they were not destined to the English course”. Another interviewee-instructor confirmed: “There is no material as such, apart from the computers the students possessed”. In addition, he made it clear: “there are some instructors who make an effort to bring their audio material [to class] to make the students listen to some conversations. If not, there is no material”. Besides, students and their instructors witnessed the bad quality of the internet connection, at UJKZ.

To get more insights into the material resources at UJKZ, course syllabi were examined and participants’ questionnaire surveys were analysed in order to determine the adequacy of the course content. The analysis of the syllabi showed that the course documents, i.e. the textbook and the handout, were inadequate. In other words, the course syllabi, in general, didn’t sufficiently match with the students’ needs. In fact, for the instructors, the syllabi put more emphasis on grammar and subject-specific vocabulary than their use in contexts of communication. The latter was consistent with the Alumni’s standpoints according to which the other skills were left out in the favour of writing. In short, the review of the course syllabi revealed that the ESP at UJKZ, on a whole, was more EAP-oriented than EOP-based.

An important information drawn from the examination of the syllabi and course schedules was the timeframe or the total number of hours allotted to each of the target ESP programmes at UJKZ. The timeframe mostly ranged between 12 hours to 50 hours each academic year or semester. This, otherwise, is viewed as insufficient with regard to programme goals. Yet, the number of hours allotted to subject-specific English programmes most often varied between 24 and 72 hours per semester and is considered as higher.

### **3.2.3. Facilities**

This section provides insights into the characteristics of the course facilities at UJKZ. It highlights the extent to which classrooms/auditoria, laboratories, libraries, and the other types of infrastructure fulfilled the ESP programmes goals and students’ needs. It is worth noting that findings of the present research revealed that facilities were outdated and very old, so they needed to be changed or renewed. Besides, in addition to the departmental libraries, only

one main library and one computer lab existed on campus, in the year 2020. But those infrastructures were not equipped enough to meet ESP students' needs as maintained by the students (56.8%), alumni (100%), and the instructors (85.7%), in their questionnaires. Yet, as to fill this gap, an online library was set up in the same year. Students could access the libraries and the computer lab only by presenting their membership cards. In contrast, relying on the questionnaire findings, 42.8% of instructors and 45.1% of students agreed that the classrooms setting on a whole was adequate even though 33.2% of the alumni were against that idea. With regard to the internet connection, all participants were discontent with its quality as it was not actually accessible in the classrooms, at UJKZ. Yet, most of them agreed with the existence of medical services, one restaurant, and students' dormitories.

According to the results of the research, the entire infrastructure at UJKZ was found to be insufficient to meet ESP learners' needs. The most appealing of all was the absence of language laboratories which did not allow the effective development of ESP students' oral communicative abilities. Above all, time resources for ESP teaching/learning were viewed as too insufficient to cover the target course content and achieve the programmes goals.

#### 4. Discussion

The combinative examination of Context-Input at Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo (UJKZ) displayed a close connexion between the institutional policy, facilities, instructional materials, and teacher skills. One of the most striking themes that the present evaluation study sketches out is the important gap between the programme's context and resource. In fact, the resources and infrastructure made available for ESP programmes are very poor at UJKZ. Nonetheless, the demands of English for academic, occupational or for business purposes are increasing in Burkina Faso (Coleman). The most impeding factors which constrain the programmes to meet these demands are lack of administrative coordination, limited budgets, inadequate teacher training, and shortages of pedagogically adequate materials. Such a situation reflects Strevens and Stufflebeam's CIPP model; it emphasizes the importance for the context and input dimensions to be considered holistically to inform decision-making before a programme is implemented.

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Yet, if the aforementioned Context-Input underlying factors are unattended to, the resulting processes and results will be inevitably compromised. Indeed, contextual and resource constraints can have negative effects on learning process, i.e. on how knowledge is transmitted and acquired in ESP class. Instances of such effects can result from the mismatch between the course goals and learner needs, teaching aids, classroom activities or tasks, and assessment practices which may all be irrelevant. Similarly, inadequate context can influence the learning product. In fact, learners' academic achievements can be incongruent with their language performance at their workplaces; and this may discredit ESP training at UJKZ. The effect of decontextualized needs assessment on ESP students' employability or academic success, in the long run, should also be closely examined. Most importantly, and as Salager-Meyer and Swales made it clear, learning outcomes are biased if learners' exposure to authentic tasks or materials is limited. Consequently, this may yield graduates who are non-proficient English language users. Therefore, further evaluation research, at UJKZ, should draw from those Context-Input weaknesses to identify and investigate relevant ESP programme process and product dimensions.

It is worth noting however that challenges related to facilities and instructional materials are not proper to Burkinabe context only; in many African higher educational settings, resource requirements are not met to a large extent. Relying on Zhang *et al.* and Beyer & Almeroth's recent works, the mismatch between the course environment and the technological resources, including fundings may hinder programme products. Such a situation should be avoided at UJKZ or its related issues should be fixed for a long-run and successful implementation of ESP programmes.

Besides, one such dimension and powerful factor is teacher competence. ESP teachers are compelled to negotiate distinct pedagogical identities according to their rote instruction of English. They also go through a more structured method of linguistic analysis, including needs identification and field-based communicative activities. Dudley-Evans and St John, and Johns argue that ESP pedagogues will possibly face significant difficulties given the multidisciplinary nature of the field. In a similar vein, findings from this study highlight that limited professional development opportunities, at UJKZ, reduce teachers' ability to innovate, adapt and develop discipline-

specific-based materials which concur with students' academic and professional environments. Indeed, without continuous support, teachers can become mired in a circular situation of limited pedagogical alternatives; the distance between classroom practices and learners' real needs could equally deepen.

Furthermore, the way forward in ESP is determined by institutional policy. Results show that there is no explicit universal university ESP policy that can guide how to plan teacher development, resource allocation, curriculum planning, and long-run programming. Consequently, the current gap reflected the findings of Richard, gatehouse, and Teodorescu on sustainable ESP, the implementation of which should be embedded into broader institutional and national language policies. Boateng notes continued discrepancy between policy intentions and institutional practice in the West African context. These findings remain relevant in the UJKZ learning environment and should be taken into consideration in future reviews of ESP programmes.

In short, the present discussion reinforces the ideas that good ESP implementation is systemic, in that institutional provisions should align with teacher competence and instructional materials. In other words, the realization of the target programmes end result, at UJKZ, cannot be achieved in independently defined blocks of action or a single box. As a matter of fact, structural problems, including policy mismatches, shortages in administrative staff, training, and materials, should be immediately addressed; otherwise, they will continue to impede the programme's capacity to meet its goal. In this light, this evaluation study strongly argues in favour of evidence-based and sustained reforms as recommended as follows.

## 5. Recommendations

Using the CIPP model that identifies contextual input dimensions previously assessed, a series of salient recommendations are given below in order to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the ESP programmes at UJKZ. The section attempts to answer the following question: How can the findings guide future curriculum development and policy reform? From the outset, an ESP policy framework is strongly recommended and should be consistently applied across the university. This must comprehensibly inform the

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institutional guidelines or principles regarding curriculum design, planning, and implementation, including material resources and teacher profile. As such, ESP programmes and administrative initiatives will be implemented with success.

Another dimension is teacher development which is central to educational curriculum and which must be taken into account for an effective implementation of ESP programmes at UJKZ. In other words, ESP instructors must be trained about ESP methodology and about their role as subject-specific language specialists. In fact, they must be provided with necessary skills and means so that they are able to do research, design course syllabuses, as well as pedagogical (authentic) materials. These skills should equally enable them to use those tools to deliver and evaluate the ESP course adequately. To become more competent, ESP teachers should also benefit from regular workshops and collaborate with subject-specific specialists, in addition to attending ESP-based conferences.

Besides, there is a need for broadening the overall technological and physical infrastructure, at UJKZ. In fact, contemporary ESP pedagogy being viewed as a digital communication, a learning environment including multimedia tools needs to be developed; this will permit particular information inputs, online resources and community to sustain the communication process. Well-resourced language labs would importantly enrich the prospects of effective learning, learning independence, tech-mediated learning and engagement. To make this possible, ESP facilities at UJKZ should necessarily be equipped with an up-to-date and stable internet connection.

Worth of mention is a systematic and comprehensible needs analysis which should be regularly carried out for the ESP curriculum to remain relevant. In that vein, the purpose of the needs analysis of the related programmes should be yearly determined and should stay consistent with the institutional goals, students' academic expectations as well as the labour market requirements. Such an iterative frame, as a matter of fact, should serve as a cornerstone based on which adequate and effective ESP programmes would be designed at UJKZ to guarantee the achievement of learners' needs on a whole.

Moreover, programme quality needs to be ensured by establishing

sustainable funding processes. ESP-specific budget lines (for materials, infrastructure and teacher training) would help cut the uncertainty that frequently follows the externally-funded or other externally-supported projects. More importantly, the partnership could be sought either with industry, international organizations, or possibly academia to expand the source of funding.

These guidelines have been developed regarding a coherent path to bring structural constraints identified during the evaluation into potential for growth in the long-run. In adopting these instructions, ESP programmes at UJKZ become stronger as they equip learners with relevant linguistic and communicative skills. Such language ability will make ESP graduates flourish in their prospective academic and professional settings.

### **Conclusion**

This study was aimed to determine the relevance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to higher educational institutions, such as Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo (UJKZ), since there have been more and more stronger needs for discipline-specific language training. The examination of the targeted ESP programmes context and inputs, at UJKZ, using the CIPP (Context Input Process Product) evaluation framework, highlights that the institutional policies are not consistent with the available resources. Otherwise, such factors as environment, critical management and corporative motivation systems influence effective ESP implementation.

In effect, the results of the present evaluation study mainly revealed a significant gap between strategic objectives (context) and the material, human, and organizational provisions (input) needed to achieve those objectives. Addressing this misalignment will require a long-lasting focused attention to various dimensions. In this regard, institutional policy should encompass a systematic framework which accounts for ESP students and their instructors' actual needs, including funding allocation. Concerned with ESP instructors, their will urgently need to develop their professional capacity in ESP methodology through different didactic and pedagogical training activities. High quality ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools are recommended for ESP students to acquire knowledge which permit them to meet their academic and prospective occupational communication

requirements.

The study, in addition, shows the additional value of using the CIPP model for curriculum development. The model was especially beneficial in identifying the common weaknesses in the context and input dimensions at UJKZ. It also highlights difficulties related to the targeted ESP programmes. Indeed, prioritizing environmental factors and resource adequacy, the CIPP framework makes programmes internally more consistent and capacity-building, rather than just relying on results-based evaluation. The implications of Context-Input constraints to the evaluation of programme Process and Product are equally addressed.

While the potential of this research was considerable, several limitations will need to be addressed. First, other universities were not included in the study, making its results more restricted to UJKZ as the only target investigation field. Second, certainly due to time constraints, the research could not be longitudinal to shed light to the impact of the ESP programme variables on learner. Lack of process and product assessment is the third limitation which prevented from providing detailed analysis of the ESP programmes at UJKZ. Further pragmatic stance could be taken by enquiring about the use of specialized English by graduate students at a given workplace. This could help assessed the adequacy and efficiency of the ESP entire resources and to inform strategic decision-making. Considering the aforementioned restrictions in future research will enhance the understanding of the overall impact of ESP instruction. It will furthermore allow teacher training, curricular change as well as institutional reform in order to strongly act on hard evidence.

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**How to cite this article/Comment citer cet article:**

**MLA:** Palm, Dyadi Romain. “Setting and Resources in ESP Programme Delivery: A Context-Input Evaluation at Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo.” *Uirtus*, vol. 5, no. 3, December 2025, pp. 474-501, <https://doi.org/10.59384/uirthus.dec2025n23>.