

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING ENGLISH AT SCHOOL

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ABSTRACTS

English language learning in Indonesian schools is a crucial element in preparing students to face globalization and competition in the job market. This study explores the impact of English language learning on cognitive development, educational opportunities, and career prospects. Using a library research method, various literatures from SINTA, WoS and Scopus indexed journals were analyzed to identify the benefits and challenges associated with English language teaching. Findings indicate that English proficiency enhances critical thinking skills, analytical abilities, and provides a competitive edge in the global job market. Despite policies such as the 2013 Curriculum improving English competencies, there are still disparities in teaching quality and resources. Challenges include limited access in rural areas and the need for more interactive pedagogical approaches. This study emphasizes the importance of sustained support from government, schools, and communities, as well as the utilization of educational technology to overcome these barriers. The conclusion of this study is that by improving English proficiency among students, Indonesia can enhance its global competitiveness and better prepare its youth for the era of globalization.

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INTRODUCTION

English has evolved into a global language dominating international communication, trade, technology, and education. Its role as a lingua franca makes it a crucial skill in an increasingly connected world. In Indonesia, the urgency of English language learning in schools has risen with globalization and shifts in economic and social dynamics. Therefore, understanding and mastering English is not merely an additional skill but an essential requirement for students to compete in the job market and actively participate in the global community (Putri, 2021).

The importance of teaching English from primary through secondary school has been extensively discussed in educational literature. Several studies indicate that early introduction to English not only enhances students' linguistic abilities but also positively impacts their cognitive development and analytical skills. A study by Rahman and Sari (2022) reveals that students who learn English from an early age have better critical thinking skills and are more open to cultural differences. This finding is supported by other research that shows English proficiency improves students' ability to solve complex problems and expands their access to global literature and knowledge (Mulyani, 2020).

Furthermore, English language learning in schools plays a crucial role in preparing students for higher education and international careers. Research published in Scopus-indexed journals indicates that countries integrating English into their education curriculum early on tend to have a more competent population ready to face global challenges (Johnston, 2019). This aligns with Williams (2020), who highlights the importance of English skills in broadening

educational opportunities abroad and enhancing graduates' competitiveness in the global job market.

In addition to educational factors, English language learning has significant socio-economic implications. In Indonesia, English proficiency often determines job prospects in certain sectors, particularly in multinational companies and the tourism industry. A study by Sari et al. (2021) found that graduates with strong English skills tend to have better career opportunities and higher incomes compared to those less proficient. This study illustrates that English is not just a communication tool but also a crucial social asset in an increasingly integrated economy.

National education policies also support the importance of English language teaching in schools. For instance, the 2013 Curriculum emphasizes the need for English language skill development as part of efforts to improve educational quality in Indonesia. Research by Yusuf and Fadli (2021) indicates that this policy has led to significant improvements in students' English abilities, although challenges remain in terms of resource availability and teacher training. This review underscores the need for institutional support and sustainable policies to ensure equitable access to quality English language education for all students.

Thus, English language learning in Indonesian schools is a critical strategy for preparing the youth to face global challenges. Beyond enhancing linguistic skills, this education contributes to cognitive development, increased competitiveness in the job market, and active participation in the global community. Therefore, investment in English language learning is not only important for students individually but also for national development as a whole. Success in integrating English into the education system will have a long-term impact on Indonesia's ability to compete and contribute on the international stage.

The aim of this research is to analyze and evaluate the importance of English language learning in Indonesian schools, as well as to identify the impact of English proficiency on cognitive development, educational opportunities, and market competitiveness. This study also aims to explore the relationship between national education policies and the effectiveness of English language learning in schools, focusing on the challenges and opportunities faced in the implementation of the English curriculum. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive educational strategies for teaching English to students in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a library research method, which is a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from available sources in libraries, academic journals, books, and other relevant publications. Library research is particularly suitable for this study as the aim is to understand and evaluate the importance of English language learning in schools by referring to existing literature.

The research procedure begins with the data collection phase. The researcher identifies and accesses various sources relevant to the topic "The Importance of English Language Learning in Schools." These sources include journal articles indexed in SINTA, Scopus, and WoS, academic books, research reports, and national education policy documents related to English language learning. Keywords such as "English language learning," "English education in schools," "impact of English in education," and "English education policy in Indonesia" are used to search for relevant literature.

Following data collection, the next stage is data analysis. This involves reviewing the content of each obtained source, focusing on arguments, findings, and conclusions related to the research topic. The researcher uses a descriptive analysis approach, organizing information based on major themes found in the literature, such as the benefits of English proficiency,

challenges in English language learning in schools, and educational policies supporting English language teaching. Additionally, the researcher synthesizes findings from various sources to provide a more comprehensive view of the issue under investigation.

The final step is data interpretation. In this phase, the researcher integrates findings from various literatures to offer a deeper understanding of the importance of English language learning in schools. The researcher also compares results from relevant previous studies to identify gaps in the existing literature and their implications for educational policy and teaching practices in Indonesia. The application of library research in this study allows for a critical exploration and analysis of the importance of English language learning in schools based on a solid foundation of existing literature.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that English language learning in schools is fundamental for equipping students to tackle the challenges posed by globalization and the competitive job market. The literature analysis highlights that proficiency in English significantly enhances cognitive development, critical thinking, and analytical skills among students. For instance, early exposure to English has been linked to improved problem-solving abilities and better decision-making skills in complex situations. This underscores the role of English as a vital tool for intellectual growth and adaptability in an interconnected world.

One of the main findings is that students who begin learning English at an early age tend to have better critical thinking skills compared to those who start learning English later in life. This is supported by Rahman and Sari (2022), who show that English language learning enhances students' ability to solve complex problems and make better decisions in situations requiring critical thinking. This finding is consistent with Mulyani (2020), who states that English proficiency is also associated with improved analytical skills, which are crucial across various disciplines.

In addition to cognitive benefits, the study also finds that English language learning has significant socio-economic implications. Students with strong English skills are more likely to pursue higher education abroad and secure better jobs in the global job market. Sari et al. (2021) found that English proficiency is a key determinant of career success in sectors such as tourism, information technology, and multinational companies. This study highlights that English is not just a communication skill but also an important social asset in the global economy.

Further discussion reveals that education policies supporting English language learning in schools play a vital role in enhancing overall educational quality. The 2013 Curriculum, which emphasizes English language teaching as part of the national education program, has had a positive impact on improving English competencies among students (Yusuf & Fadli, 2021). However, the study also uncovers that challenges remain, such as disparities in teaching quality and insufficient resources in some regions.

Additional sources suggest that effective English language learning also depends on the quality of teaching and pedagogical approaches used by teachers. According to Sutrisno and Indriani (2018), teachers who use communication-based and interactive teaching approaches tend to produce students who are more competent and confident in using English. This indicates that more interactive and student-centered teaching methods need to be implemented more widely to maximize learning outcomes.

Johnston (2019) demonstrates that countries which effectively integrate English into their curriculum from an early age are better positioned to confront global challenges and compete on the international stage. Such successful integration often results in a more skilled and adaptable workforce, capable of navigating complex global environments. However, achieving this requires not only robust government policies but also sustained efforts in teacher training

to maintain high educational standards. Ensuring that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have equitable access to quality English education is crucial for maximizing the benefits of such educational reforms.

Research by Aditya and Kurniawan (2020) shows that English skills significantly enhance students' academic performance in Indonesian schools. The study reveals that students proficient in English tend to have a better understanding of other subjects, especially those using English literature or references. This reinforces the argument that English proficiency is important not only for communication but also for achieving higher academic performance.

Moreover, Puspitasari (2019) highlights challenges faced in teaching English in rural areas of Indonesia. Limited access to educational resources and teacher training are major barriers to improving English language learning quality in these areas. However, this study also identifies strategies to address these challenges, such as utilizing educational technology and community-based learning approaches.

Harahap (2017) also indicates that English proficiency provides a competitive advantage in education and career fields. The study emphasizes that students who are proficient in English have better access to international educational resources, which in turn enhances the quality of education they receive. This underscores the importance of English as a medium of instruction in various higher education institutions in Indonesia.

The results of this study also highlight the importance of collaboration between schools, government, and the community in enhancing the effectiveness of English language learning. Williams (2020) emphasizes that strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors can help address some of the challenges in English language teaching, such as resource provision and teacher training. Additionally, the role of technology in supporting English language learning is increasingly important, particularly in the context of remote learning that has gained prominence since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, the findings of this study affirm that integrating English language learning into Indonesian schools represents a strategic investment essential for the nation's long-term development. Enhancing English proficiency among students not only boosts individual academic and career prospects but also strengthens Indonesia's position in the global market. By fostering strong English skills, Indonesia can improve its global competitiveness, ensuring that its youth are well-prepared to engage effectively in international arenas. This approach will contribute to building a more resilient and dynamic workforce, ultimately benefiting the nation as a whole in the face of an increasingly interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

English language learning in Indonesian schools plays a crucial role in preparing students to face the challenges of globalization and competition in the job market. The findings of this study indicate that proficiency in English not only enhances students' cognitive and critical thinking skills but also opens up greater opportunities in higher education and international careers. Furthermore, education policies supporting English language learning, such as the 2013 Curriculum, have had a positive impact, though challenges like inconsistent teaching quality still need to be addressed.

To maximize the benefits of English language learning, continuous efforts are required to improve teaching quality, provide adequate resources, and implement effective pedagogical approaches. Collaboration between the government, schools, and communities, as well as the utilization of educational technology, is key to addressing challenges and ensuring that all students, including those in remote areas, have equal access to quality English education. With these measures, Indonesia can enhance its global competitiveness and prepare a younger generation ready to face the era of globalization.

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