

Analyzing English's Impact on Global Competitiveness and Sustainable Progress

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk melakukan analisis menyeluruh tentang peran bahasa Inggris sebagai katalisator kemajuan, dengan penekanan khusus pada dampaknya terhadap daya saing global dan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Metodologi penelitian ini melibatkan pendekatan penelitian kepustakaan, yang memerlukan analisis komprehensif terhadap berbagai sumber literatur yang relevan, termasuk artikel jurnal ilmiah, buku, laporan penelitian, dan dokumen kebijakan yang terkait dengan bahasa Inggris, daya saing global, dan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Data yang diperoleh dari sumber-sumber ini kemudian dikenai analisis kualitatif untuk mengidentifikasi pola hubungan dan argumen yang mendukung atau menentang peran bahasa Inggris sebagai katalisator kemajuan dalam konteks daya saing global dan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penguasaan bahasa Inggris berkontribusi signifikan terhadap peningkatan daya saing global dengan memfasilitasi akses ke informasi, peluang kerja, dan kolaborasi internasional. Lebih jauh, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa bahasa Inggris memainkan peran penting dalam transfer pengetahuan dan teknologi, yang sangat penting bagi inovasi dan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Temuan-temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya investasi berkelanjutan dalam pendidikan bahasa Inggris yang berkualitas dan merata sebagai strategi untuk meningkatkan daya saing global dan mencapai tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini memberikan landasan dan wawasan teoritis bagi para pembuat kebijakan dan praktisi.

Keyword: Bahasa Inggris; Daya Saing Global; Pembangunan Berkelanjutan

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to conduct a thorough analysis of the role of English as a catalyst for progress, with a particular emphasis on its impact on global competitiveness and sustainable development. The research methodology involves a library research approach, which entails a comprehensive analysis of a wide range of relevant literature sources, including scholarly journal articles, books, research reports, and policy documents related to English, global competitiveness, and sustainable development. The data obtained from these sources were then subjected to a qualitative analysis to identify patterns of relationships and arguments for or against the role of English as a catalyst for progress in the context of global competitiveness and sustainable development. The results of the study indicate that English language acquisition significantly contributes to improving global competitiveness by facilitating access to information, employment opportunities, and international collaboration. Furthermore, the study found that English plays an important role in knowledge and technology transfer, which is crucial for innovation and sustainable development. These findings underscore the importance of continued investment in quality and equitable English language education as a strategy to enhance global competitiveness and achieve sustainable development goals. This research provides theoretical foundations and insights for policymakers and practitioners.

Keyword: English; Global Competitiveness; Sustainable Development

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization, an arguably inexorable force, has ushered the world into an era of interconnectedness, characterized by increasingly pervasive and intensive interactions between nations. Within this context, as highlighted by Chung and Cahyani, English has become the dominant lingua franca across various sectors, spanning trade, education, technology, and diplomacy (Ke & Cahyani, 2014). This assertion is further supported by Jenkins, who notes that the use of English as a lingua franca is not confined to international forums but is also prevalent in everyday life globally (Jenkins, 2013). These observations underscore that English language proficiency is no longer a mere advantage but a critical necessity for global competitiveness (Kim, 2004). Conversely, a lack of English communication skills risks the marginalization of both individuals and nations within international competition. Graddol in (Ammon, 2008), explicitly states that limited English proficiency often impedes access to information, employment opportunities, and international collaborations, particularly in the current digital age, with significant implications for economic advancement and sustainable development.

The competitive environment of the free market necessitates high levels of individual and organizational competitiveness, encompassing effective intercultural communication. English provides direct access to international markets, facilitates collaborations with global partners, and expands career prospects (Yuhendra, 2018). A study by the EF English Proficiency Index reveals a positive correlation between national English proficiency and higher per capita income (EF, 2023). This suggests that English language proficiency acts as a catalyst for economic progress and improved quality of life.

Despite the acknowledged importance of English, significant challenges persist, particularly in developing nations. Limited access to quality education, a dearth of qualified educators, and a scarcity of practical learning opportunities all impede language acquisition (Arifin, 2014). Consequently, it is imperative that governments and educational institutions expand access to English language learning through innovative curricula, digital technologies, and cultural exchange programs. Such measures will empower individuals to leverage English as a tool to navigate globalization and realize their potential on the global stage, including within the Indonesian context.

Empirical evidence from Indonesia indicates a positive correlation between English language proficiency and improved human resources and global competitiveness (Ariansyah & Caesar, 2024; Husna & Nisa', 2021; Kartini, 2006; Yadya, 2016). The significance of English proficiency is particularly evident in global economic competition. For instance, Indonesia, as a member of the G20, is expected to contribute actively to international trade, global diplomacy, and foreign investment. However, the EF English Proficiency Index also reports that Indonesia's English proficiency level remains in the lower-middle range compared to other Southeast Asian nations, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines. (EF, 2023) This gap poses a significant impediment to attracting foreign investment, expanding export markets, and developing technology-based industries that require a skilled English-speaking workforce.

To enhance international competitiveness, governments and the education sector must strengthen English language instruction strategies. Investments in teacher training, the utilization of interactive learning technologies, and collaborations with international institutions are potential solutions (Shifa soraya lestari & Widiastuty, 2023). Moreover, programs aimed at improving English proficiency among the general population are also crucial to meet the demands of the global landscape. A workforce proficient in English will enable Indonesia to strengthen its position as a respected economic and cultural power on the world stage.

Nonetheless, significant challenges in English language acquisition persist in Indonesia (Farika et al., 2024). Inequitable access to quality education represents a major barrier, particularly in rural and remote areas. The availability of competent English language teachers remains limited, and their distribution is uneven. Furthermore, many Indonesian learners exhibit a lack of confidence in active English usage, largely attributable to traditional teaching methodologies that overemphasize grammar and examinations rather than practical communication skills. This results in suboptimal English proficiency, despite early exposure. Furthermore, the traditional approach of emphasizing perfect grammar and pronunciation is being supplanted by an approach that prioritizes effective communication within diverse contexts. Current English language curricula focus on developing interaction and intercultural understanding which are key to effective communication in global settings.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a holistic and inclusive approach. Governments and educational institutions must improve teacher training, refine curricula to be more communication-oriented, and expand access to English language learning through technology. Community-based programs, such as English clubs, can also create supportive environments for language practice. By addressing these challenges, Indonesia can strengthen its human resources to meet increasing global competition.

English language learning is no longer solely viewed as an academic skill but as a strategic investment in national development. English has become the lingua franca across various sectors, from international trade

and technology to diplomacy. By achieving proficiency in the language, individuals can access global information, collaborate across borders, and take advantage of economic opportunities in international markets. A study by the World Economic Forum, indicates a strong correlation between higher national levels of English proficiency and greater competitiveness in attracting foreign investment and increasing exports of technology-based products. (Klaus, 2019) In essence, English language learning is pivotal to building a highly-skilled workforce prepared to navigate global complexities.

This research will analyze, the research questions, as follows: How does English function as a catalyst for increasing global competitiveness? and How does English proficiency contribute to the attainment of sustainable development goals? Therefore, this study will undertake an in-depth examination of the role of English as a catalyst for progress, focusing on mapping its impact on global competitiveness and sustainable development.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing library research or literature review methodology, to analyze the role of English as a catalyst for progress, particularly in the context of global competitiveness and sustainable development. This approach was selected due to the study's objective to engage in an in-depth examination of existing theories, concepts, and prior research findings, and to construct a robust argument founded upon relevant scholarly sources (Hamzah, 2019). The literature review method is particularly well-suited for research focused on conceptual and theoretical analyses, as opposed to direct empirical data collection.

The library research methodology adopted in this study involves several key stages (George, 2019):

A. *Identification of Scholarly Sources*

The initial phase of this research involves the identification of various scholarly sources relevant to the research topic. These sources encompass: peer-reviewed journal articles, books, research reports, and policy documents.

B. *Selection and Evaluation of Scholarly Sources:*

Following the identification of various sources, the subsequent stage involves selecting and evaluating the most relevant and credible sources. Selection criteria include: relevance to the research topic, source credibility, currency (actuality), and overall quality.

C. *Content Analysis:*

The selected scholarly sources are then subjected to in-depth analysis to identify key themes, patterns of relationships, and arguments pertinent to the research topic. Content analysis is conducted through qualitative methods, including: theme identification, information synthesis, and interpretation and argumentation.

D. *Synthesis and Conclusion:*

The final stage of this research entails synthesizing the results of the content analysis and formulating conclusions that address the research questions. These conclusions are based on well-supported arguments and are substantiated by evidence derived from the analyzed scholarly sources. Furthermore, the conclusions also consider the implications of the research findings for policies and practices related to English language education, global competitiveness, and sustainable development.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the literature review, this study finds that English plays a significant role as a catalyst for progress, particularly in the domains of global competitiveness and sustainable development.

A. *English and Global Competitiveness*

English, in its capacity as a global lingua franca, has become a fundamental element influencing the competitiveness of individuals, organizations, and nations in the modern era. A thorough analysis of the role of English indicates that its mastery significantly contributes to enhanced competitiveness through three primary pathways: access to information, employment opportunities, and international collaborations. These three pathways are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, creating a positive feedback loop that drives growth and progress.

1) Access to Information:

One of the strongest arguments linking English to global competitiveness is its capacity to unlock access to a vast and diverse range of information. The majority of leading scientific, technological, and economic publications are published in English (Flowerdew, 2016). Access to these resources is essential for individuals and organizations seeking to remain relevant and competitive in a constantly evolving global environment. For example, cutting-edge research in science, technology, and medicine is often initially published in English, thus leaving individuals and institutions lacking English proficiency at a disadvantage in accessing the latest advancements. This is corroborated by studies that demonstrate that students and

researchers in non-English speaking countries often experience difficulties in accessing current scientific information due to limitations in their English language skills. Such delays in access to information can hinder innovation and knowledge development, consequently negatively affecting competitiveness. Conversely, individuals and organizations with strong English proficiency can readily access diverse information sources, enabling continuous learning, innovation, and self-development, thus enhancing their competitiveness.

2) **Employment Opportunities:**

Another argument supporting the role of English in enhancing global competitiveness is its contribution to increased employment opportunities, both in domestic and international markets. In an increasingly integrated global labor market, English language proficiency has become a crucial requirement for numerous positions, especially in multinational corporations and international organizations (Xi, 2011). These entities often seek candidates who possess not only technical skills but also the ability to communicate effectively in English.

Empirical data demonstrates that graduates with strong English language skills tend to have wider employment prospects and higher salaries (Kartini, 2006). Case studies across various countries further confirm that companies prefer to recruit individuals with good English proficiency, even for positions not directly related to international communication. This indicates that English proficiency is not simply an additional skill but has become a core competency impacting career prospects and economic well-being.

3) **International Collaboration:**

English also plays a vital role in facilitating international collaboration, a key element in enhancing global competitiveness. Collaboration among individuals, organizations, and nations from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds is essential for advancing innovation, sharing knowledge, and addressing global challenges (Widiyanto & Sulastri, 2015). English, as a lingua franca, acts as a bridge enabling effective interaction and cooperation. Indeed, many international research, development, and business projects involve cross-border collaborations, where English is the primary language of communication (Chintya Winda Natalia Butar Butar et al., 2024). Multinational corporations, international research institutions, and non-governmental organizations often use English as their official working language. The ability to communicate effectively in English enables individuals and organizations to participate in these collaborations, share ideas and experiences, and develop innovative solutions.

The preceding analysis indicates that English is a crucial catalyst for global competitiveness through access to information, employment opportunities, and international collaboration. The ability to access global information, secure better employment prospects, and participate in international collaborations represents a competitive advantage that can assist individuals, organizations, and nations in achieving success in this era of globalization. Therefore, investment in quality and equitable English language education is imperative for maximizing global competitiveness.

B. English and Sustainable Development

English, as a global language, not only plays a role in enhancing competitiveness but also serves as a crucial instrument in realizing sustainable development. This role is manifested through three primary pathways: knowledge transfer, innovation, and global communication. These three pathways are interconnected and reinforce efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth by the United Nations.

1) **Knowledge Transfer:**

One of the most significant contributions of English to sustainable development is its role in facilitating knowledge transfer. A plethora of research, reports, and publications pertaining to sustainable development are published in English (McKay, 2003). This includes knowledge regarding environmentally friendly technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, natural resource management models, as well as strategies for poverty alleviation and health improvement. The capacity to access and understand this information is particularly crucial for developing nations aiming to adopt best practices and accelerate sustainable development. Notably, countries with higher levels of English proficiency tend to more rapidly adopt sustainable technologies and practices. This is a consequence of their improved access to global information and knowledge. Conversely, limited English proficiency can hinder developing nations from accessing information necessary for sustainable development. Thus, English serves as a bridge connecting developed and developing nations in the collective effort to achieve sustainable development goals.

2) **Innovation:**

English also plays a significant role in fostering innovation that supports sustainable development. Innovations in the fields of green technology, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and waste management often emerge from collaborations among researchers, scientists, and practitioners from diverse countries. English, as a global language of communication, provides the medium for collaborative and innovative idea exchange. Furthermore, many startups and technology companies focused on sustainable

development utilize English as their primary working language. Indeed, many innovations with the potential to resolve environmental and social issues are disseminated through publications and international conferences using English as the primary language. The capacity to understand and communicate innovative ideas in English enables innovators from various nations to collaborate and expedite the development of sustainable solutions. Consequently, English is not only instrumental in knowledge transfer but also in triggering the creation of new innovations that support sustainable development.

3) Global Communication:

English facilitates effective global communication among diverse stakeholders involved in sustainable development. Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and civil society often work in concert to address global development challenges. English becomes a shared language enabling all parties to interact, coordinate, and exchange information efficiently. For example, in international climate negotiations, English serves as the primary working language, permitting delegates from different countries to engage in dialogue and reach agreements. Many international organizations and NGOs working in sustainable development employ English as their main language of communication. This eases collaborations among professionals from different nations on development projects, the sharing of experiences, and learning from best practices. Moreover, English facilitates the participation of civil society in discussions on sustainable development issues, promoting accountability of governments and corporations in their efforts towards the SDGs.

This analysis demonstrates that English is a crucial instrument in realizing sustainable development through knowledge transfer, innovation, and global communication. The ability to access global knowledge, stimulate innovation, and effectively communicate with various stakeholders provides a robust foundation for achieving sustainable development goals. Therefore, investment in quality and equitable English language education not only enhances competitiveness but also contributes significantly to the achievement of sustainable development. Nations and organizations worldwide must recognize the strategic role of English in the sustainable development agenda and undertake the necessary steps to utilize it optimally.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the role of English as a catalyst for advancement, with a specific focus on mapping its impact on global competitiveness and sustainable development. Through a comprehensive analysis, this research has revealed that English plays a crucial role in both of these aspects, thus serving as a catalyst for progress in the era of globalization. The analysis demonstrates that:

English functions as a catalyst for enhancing global competitiveness through three primary pathways: Firstly, Access to Information. English provides extensive access to global scientific, technological, and economic resources, the majority of which are published in English. The ability to access and understand this information enables individuals and organizations to continuously learn, innovate, and improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace. Secondly, Employment Opportunities. Proficiency in English significantly enhances employment prospects, both in domestic and international markets. Numerous multinational corporations and global organizations seek candidates with strong English language skills. This competency has become a core attribute affecting individual career prospects and economic well-being. Thirdly, International Collaboration. English facilitates collaboration between individuals, organizations, and nations from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This cross-border collaboration is essential for advancing innovation, sharing knowledge, and addressing global challenges, which in turn collectively enhances global competitiveness.

English contributes to the achievement of sustainable development goals through three principal avenues: Firstly, Knowledge Transfer. English facilitates the transfer of knowledge concerning sustainable practices, environmentally sound technologies, and effective development strategies from developed to developing nations. Access to this knowledge enables developing nations to adopt best practices and expedite their efforts towards achieving sustainable development goals. Secondly, Innovation. English plays a role in fostering innovation across various fields relevant to sustainable development, such as green technology, renewable energy, and waste management. English serves as a lingua franca, enabling collaboration amongst innovators from diverse nations, facilitating the exchange of ideas, and accelerating the development of sustainable solutions. Thirdly, Global Communication. English facilitates effective communication between various stakeholders involved in sustainable development efforts, including governments, international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and civil society. This effective communication is paramount for coordination, negotiation, and the implementation of sustainable development projects.

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