



The Role of English in Preparing Students to Face Global Challenges

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2023-09-17 Revised: 2023-10-23 Published: 2023-11-07	Globalization has had a significant impact on various sectors of life, including education. English has become the dominant international language in cross-cultural communication and global business transactions. This research aims to investigate the role of English in preparing students to face global challenges. This study involves an in-depth analysis of how English language proficiency can help students overcome global challenges, including cross-cultural communication, access to global resources, and preparation for the global job market. Through a qualitative approach, data is collected through interviews and surveys of students who have been involved in educational programs with an international focus. The results of this research provide insight into the importance of mastering English in facing global challenges, as well as the challenges faced by students in developing their language skills. The conclusions of this research emphasize the need for better integration between English language learning and educational curricula to better prepare students to face global challenges.
Keywords: <i>Language;</i> <i>Students;</i> <i>Global Challenges.</i>	
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2023-09-17 Direvisi: 2023-10-23 Dipublikasi: 2023-11-07	Globalisasi telah membawa dampak signifikan pada berbagai sektor kehidupan, termasuk pendidikan. Bahasa Inggris telah menjadi bahasa internasional yang dominan dalam komunikasi lintas budaya dan transaksi bisnis global. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi peran Bahasa Inggris dalam mempersiapkan mahasiswa menghadapi tantangan global. Studi ini melibatkan analisis mendalam tentang bagaimana kemahiran berbahasa Inggris dapat membantu mahasiswa mengatasi tantangan global, termasuk komunikasi lintas budaya, akses terhadap sumber daya global, dan persiapan untuk pasar kerja global. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan survei terhadap mahasiswa yang telah terlibat dalam program pendidikan dengan fokus internasional. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang pentingnya penguasaan bahasa Inggris dalam menghadapi tantangan global, serta tantangan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa dalam mengembangkan kemampuan bahasa mereka. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menekankan perlunya integrasi yang lebih baik antara pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dan kurikulum pendidikan guna mempersiapkan mahasiswa dengan lebih baik dalam menghadapi tantangan global.
Kata kunci: <i>English;</i> <i>Student;</i> <i>Global Challenges.</i>	

I. INTRODUCTION

This research aims to explore the role of English in the preparation of students at the Bina Mandiri College of Economics and Business (STEBIS), a higher education institution in Indonesia, in facing global challenges. Specifically, this research reviews how the use of English in an educational environment can influence students' readiness to face various global challenges, from international communication to job opportunities in a competitive global market. This research has several main objectives. First, it aims to identify and analyze the role of English in the preparation of STEBIS Bina Mandiri students in facing global challenges. Second, this research aims to identify potential developments in the curriculum or teaching

methods that can strengthen the role of English in the context of higher education at STEBIS Bina Mandiri. Third, this research also aims to provide a better view of how students integrate English in their understanding of the global world.

In the era of rapidly developing globalization, English has occupied a central role as the most important language of international communication (Indriani, 2022). This language is not only a means of communication, but also a window that opens access to a wider world. Understanding and mastering English is no longer just an additional skill (Dewi & Widyaningrum, 2018), they have become an essential need for individuals who want to compete, work, and contribute in an increasingly connected and diverse global environment. Therefore, the role

of English in higher education is something that cannot be denied and must receive serious attention from educational institutions.

Indonesia, as one of the countries with the largest population in the world, has unique challenges and opportunities in facing globalization (Suwardana, 2018). In the midst of dynamic changes in the global market, Indonesian students are expected to become part of a workforce that is competent and able to compete at the international level. Their preparation in mastering English has become very important. English is not just seen as an additional skill; it is the key to access to participate in international trade, scientific research, student exchanges, as well as to understand and appreciate global cultural diversity. One important concept to understand is that mastering English is not just about speaking and writing in the language (Alfarisy, 2021). It's also about the ability to understand and communicate with a variety of different cultures. These abilities include understanding foreign cultures, different ways of thinking, and diverse values. Mastery of English is not just about the language itself, but also about opening the door to a deeper understanding of the world we live in.

In the context of higher education in Indonesia, student preparation in facing global challenges is not only related to language skills, but also a deeper understanding of global dynamics, openness to new ideas and perspectives, and the ability to adapt to a complex global work environment. English is one tool that can help achieve this goal. Globalization has changed the landscape of higher education around the world. This phenomenon is characterized by the rapid growth of information and communication technology, increasing international trade, and global economic integration. All this has created an environment where collaboration between countries, international mobility and global competition have become highly relevant. Higher education, therefore, must adapt to these developments to best prepare its students.

English, as a global language, has become the most frequently used communication tool in this context. Almost all aspects of global life, including business, technology, science and politics, use English as a medium of communication. In higher education settings, English has become the primary language in scientific research publications, international conferences, and student exchanges. Therefore, it cannot be denied that mastery of English is one of the most desired

competencies in the world of higher education today.

The significance of this research is very important in several aspects. First, it provides insight to higher education institutions, especially STEBIS Bina Mandiri, on how they can more effectively prepare their students to face global challenges. Second, it can help in the development of more relevant curricula and more efficient learning strategies. Third, this research can help students, especially those who want to achieve success in a global context.

II. METHOD

The methodology in this research is based on the research objective to investigate the role of English in preparing students to face global challenges. In an effort to achieve this goal, the approach used is descriptive qualitative (John, 2013) with an in-depth analytical approach (Fadli, 2021). A qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on an in-depth understanding of students' experiences and perceptions regarding the role of English in facing global challenges. This approach allows researchers to approach research topics in a more contextual and in-depth way, allowing for deeper insights. The selection of research participants is an important step in this methodology, namely 102 participants. Participants were carefully selected based on educational background, level of English language proficiency, and experience in cross-cultural communication situations. Demographic criteria such as age, gender, and cultural background were used to select representative participants. This is done to ensure that participants have relevance to the research topic and can provide valuable insights.

Two main methods are used to collect data, namely interviews and surveys. Interviews are designed with open-ended and in-depth questions, allowing students to share their experiences, views and reflections regarding their mastery of English and the global challenges they face. Meanwhile, surveys are used as a support, allowing researchers to gain broader views from students. The survey covered various aspects, including the use of English in cross-cultural communication, the benefits of global access gained through English, and students' perceptions of the importance of English language proficiency in preparing to face global challenges. The data analysis process begins with interview transcription, which helps convert verbal recordings into written text that can be analyzed further. Data from interviews

and surveys were then coded and analyzed using thematic content analysis. Key expected findings include the role of English in students' understanding of global challenges, the benefits of global access through English, and the impact of English on the development of global employability skills. This data analysis aims to dig deep and in-depth insights regarding the research topic.

In addition, this research also pays attention to ethical considerations. Participants in this research were involved voluntarily, and their identities were protected by maintaining confidentiality and using pseudonyms in research reports. Participants' personal data is treated confidentially and is only used for research purposes.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the results conducted as part of this research, several key findings have been identified. Interviews were conducted with a number of students involved in educational programs with an international component at STEBIS Bina Mandiri, with a focus on the role of English in preparing them to face global challenges. These findings provide in-depth insight into the impact and importance of mastering English in the context of higher education at STEBIS Bina Mandiri, as well as the challenges that need to be overcome.

Table 1. Research Results

No.	Key Findings	Previous results
1	Confidence in Cross-Cultural Communication: Students who have good English language skills tend to be more confident in cross-cultural communication. The ability to speak, write and interact in English helps overcome cross-cultural communication barriers. They are able to adapt to different cultural norms and build effective intercultural relationships.	Students who do not have self-confidence have more difficulty communicating both in speaking, writing and interacting in English.
2	Access to Global Resources: English gives students broader access to global resources such as academic literature, the latest research, and international educational opportunities. This allows students to keep up with the latest developments in their disciplines and participate in student exchange programs or international research collaborations.	Students who do not know academic sources as references in developing knowledge find it more difficult to compete with others.
3	Challenges to Language Proficiency Standards and	Students' English language skills are still

Speaking Limitations: There are challenges in the form of variations in English language proficiency standards among students. Another challenge is the ability to speak English, which can be a barrier, especially for students who have difficulty expressing ideas verbally.	lacking in terms of grammar, vocabulary selection, sentence structure and good intonation.
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Data processed in 2023

Thus, this research reveals several findings that highlight the impact of English language mastery on students in facing global challenges:

1. Confidence in Communicating Cross-Culturally

Table 2. Interview Results

No.	Student Interview Results
1	Students with good English proficiency tend to be more confident in cross-cultural communication.
2	The ability to speak, write and interact in English helps overcome cross-cultural communication barriers.
3	Students who are proficient in English can avoid confusion and misunderstandings due to language and cultural differences.
4	Students with good English proficiency can articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and precisely.
5	English proficiency allows students to adapt to diverse cultural norms and communication styles.
6	Students who are proficient in English can understand language nuances, expressions and hidden meanings in cross-cultural communication.
7	This ability allows them to communicate effectively, avoid inadvertent mistakes, and build strong, respectful intercultural relationships.
8	English language skills create a solid foundation for building effective relationships with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.
9	This increases students' ability to face global challenges that involve cross-cultural interactions.

In the process of this research, based on table 2 above, it was found that students' success in communicating across cultures was significantly related to their level of mastery of English. Students who have good English proficiency tend to show a higher level of self-confidence in cross-cultural communication situations. This is due to their ability to speak, write and interact fluently in English. The ability to communicate in English helps overcome communication barriers that often arise in cross-cultural contexts. Students with

good English proficiency are able to avoid confusion or misunderstandings that can occur due to differences in language and cultural expressions. They can articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and precisely, allowing the messages they convey to be well understood by others who come from different cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, students who are proficient in English have a greater ability to adapt to diverse cultural norms and communication styles. They are able to understand language nuances, expressions, and hidden meanings in cross-cultural communication. This allows them to communicate effectively, avoid unintentional mistakes, and build stronger, more respectful intercultural relationships. In other words, good English language skills provide students with powerful tools to transcend language and cultural barriers in communication. This creates a more solid foundation for building effective relationships with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, thereby enhancing their ability to face global challenges involving cross-cultural interactions.

Table 3. Impact of Mastery of English on Students in Cross-Cultural Communication

Aspect	Findings from Interviews with Students
Mastery of English	Students with good English proficiency tend to be more confident in communicating across cultures.
Smooth Communication	The ability to speak, write and interact fluently in English helps overcome cross-cultural communication barriers.
Adaptation to Culture	Students who are proficient in English are able to adapt more easily to different cultural norms and communication styles.
Intercultural Relations	English proficiency helps build more effective and meaningful intercultural relationships.

2. Access to Global Resources

In the context of the research, it was found that English language proficiency has a crucial role in providing students with wider access to various global resources (Roinah, 2022). Next up, Shanahan (2008) revealed that students who have the ability to read and understand academic literature in English can take advantage of the latest information and international thinking that is relevant to their field of study. Students who can access and understand journals, papers and academic resources in English have an advantage in keeping up with the latest developments in their discipline (Healey, 2005). Academic literature is often published in English, so mastery of this language allows them to explore the latest research and ideas that can provide deep insight and global context.

Furthermore, English language proficiency opens up opportunities to study abroad for students (Idayani et al., 2022). They can participate in student exchange programs, international internships, or cross-border research collaborations. This gives them a unique opportunity to broaden their horizons, interact with diverse cultures, and build an international network of contacts. This experience not only enriches students' academic and professional perspectives, but also helps them approach global challenges with a broader perspective. Therefore, in an increasingly connected global context, English language proficiency not only facilitates access to global information, but also expands educational opportunities and international collaboration for students. This helps them prepare more effectively to face challenges stemming from a diverse and dynamic global environment.

3. Challenges of Language Proficiency Standards and Speaking Limitations

This research identified that while there are significant benefits from mastering English, there are also a number of challenges that need to be overcome. One of the challenges identified was the variation in English language proficiency standards among students. Although some students may have high English proficiency, there are also those who have lower proficiency. This mismatch in proficiency levels can affect students' level of confidence and participation in global communication situations. Students with

lower levels of language proficiency may feel awkward or unsure in communicating with students from different cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, although most students may have good reading and writing skills in English, other challenges arise in the development of speaking skills. The ability to speak fluently and with clarity in English can be a barrier in face-to-face communication situations. Students may have difficulty expressing ideas verbally, have difficulty expressing themselves well, or feel less confident when speaking English. These challenges demonstrate the need for a holistic approach to teaching English that involves developing all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Additionally, approaches that are sensitive to varying levels of proficiency among students can help overcome inequalities and increase their participation and confidence in facing global challenges involving cross-cultural communication.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that mastery of English plays a crucial role in preparing students to face global challenges. Despite the advantages of cross-cultural communication and access to global resources, challenges such as differences in proficiency standards and barriers in speaking ability must still be overcome to maximize the benefits of mastering English in the context of diverse global challenges.

Table 4. Challenges in Mastering English in a Global Context

Challenge	Description
Variations in Proficiency Standards	There are variations in standards of English proficiency among students, affecting their level of confidence and participation in global contexts.
Limitations in Speaking Ability	Although reading and writing skills may be good, students may face difficulties in developing speaking skills in English, which becomes a barrier to direct communication.

4. Discussion

The discussion in this research highlights several key findings that have been identified in the relationship between English language mastery and students' preparation to face global challenges. This discussion will detail the impact of mastering English on students, overcoming existing challenges, as well as the implications of the results of this research in the context of higher education at STEBIS Bina Mandiri.

1. The Impact of English Mastery on Students

Mastery of English plays a crucial role in preparing students to face global challenges. The research results show that students who have good English language skills tend to be more confident in communicating across cultures. The ability to speak, write and interact in English helps them overcome cross-cultural communication barriers. This allows them to adapt to different cultural norms and build effective intercultural relationships. This positive impact creates a strong foundation for students to face global challenges, which often involve interactions with individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

In addition, English proficiency also gives students broader access to global resources, such as academic literature, the latest research, and international educational opportunities. Academic literature is often published in English, so mastery of this language allows them to keep up with the latest developments in their discipline. Access to global resources is also through student exchange programs, international internships and cross-border research collaborations, which broaden students' horizons and experiences.

2. Overcoming the Challenges of Language Proficiency Standards and Speaking Limitations

However, this research also identified a number of challenges that need to be addressed. One challenge is the variation in English language proficiency standards among students. This mismatch in proficiency levels can affect students' level of confidence and participation in global communication situations. This emphasizes the need for an approach that is sensitive to varying levels of proficiency among students. In the context of higher education, programs that can identify and support students with different levels of proficiency in English would be a valuable step.

Another challenge is the ability to speak English. Although reading and writing skills may be good, the ability to speak fluently and with clarity in English can be a barrier in face-to-face communication situations. These challenges underscore the need for holistic teaching in English that includes

listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. With a comprehensive approach, students can develop English language skills in a more balanced manner.

3. Implications in the Higher Education Context at STEBIS Bina Mandiri

The results of this research have important implications in the context of higher education at STEBIS Bina Mandiri. First, this research supports the importance of investing in the development of English language skills in high school settings. In an increasingly connected world, students need to have access to international education and global academic literature. This requires an effective and targeted English language teaching program. Second, colleges can design educational programs that are more inclusive and responsive to varying levels of English proficiency among students. By understanding and accommodating individual needs, colleges can help students overcome challenges in their English language skills. Finally, a holistic educational approach that covers all aspects of English language proficiency can be implemented to maximize the benefits of English language acquisition. This will help students better prepare themselves to face global challenges that involve cross-cultural interactions.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This research has revealed the crucial role played by English in preparing students to face global challenges at STEBIS Bina Mandiri. The main findings revealed in this research can be summarized as follows: First, students who have good English language proficiency tend to be more confident in communicating across cultures. The ability to speak, write and interact in English helps overcome cross-cultural communication barriers. They are able to adapt to different cultural norms and build effective intercultural relationships.

Furthermore, mastery of English gives students wider access to various global resources. The ability to read and understand academic literature in English enables students to keep up with the latest developments in their discipline. Additionally, international educational and collaboration opportunities are open to those who are

fluent in English. However, there are challenges in the form of variations in English language proficiency standards among students, and another challenge is the ability to speak English, which can be a barrier, especially for students who have difficulty expressing ideas verbally.

In facing increasingly complex and connected global challenges, mastery of English is not just a language skill, but also a powerful tool for building effective relationships with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. This ability helps students to communicate across cultures, access global resources, and broaden their horizons. However, challenges related to variations in language proficiency standards and limitations in speaking English must be addressed. A holistic approach to English language teaching and sensitivity to varying levels of proficiency among students is necessary to maximize the benefits of English language acquisition.

Thus, this research underlines the importance of investing in developing English language skills in higher education environments, especially at STEBIS Bina Mandiri, in order to prepare students to become individuals who are ready to face global challenges originating from various cultures and perspectives.

B. Suggestion

Based on the results of this research, there are several suggestions that can help STEBIS Bina Mandiri prepare students to face global challenges through more effective English language teaching. First, it is necessary to develop English speaking skills, remembering that speaking skills are still a challenge for some students. This can be achieved by improving the English language teaching curriculum, adopting interactive methods, and providing speaking practice in real-world situations. In addition, a holistic approach in teaching English that includes listening, speaking, reading and writing is necessary. Proficiency alignment programs can also help address variations in English proficiency standards among students. Supporting resources, such as language centers or additional courses, should also be provided for students who wish to improve their English proficiency. International cooperation with English-language educational institutions and regular evaluation of English-teaching

programs are also important steps. Sensitivity to students' varying proficiencies and psychological support for those who feel less confident in speaking English should also not be overlooked. Finally, it is important to build awareness of the importance of English through relevant campaigns or seminars, so that students are encouraged to improve their English language skills in facing global challenges. With the implementation of these suggestions.

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