

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN CAREER READINESS FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

[PERAN BAHASA INGGRIS DALAM KESIAPAN KARIR GURU MASA DEPAN]

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Abstract

As the world becomes more connected, being proficient in English is crucial for teachers' career readiness and professional growth. For future teachers, having strong English skills can open numerous opportunities. This study explores the role of English language proficiency in preparing future teachers for their careers. The researchers used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews with students who are preparing themselves to become teachers. The findings highlight that English is the global language of communication and learning. Teachers who are fluent in English can better access educational resources, collaborate with colleagues worldwide, and foster intercultural understanding in their classrooms. Mastering the four basics of English skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking is the key to equipping future teachers with the competencies they need to succeed. By improving their English skills, future educators can thrive in an increasingly globalized world.

Key words: English as a Foreign Language (EFL); future teachers; English language teachers; career preparation

Abstrak

Seiring dengan semakin terhubungnya dunia, menguasai bahasa Inggris sangat penting bagi kesiapan karier dan pertumbuhan profesional guru. Bagi calon guru, memiliki keterampilan bahasa Inggris yang baik dapat membuka banyak peluang. Studi ini mengeksplorasi peran kemahiran bahasa Inggris dalam mempersiapkan calon guru untuk karier mereka. Para peneliti menggunakan campuran metode kualitatif dan kuantitatif, termasuk wawancara dengan siswa yang belajar untuk menjadi guru. Temuan tersebut menyoroti bahwa bahasa Inggris adalah bahasa komunikasi dan pembelajaran global. Guru yang fasih berbahasa Inggris dapat mengakses sumber daya pendidikan dengan lebih baik, berkolaborasi dengan rekan kerja di seluruh dunia, dan menumbuhkan pemahaman antarbudaya di kelas mereka. Menguasai empat keterampilan dasar bahasa Inggris - membaca, menulis, mendengarkan, dan berbicara adalah kunci untuk membekali calon guru dengan kompetensi yang mereka butuhkan untuk berhasil. Dengan meningkatkan keterampilan bahasa Inggris mereka, calon pendidik dapat berkembang pesat di dunia yang semakin mengglobal.

Kata kunci: Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing; calon guru; guru bahasa Inggris; persiapan karir

Introduction

English is the main language used worldwide for communication and learning. For teachers, being good at English is important for their professional growth and success, especially in places where students speak different languages. With the increasing importance of English as a language of global communication, teachers of English, particularly, are compelled to demonstrate their English proficiency (Lie et al., 2019). It is crucial for future teachers to understand what English skills are needed

in different types of schools and educational settings. This helps them prepare better for their teaching careers.

English is an important language for career readiness especially nowadays. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, proficiency in English is becoming an essential requirement in many work fields, including the teaching profession. For future teachers, the ability to effectively communicate in English can have a significant impact on their career readiness and overall professional development. English is essential to learn for seeking jobs or building career. In today's technology driven world, it is impossible to achieve academic or professional career without acquiring proficiency in English (Dildora & Qizi, 2024)

Beyond the classroom, English language proficiency can also open doors for future teachers in terms of professional development and career advancement opportunities. English enable teachers to access and share resources, collaborate with colleagues from around the world, and foster intercultural understanding among their students. When it comes to printed, audio-visual, or electronic media and materials, English is the most essential language to use for information acquisition. Therefore, English played an important role for career readiness for many work opportunities, especially for teachers.

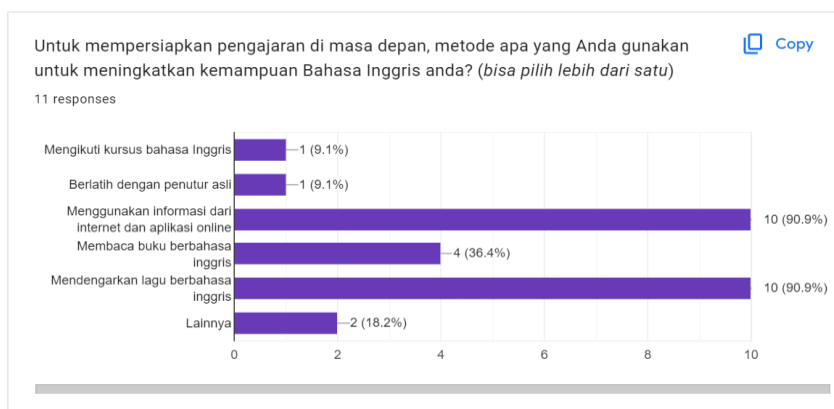
A continuous process is necessary to become a good teacher. Students are not empty vessels when they enroll in basic teacher education programs. This means that becoming a good teacher takes time and involves continuous learning and development. Students come with different levels of English proficiency depending on their backgrounds and previous experiences. In different educational contexts, the English language requirements and expectations can vary widely. For example, in some schools, teachers might only need a basic level of English, while in others, they may need to be highly proficient to teach all subjects in existing skills of their students and help them develop the specific English language skills needed for educational contexts they will work in. This approach ensures that all future teachers can meet the language requirements and expectations of their careers, regardless of where they start.

Research Methods

A mixed method approach was employed in the study which is a qualitative research method. In this research the participants who participated were the students who were preparing themselves to become future teachers and there were 11 students from English Language Teaching (ELT) study program who were involved. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data for this study. The study aims to explore the role of English to prepare them to become future teachers and the struggles they faced while improving their English skills.

Results and Discussions

Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews of the students from the Faculty of Education, Teachers College. From the questionnaire results, it was revealed that the 11 students who participated in the research stated that they used several methods in improving their English skills. Sample screenshots of the google form given to ELT students were shown in Picture 1 below.



Picture 1. The methods that the students regularly use

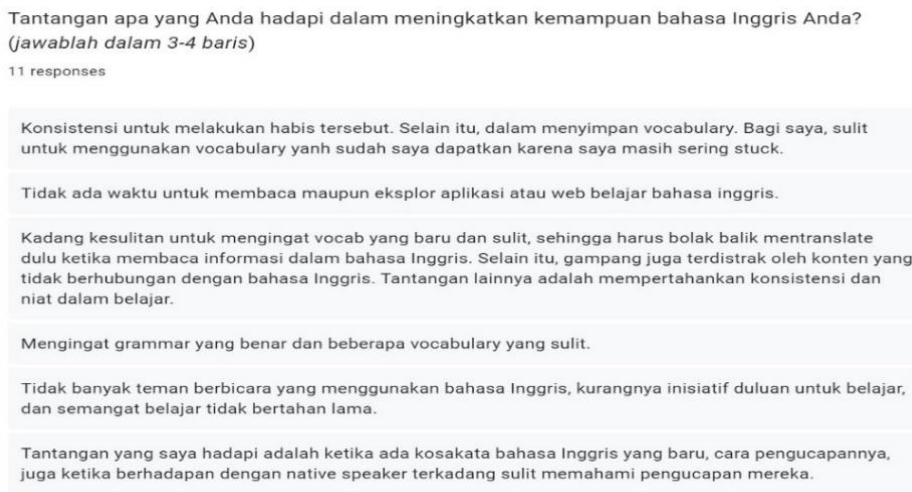
Based on the data in Picture 1, it was found that using information from the internet and online applications as well as listening to songs in English showed higher percentage compared to other methods used.



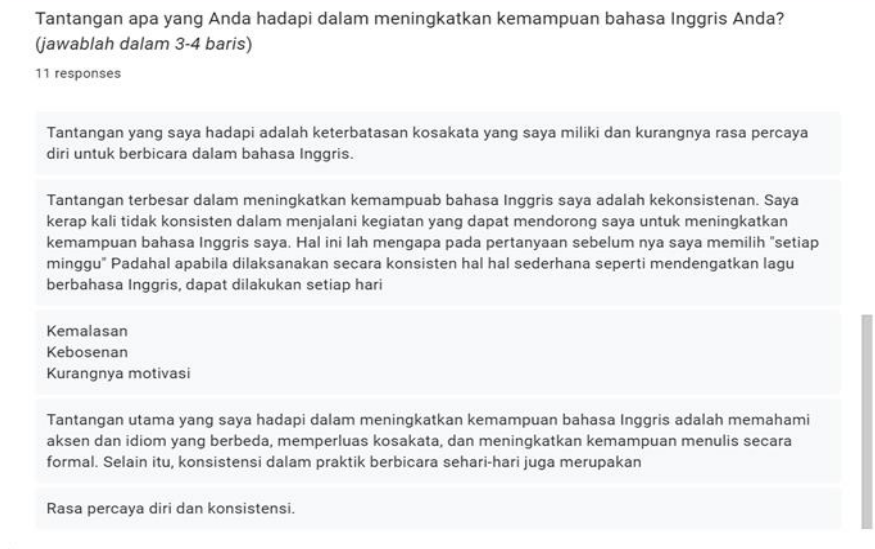
Picture 2. How often the students used these methods

Referring to Picture 2, it was found 54,5 % of ELT students who used internet and applications to search for the information they needed several times in a week and there were 45,5% of them who used those methods every day.

From all the methods and how often they used them, there were struggles that they faced in doing those methods to improve their English skills. Sample screenshots of google form given to the English Language Teaching students are shown in Picture 3 and 4.

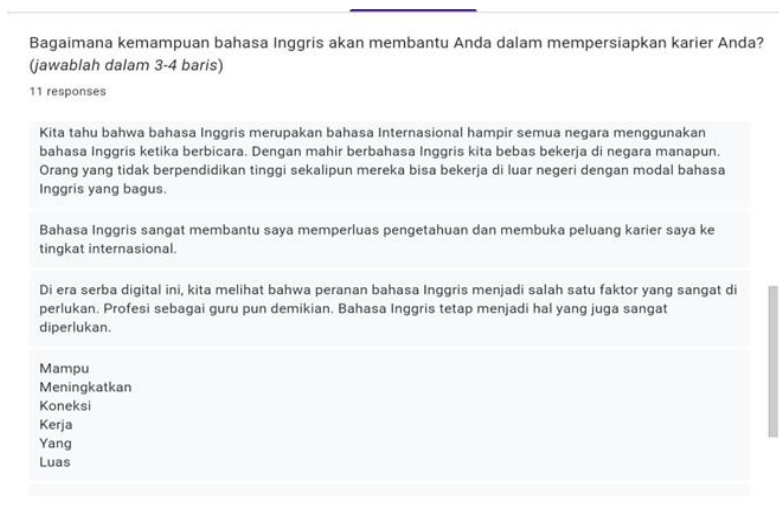


Picture 3. Students' struggles while improving their English skills



Picture 4. Students' other struggles while improving their English skills

Referring to Picture 3 & 4, it could be concluded that the biggest struggle that the students faced in developing their English skills was the unfamiliar vocabularies that made them hard to remember or memorize them, how to pronounce them correctly, and the lack of consistency to practice pronouncing them. The last question of how English would prepare their career as a future teacher will be seen in Picture 5.



Bagaimana kemampuan bahasa Inggris akan membantu Anda dalam mempersiapkan karier Anda?
(jawablah dalam 3-4 baris)

11 responses

Di era serba digital ini, kita melihat bahwa peranan bahasa Inggris menjadi salah satu faktor yang sangat di perlukan. Profesi sebagai guru pun demikian. Bahasa Inggris tetap menjadi hal yang juga sangat diperlukan.

Mampu
Meningkatkan
Koneksi
Kerja
Yang
Luas

Kemampuan bahasa Inggris akan membantu saya dalam mempersiapkan karier sebagai guru bahasa Inggris dengan memungkinkan saya mengajarkan materi dengan akurasi dan kepercayaan diri yang lebih tinggi. Selain itu, saya dapat mengakses sumber daya pengajaran internasional, berpartisipasi dalam pelatihan profesional global, dan membangun koneksi dengan guru lain dari berbagai negara.

Bahasa Inggris membawa peluang yang lebih besar untuk persiapan karir di masa depan di tengah kemajuan zaman.

Picture 5. Students' Responses on how English would Prepare their Teaching Career

Motivation is thought to be a reliable indicator of success when learning a second language. Motivation is defined as the combination of effort and ambition to accomplish the objective of learning the language, as well as positive perspectives towards language acquisition (Getie, 2020) Thus, the motivated teacher candidates will try hard to overcome their struggles and have a strong desire to keep on learning English. Their positive attitude towards learning English will help them achieve better language skills. This is important because good English language skills will improve their readiness for a career as a teacher in the future.

Meanwhile, from the interviews, the students were asked about the role of English in their teaching career in the future, they realized that English is an international language, and their students might be more fluent than they are. They also thought that being proficient in English would be an advantage to interact with other people within a wider community.

"I need to improve my English skills because as a future student, our students might already be able to speak English, and it would not be good if the teacher cannot speak English. And for now, English has also become an international language and is a basic skill that everyone should be able to do"

"When pursuing a career, it is not possible to only interact with local people, so English proficiency is very important"

"I have thought about it, because English is widely used, and wherever you go, you need to be able to speak English"

"Yes, because for a teacher it is important, as we don't know where we will be placed, and we may end up teaching subjects other than what we studied".

English has become increasingly important in a variety of fields, including education and English language proficiency is becoming more recognized as a fundamentals for educators to succeed in the increasingly international classroom (Chakraborty, 2024). This is truly relevant for the teaching profession, where English proficiency is now seen as essential.

Several studies have highlighted about the importance of English language proficiency, especially for teachers. Since English is the universal language, it has taken over as the primary means of communication in many different professional fields. The role of English as a lingua franca has significant implications for future teachers as teachers are expected to interact and participate in the global education community (Ngatu & Basikin, 2019). This global engagement does not only expand the teachers' professional networks but also exposes them to innovative pedagogical approaches and the latest developments in the field of education. Furthermore, proficiency in English grants teachers to access of educational resources and information. By staying informed of the latest theories, and best practices in education, Teachers who are prominent in English can continuously enhance their knowledge and skills, making them more valuable in the communities

In addition to the importance of English, especially in terms of education itself, there are factors that affect a person's ability to speak English. According to Cheng (2019) with the integration of world economy, English, as an international language, is wielding an increasingly considerable influence upon global communication. This

means that with the integration of the world economy, English as an international language has a greater influence on global communication. This shows that as the world becomes more economically connected, the role of English becomes more important in communicating in various fields. In an increasingly connected world, teachers who are fluent in English will have an advantage in communicating with various parties around the world. They will also be better prepared for global challenges and be able to access more resources and information available in English. This is important to equip them with the skills needed to succeed in their future career.

The next question that they were given was about what methods that they used and how they helped them to develop their English skills.

"Watching movies, by putting Indonesian subtitles and then English subtitles, so in addition to listening, I also read".

"I usually listen to songs and use the Duolingo app, but it's not very effective, and I think it's more effective if I practice speaking directly".

"I usually use the method of watching movies and using English learning apps, but I don't feel it's very effective for me. I find it more effective to practice speaking English directly".

"Watching YouTube and listening to podcasts".

"When I took the Fundamental of English class on the first semester, I practiced the learning methods in my daily life, such as using Duolingo, even if just to fill my spare time, but also to learn English. And it is useless to study if you do not apply it, so I try to speak or communicate with ITC students, even though I am not very fluent yet".

Additionally, the respondents were asked about the challenges they faced in developing their English skills. Most of them said that they are afraid of making mistakes and being judged by people around them, there were also other students saying that lack of vocabulary was the reason why they were lacking confidence to speak English.

Lastly, the respondents provided insightful perspectives when being asked about how English proficiency can prepare them for their careers.

"English can help in a career because many countries use English as their main language, which can open up great career opportunities for us".

"English skills can help us unlock new and promising opportunities, and it can also help us build connections with people from outside [our country]".

"English is now very much in demand. Nowadays, even when applying for a job, the CV used is in English. Also, if we want to expand our network, English is necessary".

"Personally, English is useful because we don't know where we will be placed, and we won't always teach what we have learned so far. The school might use English in daily conversations, and the world is becoming more advanced, so we do not know what the future will be like".

"English can change lives. With English proficiency, we can be faced with many career opportunities, especially in this day and time when many people's dreams are hindered because they cannot speak English, for example, those who want to continue their studies or pursue a career abroad but cannot speak English".

Based on the interviews, the students unanimously acknowledged the critical importance of developing strong English skills, recognizing it as a fundamental competency for teachers in the modern, globalized world. The students also recognized that strong English skills could enhance their career prospects and readiness. They agreed that English proficiency can open numerous opportunities both domestically and internationally.

Collectively, research on learning English implies that many different things could influence language acquisition. Overall, research related to English language learning shows that there are several factors that can affect the language learning process (Chou, 2007). This shows that not just one thing is important, but many things play a role in one's success in learning English. For instance, the motivation and attitudes of a student regarding language acquisition can influence the learning strategies they select and ultimately impact their level of language proficiency. This means that teachers' motivation and beliefs about the importance of English can influence how they learn the language. If they have strong motivation and believe that mastering

English is important for their career, they will choose effective learning strategies and are more likely to achieve high English proficiency. This will improve their readiness for a future career as a teacher.

Conclusions

In English learning process, it is essential for English learners to understand why they are learning English, there are also variety of different methods to improve their English skills. Most used methods were learning English from internet resources, online applications, and listening to English songs, with a significant number also watching English movies. These activities are primarily done weekly rather than daily. Challenges identified including lack of vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and inconsistent practice. Despite these challenges, students acknowledge the importance of English for their future careers, believing that strong English skills enhance their career prospects and readiness. Motivation and positive attitudes towards English learning are crucial factors influencing their language acquisition success. Proficiency in English does not only prepare future teachers for local and international opportunities but also equips them with the necessary skills to effectively communicate, teach, and continually develop their professional careers.

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