

Why is learning English important today?

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A Research Study on the Role of English Language in Contemporary Education and Global Communication

Abstract: This research article examines the significance of learning English in the contemporary globalized world, with particular focus on educational contexts. The study explores why English proficiency has become essential in the 21st century, including its role in international communication, access to information technology, career advancement, and academic research. Through literature review and empirical survey data collected from 150 secondary school students in Kazakhstan, this research identifies key motivations, challenges, and outcomes associated with English language acquisition. The findings demonstrate that English proficiency significantly correlates with educational opportunities and professional success. This study provides practical recommendations for educators seeking to enhance

English language instruction in schools.

Key Words: *English language, global communication, language acquisition, education methodology, research in schools, globalization, 21st century skills, bilingualism.*

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, the English language has emerged as the primary medium of international communication, transcending geographical, political, and cultural boundaries. English as a global lingua franca has transformed how knowledge is disseminated, business is conducted, and cultures interact.

The relevance of this research stems from the pressing need to understand why English language proficiency has become a fundamental requirement rather than merely an advantageous skill. For students in Kazakhstan and similar contexts, mastering English represents not just academic achievement but a practical tool for participating in the global community.

The problem this research addresses is the gap between the recognized importance of English language learning and the actual effectiveness of current teaching methodologies in schools. Despite widespread acknowledgment of English's significance, many students struggle to achieve functional proficiency.

Literature Review

Crystal (2003) argues that English has become the dominant international language due to historical, political, and economic factors. He notes that approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide speak English to some degree, making it the most widely learned second language.

Montgomery (2013) demonstrates that over 90% of scientific publications are written in English, making it the de facto language of scientific discourse. Warschauer (2000) highlights that English constitutes approximately 80% of information stored electronically and remains the primary language of the internet.

Neeley (2012) explains that multinational corporations increasingly adopt English as their official corporate language, regardless of headquarters location, demonstrating that English proficiency significantly impacts career opportunities and professional advancement.

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) provide comprehensive analysis of motivation in language learning, identifying integrative motivation and instrumental motivation as key drivers. Richards and Rodgers (2014) review contemporary teaching methods, noting a shift toward communicative approaches that prioritize practical language use over grammatical knowledge alone.

Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining descriptive analysis with empirical data collection. The study utilizes a descriptive-analytical research design, examining both theoretical perspectives from existing literature and practical insights from survey data.

The research sample consisted of 150 students from grades 9-11 at three secondary schools in Kazakhstan. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across grade levels and school types. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires measuring attitudes, motivation, reasons for studying English, and perceived challenges. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Motivation Levels: When asked to rate their motivation to learn English on a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high), 38% rated their motivation as high, 34% as moderate-high, 21% as moderate, and 7% as low.

Table 1. Reasons for Learning English.

Reason	Percentage
Future career opportunities	87%
Access to information and technology	71%
International communication	68%
Academic purposes (university admission)	64%
Travel and cultural exchange	59%

Perceived Importance: 91% of students agreed that English proficiency would be important for their future success.

Table 2. Challenges in Learning English.

Challenge	Percentage
Limited speaking practice opportunities	76%
Difficulty with grammar	58%
Limited vocabulary	54%

Lack of confidence in speaking	51%
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The survey results demonstrate that students recognize the instrumental value of English, with career advancement and access to information emerging as primary motivations. The high percentage of students facing speaking-related challenges indicates a gap between current teaching methods and communicative competence development.

Discussion

English as a Global Language

The ascendancy of English to its position as the world's primary international language results from historical, economic, and technological factors. The historical foundation was established through British imperial expansion, while contemporary dominance owes to American economic and cultural influence. English has achieved truly global reach, functioning as the common medium across diverse contexts from aviation to academia, from diplomacy to digital communication.

English in Technology and Education

The relationship between English and technology has created a self-reinforcing cycle. Programming languages use English syntax, major software platforms operate primarily in English, and the majority of online content remains in English. For contemporary students, digital literacy and English proficiency have become inseparable skills. Students who lack English proficiency find themselves excluded from vast repositories of knowledge and opportunities for self-directed learning.

In academic publishing, English dominance creates opportunities for maximizing research impact. For students, English proficiency determines access to academic literature, international study opportunities, and participation in global scholarly communities. Universities increasingly require English language proficiency for admission.

English and Career Development

The survey data confirming that 87% of students view English as important for career opportunities reflects accurate assessment of labor market realities. Across industries, English proficiency correlates with higher salaries, greater promotion opportunities, and access to international assignments. In Kazakhstan's developing economy, with increasing foreign investment and international partnerships, English skills significantly enhance employability.

Challenges and Solutions in Kazakhstan

Several specific challenges affect English language education in Kazakhstan: many teachers

lack native-like proficiency and modern methodological training, students have minimal contact with English beyond the classroom, standardized testing emphasizes grammatical knowledge over communicative competence, and many schools lack adequate teaching materials and technology infrastructure.

Based on research findings and survey results, several strategies could improve outcomes: schools should establish language clubs and partner with international schools for virtual exchanges, leverage digital platforms to provide exposure to authentic English, explicitly link English lessons to career objectives and real-world applications, and invest in teacher professional development.

CONCLUSION

This research has systematically examined why English language learning has become essential in contemporary society. The findings confirm that English proficiency is a fundamental skill for participation in globalized economy, access to information and technology, pursuit of higher education, and cross-cultural communication.

The survey data reveal that students recognize English's instrumental value, with career advancement and access to information driving their motivation. However, significant challenges persist regarding opportunities for authentic communication practice and the gap between grammatical knowledge and communicative competence.

For educational systems, particularly in Kazakhstan, this research underscores the necessity of modernizing teaching methodologies, increasing communicative practice opportunities, and ensuring teachers possess both language proficiency and contemporary pedagogical skills.

The importance of English in the 21st century is indisputable. The challenge facing educators is ensuring that all students have opportunities to develop the English proficiency necessary for success in an interconnected world.

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