

English As An Instrument of Economic Growth: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of English as an instrument in economic growth in Indonesia through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The literature selection process followed the PRISMA flow to ensure transparency and validity, and was supported by bibliometric analysis and visualization using VOSviewer software. The literature analyzed came from Google Scholar and Web of Science published between 2019-2025, with keywords focusing on the relationship between English language acquisition and economic growth. From the selection of the initial 100 articles, 9 relevant articles were obtained for further analysis. The results show that English proficiency contributes to four main aspects of economic growth, namely: (1) as a source of individual income through private courses, (2) as an essential skill in entrepreneurship and global business, (3) as a branding tool in the tourism sector, and (4) as a medium of communication with foreign investors. These findings reinforce the human capital theory that places language acquisition as a strategic asset for national economic competitiveness. This study concludes that English is an important instrument in supporting Indonesia's economic growth in the era of globalization.

Keyword: English as an instrument, economic growth, impact of English as an instrument, impact of economic growth

INTRODUCTION

English is a very important instrument in establishing communication for cooperation between individuals globally (Ahmad et al., 2024). English is also an instrument of power that can dominate economic markets nationally and internationally (Ngoa & Song, 2021). English is

145

IJETER, Volume 03 Issue 02, 2025



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widely used in the market to communicate advertising or marketing, propaganda, and product or service campaigns to consumers (Bakir et al., 2019). English is a means of communication that makes it easier for individuals to market products and services in an increasingly competitive global market (Cruz-Arcila et al., 2023).

English used in daily communication is certainly different from English for economic communication. English used in economic communication includes persuasion, promotion, and the creation of values through economic words and symbols. Indonesian people need to master English well to promote Indonesia's abundant natural resources. According to research results from Prihandoko et al (2019), the number of visits to the Indonesian tourism sector from January to March 2019 was 3,823,891 people. The tourism sector contributed 5% of the country's economic income globally in 2019 (Prihandoko et al., 2019). Many other sectors such as culture, mining, culinary, history and so on can increase economic income. With that, English language skills are an important aspect that needs to be prepared to support economic growth in various sectors in Indonesia (Prihandoko et al., 2019).

English language skills are a positive asset for Indonesia to achieve the demographic bonus predicted in 2045 (Paramitaswari, 2022). Indonesian people have high global competitiveness economically like other ASEAN countries (Darman et al., 2024). However, according to research by Muslim et al (2020) shows that the practice of teaching English in Indonesia still faces challenges and obstacles. Learners lack motivation in learning English, learning methods are less effective, learning facilities are lacking, and language learning systems are less innovative (Muslim et al., 2020). Indonesia will find it increasingly difficult to compete economically in the global market because it is unable to communicate in the free market (Widiastuti et al., 2021).

This research offers novelty that examines the relationship between English and economic improvement in Indonesia which has not been specifically studied. The researcher collected articles and analyzed the results of previous studies to obtain evidence. In addition, researchers want to show the role of English is not just for communication. English as an instrument of economic growth in national and international markets. English as a force to compete competitively in the global economic market. Therefore, this study not only investigates the results of previous research, but contributes to the role of English in economic improvement.



METHOD

The steps SLR analysis using PRISMA can be seen below:

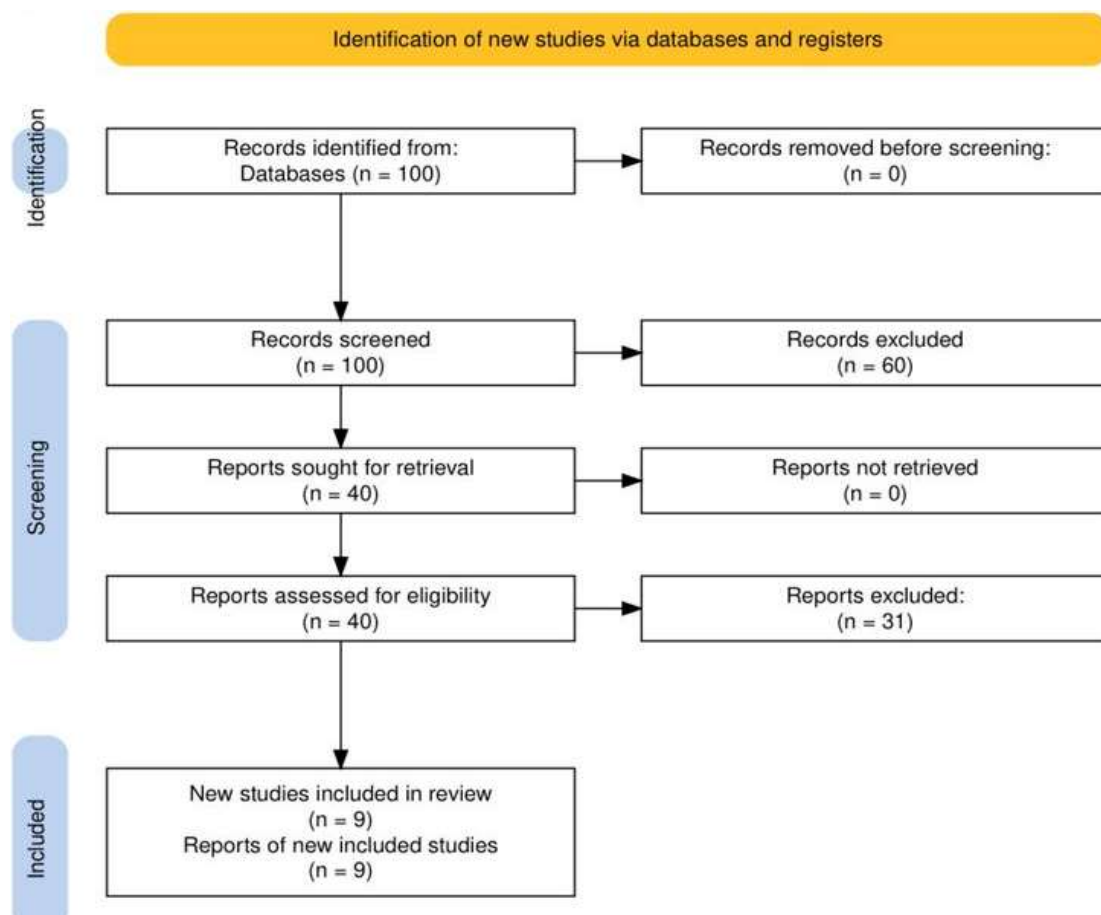


Figure 1. Article Analysis Using PRISMA

This research uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach that integrates the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method, bibliometric analysis, and visualization using VOSviewer software. The bibliometric methods used have evolved significantly with advances in software technology, enabling the mapping of scientific fields through citation data analysis. This approach facilitates the consolidation of findings from previous studies by exploring citation patterns and relationships between relevant literature.



This study aims to build a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical foundations, developments, and current research trends on the role of English in supporting economic growth. The PRISMA protocol was used to ensure transparency and traceability in the literature selection process, which included the stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. The search process was conducted systematically on the Web of Science (WoS) database, using keywords such as: “english as an instrument*”, “economic growth*”, “impact english an instrument*”, and “impact economic growth*” searched in the topic section (title, abstract, or keywords). The search was restricted to the business, management, economics, and language categories, and included only scholarly journal articles indexed in the Social Science Citation Index, excluding conference papers and book chapters.

VOSviewer was used to visualize the results of the bibliometric analysis, which included mapping the citation network, bibliographic network, and keyword analysis. This visualization helped to identify research clusters, dominant themes, and key inter-conceptual relationships in the literature related to the topic. The analysis process was conducted in several steps: first, we screened the titles and abstracts of all articles found to select relevant articles; second, we conducted an in-depth content review of the selected articles. Based on a rigorous screening process, 9 articles met the criteria and were used for further analysis.

Previous Research Results

Table 1. Previous Research Results

No.	Years	Authors	Goals	Results
1	2020	Pg Redzuan	The importance of English as an instrument of national and regional economic improvement	English language skills can be a source of income for individuals by providing private courses (Redzuan, 2020).
2	2020	Kuckertz et al.	Economic growth in Indonesia.	Entrepreneurship as a source of economic growth in Indonesia (Kuckertz et al., 2020).
3	2021	Perkins	Economic growth in Indonesia.	Political stability can increase Indonesia's economic growth. Many investors entering a country can increase economic growth (Perkins, 2021).



4	2021	Perkins	Economic growth in Indonesia.	Political stability can increase Indonesia's economic growth. Many investors entering a country can increase economic growth (Perkins, 2021).
5	2022	Cabugsa	The importance of English as an instrument of national and regional economic improvement.	English language skills can be a source of income for individuals by providing private courses. The demand for private English courses is a large market in Indonesia (Cabugsa, 2022).
6	2024	Heide et al.	The importance of English as an instrument of national and regional economic improvement.	The use of English as a means of branding for companies and tourism. Indonesia needs employees with good English skills (Heide et al., 2024).
7	2024	Gunawan	Economic growth in Indonesia.	Entrepreneurship as a source of economic growth in Indonesia. Entrepreneurship is the main parameter to grow the economy. English is important in entrepreneurship (Gunawan, 2024).
8	2024	Junaidi	Economic growth in Indonesia.	The role of religions in Indonesia in economic growth. The presence of Islamic banks provides business capital loans to the community (Junaidi, 2024).
9	2024	Bhatt et al.	Economic growth in Indonesia.	Tourism has an important role in Indonesia's economic growth. Tourism destinations can reduce poverty and inequality (Bhatt et al., 2024).

The literature selection process in this study followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow to ensure transparency, repeatability, and methodological validity in conducting systematic reviews. In the identification stage, researchers conducted a literature search using the Google Scholar database accessed through the Publish or Perish application. The keywords used in the search included: “english as an instrument”, “economic growth”, “impact english as an instrument”, and “impact economic growth”. From the search results, 100 articles were obtained that met the initial criteria. There were no additional articles from other sources, and no duplicate articles were found in the dataset.

The next stage was the screening process, which was carried out by reviewing the titles and abstracts of all articles obtained to assess their relevance to the research focus, namely the relationship between English language acquisition and economic growth. Articles that did not

directly address the relationship were eliminated from the analysis process. Although the number of articles eliminated was not explicitly mentioned, this stage succeeded in narrowing down the scope of literature to be further analyzed in the next stage, which was the eligibility assessment.

At the eligibility stage, the researcher conducted a full reading of the article content to assess the suitability of the substance to the study objectives. Articles that only mentioned the English language without presenting relevant discussions on aspects of economic growth were excluded from the analysis. This process resulted in 9 articles that met the inclusion criteria and were suitable for in-depth analysis. These articles made significant contributions in exploring the relationship between English language acquisition and various dimensions of economic growth, whether at the individual, national or regional level. The application of the PRISMA framework in this process not only enhances the internal and external validity of the research, but also ensures a systematic, transparent and accountable reporting structure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature Identification

Researchers collected articles published from 2019 to 2025 as relevant literature to be included in the analysis. Searching the google scholar database in the publish or perish application resulted in 100 articles and 29019 citations. Researchers collected articles published from 2020 to 2024 as relevant literature to be included in the analysis. Searching the google scholar database in the publish or perish application resulted in 100 articles and Citation 29019. A combination of relevant results occurred with the PRISMA method in considering systematic documents (SLR):

VosViewer Search Results

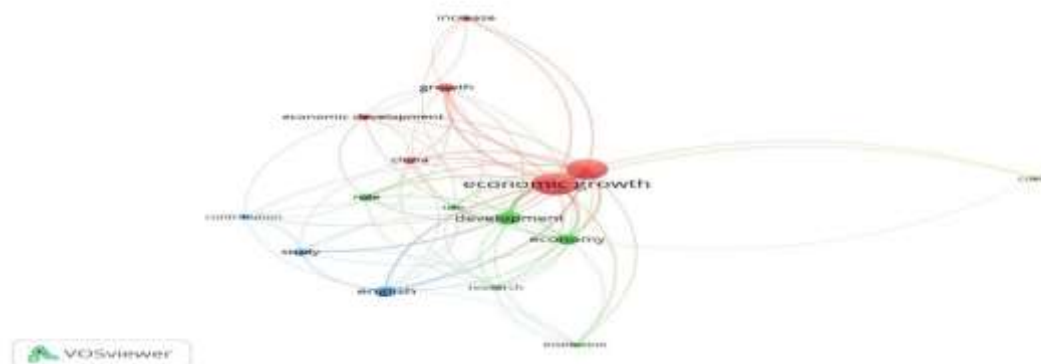


Figure 2. Vos Viewer (Network Visualization)

It can be seen through the visualization of the results of the analysis using the software vosviewers economic growth has the largest circle size with a red base color, many previous research references related to this theme. But even so, the variable continues to grow, it can be seen with the surrounding variables that are still new and small.

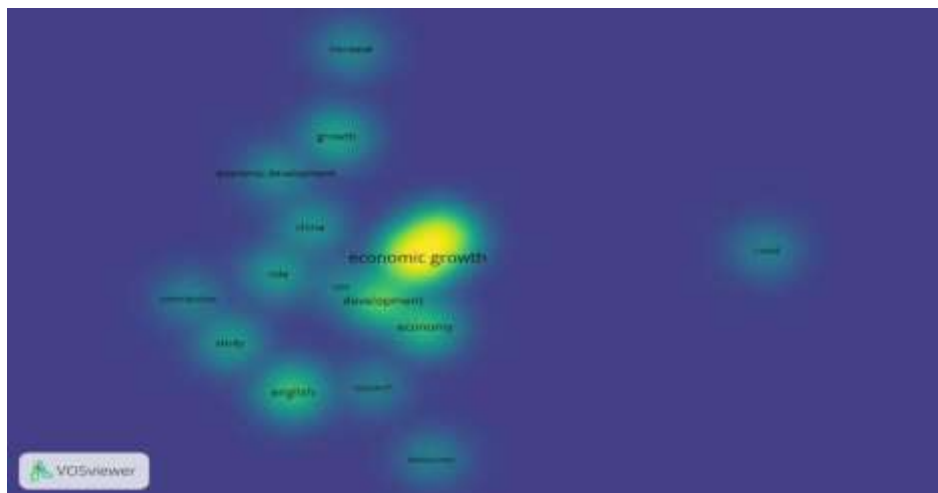


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Next, this analysis can be seen through yellow light, the more intense the color of the light, the more research on the theme. This research is mostly conducted by China, which is always experiencing economic and technological developments.

From the results of the VOSviewer analysis, researchers found 9 articles that could be the main keywords for economic growth with language in Indonesia. The 9 articles were selected based on the number of citations and research results that match the researcher's objectives. The following is a discussion of the 9 articles.

English

Of the 9 journal articles that have been identified as appropriate and relevant to the research, 4 articles speak to the importance of English (blue color) as an instrument in improving national and regional economies. The 4 articles are research results from (Cabugsa, 2022; Heide et al., 2024; Redzuan, 2020; Widiastuti et al., 2021). These 4 research articles explain the role of English in improving the economy of Indonesian society. 2 articles from Cabugsa (2022) and Redzuan (2020) which explain English language skills can be a source of individual income by providing private courses. According to research results from Cabugsa (2022), the demand for



private English courses is a very large market in Indonesia. Children from kindergarten to high school need personalized and incentivized English assistance (Cabugsa, 2022).

There are 2 articles from Heide et al (2024) and Widiastuti et al (2021) that explain the use of English as a branding tool for companies and tourism. Indonesia needs employees who have good English skills because the demand from companies and tourism is very high. According to Widiastuti et al (2021), employees who are able to communicate in good English can support the development of tourism businesses in Bali. With English language skills, employees can provide efficient service to every guest who comes to visit tourism sites in Indonesia.

Indonesia's Economic Growth

The results of the analysis of previous research literature found 5 (red color) out of 9 articles that specifically discuss economic growth in Indonesia. The 5 articles consist of the results of researchers (Bhatt et al., 2024; Gunawan, 2024; Junaidi, 2024; Kuckertz et al., 2020; Perkins, 2021). Researchers Kuckertz et al (2020) and Gunawan (2024) emphasize entrepreneurship as a source of economic growth in Indonesia. Entrepreneurship is the main parameter that Indonesian people have to grow the economy (Ripollés & Blesa, 2023). English is essential in entrepreneurship to establish communication, connectivity and marketing of products or services (Bernardus et al., 2022).

An article by Perkins (2021) explains that political stability can increase Indonesia's economic growth. Political stability over a long period of time encourages investors to invest in Indonesia. According to Perkins (2021), more investors entering a country can increase economic growth. The economy can also grow in Indonesia due to the role of religions in Indonesia. One article from Junaidi (2024) explains that the presence of banks such as Islamic banks that provide business capital loans to the lower middle class. These loans become community business capital in increasing economic growth starting from the household. The tourism factor also has a very important role in Indonesia's economic growth. An article from Bhatt et al (2024) explains that tourist destinations are able to reduce poverty and inequality that occurs in society. The Indonesian economy will increase every year if tourist destinations are managed properly by the government.

DISCUSSION

From the 9 research articles that have been analyzed, researchers found that English plays a role in; (a) individual economic growth through private classes and bank loans for businesses, (b) national and regional economic growth through tourist destinations, (c)





economic growth with increased entrepreneurship, and (d) national economic growth through communication with outside investors. This is supported by the human capital theory developed by Gary Becker (1964) in Santoso et al (2022). Human capital theory encourages human productivity to increase economic income (Marginson, 2019). Indonesian people who are productive and have quality can support the economic development of a country (Fleischhauer, 2007). Likewise, Indonesian people who master English well can support the economic development of the country. The ability in English can be said to be economic production because the market needs are very broad in Indonesia (Heide et al., 2024). Indonesia needs English skills in managing tourism, companies, entrepreneurship or business and so on (Muslim et al., 2020).

The results of the analysis of 9 research articles encourage Indonesia to understand English as an instrument of national economic growth. English language skills encourage people to run businesses competitively and globally (Ngu et al., 2021). Indonesia is able to communicate domestic products and services globally using English. In addition, the market for marketing products and services is very global and not only marketed in Indonesia. Now the business world or business has switched from conventional to online markets (Kazak et al., 2023). Online marketing through digital platforms certainly requires English language skills to market products and services globally (Darman et al., 2024). English is a communication tool that encourages global consumers to recognize products and services from Indonesia (Ersahin et al., 2024). In addition, English is useful for the advancement of beautiful natural tourist destinations such as Bali, Labuan Bajo, Lake Toba, Raja Ampat, and so on. English skills are very important to provide important information to every tourist visitor from outside Indonesia (Bhatt et al., 2024). English is an allure for outsiders to come visit Indonesian tourism.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to understand English as an instrument of economic growth in Indonesia. With that, the Indonesian government needs to encourage people to have correct English skills. English is the main capital of the community in the world of work. From this study, researchers found 4 main components of English in growing the economy in Indonesia, namely the increasing need for private English in the community, the need to run a global business or business specifically online, the need in tourist destinations, and the needs of companies. English can play a role in these 4 components to improve the economy independently and nationally.

This research certainly has limitations because it only produces 4 components as a source of economic improvement from English language skills. Researchers feel there are still other





components that have not been found by researchers to make English an instrument of economic growth. In addition, researchers did not further explain each component that was used as a source of economic growth in Indonesia from English language skills. Research on each component, especially separately, is a recommendation for future research.

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