

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND LANGUAGE MASTERY: INDONESIAN EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN AN INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE FRAMEWORK

Alifia Chaerunnisa¹, Bachtiar^{2*}

^{1,2}Universitas Terbuka (UT), Indonesia
(bachtiar_nur@ecampus.ut.ac.id)

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ABSTRACT

The transformative potential of the International Baccalaureate (IB) framework in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education emphasizes inquiry-based learning, global awareness, and intercultural competence, positioning it as a pivotal model for educational reform. This study aims to explore the beliefs and practices of Indonesian EFL teachers within the IB framework, focusing on how these educators perceive and enact their roles in fostering holistic student development. Utilizing a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, the research was conducted at a primary school in Tangerang, Indonesia, involving six EFL teachers categorized by their teaching experience. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, and was subsequently examined using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes. The findings reveal that EFL teachers perceive their roles as multifaceted, requiring continuous professional development, cultural integration, and creating engaging, student-centered learning environments. The teachers emphasized the importance of inquiry-based learning and critical thinking, which they see as essential for preparing students for future challenges. The study's implications underscore the need for educational policies that support ongoing teacher development and the integration of holistic, inquiry-driven curricula in EFL education. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on educational reform in Indonesia, highlighting the critical role of teacher beliefs in shaping effective pedagogical practices within the IB framework.

Keywords: international baccalaureate framework; EFL teachers' beliefs; inquiry-based learning; holistic education

ABSTRAK

Potensi transformasi melalui kerangka International Baccalaureate (IB) dalam pendidikan Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing menekankan pada pembelajaran berbasis inkuiri, kesadaran global, dan kompetensi antarbudaya, yang memposisikannya sebagai model penting untuk reformasi pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi keyakinan dan praktik para guru Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia dalam kerangka IB, dengan fokus pada bagaimana para pendidik memahami dan menjalankan peran mereka dalam mendorong pengembangan diri siswa secara holistik. Menggunakan pendekatan naratif kualitatif, penelitian dilakukan di sebuah sekolah dasar di Tangerang, Indonesia, yang melibatkan enam guru Bahasa Inggris dengan berbagai jenjang pengalaman mengajar mereka. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi kelas, dan analisis dokumen, yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola dan tema utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para guru Bahasa Inggris memandang peran mereka sebagai sesuatu yang multifaset, yang memerlukan pengembangan profesional yang berkelanjutan, integrasi budaya, dan penciptaan lingkungan pembelajaran yang menarik serta berpusat pada siswa. Para guru tersebut menekankan pentingnya pembelajaran berbasis inkuiri dan berpikir kritis, yang mereka pandang sebagai hal yang esensial dalam mempersiapkan siswa menghadapi tantangan di masa depan. Implikasi penelitian ini menyoroti perlunya kebijakan pendidikan yang mendukung pengembangan guru secara berkelanjutan dan integrasi kurikulum yang holistik dan berbasis inkuiri dalam pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap wacana yang lebih luas tentang reformasi pendidikan di Indonesia dengan menekankan peran krusial keyakinan guru dalam membentuk praktik pedagogis yang efektif dalam kerangka IB.

Kata Kunci: international baccalaureate framework; kepercayaan guru bahasa Inggris; inquiry-based learning; pendidikan holistik

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*Corresponding author

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INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Indonesia has undergone significant transformation, driven by the nation's strategic objective to improve global competitiveness through enhanced English proficiency (Bachtiar, 2021; Munandar & Newton, 2021). Central to this evolution are the nationwide educational reforms embodied in the 2013 Curriculum and the subsequent Merdeka Curriculum, which aim to align Indonesia's education system with international standards. The 2013 Curriculum emphasized communicative competence and interactive pedagogies, leading to significant changes in teaching materials, methodologies, and assessments across EFL classrooms (Qoyyimah, 2019). Supported by substantial governmental investment in teacher training and educational resources, these reforms have contributed to measurable improvements in students' English proficiency and have elevated Indonesia's stature within the global educational arena (Mali & Timotius, 2023).

A key innovation introduced by the 2013 Curriculum was the implementation of integrated thematic learning modules at the primary education level (Amini & Usmeldi, 2022). These modules, structured around broad, interconnected themes, seek to deepen understanding by contextualizing knowledge across multiple subjects. Advocates argue that this thematic approach not only situated learning in authentic, real-world contexts but also mitigates academic stress by promoting meaningful cross-disciplinary connections (Sofa & Sutisna, 2019). Conversely, critics caution against potential dilution of subject-specific expertise, questioning the overall efficacy of this integration.

Perhaps the most debated aspect of the 2013 Curriculum was the removal of English as a standalone subject in elementary schools, intended to prioritize local content and reduce young learners' academic burden. However, given English's expanding role in global communication, commerce, and diplomacy, embedding English instruction within thematic subjects has raised questions about its effectiveness in fostering both language proficiency and intercultural competence among young learners (Setyarini et al., 2020). In response, the Indonesian government reaffirmed its commitment to developing communicative competence through practical language skills and interactive teaching methods, encouraging the integration of English language learning across curricula and promoting authentic language use in real-life contexts (Jazuly et al., 2019).

Amid these reforms and increasing globalization, the IB framework has emerged as a compelling educational model adopted by an increasing number of Indonesian schools. The IB's comprehensive, inquiry-driven approach resonates strongly with national aims to cultivate not only language proficiency but also critical thinking, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship among students. Its emphasis on holistic education and lifelong learning offers a strong basis for advancing EFL instruction within Indonesia's multicultural and globally connected society. By embedding IB principles, Indonesian EFL teachers are empowered to transcend traditional language teaching paradigms, equipping learners to navigate complex intercultural environments with competence and confidence (Lestari et al., 2019; Maryono & Emilia, 2022).

The IB framework's inquiry-based pedagogy aligns well with Indonesia's educational shift from rote memorization to a focus on student-centered, experiential learning. This approach encourages learners to actively construct knowledge through questioning and exploration, fostering not only deeper understanding but also learner autonomy (Setyarini et al., 2020). Moreover, Indonesia's rich cultural diversity and growing engagement with the global economy underscore the critical need to nurture global awareness and intercultural competence (Bachtiar et al., 2024). The IB's focus on these domains supports national educational goals and addresses challenges such as promoting unity in diversity and equipping learners for effective cross-cultural communication.

Concomitantly, the IB framework advocates a transition from traditional teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning environments. Indonesian EFL teachers are increasingly recognizing language as a medium for self-expression and meaningful interaction within the global community. Attributes from the IB Learner Profile, such as "Open-Minded" and "Caring", motivate

educators to foster inclusive, culturally responsive classrooms that foster global citizenship and mutual understanding. The integration of technology further augments these efforts by enhancing students' communicative and intercultural competencies, facilitating collaboration with peers worldwide, and enabling participation in international projects (Jin, 2023; Vahed & Rodriguez, 2021).

Existing literature has explored various dimensions of EFL education and teacher beliefs within international curricula. For example, Fischer and Hänze (2020) highlighted how teachers' beliefs shape instructional practices, noting a paradigm shift from traditional knowledge transmission to facilitation and inquiry. Studies in Southeast Asia, such as Kamaruddin and Matore (2020) demonstrate that IB principles promote global citizenship and cultural sensitivity in Malaysian schools, providing parallels for the Indonesian context. Ulla (2023) examined the influence of constructivist and humanistic beliefs on EFL teaching efficacy. Nevertheless, research explicitly investigating how EFL teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices evolve within IB frameworks, particularly at the elementary level in Indonesia, remains scarce. Given the profound impact of teacher beliefs on instructional approaches and the success of curricular reforms, understanding these beliefs in IB EFL settings is vital for effective curriculum implementation and professional development.

Furthermore, the IB framework encourages valuing diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives, fostering mutual respect and understanding (Ferguson, 2024). EFL teachers increasingly incorporate multicultural literature and texts, exposing students to the rich plurality of global English and its associated literatures (Jaafar et al., 2023). The "balanced" attribute emphasizes holistic development, positioning language learning as integral to personal growth. Meanwhile, the "reflective" attribute fosters student self-assessment and goal-setting, enhancing language acquisition and learner autonomy (Reynolds et al., 2021). This holistic orientation has significantly transformed Indonesia's English instruction for young learners, emphasizing proficiency, critical thinking, intercultural competence, and global awareness.

Consequently, the integration of the IB Learner Profile into EFL pedagogy has redefined teachers' roles and beliefs. Educators increasingly adopt student-centered, inquiry-based methods that extend beyond language mastery to encompass global citizenship, cultural sensitivity, and personal development (Sari et al., 2022). This shift is particularly pertinent in Indonesian primary schools, where an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives is essential for assessing the effectiveness of this educational approach. Teachers' beliefs about their roles significantly influence their teaching practices (Bachtiar & Puspitasari, 2024). Traditionally perceived as mere "knowledge providers," teachers now assume facilitative roles, fostering learner autonomy and engagement (Bachtiar et al., 2024).

Despite these advancements, some educators continue to prioritize traditional content transmission, highlighting the enduring impact of entrenched beliefs on teaching roles (Huda & Lubis, 2021; Irasuti & Bachtiar, 2024). The IB framework's emphasis on inquiry, intercultural understanding, and holistic education imposes new expectations for personalized, differentiated instruction that responds to diverse student needs (Batubara, 2021; Griffith & Lim, 2024). This study aims to explore the beliefs and practices of EFL teachers within an IB primary school context in Tangerang, Indonesia, offering nuanced insights into the evolving EFL education landscape and teachers' adaptive strategies amidst ongoing reforms.

While previous research has predominantly focused on secondary and tertiary education and regions outside Indonesia, a notable gap remains regarding primary-level IB EFL education in the Indonesian context. This study addresses this gap by examining teacher beliefs and practices in an IB Primary Years Programme school in Tangerang. Given the unique developmental and contextual considerations at the elementary level and the expanding adoption of IB programs nationwide, this investigation contributes to both theoretical discourse and practical implementation strategies relevant to Indonesian EFL education. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of IB values on students' English language proficiency and preparedness as global citizens?

- 2. How do EFL teachers in Indonesian IB schools integrate core IB values into their English language teaching practices?
- 3. What challenges do EFL teachers encounter in implementing IB values within English language teaching, and how do these challenges affect student outcomes?

Although this research focuses on a single well-established IB primary school, its findings are discussed within the broader context of IB adoption across Indonesia. This approach facilitates a detailed exploration of classroom practices while offering insights applicable to similar educational settings, examining the interplay between global frameworks and local realities.

METHODS

Research design

This research employs a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to investigate the influence of IB frameworks on teachers' roles and beliefs in teaching English to young learners. Narrative inquiry is chosen because it foregrounds participants' personal stories and lived experiences, which are crucial for understanding complex phenomena such as teachers' beliefs and professional identities. As Barkhuizen (2021) identifies, narrative inquiry utilizes participants' stories as data, particularly narratives related to language instruction or acquisition, offering concrete examples of successes, challenges, and ethical considerations. This approach allows a rich, contextualized exploration of how teachers make sense of and enact their roles within the IB framework. It is particularly well-suited for this study as it captures the evolving nature of teachers' beliefs and practices through their own perspectives. The current study integrates multiple sources of evidence to analyze current, real-world phenomena in language teaching, thereby enhancing the validity and depth of the findings. The justification for using narrative inquiry lies in its strength to explore meaning-making processes through personal storytelling, which aligns with the study's aim to uncover teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and practices within a specific educational context (Haim & Tannenbaum, 2022). This methodological choice facilitates an in-depth understanding that is less likely to be fully achieved through quantitative or alternative qualitative methods.

Research participants

This study focuses on English teachers instructing 6-12-year-old students within the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at one primary school in Tangerang City, Indonesia. Six English teacher respondents were selected based on their teaching experience and categorized as novice, experienced, or highly experienced to provide diverse perspectives. This school and group of teachers were selected as they provided an ideal context for understanding the influence of the IB framework on teaching practices and perceptions. Concentrating on this small group facilitated in-depth data collection and analysis, ensuring a thorough exploration of how the IB framework impacted these teachers, thus yielding richer and more comprehensive insights. Table 1 presents the pseudonyms of participants who took part in the semi-structured interviews.

Table 1. Participants' pseudonyms names in the interviews

No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience ¹
1	MN	Female	18 years (VET)
2	AY	Female	15 years (VET)
3	ML	Female	8 years (ET)
4	ER	Female	7 years (ET)
5	DL	Female	5 years (NT)
6	YN	Female	3 years (NT)

Note: ¹) VET (a very experienced teacher); ET (an experienced teacher); and NT (a novice teacher).

This study focused on English teachers instructing 6–12-year-old students within the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at a primary school in Tangerang City, Indonesia. This school was selected for its status as an established IB World School implementing the Primary Years Programme, providing a relevant context for examining the impact of IB philosophies on EFL teaching. Additionally, the school's demographic and institutional characteristics reflect a growing trend of internationalized education in Indonesia, making it an appropriate case for studying intercultural competence development.

The six English teachers who participated were purposefully selected based on their teaching experience, categorized as novice, experienced, and very experienced, to provide diverse perspectives on the influence of the IB framework. This purposeful sampling ensured the inclusion of varied perspectives, enhancing the depth of analysis. The chosen school and group of teachers were ideal for understanding how the IB framework shapes teaching practices and perceptions. Concentrating on this small group enabled in-depth data collection and analysis, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the framework's impact on the participants' teaching practices.

The coding system used for the interview data involved assigning 'IT' to denote the interview transcript at the start of the reference quotes, followed by the participants' pseudonyms and their level of teaching experience. For instance, IT.YN.ET signifies the interview with YN, an experienced teacher. Table 1 presents the pseudonyms assigned to the participants in the semi-structured interviews. In summary, this school was intentionally chosen as it exemplifies the IB teaching context under investigation, offering valuable insights into how international curricula influence teacher beliefs and practices in Indonesian EFL settings.

Research Instruments

The current study utilized three primary tools (semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis) to gain comprehensive insights into EFL teaching practices at the lower primary level. The tools are detailed below:

1. Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in a quiet and private setting within the school to ensure participants' comfort and candidness. Each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes, was audio-recorded with consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for accuracy. The interview questions, adapted from Payant (2019), included 18 questions across six categories related to teachers' beliefs and 11 questions covering teachers' roles in six categories. These instruments comprehensively explored various dimensions of language teaching, eliciting examples, strategies, and personal experiences. Probing questions were used to enhance depth and clarity in participants' responses.
2. Observations. Classroom observations were conducted over multiple sessions per teacher, resulting in six observation visits over a two-month period. These sessions focused on teachers' instructional behaviors, classroom interactions, and their application of IB principles. Detailed field notes were taken during each session, emphasizing concrete examples of teaching strategies, student engagement, and instances of intercultural competence.
3. Document analysis. Documents such as lesson plans, syllabi, teaching materials, and assessment tools were collected from participants. The selection prioritized materials explicitly designed for or influenced by the IB framework. These documents were systematically reviewed to extract data on curricular goals, intercultural content, and pedagogical approaches that aligned with the teachers' narratives.

Together, these methods allowed triangulation, enhancing the study's validity by providing a multifaceted perspective on the teaching experience.

Data analysis

The researcher employed thematic analysis, a widely recognized method in qualitative research, to examine the data. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke (Campbell et al., 2021) six-step process, adapted to the context of this study.

1. Familiarization. The researcher immersed themselves in the data by repeatedly reviewing interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents to gain a thorough understanding.
2. Generating Initial Codes. Significant segments of data related to teachers' beliefs, roles, and intercultural competence were identified and coded manually. Coding was conducted inductively to allow themes to emerge naturally from the data.
3. Searching for Themes. Codes were organized into potential themes reflecting patterns across the dataset, such as perceptions of IB influence, teaching challenges, and strategies for intercultural competence.
4. Reviewing Themes. Themes were refined by examining coherence within each theme and distinctions between themes, ensuring they accurately represented the data.
5. Defining and Naming Themes. Each theme was clearly defined and labeled to capture its essence and relevance to the research questions.
6. Producing the Report. The final themes were integrated into a coherent narrative supported by illustrative data extracts and linked to relevant literature.

The thematic analysis incorporated data from interviews, observations, and documents, allowing triangulation to provide a rich, nuanced understanding of how the IB framework shapes Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs and practices. The reflexivity was maintained by keeping memos to track decisions and interpretations throughout the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this study revealed three key themes that emerged from the data analysis. These themes closely correspond to the three research questions that guided this inquiry. Specifically, the themes include: (1) teachers' beliefs about teaching English using the IB framework; (2) teachers' roles in implementing the IB framework in English language instruction; and (3) the perceived impact of the IB framework on teaching and learning practices. Consequently, the results are presented in accordance with the structure of the research questions.

Teacher's Beliefs in Teaching English Using the IB Framework

The research findings reveal that Indonesian EFL teachers within the IB framework perceive education as a transformative journey focused on fostering lifelong learning, personal growth, and societal contributions. According to the participating teachers, good teaching involves creating joyful, engaging learning environments that build emotional connections and promote comprehensive understanding. They view meaningful learning as practically applicable, relevant, and capable of cultivating inquiry and deep understanding. A quality curriculum is also seen as student-centered, emphasizing critical thinking, collaboration, and real-life relevance, which align with the broader educational goals of nurturing independent, lifelong learners and holistic development. The participants' views on transformative education within the IB framework are exemplified in the following quotes.

Education within the International Baccalaureate (IB) framework is a transformative journey that shifts students from ignorance to knowledge, fostering lifelong learning, personal growth, and societal contributions to the purpose of education and teaching English (Int. AY.VET).

For me, education should shape students to think critically, become better persons, and contribute meaningfully to society. In the IB context, English is more than a language; it serves as a bridge to deeper understanding and global awareness (Int.ML.ET).

Regarding good teaching and learning, the participants related it to teachers' commitment to effective instruction that goes beyond mere content delivery. For example, DL believes that good teaching enables students to not only understand what teachers explain but also retell what they have learned, emphasizing comprehension and communication. Similarly, ML focused on fostering a joyful and engaging learning environment, describing her classroom as a place where students can enjoy learning while gaining knowledge and experience. The participants highlighted the importance of creating lifelong learners and building emotional connections, suggesting that good teaching involves nurturing students to become lifelong learners while fostering strong emotional bonds. These ideas are supported further by ER and YN, who stressed the significance of a positive learning environment in helping students enjoy their education and apply their learning beyond the classroom. To achieve this, they emphasized the importance of skill development and holistic growth, aligning with the IB framework's comprehensive approach.

Meaningful learning, as perceived by the teachers, is characterized by its practical application and relevance. YN believes that meaningful learning occurs when "the knowledge that students get can be applied in their daily lives," stressing real-world applicability. ML considers meaningful learning as achieving goals that hold significance for students, teachers, and parents, emphasizing the collaborative nature of the educational process. MN introduces the concept of a learning cycle that fosters inquiry and deep understanding, explaining that "meaningful learning involves creating a cycle that makes students inquire and helps them understand concepts deeply." AY emphasizes experiential learning, noting that "meaningful learning is about giving students experiences to face real life in their future." ER and DL focus on providing engaging and enjoyable learning experiences, with ER highlighting the value of creating a cycle of inquisitiveness and DL emphasizing that achieving learning goals in an enjoyable way makes learning meaningful.

According to the teachers, a quality curriculum is fundamentally student-centered and relevant to students' lives and future needs. YN appreciates the IB curriculum's emphasis on student collaboration and process-oriented learning, stating that 'a good curriculum is student-centered and focuses heavily on collaboration, prioritizing the process over the final product.' ML emphasizes the need for curriculum relevance across eras, explaining that 'a good curriculum addresses current needs while preparing for the future.' MN underscores the integration of critical thinking and real-life relevance, noting that 'a quality curriculum fosters critical thinking and aligns with students' needs.' AY believes that a quality curriculum helps students reach their full potential, providing the tools and opportunities needed for comprehensive development. DL elaborated her perspective as follows:

For me, good teaching is not just about explaining; it's about creating emotional connections and making learning enjoyable. When students feel safe and engaged, they remember better and become more active learners" (Int.NT.DL).

In addition, the teachers consistently highlight the distinct advantages of the IB curriculum compared to traditional curricula. For instance, YN appreciates the curriculum's focus on process-oriented learning and collaboration, reflecting the IB framework's commitment to fostering critical thinking and teamwork. ML emphasizes the adaptability and forward-thinking nature of a strong curriculum, highlighting its relevance across different eras. MN underscores the importance of critical thinking and real-life application, aligning with the IB framework's focus on these elements. AY, ER, and DL highlight the IB curriculum's ability to foster critical thinking and encourage student exploration, emphasizing its role in helping students reach their full potential.

I've noticed that while students in traditional systems are often passive, the IB approach encourages them to ask questions, explore diverse perspectives, and become active participants in their learning, which makes it distinctive and effective for the future (Int.NT.ER)

The teachers' endorsement of a student-centered and relevant curriculum aligns with the broader educational goals of nurturing independent, lifelong learners. YN's recognition of the IB curriculum's emphasis on collaboration and process-oriented learning, ML's attention to its adaptability and relevance, MN's focus on integrating critical thinking, and AY, ER, and DL's emphasis on fostering student-centered learning and exploration all converge to underscore the IB curriculum's strengths. This approach supports not only academic growth but also personal and social development, preparing students to meet future challenges with confidence and competence.

When we center the curriculum on students' lives and needs, they feel ownership of their learning. It makes them more independent and confident in facing real-world problems. That's one of the key points stressed in the IB framework (Int.VET.KY)

In conclusion, the Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs and practices within the IB framework reveal a deep commitment to holistic and meaningful education. Their views on the purpose of education, good teaching, meaningful learning, and a quality curriculum reflect the IB framework's core principles, emphasizing transformative, student-centered, and relevant learning experiences. This alignment with IB philosophy underscores their dedication to creating dynamic and supportive learning environments that empower students to achieve their full potential and navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Teachers' Roles in Teaching English Using the IB Framework

The implementation of the IB framework has significantly influenced the roles of Indonesian EFL teachers, particularly those with more than eight years of experience. The participating teachers view their professional role as one of continual learning and adaptation, driven by the dynamic demands of internationalized teaching. They demonstrate a commitment to self-development and professional growth in alignment with the IB's emphasis on reflective practice and continuous improvement. Many teachers adopt digital tools and collaborative learning approaches to stay informed about evolving pedagogical practices. The following quotes exemplify the participants' conceptions of their role in the IB framework.

As an IB teacher, I never stop learning. I follow English teachers on Instagram and join webinars because the world keeps changing, and I must keep up to teach effectively (Int.VET.YN).

I believe IB requires us to be lifelong learners. Every day, I try to learn something new and talk to other teachers, so I can grow professionally (Int.ET.ML).

Incorporating cultural aspects into English language teaching is another critical role for these teachers. YN believes the IB framework fosters open-mindedness, stating, "I try to relate lessons to students' experiences, like using examples of different kinds of food." ML and MN stress the importance of accepting diverse cultural perspectives. ML explains, "Being open-minded is essential so students can share and embrace different cultures," while MN adds, "I do research and brainstorm cultural connections based on the themes we are learning." These practices align with the IB framework's emphasis on international-mindedness and cultural awareness.

As knowledge facilitators, the teachers prioritize active learning, using participatory strategies to improve student engagement. They integrate current topics, encourage student-led discussions, and employ reflective exercises to enhance learning effectiveness and relevance. These practices reflect the IB's constructivist approach, which places students at the center of the learning process.

Brainstorming is my favourite method because it makes students think, speak, and share their ideas naturally during the lesson (Int.ET.ML).

I review their work every day and include trending topics, so they stay interested and see that English connects to real life. I sometimes also use news or current topics in class to help students remember vocabulary and ideas more clearly (Int.VET.MN).

The teachers also see themselves as entertainers, aiming to make learning enjoyable and engaging. YN believes in giving students chances to talk and share, explaining, "Group discussions and peer interviews make learning engaging and interactive." ML and MN use various methods to make learning enjoyable, with ML noting, "We use videos and games to make learning fun," and MN adding, "I use activities like gallery walks and wonder walls to engage students." These approaches highlight the importance of making learning enjoyable, a key aspect of the IB framework.

Motivation plays a crucial role in the teachers' practices. YN uses the IB learner profiles to keep students motivated, stating, "I always tell them which IB profiles we are applying to keep them motivated." ML and MN emphasize relevance and engaging activities, with ML explaining, "We help students understand the practical relevance of what they're learning," and MN adding, "Engaging activities make learning more interesting and relevant." These strategies underscore the importance of motivation and relevance in the IB framework, fostering active and engaged learners.

In their role as facilitators, teachers guide students in their learning journeys. YN encourages student opinions and experiences, explaining, "I ask them to share their ideas and choose others to do the same." ML and MN emphasize meeting individual needs and encouraging student agency, with ML noting, "Effective learning meets each student's needs," and MN adding, "We incorporate student agency in our lessons, allowing them to choose and explore topics." These practices align with the IB's student-centered approach, emphasizing the importance of student agency and exploration.

The IB framework's advocacy for lifelong learning is reflected in how teachers structure their lessons around cycles of inquiry. These cycles promote curiosity, critical thinking, and sustained engagement. Teachers deliberately create spaces that nurture student voice and ownership, promoting authentic learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

When students ask their own questions, they learn better. I guide them to research and present ideas from multiple perspectives (Int.VET.ML).

In class, I always try to build a comfortable space where they can speak, ask, and express their opinions without fear (Int.NT.DL).

The stories of YN, ML, MN, AY, ER, and DL reveal a deep commitment to student-centered, inquiry-based education. Their roles as facilitators, motivators, and cultural ambassadors reflect the IB framework's principles, creating a rich, supportive, and engaging learning environment. They regard education as a pathway to personal growth, lifelong learning, and holistic development, translating these beliefs into their daily classroom practices. Through their dedication, they embody the IB framework's mission to cultivate curious, knowledgeable, and global-minded students prepared to navigate and contribute to the complex modern world.

Impact of IB Framework

The implementation of the IB framework has profoundly influenced the beliefs and practices of Indonesian EFL teachers, fundamentally transforming their educational approach. YN, who was initially challenged by transitioning from traditional methods to a student-centered, inquiry-based approach, ultimately recognized its significant benefits. She observed that the framework encourages students to take ownership of their learning, enhancing their confidence and active participation. By emphasizing real-life application and critical thinking, it significantly improves

students' communicative competence, better preparing them for future challenges. Similarly, ML highlights the importance of creating a space where students' voices are heard and valued, reinforcing the principle of learner agency embedded in the IB approach.

At first, I was unsure about using inquiry-based learning, but I realized it helps students speak more, think more, and become more independent in class discussions and tasks (Int.VET.YN).

I used to give all the instructions, but now students ask questions, explore, and lead discussions. This change has made them more active and confident English users (Int.ET.ML).

Teachers like ML and DL embody the IB framework principles by adopting the role of facilitators rather than content deliverers. ML emphasizes active student participation, which she believes is critical for fostering students' ownership of their learning journey. DL underscores the importance of meaningful engagement that goes beyond content delivery. These shifts transform the traditional classroom into a dynamic learning environment that nurtures independence, confidence, and engagement among learners, aligning with the IB framework.

Instead of only explaining grammar rules, I now give them scenarios to explore and solve. They ask more questions and take responsibility for their own progress (Int.ET.ML).

I try to build a space where students feel free to speak up, make mistakes, and try again. When they are comfortable, they are more willing to express themselves in English (Int.NT.DL).

The IB framework also promotes global awareness and inquiry-based learning, as highlighted by MN and ER. MN appreciates how it fosters open-mindedness and inquiry, stating, "The IB framework makes me more open-minded and encourages inquiry-based learning." AY, despite finding the framework challenging, acknowledges its effectiveness in fostering active communication: "The IB framework requires students to be more active and communicate well," she says. Together, these narratives illustrate the profound impact of the IB framework on shaping teachers' beliefs and practices, transforming their teaching into a more student-centered and inquiry-driven approach.

Collectively, YN, ML, MN, AY, ER, and DL highlight the framework's role in transforming education into a holistic, student-centered experience that prepares learners for the complexities of the modern world. Through their experiences, it is evident that the IB framework has reshaped their teaching philosophies, enhancing their roles as facilitators, motivators, and cultural ambassadors, all committed to helping students reach their full potential.

The IB framework needs us to use more student-centered approaches. This has made my students more confident and active in class... real-life applications and critical thinking improve their communication skills, getting them ready for future challenges (Int.ML.ET).

Discussion

EFL Teachers' Perception of Their Roles in Teaching English within the IB Framework

The findings reveal that Indonesian EFL teachers increasingly conceptualize their professional identity as dynamic, multifaceted, and student-centered. This aligns with broader international trends where teachers move beyond the traditional role of knowledge transmitters toward facilitators of inquiry, critical thinking, and intercultural sensitivity (Fischer & Hänze, 2020; Munandar & Newton, 2021). Such a shift also reflects the growing emphasis on teacher agency within international curriculum settings, particularly the IB framework, which encourages teachers to adaptively negotiate their roles to foster student-centered and intercultural learning (Lai et al., 2023). In particular, teachers' commitment to continuous professional development through digital platforms and collaborative learning is consistent with the observations of Madayani and Muhassin (2020), who highlight

the importance of technological agility in modern EFL instruction. Furthermore, the prioritization of intercultural competence development within EFL teaching echoes regional calls for globally responsive teacher education programs in Southeast Asia (Quyen Phuong, 2022).

The intentional integration of cultural elements into classroom practice, as demonstrated by the teachers in this study, highlights an important shift towards promoting intercultural competence. This finding aligns with Griffith and Lim (2024), who contend that fostering intercultural sensitivity is integral to global citizenship education. Teachers' efforts to contextualize lessons with diverse cultural references not only enhance linguistic competence but also prepare students to navigate complex multicultural environments, an increasingly vital skill in the era of globalization..

Moreover, the adoption of entertainment and motivation strategies to enhance student engagement, such as games, storytelling, and inquiry cycles, reinforces the IB's student-centered philosophy. It also echoes Huda & Lubis' (2021) findings that experiential and creative teaching strategies significantly enhance student enjoyment and participation in EFL contexts. Teachers' evolving roles as entertainers and motivators are especially significant in Indonesian classrooms, where traditional hierarchies have historically constrained active learner participation.

Thus, Indonesian EFL teachers' perceptions of their roles within the IB framework reflect a sophisticated understanding of 21st-century pedagogical demands: fostering inquiry, intercultural awareness, and lifelong learning through dynamic, student-centered practices. This evolving self-conception underscores not only their adaptability to international standards but also their agency in reimagining English language education to meet the complex needs of globally-oriented students (Wulandari et al., 2024).

EFL Teachers' Beliefs of Teaching English within the IB Framework

Teachers' beliefs about English language teaching, as illuminated by this study, foreground the transformative power of education, viewed as a journey of not only academic achievement but also personal growth and societal contribution. This perception deeply resonates with Ulla's (2022) and Barkhuizen et al.'s (2021) assertions that teacher beliefs are central to shaping transformative classroom practices. Moreover, Reynolds et al. (2021) observe that pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning are shaped by their experiences, which are crucial for effective curriculum design.

Good teaching in the IB framework is perceived as effective instruction that transcends mere content delivery by focusing on student involvement to foster understanding, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. This perception is supported by Koşar and Dolapçioğlu (2021), who found that EFL teachers believe constructivist and humanistic approaches enhance student learning by making education interactive and student-centered. Similarly, Fitriyani et al. (2020) underscore the effectiveness of explicit and implicit grammar teaching in engaging students and enhancing the relevance of learning to their experiences. Additionally, Luo et al. (2020) emphasized that EFL teachers' instructional practices are influenced by their beliefs about reading and teaching reading, which are shaped by contextual factors and prior experiences.

Meaningful learning within the IB framework is characterized by its emphasis on practical application and real-world relevance, enabling students to achieve significant educational and personal goals. This concept is echoed by Badash et al. (2020), who found that EFL teachers prioritize vocabulary and speaking skills as essential for practical language use and lifelong learning. Haim and Tannenbaum (2022) also highlighted that EFL teachers' beliefs about multilingualism as a resource significantly influence their teaching practices and the effective application of language skills in various contexts. Furthermore, Reynolds et al. (2022) emphasized that pre-service teachers' beliefs about the goals of language learning are fundamental to effective teaching, as they ensure learning is both meaningful and relevant to students' lives.

EFL teachers' beliefs within the IB framework emphasize a holistic, meaningful, and transformative education that aligns with the IB's core principles. Their beliefs in effective

instruction, student involvement, and practical application of knowledge are supported by research, highlighting the importance of continuous professional development and reflective practice in teaching. These beliefs underscore the need for a student-centered curriculum designed to prepare students for real-life challenges and foster lifelong learning.

While Indonesian EFL teachers express progressive beliefs aligned with student-centered, transformative education principles inherent in the IB framework, our findings reveal nuanced tensions between these beliefs and classroom practices. For instance, although teachers emphasize inquiry-based learning and intercultural competence as ideals, practical constraints such as large class sizes, limited resources, and entrenched cultural expectations often hinder the full implementation of these pedagogical approaches. This partial alignment echoes findings from Barkhuizen et al. (2021) and Lai et al. (2023), who note that teacher beliefs do not always translate seamlessly into practice due to contextual limitations. These contradictions highlight the complex negotiation teachers undertake as agents navigating both international curricular ideals and local realities. Understanding this dynamic interplay between beliefs and practices deepens our comprehension of teacher agency within IB contexts and identifies areas where targeted support and professional development can enhance coherence and efficacy in EFL instruction.

The Integration of IB Principles and Approaches in English Language Teaching Strategies

The study reveals that Indonesian EFL teachers actively integrate IB principles such as inquiry-based learning, intercultural understanding, and student agency into their classroom strategies. This approach aligns with the holistic education model described by Dyndarenko (2021) and the interdisciplinary emphasis within Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) frameworks as advocated by Metlí and Akis (2022) within Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) frameworks. According to Al-Amri (2020), the application of well-established language teaching principles can significantly enhance classroom input strategies, complementing the IB's holistic educational philosophy. Furthermore, Kalsum et al. (2023) found that integrating multiple language skills in teaching not only improves communicative competence but also addresses learning challenges, thus reinforcing holistic educational frameworks.

Teachers highlight the importance of creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences. They employ various methods, including group discussions, peer interviews, videos, games, gallery walks, and wonder walls, to actively engage students. These strategies are supported by Metlí and Akis (2022), who found that interactive methods like group work and interdisciplinary activities improve student engagement and language proficiency within CLIL frameworks. Similarly, Mutammimah et al. (2019) observed that inquiry-based learning methods in IB PYP candidate schools foster student-centered learning and skill development in English teaching. Guiral Herrera & Pifarré Turmo (2023) also highlight the benefits of participatory teaching modes, which create cognitive connections between existing and new knowledge, enhancing learning outcomes.

The IB framework's focus on lifelong learning is evident in the teachers' practices. They strive to create inquiry cycles that encourage students to ask questions, explore ideas, and develop a deeper understanding of the content. This approach is consistent with findings by Stan (2022), who highlights that integrating content and language through the CLIL approach enhances deeper comprehension among students. Additionally, Jon et al. (2021) noted that effective ELT implementation requires teachers to balance content and language instruction to optimize student learning outcomes. This aligns with the IB's emphasis on student agency and meaningful engagement beyond content delivery. Pitkänen-Huhta and Mäntylä (2021) also discuss the integration of communicative language teaching and genre-based pedagogy in promoting critical thinking and exploration, preparing students for modern complexities.

The integration of IB principles into English language teaching strategies emphasizes a holistic, engaging, and lifelong learning approach. Teachers' practices in creating dynamic learning

environments, fostering student engagement, and promoting inquiry-based learning reflect the core principles of the IB framework. These practices are validated by research highlighting the benefits of integrative teaching methods, student-centered learning, and balancing content and language instruction. This alignment underscores the commitment to preparing students to address future challenges confidently and competently.

A significant contribution of this study is the illustration of teacher agency as a critical factor mediating the implementation of the IB curriculum in Indonesian EFL settings. Teacher agency, conceptualized as the capacity to act purposefully and reflectively within structural constraints (Appadoo-Ramsamy, 2023), is manifested in how teachers adapt IB principles to their unique classroom contexts. Our findings align with global research emphasizing that curriculum reforms, particularly in international programs like IB, rely heavily on teachers' ability to interpret, negotiate, and transform prescribed frameworks (Lai et al., 2023). Indonesian teachers in this study demonstrate agency through professional development, digital engagement, and innovative pedagogies, despite challenges such as rigid assessments and limited institutional support.

This agency-driven curriculum adaptation underscores the active role of teachers, not merely as implementers but as co-creators of curriculum meaning, resonating with international scholarship (Lestari et al., 2019; Mouraz et al., 2024). However, tensions between global IB ideals and local educational cultures can limit teacher agency, necessitating nuanced support mechanisms. Our study thus contributes to the growing global discourse on teacher agency by contextualizing these dynamics within Southeast Asia's evolving educational landscape, emphasizing the balance between adhering to international curricula and fostering culturally responsive pedagogical autonomy.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study has illuminated the nuanced beliefs and practices of Indonesian EFL teachers within the IB framework, offering significant insights into the transformative impact of this educational approach. The research underscores the pivotal role of EFL teachers in navigating the dynamic intersection of language mastery and intercultural competence. Key findings reveal that teachers perceive their roles as multifaceted, encompassing continuous professional development, cultural integration, and the creation of engaging, student-centered learning environments. The IB framework's emphasis on holistic education, inquiry-based learning, and global awareness has notably influenced teachers' instructional strategies, fostering a deeper commitment to nurturing lifelong learners. This study also highlights the importance of integrating IB principles to enhance communicative competence and intercultural understanding among young learners, thereby preparing them for the complexities of the modern world.

Building on these insights, several practical recommendations emerge as; first, educators and school administrators. It is essential to prioritize ongoing professional development programs that explicitly focus on enhancing teacher agency, intercultural competence, and the effective integration of IB principles in diverse classroom contexts. These programs should incorporate digital literacy and collaborative learning as foundational components to equip teachers for the demands of 21st-century education. Second, curriculum designers and policy makers should ensure that IB curriculum adaptations are contextually relevant and culturally responsive to the unique educational environments in Indonesia. This includes providing flexibility for teachers to exercise professional judgment and adapt instructional strategies without compromising the integrity of IB standards. Third, for the institutional level as schools should foster supportive cultures that encourage experimentation, reflective practice, and peer collaboration, which are crucial for sustaining the pedagogical innovations necessary in IB settings. Adequate resources and manageable class sizes are critical to enable teachers to implement inquiry-based and student-centered approaches effectively.

Despite the comprehensive insights provided, this study has several limitations. The research is confined to a single primary school in Tangerang, Indonesia, which may limit the generalizability

of the findings. Additionally, the sample size, although diverse in experience levels, remains small, potentially affecting the breadth of perspectives captured. Future research should consider expanding the scope to include multiple schools across different regions to enhance the representativeness of the data. Longitudinal studies could also provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts of the IB framework on both teachers and students. Further recommendations for future research include exploring the integration of digital technologies in EFL teaching within the IB framework, as this study indicated a growing reliance on digital platforms for professional development. Investigating the impact of specific IB attributes on student outcomes could also yield valuable information for refining instructional practices. Additionally, comparative studies between IB and non-IB schools could highlight the distinct advantages and challenges associated with the IB framework, offering a more comprehensive understanding of its efficacy in diverse educational contexts.

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