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Integrating International Baccalaureate values into English language teaching: Insights from Indonesian classrooms

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Abstract

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program stands as a globally transformative educational framework, emphasizing inquiry-based learning, reflective thinking, and principled action to prepare students as competent global citizens. This study aims to critically examine how IB core values are integrated into English language teaching (ELT) within Indonesian schools, a context that presents unique challenges and opportunities. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving seven experienced EFL teachers in a well-established IB-implemented school. The results reveal that reflective thinking and inquiry-based learning are pivotal in fostering intercultural competence, critical engagement, and ethical communication among students. Teachers leverage these approaches to connect linguistic mastery with broader cultural and global contexts, aligning with the IB's mission to cultivate holistic learners. However, the findings also underscore systemic challenges, including the tension between Indonesia's rigid, exam-oriented curriculum and the IB's flexible, student-centred pedagogy, compounded by resource limitations and cultural resistance to independent learning. Despite these barriers, teachers demonstrated adaptability and innovation, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development and systemic support to fully realize the IB program's potential. This study contributes critical insights into how IB values enrich ELT in Indonesia, bridging global ideals with local realities through reflective, inquiry-driven pedagogy.

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Introduction

International education refers to educational frameworks and practices that transcend national boundaries, aiming to develop learners' global awareness, intercultural competence, and ethical responsibility. It is characterized not only by rigorous academic content but also by the cultivation of values and skills essential for navigating an interconnected world (Gayatri et al., 2023). As the world becomes increasingly globalized, international education has gained traction in both policy and practice across diverse national contexts. In Indonesia, this trend is reflected in the rising number of schools adopting globally recognized curricula, most notably the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, which strives to bridge international standards with local cultural and educational realities (Dickson et al., 2018; Maryono & Emilia, 2022).

Among the most prominent global education frameworks, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, established in 1968, has positioned itself as a transformative force in education. With implementation in over 150 countries, including a growing presence in Indonesia, the IB framework seeks to develop students who are not only academically capable but also culturally literate, ethically minded, and globally engaged (Ferguson, 2024; Jaafar et al., 2023; Maryono & Emilia, 2022). The expansion of the IB program within Indonesia's international and private school sectors reflects a significant shift toward pedagogies that prioritize inquiry, critical thinking, and intercultural communication (Lestari et al., 2019).

English language instruction plays a pivotal role in Indonesian IB schools as both a subject and a medium for promoting international mindedness (Indrayadi, 2024; Karimullah et al., 2021). Within these contexts, English is taught not only for linguistic proficiency but also as a vehicle for fostering cultural understanding, reflective thinking, and ethical engagement. This aligns with the IB's mission to cultivate global citizens who can communicate effectively across cultures and contribute meaningfully to the world (Mutammimah et al., 2019).

At the core of the IB philosophy are three interrelated values: inquiry, reflective thinking, and principled action. Inquiry involves the pursuit of knowledge through curiosity, research, and critical questioning, fostering students' ability to construct meaning from diverse sources (Koşar & Dolapçıoğlu, 2021; Mutammimah et al., 2019). In English Language Teaching (ELT), inquiry allows learners to engage with language as a tool for exploration and expression rather than rote memorization. Reflective thinking encourages learners to evaluate their learning experiences and connect them to broader social, cultural, and ethical contexts, thus deepening their metacognitive and linguistic awareness (Naibaho, 2019; Shammari, 2022). Principled action refers to the application of learning toward ethical behavior, promoting students' responsibility, empathy, and respect in both local and global communication (DeSutter & Stieff, 2017). Together, these values form a holistic educational approach that integrates academic learning with socio-emotional development, especially within language classrooms.

Principled action, which underscores ethical and moral behavior, also plays a crucial role in English instruction (DeSutter & Stieff, 2017). This value encourages students to use language responsibly, fostering meaningful and ethical communication in both local and global contexts. Together, these values provide a robust foundation for IB education, enabling students to become critical thinkers, ethical individuals, and culturally aware global citizens (Hacking et al., 2018; Jaafar et al., 2023). By integrating these principles into English instruction, the IB Program seeks to achieve holistic education that combines linguistic proficiency with intercultural understanding.

Although these values have been globally praised, their implementation in Indonesian contexts faces systemic challenges. Teachers often struggle with aligning IB's student-centered, reflective pedagogy with Indonesia's exam-oriented curriculum, which tends to emphasize grammatical precision and standardized outcomes over inquiry and critical engagement (Ferguson, 2024). Additionally, cultural expectations that prioritize teacher authority and passive learning can create resistance to the autonomy and dialogic learning modes advocated by the IB framework. These tensions necessitate further investigation into how IB values are localized and operationalized in the ELT practices of Indonesian educators.

Existing research has explored various aspects of the IB framework but often lacks a focused analysis of its application within ELT in Indonesia. Studies such as Koterwas (2022) have examined the influence of inquiry on academic performance but overlook its implications for language development. Similarly, Mutammimah et al. (2019) and Nicol (2021) have touched on reflective thinking and inquiry, but their discussions do not provide a comprehensive understanding of how these values shape English teaching specifically. Moreover, there remains limited empirical evidence on how principled action is integrated into daily classroom practices and its role in enhancing intercultural competence among EFL learners. This gap is particularly salient given the increasing urgency to align English language instruction with global competencies.

To address these gaps, this study critically investigates how IB values (i.e., inquiry, reflective thinking, and principled

action) are integrated into English instruction within Indonesian IB schools. By exploring teachers' perceptions and classroom practices, the study aims to illuminate how these values contribute to holistic language skill development and intercultural competence. It also identifies the challenges teachers face and assesses how systemic factors shape the integration of these core IB values in EFL education.

Although this study was conducted in a single, well-established IB-implemented school, the findings are discussed within the broader context of IB adoption in Indonesia. This approach allows for a focused, in-depth exploration of classroom practices while offering insights relevant to similar educational settings that are navigating the intersection of global educational frameworks and local realities. Accordingly, this study was guided by the following research questions.

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

2. How do EFL teachers in Indonesian IB schools integrate the core values of the IB program into their English language teaching practices?

3. What are the challenges EFL teachers face in implementing IB values in English language teaching, and how do these challenges affect student outcomes?

Theoretical Framework

International Baccalaureate Values in the Context of Global Education

The IB program represents a transformative approach to education, grounded in inquiry-based learning, principled action, and global citizenship. Central to this framework is the cultivation of curiosity and critical thinking through inquiry-driven pedagogy, which enhances student engagement and achievement across diverse cultural contexts (Budiharso et al., 2024). This approach not only fosters intellectual independence but also prepares students to navigate complex, interdisciplinary challenges in a globalized world.

Equally integral to the IB philosophy is its emphasis on principled action, encouraging learners to become ethically responsible individuals. Studies indicate that IB students demonstrate a higher propensity for social responsibility compared to their non-IB peers (Souefi, 2021), underscoring the program's impact on moral development. Harshman and Augustine (2019) argue that IB educators play a pivotal role in fostering integrity and ethical decision-making through reflective and experiential learning. Such pedagogical strategies ensure that ethical values are not abstract ideals but are deeply embedded in students' daily practices and choices.

IB's commitment to global citizenship further reinforces its relevance in contemporary education. The program equips students to engage meaningfully with global issues by promoting intercultural understanding and valuing diversity. Research has shown that international learning experiences enhance intercultural competence (Trede et al., 2013), a skill vital for collaboration in pluralistic societies. As Maryono and Emilia (2022) affirm, this competence fosters empathy and cooperation across cultural boundaries. Collectively, the integration of intellectual, ethical, and intercultural dimensions, as advocated by Sheromova et al. (2020), positions IB graduates as well-rounded, socially conscious individuals capable of ethical leadership and collaborative problem-solving. The IB framework thus offers a holistic model for preparing learners to meet the demands of an increasingly interconnected and ethically complex world.

Mastery of English and Intercultural Competence in EFL Education

English language mastery in Indonesian EFL classrooms remains a complex challenge, often hindered by limited access to quality instructional resources and insufficient teacher training (Jon et al., 2021). Communicative competence is recognized as a key pedagogical goal, yet many teachers still lack the confidence to implement interactive, student-centered approaches effectively (Indrayadi, 2024; Jon et al., 2021). Moreover, English as a global lingua franca demands not only linguistic proficiency but also the development of intercultural competence, a skill increasingly central to EFL instruction.

Intercultural competence, defined as the ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries, is essential in preparing students for global engagement (Nurhayati, 2023; Sugiantoro et al., 2022). In Indonesia, integrating this dimension into English instruction supports students in navigating diverse perspectives, yet obstacles persist, including the scarcity of culturally relevant materials (Nurhayati, 2023; Yawan & Marhamah, 2024). Despite these limitations, incorporating intercultural themes into curricula has been shown to enhance both motivation and cross-cultural awareness (Fathiyah et al., 2020), aligning closely with the IB's emphasis on international-mindedness and global citizenship (Budiharso et al., 2024).

This alignment is further supported by sociocultural learning theories, particularly Vygotsky's emphasis on the role of social interaction in cognitive development (Ohreen et al., 2022). Students exposed to intercultural environments

demonstrate increased critical thinking and cultural sensitivity (Bachtiar et al., 2024), underscoring the pedagogical value of such integration. In the context of IB schools in Indonesia, fostering intercultural competence enhances the holistic nature of language education, positioning English not only as a subject of study but also as a medium for cultivating global competencies (Boy Jon et al., 2021).

The Relationship Between IB Values and EFL Teaching

The integration of International Baccalaureate (IB) values into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching establishes a pedagogical foundation rooted in inquiry, reflection, and principled action. Inquiry-based learning (IBL), a core tenet of the IB framework, enhances critical thinking and higher-order language skills, particularly when combined with technology-enhanced formative assessment (TEFA), as evidenced by improved writing outcomes in EFL contexts (Huang et al., 2024). This approach aligns with Kolb's experiential learning theory, where reflective cycles facilitate deep learning and the development of cognitive and ethical competencies (Mutammimah et al., 2019).

Recent studies emphasize the transformative potential of integrating IB values in EFL classrooms. Chaerunnisa et al. (2024) report that student-centered, inquiry-based instruction fosters intrinsic motivation and strengthens learners' global awareness. Similarly, project-based methodologies, another manifestation of IB pedagogy, promote autonomy, creativity, and collaboration, aligning language learning with real-world challenges. These approaches do not merely develop linguistic proficiency but also cultivate holistic learner identities (Huang et al., 2024).

In the Indonesian context, evidence suggests that EFL teachers who embrace IB values achieve notable gains in student engagement, intercultural competence, and learning outcomes (Lestari et al., 2019; Mutammimah et al., 2019). However, such integration requires robust professional development to equip educators with the pedagogical skills necessary for meaningful application. Ultimately, the alignment of IB values with EFL instruction offers a practical and impactful framework that transcends theoretical ideals, enabling students to navigate an increasingly interconnected and culturally complex world.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to critically investigate how EFL teachers integrate IB values, namely, inquiry, reflective thinking, and principled action, within ELT practices. This approach was chosen to allow in-depth exploration of teacher beliefs, contextual practices, and pedagogical challenges in a naturalistic setting (Bachtiar et al., 2024). Importantly, the setting for this research was a single officially certified IB World School in Indonesia. The school was selected as an exemplar site due to its decade-long history of IB implementation, encompassing the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and its documented commitment to embedding IB values into cross-disciplinary instruction, including English.

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted in an urban-based IB World School officially authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization. This institution has implemented IB programmes for over ten years and currently offers the MYP. The school was purposively selected because of its maturity in applying IB values, consistent participation in IB teacher workshops, and integration of inquiry-driven instruction into English language learning.

Seven EFL teachers participated in this study, selected through purposive sampling to ensure they had relevant experience and direct involvement with the IB framework. All participants had at least five years of general teaching experience, and at least three years specifically in IB settings. All the participants were female teachers, holding bachelor's degrees in English education, with two holding master's degrees in English language education. Their teaching responsibilities spanned grades 7 through 9, covering the MYP.

Data Analysis

The data derived from interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis were examined using both thematic and narrative analysis. Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns in teaching practices and teacher perceptions regarding the integration of IB values. Categories were developed inductively from the data, enabling an in-depth understanding of successes, challenges, and pedagogical

strategies. Concurrently, narrative analysis was employed to explore teachers' lived experiences, illuminating how they navigated curricular demands and devised contextually relevant solutions. This dual approach offered a holistic perspective on the intersection between belief systems and instructional realities in IB-oriented English classrooms. Drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, the coding process involved extracting salient story elements, categorizing them into meaningful themes, and assigning precise code labels. Events were bracketed and annotated with code words or phrases that encapsulated their pedagogical significance. This process allowed the researcher to capture both the structural patterns and the nuanced trajectories of teacher agency and adaptation. Ultimately, the integration of thematic and narrative techniques ensured analytic depth and preserved the integrity of individual professional narratives (Nowell et al., 2017).

Results

Teachers' Beliefs and Roles in Teaching English within the IB Framework

The results show that Indonesian EFL teachers operating within the IB framework perceive education as a transformative endeavour aimed at fostering lifelong learning, personal growth, and societal contribution. These teachers stress that education goes beyond content delivery, aiming to develop curious, reflective, globally minded learners. One teacher stated, "Our goal is not just teaching grammar, but building thinkers who understand their role as part of a global society" (Int.T02.ET). Embracing a holistic approach, they see themselves as central to nurturing students' critical thinking and emotional readiness for global engagement.

In addition, the findings indicate that teachers prioritize student-centered learning by fostering engagement, relevance, and active participation. They view active, inquiry-based approaches as essential for promoting curiosity and critical thinking. This aligns with the IB's emphasis on student agency. Through these practices, teachers aim to create dynamic classrooms that support deeper, more meaningful learning.

Another key finding highlights teachers' emphasis on emotional engagement as essential to learning. They believe that fostering strong emotional connections enhances student motivation and comprehension. By creating a supportive and nurturing environment, teachers help students engage more deeply with academic content. The following quote represents the participant's view.

"In my experience, when students feel emotionally safe and valued, they're more willing to take language risks, ask questions, and engage, making emotional connection not optional, but essential for deeper academic learning" (Int.T04.VET).

Furthermore, the results highlight that high-quality teaching within the IB framework goes beyond content delivery by fostering essential life skills such as communication, critical thinking, and reflection, preparing students for both academic and real-world challenges. Teachers value a curriculum that integrates interdisciplinary perspectives, allowing English language instruction to connect with subjects like history or science. This adaptable, inquiry-driven approach supports the IB's aim of developing lifelong learners equipped with a holistic, contextually relevant skill set for meaningful engagement in contemporary and future society.

Another noteworthy finding highlights the importance of continuous professional development in shaping English teaching practices. Teachers view their roles as dynamic, requiring ongoing learning of innovative methodologies and digital integration to align with the IB's global and interdisciplinary focus. Collaboration with colleagues across disciplines also emerges as a key strategy, enabling the design of culturally and academically enriched lessons. Such collaboration broadens perspectives and supports more effective, contextually relevant English language instruction.

Lastly, the results indicate that the global orientation of the IB framework strongly shapes teachers' practices. Teachers embed the IB learner profile into English instruction to foster global competence by emphasizing open-mindedness, reflection, and intercultural understanding. English is taught as a language and a medium for promoting cultural awareness and empathy. This approach aligns with the IB's mission to develop socially responsible learners capable of engaging meaningfully in a multicultural world.

Integrating the Core Values of the IB Program into English Language Teaching

Reflective thinking emerged prominently, where strategies like journaling and peer feedback were utilized. One teacher stated, "I often ask my students to reflect on how the lesson changed their view about global issues, not just whether they mastered the vocabulary" (Int.T04.NT). Student reflective journals, reviewed during document analysis, revealed prompts such as 'How does learning English help you engage with the world more ethically?', showcasing the integration of reflection into the learning process. This practice fostered deeper connections between students' linguistic development and their

sense of identity, enabling them to understand how their language learning shapes their engagement with diverse cultural environments.

To implement reflective thinking effectively, the teachers employed strategies such as journaling, peer feedback, and guided questioning. Journaling encouraged students to document their learning trajectories while engaging in critical self-assessment, making it an effective tool for introspection and growth. For instance, during reflective journaling tasks over six weeks, one observed student demonstrated notable improvement in grammatical accuracy and self-correction awareness in written English, moving from B1 to low B2 proficiency based on CEFR-aligned rubrics. Peer feedback fostered collaborative learning, allowing students to gain insights from their peers' perspectives and enhancing the inclusivity of the learning environment. Guided questioning, through prompts like "How does this language task help you understand cultural differences?" provided students with a structured framework for linking language acquisition to global issues.

In addition to reflective strategies, some teachers reported leveraging digital platforms to support students' language development. Tools such as Grammarly and Write & Improve were used to provide AI-generated feedback on writing tasks, allowing students to revise their texts based on clarity, coherence, and grammar suggestions. These tools not only supported independent learning but also mirrored the IB's emphasis on reflective cycles and learner autonomy. In other cases, virtual pen-pal programs and online intercultural projects enabled students to engage in meaningful cross-cultural communication, reinforcing the IB's global learning objectives through real-time language use.

Despite its advantages, integrating reflective thinking into the EFL classroom presented significant challenges. The participating teachers noted that many students initially struggled with articulating reflections and drawing connections between their learning and wider societal contexts, largely due to the lack of emphasis on critical reflection in traditional Indonesian education. Furthermore, the constraints of exam-oriented curricula left limited time for reflective activities, making it difficult to balance reflective practices with academic performance demands. These challenges underscore the need for targeted professional development and curriculum adjustments to support teachers in embedding reflective thinking effectively into their instructional practices.

Principled action, another core value of the IB program, emerged as a pivotal force in promoting ethical communication and intercultural understanding within English language teaching. Teachers reported that it encouraged students to engage respectfully and responsibly across diverse cultural contexts through global issue debates, cultural simulations, and collaborative problem-solving tasks. These practices enhanced language proficiency and fostered ethical reasoning and cultural empathy. Teachers observed increased student awareness of ethical considerations and appreciation for differing perspectives, reinforced by educators modelling ethical behaviour and cultural sensitivity. However, the full integration of principled action was often constrained by the pressures of curriculum coverage and exam preparation, underscoring the need for greater institutional support to sustain these value-based pedagogies.

Collaborative learning environments fostered through principled action further demonstrated its impact on language learning and intercultural competence. The teachers implemented group projects that brought together students from varied cultural backgrounds, encouraging constructive navigation of differences. These collaborative tasks not only bolstered students' linguistic abilities but also nurtured interpersonal skills essential for effective communication in global contexts. The emphasis on mutual respect and understanding within these activities directly aligned with the IB mission of preparing students for a multicultural world.

Intercultural competence is a key component of EFL instruction, aligned with the IB's emphasis on global perspectives. Teachers stressed the need to go beyond language mechanics to nurture cultural awareness and empathy. Students developed a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and global interconnectedness by analyzing texts, films, and engaging in real-life interactions.

Challenges in Implementing IB Values in EFL Teaching

The implementation of core IB principles, such as inquiry, reflection, and critical thinking, in the context of EFL teaching in Indonesia faces multiple significant challenges. One major challenge lies in the tension between Indonesia's traditional educational culture and the inquiry-driven, student-centered principles of the IB framework. The results reveal that there is a strong cultural emphasis on group conformity and the avoidance of conflict in Indonesia, which discourages students from questioning ideas or engaging in debates.

In addition, Intercultural competence is challenged by Indonesia's traditional teacher-student dynamic, which remains teacher-centered and authority-driven. This contrasts with the IB's emphasis on student autonomy and critical thinking, requiring a significant shift in classroom roles and pedagogical mindset. The difficulty is compounded by limited access to inquiry-based materials, with teachers citing time constraints

and a lack of relevant resources as key barriers to fully integrating IB values.

Furthermore, professional development opportunities focused on IB pedagogy were perceived as inadequate. The results indicate that although teachers received initial exposure to IB frameworks, there was a consensus that continuous, targeted professional development was necessary for them to deepen their understanding and refine their application of IB principles. The lack of sustained support structures left many teachers feeling unprepared to fully embrace the IB framework, resulting in less-than-ideal learning experiences for students.

Another significant challenge is students' resistance to traditional, teacher-centred instruction. Transitioning to an inquiry-based approach demands active participation, which can be overwhelming for learners more familiar with passive, directive learning. This resistance reflects deeper cultural norms about teacher authority and requires sustained effort from educators to gradually cultivate a more student-centred learning environment.

Cultural factors within the classroom also play a crucial role in hindering the development of critical thinking and reflective practices, which are central to the IB approach. The results reveal that there is a strong cultural emphasis on group conformity and the avoidance of conflict in Indonesia, which discourages students from questioning ideas or engaging in debates. It was noted that overcoming these deeply ingrained cultural values requires a delicate balance, with teachers needing to foster individual critical engagement while maintaining respect for group harmony.

Lastly, the personal transformation required for teachers to adopt an inquiry-based, student-centred approach presents a considerable challenge. The findings highlight that many educators reported that shifting from a traditional, knowledge-delivery role to that of a facilitator of learning required a complete rethinking of their teaching philosophy. This transformation, though intellectually stimulating, presented both emotional and pedagogical challenges, with many teachers feeling ill-prepared to adopt unfamiliar teaching strategies. This shift, though necessary for the effective implementation of IB principles, is often slow and complex, posing further obstacles to the integration of IB values in EFL education.

Opportunities for Enhancing the Quality of EFL Education through IB

Despite the challenges teachers face, several opportunities for enhancing the quality of EFL education through integrating IB values emerged from the data. One prominent opportunity was the potential of IB to foster critical thinking and autonomous learning among students. Teachers noted that inquiry-based learning encouraged students to engage more deeply with texts and develop their communicative competence when effectively implemented. This process was viewed as pivotal for enhancing students' language proficiency, as it moved beyond rote memorization and towards developing critical thinking skills essential for navigating real-world language use. Such an approach is integral in preparing students for the demands of a globalized society, where language proficiency is not merely about grammatical accuracy but about effective communication in diverse contexts.

In addition to fostering critical thinking, the reflective nature of the IB approach was seen as a significant opportunity for improving students' language acquisition. Teachers observed that reflection enabled students to take a deeper look at their own learning processes, which in turn facilitated more targeted and self-directed improvements. This self-awareness was considered crucial for language development, as it encouraged students to recognize both their strengths and areas for improvement. Such reflective practices contribute to linguistic growth and empower students to become lifelong learners, aligning with the IB's focus on fostering educational autonomy.

Another critical opportunity identified was the potential of the IB framework to foster collaborative learning, which significantly enhanced students' communicative competence in English. Teachers noted that collaborative tasks offered real-life, meaningful language use contexts, increasing engagement and proficiency. This approach also cultivated essential social skills such as teamwork and effective communication, which are crucial in today's globalized society. Overall, the collaborative environment strengthened language development and prepared students to work in diverse, multicultural settings for future academic and professional success.

Furthermore, teachers frequently cited the opportunity for ongoing professional development through the IB framework to enhance the quality of EFL education. Teachers who participated in IB training expressed the value of continuous professional learning and how it helped refine their teaching practices. This ongoing development was seen as crucial for staying current with pedagogical trends and equipping teachers with new tools and strategies to improve student engagement and outcomes. Such professional development not only enhances teachers' confidence but also improves their ability to implement IB values in the classroom, leading to more effective language teaching.

Finally, integrating IB values was recognized as an opportunity to align the EFL curriculum with global educational frameworks, thereby preparing students for international opportunities. Teachers identified the alignment of IB values

with global citizenship and intercultural understanding as a key benefit of the program. This approach was seen as essential for developing students' skills in navigating diverse cultural contexts, which are increasingly important in today's interconnected world. Such a global perspective, which emphasizes inquiry, reflection, and collaboration, positions students not only as proficient language users but also as informed, responsible global citizens.

Discussion

The findings underscore that Indonesian EFL teachers operating within the IB framework adopt a transformative and holistic educational approach. Central to this approach is the emphasis on student-centred and inquiry-based learning environments that promote critical engagement and equip students to navigate the complexities of diverse, real-world contexts. As supported by Chaerunnisa et al. (2024) and Sam (2024), inquiry-based pedagogies enhance both student engagement and global competence. These findings demonstrate that IB-aligned teaching fosters significant gains in students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening competencies. Teachers observed that students improved in articulating ideas, writing reflections, engaging in academic dialogue, and interpreting diverse texts. This supports a broader implication: IB practices, when contextually adapted, directly enhance core language skills across communicative domains. Similarly, Attard et al. (2021) demonstrated that such practices address intercultural complexities, equipping students with essential skills for globalized interactions. However, systemic challenges persist, as highlighted by Habibi et al. (2021), who identified the tension between transformative pedagogies and Indonesia's traditional, policy-driven educational framework. Addressing these challenges requires robust support systems to fully realize the potential of IB-aligned methodologies.

The findings further highlighted the critical importance of cultivating strong emotional bonds with students. By integrating essential life skills, such as communication and critical thinking, into their pedagogical practices, educators not only advance linguistic proficiency but also prepare students to navigate societal and professional challenges effectively. This aligns with Hapsari's (2019) assertion that motivational strategies drive student engagement and improve learning outcomes in Indonesian EFL contexts. Furthermore, Gayatri et al. (2023) argued that blended learning environments integrating active methodologies and information and communications technology (ICT) effectively prepare students for real-world challenges by fostering critical thinking and collaboration. These findings are corroborated by Muslim et al. (2020), who demonstrated that translanguaging strategies enhance both cognitive and social dimensions of learning, fostering inclusive and supportive classroom dynamics.

Reflective thinking emerged as a cornerstone of effective pedagogy, fostering cultural sensitivity and self-awareness among students. Teachers employed strategies such as journaling and peer feedback to bridge language learning with personal and cultural identities, thereby deepening students' understanding of global citizenship. Complementing these reflective approaches, teachers' use of digital tools such as AI writing feedback platforms and virtual exchanges demonstrates how technology can enhance IB-aligned pedagogy. These tools enabled personalized, iterative feedback and intercultural dialogue, reinforcing the inquiry and communication dimensions of the IB framework. This is consistent with Gayatri et al. (2023), who found that integrating technology into EFL instruction fosters active learning and strengthens students' engagement with real-world communication contexts.

This finding aligns with Fuertes-Camacho et al. (2021), who highlighted the efficacy of reflective practices in cultivating self-awareness and cultural sensitivity. Similarly, Mohamed et al. (2022) demonstrated how integrating interculturality into EFL instruction enhances students' understanding of their cultural identities while fostering global citizenship. Borko et al. (2017) further underscored the value of collaborative lesson studies in refining reflective practices and improving student-centred pedagogical outcomes.

Despite these strengths, significant challenges remain. Aligning reflective and inquiry-based practices with exam-oriented curricula poses a considerable obstacle, as students often resist transitioning from teacher-centred approaches rooted in cultural norms of conformity and authority. Targeted professional development is essential to equip teachers with the skills and strategies needed to implement IB-aligned methodologies effectively. Maltagliati et al. (2023) identified policy-driven constraints, such as an overemphasis on examinations, as a critical barrier to innovative teaching practices. Meutstege et al. (2023) emphasized the need for professional development to address cultural resistance and facilitate the implementation of differentiated instruction. Moreover, Grimberg and Gummer (2019) argued that teacher training aligned with global standards is vital for overcoming systemic and cultural challenges, ensuring a consistent application of IB principles.

The principle of ethical communication, as encapsulated by the IB's value of principled action, was evident in classroom activities such as debates and collaborative tasks. These activities fostered respect, empathy, and ethical reasoning alongside linguistic proficiency. However, balancing this focus

with the demands of exam preparation underscores the need for additional resources and institutional support. Munandar and Newton (2021) emphasized the importance of principled action in developing respect and empathy through intercultural activities in EFL classrooms. Ferri (2019) and Lee (2018) further highlighted the role of debates and collaborative projects in fostering critical thinking, ethical communication, and linguistic competence.

Finally, the emphasis on intercultural competence reflects a deliberate commitment to broadening students' perspectives through engagement with diverse cultures and global issues. Strategies such as collaborative projects, multimedia resources, and discussions were integral to fostering empathy and understanding, aligning with the IB's mission of preparing students for multicultural environments. Ferdiansyah et al. (2023) noted that embedding cultural sensitivity into language instruction equips students to navigate diverse cultural contexts effectively. Griffith and Lim (2024) highlight that attaining genuine proficiency in a foreign language extends beyond mastering grammar and vocabulary. It necessitates cultural awareness to understand the appropriate use of language in various contexts. Additionally, Cancino and Nuñez (2023) highlight how intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence are essential for understanding and promoting effective communication in multicultural classrooms.

In conclusion, the findings illustrate the transformative potential of IB values and frameworks in enhancing English language education in Indonesia. By fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and global citizenship, these methodologies offer significant opportunities for student development (Budiharso et al., 2024; Chaerunnisa et al., 2024). However, addressing systemic and cultural barriers is crucial for their effective implementation. Continuous professional development and strategic curriculum alignment are imperative to empower EFL educators to integrate IB principles effectively, thereby enabling students to thrive in an interconnected global landscape (Ferguson, 2024; Salim Saif Al-Jardani, 2021).

However, these practices risk remaining peripheral rather than systemic without alignment between school-level implementation and national curriculum policies. Indonesia's national curriculum, while competency-based in design, often lacks the assessment flexibility and teacher autonomy necessary to support inquiry-driven learning. This misalignment can constrain teachers' ability to integrate IB values meaningfully. Therefore, policy reform should prioritize the integration of formative, reflective, and intercultural learning benchmarks into national standards. Doing so would not only legitimize IB-aligned practices within broader EFL instruction but also encourage more schools to adopt globally responsive pedagogies.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has critically explored the integration of core IB values (i.e., inquiry, reflective thinking, and principled action) within ELT in Indonesian IB schools. The findings highlight that these values significantly contribute to students' development, not only in terms of global awareness and intercultural competence but also in core language skills, namely, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Practices such as reflective journaling, inquiry-based discussions, and collaborative tasks rooted in ethical reasoning were shown to strengthen both linguistic proficiency and students' capacity for empathetic, culturally sensitive communication. However, the implementation of these values remains challenged by rigid, exam-oriented curricula, limited institutional resources, and deeply ingrained teacher-centred traditions.

To move forward, several strategic efforts are necessary. First, there is an urgent need to enhance professional development pathways. Teachers require continuous and contextually relevant training through IB-certified programs, collaborative lesson studies, and peer mentoring systems that focus specifically on implementing inquiry-based and reflective pedagogies. In parallel, integrating digital tools into ELT practices can provide powerful support for the IB approach. Platforms offering AI-driven feedback on writing, virtual exchange projects, and tools for multimodal content creation can not only facilitate more individualized and authentic learning but also expand students' access to real-world intercultural communication experiences. Finally, for these innovations to be sustainable, greater policy and curricular alignment is essential. National education frameworks must accommodate the flexibility required by the IB philosophy by embedding alternative assessment models, recognizing formative and reflective learning outcomes, and allowing teachers greater pedagogical autonomy.

Although this study is limited to a single school context, it offers grounded insights into how IB values can transform English instruction when thoughtfully and systematically applied. Future research should examine these dynamics across a broader range of institutions and over longer periods to assess their sustained impact. Ultimately, this research affirms that aligning ELT with IB principles represents a meaningful step toward cultivating learners who are linguistically skilled, ethically engaged, and globally competent, which is essential in an increasingly interconnected world.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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