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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS A GLOBAL LINGUA FRANCA IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract. The article analyses the role of the English language as a global lingua franca in international relations. The historical preconditions for the formation of such a status, features of the use of English in diplomacy, international organizations and intercultural communication are considered. Special attention is given to the benefits and challenges associated with the dominance of English in global politics, as well as its impact on the training of international professionals. The key role of English in the current system of international interaction and its future prospects are concluded.

Key words. Globalization, Lingua Franca (ELF), Language policy, International diplomacy, education, scientific communication, international business , Cross-cultural communication , Language in international relations.

Introduction

The Globalization of English and Its Role in the International System

25-november 2025

The role of the English language in the scientific and academic world, as well as its influence on international diplomacy, has significantly increased. Today, English has become the primary medium of instruction in universities around the world and serves as a dominant language for leading scientific journals and international research collaborations. As globalization accelerates, the importance of English in academia and scientific communication continues to grow. Moreover, the language has evolved into one of the main tools of global communication used across all spheres of professional and social interactions.

English now functions as a bridge connecting scholars from different countries, enabling them to exchange ideas, findings, and innovations effectively. In the field of international diplomacy, a large share of online and offline conferences, intergovernmental meetings, and discussions on global challenges are conducted in English. Historically, Latin served as a primary language of scientific communication. However, in the 18th century, with the expansion of scientific research and the growing influence of the British Empire, English gradually replaced Latin and French in many spheres as a dominant language. By the 20th century, English had become the central language of academic publishing and scholarly exchange, particularly due to the significant role of academic institutions and scientific and technological research in the United States.

Today, English occupies an indispensable position not only in science but also in international relations. Major global forums, high-level international conferences, intergovernmental negotiations, political reports, and cooperation platforms are predominantly conducted in English. For this reason, fluency in English is considered a fundamental requirement for diplomats and envoys representing their countries. Proficiency in English not only enables a deeper understanding of international political processes but also provides broader opportunities for active participation in global

25-november 2025

diplomatic communication, equal engagement in negotiations, effective cooperation with international organizations, and the development of foreign policy relations. For this reason, English has become an integral component of the modern diplomatic system for many countries and represents a strategic instrument that determines competitiveness in the international arena.

The establishment of English as the primary language of science and diplomacy occurred gradually. The main driving force behind this transformation was the rise of the British Empire and its extensive scientific and cultural influence on a global scale. In the 18th century, as the British Empire expanded its control over large parts of the world, English became to be used as the language of administration, trade, and education in many territories. This significantly contributed to the formation of English as a global medium of communication.

In the 20th century, the emergence of the United States as a world superpower further strengthened the international role of English. David Crystal comments on this phenomenon, noting: “*The spread of English around the world has reached a point where it is now the dominant language of science, technology, business and international diplomacy, making it the most important language for academic and scientific communication*” (2003). Scientific achievements emerging in the United States during the mid-20th century—particularly in fields such as physics, medicine, and technology—were predominantly published in English, and a large share of global scientific information was disseminated in this language.

In addition, major publishing houses that produce scientific literature, such as Elsevier, Springer, Wiley and others, primarily publish books and journals in English. This has encouraged scholars and researchers from other countries to acquire a higher level of proficiency in the language. Moreover, many of the world’s top-ranking universities—according to the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings*, including the

25-november 2025

University of Oxford (ranked 1st), the University of Cambridge (ranked 2nd), and Stanford University (ranked 3rd) are located in English-speaking countries, and the majority of instruction is conducted in English. (daryo.uz) This has further contributed to the growing popularity of the language among young people.

The predominance of English can often be explained by globalization and technological advancement. The development of global mass media has further facilitated English-language diplomacy through platforms such as CNN, BBC, and other online channels (Van Paris, 2011). It is important to note that English possesses several advantages as a common diplomatic language. For instance, its widespread use in diplomacy has enhanced the efficiency of communication between states. Research indicates that over 85% of international treaties and agreements are conducted in English. In addition, English fosters global connections and opportunities. As the most widely spoken second language, it allows diplomats from different countries to communicate freely without relying extensively on translation services. International organizations such as NATO, World Trade Organization (WTO) European Union, WHO and other global institutions use English in the majority of their meetings, which facilitates smoother and more efficient decision-making processes (Rayimaliyeva, 2025).

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

Throughout human history, the term *lingua franca* has been consistently applied to languages used primarily for trade, religious purposes, and diplomacy. Any language regularly employed as a means of communication between speakers with different native languages can be considered a lingua franca.

For many years, French was regarded as the lingua franca of Western civilization. For centuries, diplomats used this language to communicate with one another, and even

25-november 2025

several previous presidents were fluent in French. However, today English is recognized as a global lingua franca. Currently, more than 900 million people speak English as either a first or second language, and it has become a dominant language in international arena, business and diplomacy. Some may argue that more people speak Chinese than English, and this is true. Nevertheless, the key difference between the two languages lies in the fact that the rest of the world generally does not learn Chinese. Although Chinese has more than 900 million native speakers, the number of additional learners is less than 200 million, and it is not widely used outside China. English, on the other hand, is fully accepted as a global lingua franca, since according to some estimates, nearly 80% of English speakers worldwide are non-native speakers (Erzhanova, 2022).

How Lingua Franca used?

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) differs from standard English in several important ways. Because ELF is primarily used in spoken communication, less emphasis is placed on strict grammatical rules. Features such as the omission of certain consonant sounds, the addition of extra vowel sounds, and a general prioritization of effective and rapid communication over grammatical accuracy are commonly observed in ELF interactions.

Despite its widespread use and practical value across numerous fields, some scholars and linguists interpret ELF as a form of *linguistic imperialism*. This concept became widely known after Robert Phillipson introduced it in his 1992 book of the same name. According to Phillipson, English has long functioned as a tool for colonization, cultural domination, and the subordination of other nations. (2009). Some critics argue that the increasing spread of ELF may lead to unstructured language learning and the distortion of linguistic norms. As a result, ELF speakers may ultimately communicate inaccurately both in their native language and in English.

25-november 2025

Nevertheless, despite such criticisms, ELF continues to flourish in many countries and, at the same time, enriches the language through the incorporation of diverse aphorisms and expressions.

The spread of a language in different countries of the world depends on the language policy of the state—that is, the official attitude of the government toward the language or languages of the country, as well as toward foreign languages, as established in policy documents and implemented through practical measures. This attitude toward language is manifested in domestic life, education, culture, the economy, interstate relations, and language reforms.

The language policy of each country also affects the teaching of English within that country. This is primarily because language has always played an important role in education as a key cultural marker for each nation and its people.

In our university as well English is taught. For the students who are studying in international relations proficiency in English is not just a requirement of the curriculum, but an important professional need. Almost most of the materials like articles, analyses, reports of international organizations are published in English and we read original sources, participate in English-language conferences, prepare presentations and projects.

English also exerts a significant influence on international relations. Several factors underline its importance: it serves as an international common language, the language of academia, and an essential tool in international commerce and business. Since World War II, English has largely replaced French, notably in documents such as the Treaty of Versailles, which was written in both French and English. According to Aleshina (2017), English has become a lingua franca because it provides a common and effective mode of communication, enabling people to understand each other regardless of their ethical or cultural backgrounds. Among the various languages used in diplomacy, English is arguably the most popular and widely preferred. Approximately 1.1 billion people

25-november 2025

consider English a significant foreign or second language (Lyons, 2021). It is associated with prestige and power and can be considered a gatekeeper to economic and social advancement. Most of the world's leading scientific journals are published in English. Moreover, English continues to shape the future of international law, as noted by Buerki et al. (2020). It is the language of choice for global communication, with both practical and political implications. Legal negotiations and inter-state diplomatic processes are conducted primarily in English. Examining the role of language in the development, application, and study of international law reveals numerous ways in which language is closely linked to power within the international legal system.

Conclusion

The English language has developed over many centuries and, in today's era of globalization, occupies a significant role in various spheres, including diplomacy, international business, and scientific research. It has become one of the most important tools for communication and professional engagement worldwide. Many developed countries, as well as those in the process of development, have been skillfully implementing policies to promote English proficiency among their populations, encouraging citizens to achieve high levels of mastery in the language.

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25-november 2025

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25-november 2025

