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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract: The primary language of international relations and diplomacy is English. The representatives of international bodies communicate in the English language. It is vital to establish English as the official language for international organizations in facilitating more efficient collaboration internationally. English dominance in international communication becomes increasingly apparent. This study aimed at gaining a more in-depth understanding of the significance of the English language. It also aimed at identifying, describing, and explaining the importance of the English language in public diplomacy and international relations. The researcher used the descriptive research method in the study, notably; secondary data were used for collecting reliable conclusions for the research. The findings suggested that the adoption of formulaic language, particularly, idioms and idiomatic expressions to further embellish the phrases used in the arena of international relations or policy is a peculiarity of the English language. The study concluded that formulaic language and the adoption and usage of idioms is a distinguishing feature that diplomats and those who have a career in international law and international relations should master.

Keywords: International Relations; English; Language; Diplomacy; Law; Communication; Policy

INTRODUCTION

The present era is of globalization, and with this increasing concept, international relations are continuously expanding. With the growing relations, the countries are performing on a single platform. In this situation, it is vital to communicate effectively with the appropriate application of language. To establish and strengthen international relations, proper communication is essential. Communication can be verbal or written; still, the English language is considered the language of business, which is usually communicated worldwide to avoid further misunderstandings. Aaliyah (2021) says that English can be said as the language of international trade and relations. The English language is widely used to share thoughts and ideas. Although it may not be the most spoken language worldwide, it is still the official language of around 53 nations and is spoken by approximately 400 million people.

Several reasons can describe the importance of the English language as it is an international common tongue, the language of academia, and essential while working in international commerce or business. English has also replaced the French language since WWII, notably with the Treaty of Versailles which was written in French and English. The English language has become the lingua franca because this is the common language and most suitable mode of communication that helps people understand each other regardless of any ethical or cultural background as per Aleshina (2017).

Further, another role of the English language is to strengthen western influence over other countries. It enhances domination and facilitates better communication, and can be referred to as an appropriate tool to attain various objectives of multiple individuals. Among various diplomatic languages, English can be said as the most popular one. This language is the most preferred choice amongst the masses. Approximately 1.1 billion people consider English as a significant foreign or second language (Lyons 2021). It is the language of prestige and power and thus can be said as a gatekeeper to economic and social progress. According to Brannen (2017), English is an official working language in most international organizations. The rise of English in diplomacy started in 1919. The English language began as the language of three powerful tribes in the fifth century, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, and has since evolved into an international language.

Some unofficial global lingua franca also regards it due to mainly developed western countries' political, cultural, and economic power. Most of the world's crucial scientific journals are also published in the English language. Moreover, English is also shaping the future of international law says Buerki *et al.* (2020). This is the language that everyone chooses to communicate in, and it has both practical and political ramifications. This is the language in which legal negotiations and inter-state diplomacy take place. Examining the role of language in the development, application, and research of international law reveals a variety of ways in which language is linked to power in international law.

In terms of the creation of international law, English is now the main language in which inter-state diplomacy and negotiation over legal texts are conducted. This raises practical difficulties for those who do not have English as their native language, who may be at a disadvantage when it comes to the detailed, technical negotiations over the wording to be used in legal texts. Under pressure, it can be hard for non-native-speaking delegations to keep up with fast-moving negotiations and rapidly changing draft texts, a fact which offers a significant strategic advantage to English speakers. Choice of language also affects the application of international law by international organizations, including courts and tribunals. The same applies to public diplomacy and communication among parties. In practice, much of the work of these organizations is conducted in English. This raises concerns that those who do not speak English may be marginalized or excluded from the work of these bodies.

This marginalization or exclusion operates on two levels. The first is practical: without knowledge of English, individuals won't be eligible to work for these organizations, and, more generally, will be unable to engage effectively with their work. The second is symbolic: individuals and groups may feel that an institution that does not use their language does not truly represent them. This reflects, for example, the strong feelings around proposals to make Irish an official EU language, despite the fact that most, if not all, Irish speakers can also communicate in English.

The present paper is based on examining the importance of the English language in maintaining international relations and in public diplomacy. This is inclined towards concerning the research objectives. The study elaborates the significance of the English language in maintaining business relations, emphasizing the importance of public diplomacy, and bridging the global boundaries. Thus, it can be said that this language is vital to make the business steady in overcoming communication barriers in the global economy. This makes collaboration easy and enhances the awareness of objectives within the international business context. Awareness and understanding of the English language help in developing global opportunities and help the business expand its customer base by maintaining efficient relations.

According to Ches *et al.* (2017), the growing need for using the English language in international relations, international law, and diplomacy has promoted language learning as a necessary component of social and political inclusion, yet English has established itself as the dominant language. In this line, English for occupational purposes has been taken into consideration. English for occupational purposes is a branch of English for Specific Purposes and covers situations in which learners are studying English for work-related reasons. The topics are based on an analysis of their specific communicative needs in their work. In our context, it relates to English for diplomacy and international relations. English language learning is a process that sometimes may be considered challenging, as is the case with English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). This is because the English language in international relations and diplomacy requires learners to be at a higher proficiency in English because this type of language is professional. The goal of English for Occupational Purposes is to meet learners' occupational English language needs in their workplaces. In other words, the EOP is a method of second or foreign language teaching through which the learners' needs are evaluated initially and then the curricula and syllabus are designed based on their needs, wants, and lacks to develop their language skills for their academic or occupational purposes.

In this line, English for international relations and diplomacy has its distinguishing features. The importance of learning this type of language is undeniable. Diplomats, professionals, and academics in international relations are required to learn this type of language as it is considered a must in this career. In the past, diplomats, politicians, and those who have a career in law, international relations, public policy, communicated in

the English language through translation acknowledged Chou (2018). The translation in this type of communication has proven to be costly and impractical. Bilateral and multilateral communication between and among parties involved requires high proficiency language skills in all four skills of the language, i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Therefore, diplomats need to master all the language skills to be able to communicate effectively and efficiently. It is worth mentioning that the English language in diplomacy has some distinguishing features.

First of all, it is different from general English. Diplomats entering a career in diplomacy should learn the general English language first and become proficient so that they could continue with learning the EOP, notably, English for diplomacy. Secondly, its vocabulary is different from general English. Thirdly, another distinguishing feature of this type of language has a different style both in spoken and written language. Next, texts of diplomatic official documents contain a lot of terms and terminological word-combinations in English. In the views of Cull (2019) the use of formulaic language in diplomacy is very common. It includes compound words, fixed expressions, clichés, lexical metaphors, idioms, etc.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research objectives in this study were used to define the direction and/or content of the research investigation:

1. How the English language plays an important role in international relations?
2. What is the role of the English language in public diplomacy?
3. What is the extent of idioms and formulaic language adopted and used in the English language while communicating in public diplomacy and international relations?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study used the following research questions that guided the researcher in terms of data needed, data collection method, and data analysis:

1. To identify the importance of the English language in public diplomacy.
2. To determine the significance of the English language in international relations.
3. To emphasize the importance of public diplomacy in bridging global boundaries.
4. To describe and explain the usage and adoption of formulaic language and plain language in the English language in the arena of international relations or policy.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The overall significance of the study is the recognition of the English language in the world. Study results will help determine the importance of the English language in public diplomacy and international relations. This research will encourage innovative approaches to improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes, resulting in future internationally competitive skills. The individuals will have a better understanding of the importance of increasing the use of English as a primary language as a result of this research. The analysis offered in this paper will provide useful information for future research into numerous areas of the English language. In addition to this, the data collected will also help the readers to improve academically.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Use of English in Public Diplomacy

In public diplomacy, selecting the appropriate words is essential. Words are the building blocks of phrases. Each sentence should be a jumbled-up idea. It is preferable to employ short, concise, straightforward sentences if one wants to be clear, especially while utilizing a language that one does not fully know. In this sense, English is the most widely used diplomatic language. It is the first choice of both the public and legal affairs says Deng (2019). It is estimated that 1.1 billion people know English as a second or foreign language. English as a worldwide language has now become the language of power and status, English's current supremacy as a world language is undeniable. English is the contemporary worldwide business, scientific, technology, and aviation lingua franca. The English language retains its intact leader's status, allowing for the successful negotiation of diplomatic agreements amongst a wide range of allies.

There are several reasons behind the present trend of using English outside of English-speaking countries. Individuals who do not speak English will be unable to work for these organizations and, more broadly, will be unable to participate effectively in their work. Speaking English will provide people access to a whole new world of enjoyment, career, and more. Nowadays, it's difficult to imagine a young person who does not speak or study at least one language other than their mother tongue. In a variety of industries, globalization forces many individuals to communicate in English.

English is a universal language that may assist people in any situation. As a result, the English language is important in public diplomacy. It has been found that several types of governments in practice around the world maintain parity between discussions at global level summits cross country discussions select an English and a local language translator respectively to prevent any difference in understanding the root of the discussion.

Major world-class organizations like the United Nations, the WHO which work at a global level rely on the English language to issue any notification/information. It is also found that English is also becoming the preeminent language for academic communication, with English being used in the majority of important journals, conferences, learned societies, and scholarly works. English is spoken in so many nations, there are thousands of colleges and universities offering English programs all over the world. It is also evaluated that English is an especially significant language on the internet, with more than half of all information written in the language. Furthermore, according to Ferraro (2021), English-speaking nations are linked to some of the world's largest tech corporations. He also added English is also the language of scientific research and the most widely used language in the tourism industry.

Moreover, Hollywood as an industry which gave some of the most influential talents and individuals around the globe relied almost on English as their end product has users who could understand and comprehend English. Due to Hollywood's importance in worldwide media, a large number of films, television shows, and famous tunes are written in English. E-business has been progressing and achieving good results in the sector of industry and business, as it is largely used on the internet. It is also the language used by some international organizations such as the United Nations, the WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF, WTO, ILO, BRICS, INTERPOL, etc.

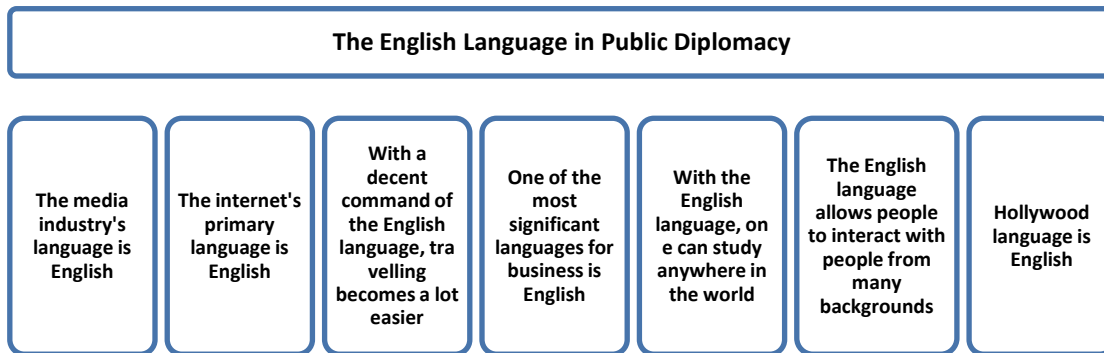


Figure 1: English Language in Public Diplomacy (Source: Author's depiction)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The language in which international law is conducted is important. The terminology people use to discuss international law has political and practical consequences. Realistically, English is the language of choice throughout countries. It has become the international language for cross-border trades, media, science, etc. Due to its span, English has become the language of the global workforce which operates

across continents. Conglomerates and corporations have organized their operations around English to preserve homogeneity among all sections of the workforce.

English is the most widely spoken language across the globe which gives an edge of comprehension to its users of global content says Grahovac (2020). Whether it's an international summit or a global event, English will be the dominant language used to establish a marketing environment around it. Furthermore, one must prepare the generation for globalization, and the first and most essential guideline is to go deep and local into the grassroots level, creating the foundation of English as an adaptable language that can be taught from the start of any individual's academic path.

Nowadays every line of the profession has its forums and community to share and exchange their experiences on a particular problem and all the information is available in English as well as local communication language. The reason it's available in English is for wider reach. English serves as a bridge between internal and external stakeholders, including a global workforce. This bond is only strengthened through good communication, which boosts a company's trustworthiness. According to estimates, two billion individuals around the world will be presently Studying It has evolved from a mark of the elite to a basic competence required of professional workers. It's analogous to how reading used to be a luxury a few generations earlier and has now evolved into a necessity. The majority of individuals who acquire English as a second language prepare themselves for a variety of professional opportunities in international business states by Gumenyuk *et al.* (2021).

In reality, most organizations that use English as their official language are aware of this. Individuals who do not speak English will be unable to work for these organizations and, more broadly, will be unable to participate effectively in their work. Furthermore, it is not just businesses that place a larger focus on English as a preferred means of communication; most governments and significant educational institutions in a variety of different language-speaking countries do as well. Outsourcing allowed those who spoke the language fluently to fly abroad and work with international companies temporarily. This phenomenon was highly profitable for the language-speaking workforce, and it prompted a substantial section of the people to learn the language. Kim (2017) demonstrates that another advantage of speaking English is the ability to find work, as most employers require language abilities, particularly communication skills in English. This is because the majority of businesses do business with other countries. Since there are so many options to work for foreign firms in today's global employment market, everyone is putting up his best effort to improve his English language skills. The receptivity for the English language is the DNA of the upcoming generations as many governments made English mandatory for the learning and teaching of any individual. Even if the preferred language would be local there would be a provision of English as an additional language. The entire education system of many countries has English as its foundation. Along with speaking fluently, effective

communication in writing is equally important for success. The key to learning and enriching the work with multiple options is a solid capacity to articulate the views in writing and verbally. Kristina *et al.* (2021), determine that employees that can communicate in English with partners and clients all across the world are in high demand. One may work as a translator, a language teacher, or an English marketing specialist for a multinational corporation if they speak English fluently. Learning English is a critical step toward achieving all of the objectives. Lee and Jonathan (2020) say that people will be capable of communicating with more people online and use more materials when they can communicate in English. The options are limitless (Figure 2).

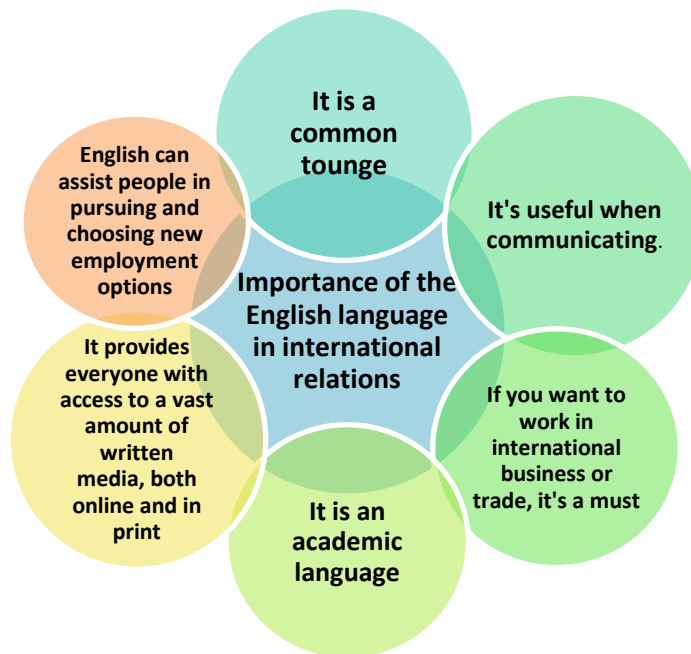


Figure 2: The Importance of the English Language in Maintaining International Relations
(Source: Author's depiction)

IDIOMS AND FORMULAIC LANGUAGE ADOPTED AND USED IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WHILE COMMUNICATING IN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The English language makes extensive use of idioms to enrich sentences used in international affairs and diplomacy. English is currently the most often used language for inter-state diplomacy and legal text negotiations in international relations. International organizations have a limited number of official languages and English is one of them, it is widely used in international law, including courts and tribunals.

Manor (2019) reports that there are a variety of idioms those countries employ while speaking in public diplomacy and international affairs. For example, the idiom 'Lame Duck' is frequently used in international relations to describe a politician who has lost his or her uniqueness and authority. The acronym 'NIMBY' means 'Not In My Backyard', and it is used when the officials of a country express their citizens' concerns regarding the development of new or extremely risky technology. 'BANANA' (Building Absolutely Nothing Anyone Near Anything) is another commonly employed acronym. This term is frequently used in international relations to describe a policy forbidding the construction of something that may cause inconvenience to people who already dwell in a certain location. In the realm of environmental safety, this word is usually used to express disapproval of certain environmentally damaging actions. As a result, English is the most often used language in international contacts and policies. Diplomacy is the backbone of inter-state or inter-organizational relations. In addition to this, diplomats are chosen by their government to represent and implement their country's foreign policy. Diplomats communicate in English, which, as Peniro and Jorde (2019) noted, has already acquired global characteristics.

A well-defined group of words, densely linked in a lexical pattern to facilitate communication, is referred to as formulaic language. The learning, production, and overall usage of language are all aided by formulaic language. English is the language spoken by approximately 2 billion people on this planet. According to this math, every third individual speaks English. In the opinion of Rao (2019), to conduct any public diplomacy survey or event authorities depend on English as a language to communicate with the masses. English as a language has the highest reach among common people and word of mouth is an effective and one of the most traditional ways of spreading information. Sevin (2019) validates that, by this virtue of creating and spreading information to the masses all diplomats of the representative government of each country prefer English as a language of commonality. Therefore, the realm of diplomacy is where English has developed the most. Furthermore, the significance of oral communication among participants in diplomatic discussions cannot be overstated. As a result, it is vital to study the criteria for spoken communication.

Oral communication is still one of the clearest forms of communication; it is the foundation of human interaction, and there are fewer chances of miscommunication. Along with speaking fluently, effective communication in writing is equally important for success. The key to learning and enriching the work with multiple options is a solid capacity to articulate the views in writing and verbally says Sheehan (2021).

It has been noticed that the EU Member States have promoted linguistic diversity as essential for social and political equality, while English has firmly established itself as the dominant language. Historically, English as a language has been used to widespread the creations of imagination as books on literature, fiction, biographies, self-development, etc.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology section of the article allows readers to assess the general validity and dependability of the research while also providing important information about two essential aspects of the study. As a result, in this study, the researcher employs the critical bibliographic review method. This method assists researchers in determining and explaining facts with examples and statics. This study shed light on many different aspects of how the English language is used, including communication, academics, business, media, travel, and entertainment.

DATA COLLECTION

To get useful results, the author relied on secondary data. Secondary data was collected from a variety of sources, including publications, articles, reviews, and previous research investigations. The results are based on the most current and reliable data available. The study covers a variety of literature and research perspectives on the issue to establish the usefulness of the English language in public diplomacy and international relations. Secondary research makes use of not only a massive quantity of data but also data that has been collected carefully. Researchers use secondary data, which allows them to deal with massive data sets that have already been compiled by others. As a result, researchers can work with longitudinal data, which can be used to investigate trends and changes in phenomena across time. Researchers can look into trends in the use of linked topics using the amount of data available on the internet. As a result, the varied opinions of numerous authors and researchers were compared and contrasted to arrive at appropriate results.

RESULTS

All the research findings of the study were critically reviewed from various journals, research papers, articles, etc. Findings from the preceding study signify that English possesses the 'universal language' characteristics of diversity, flexibility, and adaptability. The researcher interpret that the English language was chosen as the business or communication language to avoid misunderstandings when cooperating. English is employed as a business language, a language of international interactions, and a language of personnel at multinational corporations in the era of globalization.

Both sides must be able to speak in the same language in order for business deals with other countries to go well. The findings of the study demonstrate that the English language plays an important role in international relations. For example, fluent speaking and writing abilities are essential for gaining decent job chances with lucrative compensation packages. For all official and legal concerns, the majority of national and

international organizations use English as their primary means of communication. The efficient running of activities, such as the regular exchange of e-mails, presentations, and sales and marketing, is aided by a good command of the language. It has also been recognized as an official language in over 75 nations. As a result, new enterprises will follow suit and create their networks and corporate atmosphere solely based on language. A specific language English serves as a yardstick for evaluating and improving performance and output. The English language is critical for tracking performance in a wide range of geographically diverse functions and business ventures. The English language is critical in overcoming such opposition and vagaries in the business because it aids in keeping a corporation stable in the global economy and overcoming communication hurdles. It is also determined that since different people speak different languages in different parts of the world, there is a need for a common language that is spoken by the majority of people worldwide. English has now become the international language, as it is spoken by people from all over the world. With ethnic communities in other counties, English serves as a neutral mode of communication.

Diplomats engage in negotiations, persuasion, presentation, and communication, all of which require language skills to conduct diplomatic work effectively. Tenzer *et al.* (2017) reveal that equally the written and the spoken language necessitate the mastering of concepts and skills, and need to consider message and context. Therefore, the previously listed examples could serve as an illustration that diplomats should consider this aspect of the English language. Language can also assist as a form of action: when we warn, threaten, promise, suggest, agree, advice, or otherwise, we are doing something, and not merely 'saying' something. The effect of the unsaid in communication (the meaningful silence) is equally vital. Diplomacy, like any other area of communication, has its own set of idioms, clichés, syntactical patterns, and other language peculiarities.

The findings of the research (Table 1) also concluded that the broad lexis of diplomatic English entails almost exclusively academic words; the wording of documents is as remote and impersonal. Another finding of the present research is that diplomatic vocabulary comprises of terms and words used in the domain of international law in some special meaning. Also, diplomats use plain English words. Another distinguishing feature of the English language in diplomacy found in this research is the use of formulaic language and idioms. The findings of the study also concluded that people from culturally diverse backgrounds and nations are also considered when they come to work in international businesses. Even if they aren't physically working together, they are interacting online. The English language used in this scenario facilitates communication and the free flow of ideas, resulting in improved creativity and cross-border partnership. In an international business, having a common language is essential for teamwork and boosting awareness of goals. Relationships are the foundation of any business, and relationships rely on effective communication. In this scenario, an English language that

is spoken all over the world and is structurally simpler to learn is used. The widespread use of English as a foreign language can be linked to educational, economic, and cultural globalization. It also includes tourism, advertising, science, technology, education, the internet, and information technology.

As English has got the common qualities, it has been accepted as the global language among the speakers of thousands of different languages. According to Rosenberg (2021), English is the official language of 60 sovereign states and 29 non-sovereign entities, at the regional or local level, many country subdivisions have declared English to be an official language (Figure 3). According to Tibet (2021), English has been classified as a universal language in order to meet the needs of people all over the world.

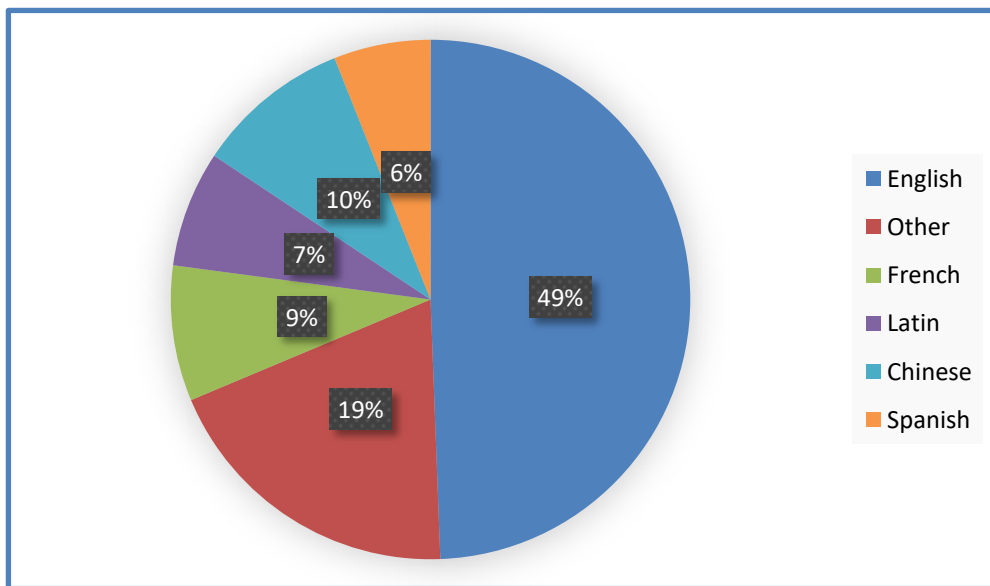


Figure 3: The Use of the English Language in the World (Source: Author's depiction)


Table 1: The Research Questions' Answers (Source: Author's depiction)

Questions	Findings
<p>How the English Language Plays an Important Role in International Relations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the English language became widespread, it has become the international language for cross-border business, media, science, etc. • The majority of national and international organizations utilize English as their primary means of communication for all official and legal matters. • The English language is critical for assessing performance in a wide range of geographically diverse functions and business operations. • The English language is critical in overcoming opposition and vagaries in business since it aids in sustaining a corporation's stability in the global economy and overcoming communication challenges. • English is used to connect internal and external stakeholders, such as a worldwide workforce.
<p>What is the Role of the English Language in Public Diplomacy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English is the most widely used diplomatic language as it is the first choice for both public and legal matters. • The English language retains its monolithic leader status, allowing for the successful negotiation of diplomatic agreements among a wide range of allies. • People from diverse backgrounds choose the English language to avoid any difference in understanding the root of the discussion. • English is the dominating language for academic communication, according to Zaharna (2019), with English being used in the most prominent journals, conferences, scholarly societies, and scholarly works. • The English language is the DNA of peers to come as many governments have made English obligatory for any individual to learn and teach. • Diplomats communicate in English, which has already acquired the characteristics of a global language.
<p>What is the Extent of Idioms and Formulaic Language Adopted and Used in the English Language while Communicating in Public Diplomacy and International Relations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is mostly the language in which international law is conducted. • English is currently the most widely used language in international relations for inter-state diplomacy and legal text negotiations. • The country uses a variety of idioms in public diplomacy and international relations, including 'Lame Duck', 'Beat Around the Bush', etc. • To maintain uniformity across all segments of the workforce, groups and corporations have designed their operations around English. • Language diversity is considered crucial for social and political equality by EU Member States. English, on the other hand, has firmly established itself.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that English is the primary language of international relations, with an emphasis on its role in diplomatic development. The significance of English as a worldwide language has been thoroughly examined in this work, and some statistical data has been provided as evidence that English is the sole language that is spoken and acknowledged universally. The fact that more than half of UN Member States prefer to speak English demonstrates the importance of English as a *lingua franca*. The EU is the major European organization that facilitates collaboration among the Member States or aspires to be a part of it. Declaring English as the organization's official language was critical to allow more efficient collaboration. Other international organizations are in the same boat. Economic links between countries, worldwide commercial relationships, global trade, and other forms of international engagement are all aspects of international cooperation. In these international interactions, English is the *lingua franca*. Hence, English is deployed as a communication tool amongst commercial organizations and addresses the needs of international corporations. It has been evaluated almost all of the world's most powerful business and governmental leaders prefer to communicate in English. During the meetings, officials from international organizations needed to converse with one another and express their perspectives. It could be easier to communicate if each of the spokes in his common language is English. Further, it is summarized that all international legislation, decrees, dialogues, and debates are conducted in English. NATO is likewise a global organization that operates in English due to the need to communicate in a common language. In an international business, having a common language is essential for teamwork and boosting awareness of goals. Relationships are the foundation of any business, and relationships rely on effective communication.

With the advancement of globalization, it is an irrefutable fact that a rising number of people from different countries are conversing and exchanging ideas in a single language, English. If one wants to join the wave of globalization and conduct successful worldwide communications, or if one wants to become a prominent politician, merchant, or scientist, then they must be able to communicate in English. As a result, English has become the world's most powerful and dominant language, prompting many linguists and language specialists to refer to it as a global language. Similar to any specific scope of communication, diplomacy has its stock of special expressions, clichés, specific syntactical patterns, and other linguistic peculiarities. Diplomats participate in negotiations, persuasion, presentation, and communication, all of which necessitate language skills for the effective conduct of diplomatic work. Equally the written and the spoken language necessitate the mastering of concepts and skills and need to consider message and context. Other differentiating characteristics that diplomats and people with a profession in international law and international relations

should master are formulaic language and the acquisition and use of idioms. As a result, the previous examples may serve as an example of why diplomats should think about this feature of the English language. For academics in this discipline, analyzing the formulaic language in diplomatic speech could be a good idea. 

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Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

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