

Historical Background and Sociology of English as Lingua Franca in Azerbaijan

Koroghlu, Saadat Davud Farhadova

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Koroghlu, S. D. F. (2023). Historical Background and Sociology of English as Lingua Franca in Azerbaijan. *Path of Science*, 9(10), 1001-1010. <https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.97-14>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

Historical Background and Sociology of English as Lingua Franca in Azerbaijan

Saadat Davud Farhadova Koroghlu ¹

¹ *Khazar University*

41 Mahsati Street, Baku, AZ1096, Azerbaijan

DOI: [10.22178/pos.97-14](https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.97-14)

LCC Subject Category: PE1001-1693


Received 26.09.2023

Accepted 29.10.2023

Published online 31.10.2023

Corresponding Author:

sfarhadova@khazar.org

© 2023 The Author. This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License 

Abstract. The article researches the history and sociological substantiation of ELF (English as Lingua Franca) in Azerbaijan. The author indicates the unique historical role of mercantile activities in extending the borders of EFL. It is also stated that the English language would be on a narrow scale long before ELF was used in Azerbaijan. The paper argues that scientific and linguistic literature supports the idea that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) served as an extension for ELF usage. At the same time, some linguists make a controversial statement that the reason English is spreading around the world at the moment is because of its utility as a lingua franca.

It also analyses the distinct stages of ELF use in Azerbaijan and illustrates the historical facts necessitating the vast in-country spread and usage of ELF. Following the in-depth analyses of ELF, the paper makes some new remarks: 1) There are at least two varieties of English and simplified (we may call it mere or simple English); 2) Global English existed long before English existed; 3) Until people speak English to their kids, it is usually called ELF; 4) ELF is more extensive; 5) Simple English is more intensive by its nature, and so on.

The author argues that the content and concept of ELF's usage is more significant than the concept of simple or mere English usage because the former assumes much-embracing features rather than the "simple English choice". That means, unlike English, ELF has the following specific qualities: 1) It is not spontaneous but strictly purposeful and pragmatic (but are these not for the sake of any foreign language use); 2) It emerges and develops in close connection with "communication needs"; 3) It includes further behaviour of communicators, whether to use or abandon it; 4) It has a distinct cause-and-effect chain in the socio-political and economic situation in the areas of its usage; 5) It does not come from family nurture and instructions but is taken for the needs of its urgency; 6) Side forces (external, socio-political) can strengthen its usage and extension. However, its "impetus" is always needs-based; 7) ELF is more practical rather than English instructional; 8) English is a transitory stage in its transference into ELF when it assumes a global character; 9) ELF serves as a source of enrichment of English vocabulary, at least by its international varieties, dialects, and terminological usages; 10) English and EFL are ontologically interrelated, though different in formalities and designation.

Another essential feature of the article is ELF's study on the sociological level in Azerbaijan by conducting the respondents of the different musts. While analysing the experiment results, it became clear that 40 % of people aged 25-35 in Azerbaijan prefer EFL in education and science,

which is less than twice for the community aged 35-45. On the contrary, 43 % of 35-45-year-old community members preferred ELF in business and management. It proves that apart from the language peculiarities, its extracurricular features also play a leading role in determining the choice of ELF. The article's findings are new to the specialities in the relevant fields.

Keywords: the concept of ELF's usage; simple English; specific features of ELF; history of ELF in Azerbaijan; sociology of ELF; conditions of language coexistence.

INTRODUCTION

Generally, "lingua franca" embraces a wide range of world languages. A lingua franca [ˌlɪŋgwə ˈfræŋkə] is also a set of (Africa, Asia, Europe) systematic and necessitated common, commercial, trade, and integral communication usage of languages bringing people together because of their "easing the communication among the people nature". Joshua Brown (Australia), a historical sociolinguist, emphasises the trade relations and indicates that "the mercantile spheres of activity were characterised by a high degree of multilingualism in broader European society, but this was often the case at the individual level as well" [3, p. 237].

The sociology and history of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) are quite different and complicated to learn. Besides, each country also has its individual or specific developments, sociocultural context, imminent wishes of its people communicating this, etc. ELF will never be the same in native or native countries for at least two reasons: the extent and stability of their usage and comparative sociocultural settings. The extralinguistic individual features and levels of various intensified learning practices of ELF in Azerbaijan also have varying features since it has become a part of the Former Soviet Union (FSU). This particularity for Azerbaijan is distinguished by ELF's distinctive historical stages of its in-country usage.

Literature review

Many authors have researched this issue, where they primarily try to shed light on the history of ELF's developments in Azerbaijan within the historical context of the Russian Empire [1; 5; 15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20].

Analyses of the information gained from this and other research are inevitably based on two distinct stages of ELF use in Azerbaijan:

1. Soviet period – up to the disintegration of the USSR;

2. The stage starts from Azerbaijan's Second Independence—from October 18, 1991, when the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted the Constitutional Act "On State Independence" until now.

By the extent of its subject research, it becomes clear that, in the second period of ELF in Azerbaijan, people mostly used it within an educational context, not as a standard communication (contact language). The historical concept of ELF's development in Azerbaijan has some logical reasons because, along with the dominant Russian language at the period for its easy linguistics nature, users preferably utilised English rather than French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish in Azerbaijan. It is also true that "if we look at the question of mixing or non-mixing languages, we must agree that there is not and cannot be a single pure, unmixed linguistic whole" [2, p. 363]. Apart from this, during the Russian Empire, people were more restrained in using Turkish because of political reasons (fears). So, the status of English in Azerbaijan also could not go beyond its educational borders. However, this situation does not entirely illustrate the history of the coexistence of English with native Azerbaijani and other foreign languages. The long-term historical influence of the Cyrillic and Arabic alphabets also impeded EFL in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, some researchers think that "it is only during the past thirty years that ELF has spread to the rest of the world, seen a dramatic rise in its number of users, and attained its current global status" [8]. The English language, even would it be on a narrow scale, long before ELF was used in Azerbaijan. It means that ELF is a recent historical fact that is to be distinguished from the so-called mere English usage because English usage has some differences from the concept of ELF. In scientific and linguistic literature, there is broad support for the idea that EFL served as an extension for ELF usage. Referring to this, some linguists make the controversial statement that the

reason English is spreading around the world at the moment is because of its utility as a lingua franca. That means the global nature of English is when it is used worldwide, "be there as long as it is needed, but since it's not being picked up as a mother tongue, it's not typically spoken by people to their children. It is not getting effectively to first base, the most crucial first base for the long-term survival of a language" [21]. It is not difficult to make the following deductions from this statement:

1. There are at least two varieties of English: global and simplified (we may call it mere or straightforward English).
2. Global English existed long before English existed.
3. Until people speak English to their kids, it is usually called ELF.
4. ELF is more extensive.
5. Simple English is more intensive by its nature, and so on.

By its content, the concept of ELF's usage is more significant than mere English usage because the former assumes much-embracing features rather than the "simple English choice". That means, unlike English, ELF has the following specific qualities:

1. It is not spontaneous but strictly purposeful and pragmatic (but are these not for the sake of any foreign language use).
2. It emerges and develops in close connection with "communication needs".
3. It includes further behaviour of communicators, whether to use or abandon it.
4. It has a distinct cause-and-effect chain in the socio-political and economic situation in its usage.
5. It does not come from family nurture and instructions but is taken for the needs of its urgency.
6. Side forces (external, socio-political) can strengthen its usage and extension. However, its "impetus" is always needs-based.
7. ELF is more practical rather than English instructional.
8. English is a transitory stage in its transference into ELF when it assumes a global character.

9. ELF serves as a source of enrichment of English vocabulary, at least by its global varieties, dialects, and terminological usages.

10. English and EFL are ontologically interrelated, though different in formalities and designation.

Together with these sociological and historical features, it is also evident that simple English usage has created some firm prerequisites for its further development into ELF. On the other hand, simple English usage was initially mainly triggered by spontaneous business-tail choice. In contrast, in its "ELF period," it was further expanded to cover all spheres of human activity.

Some researchers note that more than 350 million people speak English as their first language worldwide. On the other hand, almost half a billion people are using English as their second language. It is considered the world's lingua franca since English is the primary language in many countries worldwide [24].

Concerning the date of English when it was first used as a lingua franca, it is usually associated with the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the British Empire started to "irradiate its influence" on the world of humanity. This date goes back to the 16th century when the British began taking European possessions. However, up to that period, simple English had already been used. While speaking about the interwoven nature of languages, K. Bennett indicates a state of individual, societal and functional multilingualism when codeswitching was the norm and when languages were more fluid, unbounded and porous [13, p. 2]. From this stand, considering its pragmatic usage, English in Azerbaijan may embrace the following historical stages:

Stages of development of English in Azerbaijan

The first stage – Merchandise English, arose when it was used to exchange commercial goods contracts. Hence, the English interpreters acted not mainly for educational purposes but for pragmatic reasons of commerce while converting the communication into English or vice-versa. We have very little or fragmental information about this period. There is a general knowledge that the most successful merchants of the late Middle Ages – the 14th century Tuscan merchant Francesco di Marco Datini (Born in Prato in c. 1335) established trading warehouses around the Mediterranean, and in his later years, even founded a

bank. The need for information to be communicated as soon as possible, like prices, the weather, and details of ships and shipping, meant that an enormous level of written communication was exchanged between branches of the Datini company [3, p. 236].

The second stage is due to the spread of Islam as a religion. Some "Arabic and Persian were taught in madrasas (Islamic religious schools) in Azerbaijan when the Aghgoyunlu state (1468-1501) established relations with some European countries" [20].

This situation necessitated the development of intergovernmental relations, triggering the arousal of Diplomatic English and the Enhancement of Commercial English. Later, this period continued until the beginning period of the Soviets and coincided with the era of scientific and cultural developments. Nowadays, while speaking about ELF, it is usually stated that it "is used globally in many ways, and this includes important matters of politics and diplomacy, as well as being used often in a straightforward form – by tourists, ELF is prominent in international politics and diplomacy, international law, business, the media, and in tertiary education and scientific research – which Yamuna Kachru and Larry Smith call ELF's "pathetic function". So, it is not a reduced lingua franca in the term's original (Frankish) sense, "notes Ian Mackenzie before going on to elaborate on how this application of English differs from native English" [22]. Mere English, native English, and ELF have some demarcation lines based on their historical developments.

The third stage covers the 20th-40th of the XIX century up to the 60th and 70th of the 20th century. Referring to this stage, professor Mustafayev states that "the systematic teaching of foreign languages, especially English, in Azerbaijan, dates only from the late 1920s. The People's Education Commissariat launched English language education in 1925-26" [20]. Generally, this stage is a crucial period for legalising the status of foreign languages in Azerbaijan. However, the speech is not about the importance of ELF in Azerbaijan, of course. We need detailed research and chronology to investigate further the coexistence of foreign languages with native Azerbaijani at that period.

The fourth stage (from 1960-1970 to the end of the XX century) was distinguished by the beginning of the active deployment of international

missions to Azerbaijan, which was followed by the arrival of more than one hundred international agencies in Azerbaijan due to two significant reasons:

1) The starting of aggression and undeclared war against Azerbaijan by Armenia or the launch of the First Karabakh War (1988 and 1994) when Azerbaijan was a part of FSU, and due to created humanitarian calamity, deployment of major International Humanitarian Organizations to Azerbaijan;

2) The start of a Century's Contract on oil business in Gulistan Palace in Baku on September 20, 1994, which "was called the Contract of the century due to its historical, political, and international importance and that was reflected in 400 pages and four languages. It included 13 leading oil companies (AMOCO, BP, McDermott, UNOCAL, SOCAR, LUKOIL, Statoil, Exxon, Turkish Petrol, Pennzoil, Itochu, Remco, Delta) from 8 countries of the world (Azerbaijan, USA, Great Britain, Russia, Turkey, Norway, Japan, and Saudi Arabia). Thus, the new oil strategy and its doctrine were initiated successfully" [25], which gave rise to using ELF as the primary communication among communities.

By the level of its intensity and opportunity, these first four stages of development may be called access to the English period. This process was unique in the development of the lingua franca in Azerbaijan. The consequences of the war created a vast humanitarian catastrophe all over the country; more than 70 international agencies under the USAID and EU and Saudi Arabian umbrellas arrived in Azerbaijan to aid the IDP flood (about a million IDPs and refugees fled from their native places), while meeting the emergency requirements of this vulnerable group of people. This had also a great deal of regional impact on the total development of English language usage. One of the first arrivals of the humanitarian missions was connected with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and other international agencies. The expatriate staff of these foreign agencies mostly used English (rarely, German, French, Arabic, and other languages), which necessitated the presence of local English speakers assisting them in various activities. Hundreds of former educational employees from different schools and institutions along the Republic got immediately involved in the emerging necessities to help foreign country

expatriate staff smoothly run their daily missions. Not only the number of English speakers but also the "English learning practice" immediately expanded. It especially embraced the jobs of English interpreters and the kind of field officers' work where English interpreters/translators started their new functions without any special preparation. A mass ELF practice in Azerbaijan gave a "huge push" to developing English as a lingua franca in the way of its further wide use. The active specialists started to more intensively and extensively practice ELF to meet the growing needs of humanitarian missions to aid the IDP mass. Mastering English became a priority for privileged specialists to do their daily work. Interactions with EU countries (education, social, business, etc.) helped further extend ELF. Mammadof justifiably mentions that "in the context of Azerbaijan and its adjacent post-imperial neighbour states, the promotion of linguistic diversity can be mainly attributed to the role of the three major Pan-European institutions: the European Union, Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)" [15, p. 93].

Further socioeconomic developments strengthened the position of ELF usage in Azerbaijan, and a large part of the population started learning English more intensively to gain better access to competitive work and welfare. A similar situation served as one of the primary reasons for the wide range of ELF usage. However, we cannot tie the extended borders of ELF's usage to only one or two situations. Nevertheless, the emerging new and increased learning attitude towards English was apparent. Of course, other economic and socio-political reasons existed for such an alteration.

Coexistence of ELF and other languages in Azerbaijan

Hardly can one doubt that the Russian language had its inevitable in-country dominance before the First Karabakh War. However, English was also prioritised among the other foreign languages (French, German, and others) at educational institutions. For example, out of 85 high and eight-year schools in one of the southern districts of Azerbaijan (Fizuli district), English had approximately 95 % of teaching. However, some remote areas still lacked English teachers. Teaching French, German, Arabic, and Persian languages followed this trend, followed by the

unavailability of English teaching specialists, which further created problems in post-admission periods in tertiary schooling. It was because the number of "non-English groups" constituted the minor figures creating problems in shaping "the entire English group teachings."

Reinforcement of ELF's educational context and language policy in Azerbaijan

Later, the "State Program for the Education of Azerbaijani Youth in Foreign Countries" was a significant pull factor for ELF, especially in 2007-2015. The program has been successfully implemented, so subjects taught by English curricula also soared. Within the framework of this program, "3,558 Azerbaijani students had the opportunity to study at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels in the world's most-ranked universities" [6]. Thanks to this State Program, the vast majority of young people who have completed their studies have returned and now have a professional level of near-native English speaking skills and are closely involved in developing the educational aspects of ELF.

Studying abroad within the 2007-2015 and 2019-2023 state programs framework is also essential for developing EFL in Azerbaijan. Besides, the "State Program on Increasing the International Competitiveness of the Higher Education System in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2023" [6] approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated November 16, 2018, also sets new tasks in line with the requirements of the modern era.

It is more difficult to consciously assimilate a newer language than one's own, which will, without doubt, require additional efforts; despite this, there is still an open and transparent condition for developing other minor languages.

The complex mechanism of language learning usually overlaps with different stages of people's life span or period; for using the native language or another language mastered in early childhood, a person uses both hemispheres of the brain, complementing each other which sometimes constitutes an additional burden for kids or language learners.

However, is it possible to deny the importance of learning another language where all languages historically and inevitably develop in close relationship with each other? The answer is negative

because languages are the typical house of humanity that unavoidably and unceasingly needs to be interconnected. That is why language policy, especially in the modern stage of sociocultural development of the nations, becomes more significant for the further "smooth coordination" of all their pros and cons in the status of languages.

Besides, the concept of the mother tongue also has a clear expression of social meaning. In most cases, the mother language is the one of an ethnic group or culture. Octavian Manturi shows that "for many people, it may not be easily apparent or obvious in day-to-day communication on a personal level because many individuals are so intimately connected to their language that they may fail to see its changes. However, languages change; some flourish, some expand, and some even die" [23, p. 1]. Using a foreign language is easily associated with a feeling of ethnic, cultural, and often social inferiority. Of course, a compensating factor is also possible – a feeling of the unique prestige of English as a lingua franca, for example, in Azerbaijan's case. Regarding this, Kaplan brought some evidence from the history of English language dominance, mentioning that "imperatively maintaining the civil order, and developing the civilising influence of Britain through language after the World War I and II, English took a more special place in the world, mainly because the United States claimed to be an English-speaking country and this language became as one of the United Nation's official languages" [10, p. 9].

Today, according to Azerbaijan's modern language policy, both languages are used in Azerbaijan's socioeconomic life without any negative consequences. The essential features of the peculiarities of such coexistence lie in the alleged fact that Azerbaijan is a multicultural country open to all nations and cultures. It has never aimed to eliminate any foreign or minor languages used in its state territories. It increasingly encourages the intergovernmental policy of interrelations between the states while respecting the other languages, such as the ELF's intensive use in the Republic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Suppose the areal extension of ELF is associated with the language policy of the countries from one side. In that case, the rich history of the English language is another source for such harmon-

ic interrelation. While analysing the historical background of the English language, it is commonly accepted that "the oldest roots of the English language have been traced back to Denmark when Angles, Jutes, and Saxons came from their home of the Danish peninsula" [4]. In fact, "it has official status in over 60 of the world's territories. Over 300 million speak English as a mother tongue, and at least another 400 million use English as a first foreign (i.e., second or international) language. English is the main language of newspapers and advertising. It is the official international language of airports and air traffic control. It is the lingua franca of international business and academic conferences, diplomacy and sport, and it is one of the six official languages the United Nations uses" [7, p. 532].

What are the primary reasons behind the currently extended status of English? Mammadof states that "post-imperial societies, such as Azerbaijan, tend to have a more open attitude to the realities of a global language since they feel more secure in their cultural identities. Therefore, the spread of global English creates an excellent opportunity for building multilingualism and plurilingualism in post-imperial societies" [15, p. 92].

We think this is an axiomatic thesis that the reason for each country or nation's need is quite different. For example, today, the socioeconomic factors behind the global use of English have become mainly "localised" in sovereign countries, even serving the newest – other functions, such as the stratification of nations. Promoting English to this level undoubtedly contributes to the rising role and parts of the diplomatic and commercial interests of England and the United States. We cannot artificially devise the historical realities that the spread of the English language as a lingua franca has a twofold interrelation with the realities of Azerbaijan's social and cultural life. Its influence creates some integrative peculiarities from sociolinguistic viewpoints (lexical enrichment, terminological unity, calques, syntactic compositions, etc.) on the one hand, and it gets more and more differentiated from Azerbaijani traditions and where customs become much more individual, on the other.

Under the right circumstances, people usually use the correct language to communicate peace, compassion, fairness, and self-control. This trend of globalised English has passed through many complex historical challenges. For this reason, "linguists constantly argue about the precise na-

ture of the interaction between language, thought, and cultural background. However, it seems self-evident that language, as a mirror of societal dispositions, reflects and helps perpetuate deeply held cultural attitudes" [11, p. 162].

"Sociolinguistic research in the 1950s and 1960s had shown how people change the degree of formality of their language as a function of the social contexts in which they find themselves. This was explained in terms of social norms dictating language use. More specifically, the theory provides a framework for understanding how and why people adapt their communication toward and away from others and the social consequences of doing so" [7, p. 70].

In our times, many have already spoken about the linguistic elements (syntax, morphology, phonology, semantics, and pragmatics) of the English language and its other grammatical features. In contrast, it has been done incredibly fewer works about the prominence of the English language as "lingua-franca" and its "linguistically coexisting environment". One of the primary reasons is that all linguistic factors, along with extralinguistic possibilities such as historical events, different changes in communities' lifestyles, and social, economic, political, cultural, scientific, and technological developments, are closely interrelated. So, once it historically becomes recognised as a helpful medium, all other linguistic features gradually adapt to the local environment and the speakers' needs. Besides this, the attractive pronunciation, consistent word order, grammatical structure, and some other intrinsic features for easy learning also significantly contribute to the "worldly community interest" of lingua franca speakers. That is why we continue creating conditions to open many academic and institutional institutions, invest a growing number of resources, and create new jobs and other prospects in this end! However, it does not come to the same meaning that the boosted speed of the similar infusion in learning English as a lingua franca is the only factor associated with its "friendly linguistic specifications". Nevertheless, "it appears that almost all pejorative developments that have appeared in the history of English have a certain dose of sociocultural background which must be taken into consideration to provide partial explanatory causes for semantic extensions of words belonging to a given lexical category" [11, p. 1].

Sociological view about the current situation of coexistence of ELF and mother tongue. English does not immediately become "melted" in the written and spoken Azerbaijani or vice-versa, but they start coexisting according to their specificities, making the global language environment unique. There is no doubt that in one article, we cannot describe all interwoven linguistic features. However, to perceive the current situation in that media, we conducted some experiments among both language speakers (English and Azerbaijani), where we obtained the identified balance between these languages. Primarily, we accept a consistent and comprehensive language policy in each country, and Azerbaijan has also developed all necessary conditions for developing other languages spoken in the Republic. That means it is within our interest to learn not only the status of English spoken by Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan but also the local language spoken by native English speakers. However, we understand that mere declarations do not determine these developmental trends but by deep and comprehensive analyses. In this term, a question arises: "How does the local Azerbaijani language interact with English nowadays?"

Interestingly, when speaking about the value of a linguistically coexisting environment of English in Azerbaijan, the British Chamber of Commerce Azerbaijan Branch Manager John Patterson gave a new and exciting statement about the state of the art of learning the Azerbaijani language by native English speakers when they start sojourning or temporary living in Azerbaijan. He stated that in Azerbaijan, the rate of spoken English is so that "especially young people speak English without leaving much chance to speak Azerbaijani, as they are too much literate and educated in English. Otherwise, it would be much easier for him to learn the Azerbaijani language" [26]. The super active or "Excess English" status of English speakers by native Azerbaijanis, in some cases, does not allow English speakers to practice the Azerbaijani language and make efforts to learn the local or community language. This is an entirely new situation within the language coexistence. He mentioned, "As most local Azerbaijanis can speak English very well, sometimes it becomes tough for him to learn and speak the Azerbaijani language" [26]. Within this sociological study, we tried to identify such interwoven features of English as a part of the "lingua franca" now widely used in Azerbaijan and Western countries as English as a Second Language (ESL).

For this purpose, we tried to study the opinions of randomly chosen respondents from both native speakers to find first-hand responses to the preliminarily prepared questionnaire. For this aim, we designed and posed a question to determine the current conditions regarding the coexistence of Azerbaijani and English languages. The questionnaire was set to respond in multiple-choice answers to learn the feelings of both categories of respondents (native Azerbaijani and native English speakers). The study questionnaire included the following set of questions:

- 1) "What is your major difficulty in learning the Azerbaijani/English language?"
- 2) Sounding, pronunciation;
- 3) Writing literacy;
- 4) Insufficient practical linguistic environment;
- 5) Deficiency of popular materials and language teachers;
- 6) Language policy;
- 7) Other (specify).

We immediately mention that by the questionnaire results, a negligent number of the interviewed respondents chose the mode of the answer of "other".

The conclusions of the conducted questioning among the randomly chosen 120 native English-speaking foreigners out of two areas – academic and business groups, showed that the language and style used for writing and speaking (sounding/pronunciation) of Azerbaijani demonstrated that the native English speakers do not feel much more significant language barrier while living in Azerbaijan excepting the writing skills (Figure 1).

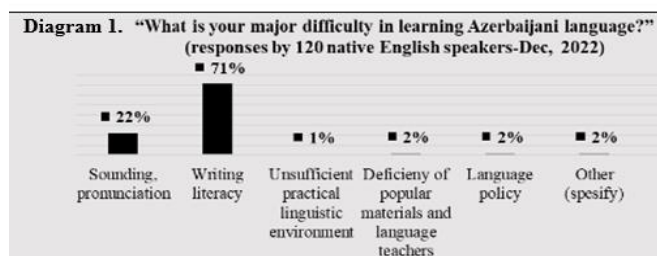


Figure 1

On the other hand, out of the same number of Azerbaijanis (120 respondents of academic and business groups), it has also become clear that about 63% of them face many difficulties in writ-

ing English rather than speaking it (Figure 2). Interestingly, 71% of the native English speakers also experienced some writing difficulties in Azerbaijani. So, the significant problem for both categories of native speakers was writing, and its proportion was 71:63.

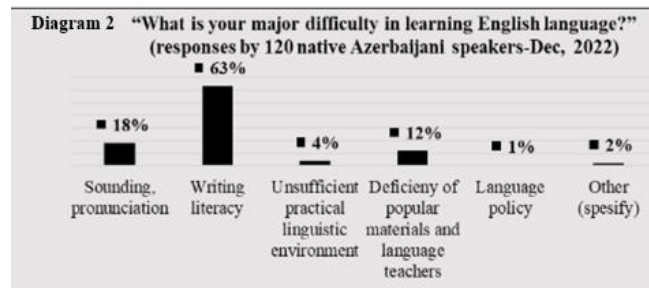
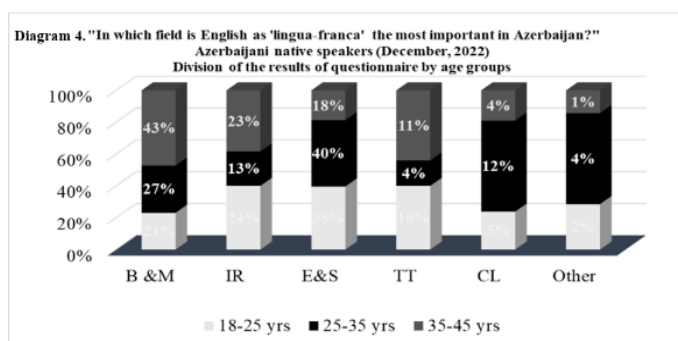


Figure 2

In our further sociological findings, we discovered that the importance of ELF among native Azerbaijanis greatly varies by specific business and age groups. The results of the response are given in Figures 3, 4.

	B & M	IR	E&S	TT	CL	Other	
18-25 yrs	21%	24%	38%	10%	5%	2%	100%
25-35 yrs	27%	13%	40%	4%	12%	4%	100%
35-45 yrs	43%	23%	18%	11%	4%	1%	100%

B&M Business & Management
 IR International Relations
 E&S Education & Science
 TT Technology Transfer
 CL Community Relations



CONCLUSIONS

While analysing the experiment results, it becomes clear that 40 % of people aged 25-35 in Azerbaijan prefer EFL in E&S, which is less than twice for the community aged 35-45. On the contrary, 43 % of 35-45 aged community members preferred ELF in B&M. It proves that apart from the language peculiarities, its extracurricular fea-

tures also play a leading role in determining the choice of ELF.

The concluding remarks reflect the entire funding of the sociological research analyses of ELF's in-country perspective.

1. ELF has not yet readily used success and failure practices in the broader community and academic discussions.
2. The level of ELF competence among students needs further debates and discussions (no or less high school practice).
3. We do not have wider public online or audio and visual aids or TV reasoning illustrations about ELF's in-country status yet.
4. It requires theory, practice, and significant research results on "push" and "pull" factors in community and academic learning.
5. Misconception and misunderstanding of the concept, as if it always goes to usurp "native

tongue", is obvious. The current positive practice of "language coexistence" is in place.

6. Why do we "throw away Russian as ELF?" Did we use it for fun over decades!?
7. There are still existing similar sayings: "I didn't see reasonable substantiations on anything concerning the "lingua franca", etc.
8. The concepts given in popular literature can be used somewhere else (...), but not for our students. It is as if our students are backward (with 200-300 points of the test entry marks out of 700), and it is not feasible for them to develop this concept.
9. There is some inertness in learning new things, referring to the concept of ELF.
10. We need to make gradual adjustments to learning its theoretical features before being fully competent in it.

REFERENCES

1. McCrum, R. (2010, October 31). My Bright Idea: English Is On the Up but One Day Will Die Out. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2010/oct/31/nicholas-ostler-my-bright-idea>
2. Aslanov, C. (2000). Interpreting the language-mixing in terms of codeswitching: The case of the Franco-Italian interface in the Middle Ages. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32(9), 1273–1281. doi: 10.1016/s0378-2166(99)00100-9
3. Russell, M. (2011). *Ded words of the day Lingua Franca*. Retrieved from <https://slideplayer.com/slide/13158791>
4. Deniz, E., Özkan, Y., & Bayyurt, Y. (2016). English as a Lingua Franca: Reflections on ELF-Related Issues by Pre-Service English Language Teachers in Turkey. *The Reading Matrix*, 16(2), 144–161.
5. Edumaster. (2023). About. Retrieved from <https://edumaster.az> (in Azerbaijani).
6. Ekkehard, K., & van der Auwera, J. (1995). *The Germanic Languages*. Routledge.
7. Jenkins, J., & Baker, W. (2020). *English as a Lingua Franca*. Linguistics. doi: 10.1093/obo/9780199772810-0262
8. Jenkins, J., & Leung, C. (2013). English as a Lingua Franca. *The Companion to Language Assessment*, 1605–1616. doi: 10.1002/9781118411360.wbcla047
9. Brown, J. (2017). 11. Multilingual merchants: the trade network of the 14th century Tuscan merchant Francesco di Marco Datini. *Merchants of Innovation*, 235–251. doi: 10.1515/9781501503542-011
10. Kaplan, R. B. (2001). English — the Accidental Language of Science. *The Dominance of English as a Language of Science*, 3–26. doi: 10.1515/9783110869484.3
11. Kochman-Haładaj, B. (2011). Extra-linguistic factors in the mechanism of semantic change affecting female human being terms. In *Podkarpackie Forum Filologiczne* (pp. 159–169). Jarosław: Wydawnictwo Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Techniczno-Ekonomicznej.

12. Kopchak, L., Zhumbei, M., Terletska, L., Konchovych, K., & Kanonik, N. (2022). The use of english as Lingua Franca to overcome language barriers and raise the level of education in modern conditions. *Eduweb*, 16(3), 121–133. doi: [10.46502/issn.1856-7576/2022.16.03.9](https://doi.org/10.46502/issn.1856-7576/2022.16.03.9)
13. Kurtene, B. (1963). *Izbrannyye trudyi po obschemu yazyikoznaniyu* [Selected works on general linguistics: in 2 volumes]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR (in Russian).
14. Bennet, K. et al. (2018). *Multilingualism, Lingua Franca and Translation in the Early Modern Period*. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
15. Mammadov, A. (2009). The issue of plurilingualism and language policy in Azerbaijan. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2009(198). doi: [10.1515/ijsl.2009.027](https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2009.027)
16. Mammadov, A., & Mammadova, A. (2021). English in Azerbaijan: Developments and Perspectives. *English Today*, 38(2), 92–97. doi: [10.1017/s0266078421000298](https://doi.org/10.1017/s0266078421000298)
17. Mammadova, A. (2019). Multicultural paradigms of student empowerment in educational discourses: Azerbaijan, UK and USA as case studies. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 14(2), 152–166. doi: [10.1080/17447143.2019.1583242](https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2019.1583242)
18. Mammadofa, F (2019). *English as a Lingua Franca in Higher Education of Azerbaijan* (Master's thesis). Baku: Khazar University.
19. Mustafayev, G. (2012, January-February). *Teaching English in Azerbaijan: Brief History*. Retrieved from <https://www.visions.az/en/news/370/ef0dd232/>
20. Nordquist, R. (2020). *English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)*. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/english-as-a-lingua-franca-elf-1690578>
21. Mantiri, O. (2010). Factors Affecting Language Change. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi: [10.2139/ssrn.2566128](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2566128)
22. Seidlhofer, B. (2007). Common Property: English as a Lingua Franca in Europe. *International Handbook of English Language Teaching*, 137–153. doi: [10.1007/978-0-387-46301-8_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-46301-8_11)
23. Littlejohn, S., & Foss, K. A. (Eds.). (2009). *Encyclopedia of communication theory*. London: SAGE Publications.
24. N. d. (2023). The Contract of the Century-Azerbaijan. Retrieved from <https://azerbaijan.az/en/related-information/132>
25. ARB 24 TV. (2022, November 11). *Business Lady*. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrfnlxGRex4&ab_channel=ARB24TV