

DOI: 10.5937/SustFor2592145J

UDK: 811.111:630=111

Review paper

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN FORESTRY

*Emina JEREMIĆ MARKOVIĆ^{*1}, Doloris BEŠIĆ-VUKAŠINOVIĆ²*

Abstract: English has become the primary medium for global communication, scientific discourse, and professional exchange. Within forestry, its significance is evident in education, research, international collaboration, and access to information. This paper examines the role of English as the lingua franca in forestry, highlighting its influence on academic publishing, knowledge dissemination, and international networking among forestry professionals. Through case studies from forestry education, international projects, and research distribution, the study demonstrates the necessity of English proficiency for both students and professionals in the field. The findings suggest that English serves not only as a means of communication but also as a catalyst for innovation and sustainable forest management globally.

Keywords: English language, forestry, communication, education, research, globalization.

VAŽNOST ENGLESKOG JEZIKA U ŠUMARSTVU

Sažetak: Engleski jezik je postao globalno sredstvo komunikacije, nauke i stručne razmene. U šumarstvu se njegova važnost ogleda u obrazovanju, istraživanju, međunarodnoj saradnji i pristupu informacijama. Rad istražuje značaj engleskog jezika kao lingua franca u šumarstvu, sa posebnim naglaskom na njegovu ulogu u akademskom izdavaštvu, transferu znanja i globalnom umrežavanju stručnjaka. Kroz primere iz šumarskog obrazovanja, međunarodnih projekata i širenja istraživačkih rezultata, pokazuje se da je znanje engleskog jezika neophodno za studente i profesionalce u šumarstvu. Rezultati ukazuju na to da engleski nije samo sredstvo komunikacije već i put ka inovacijama i održivom upravljanju šumama na globalnom nivou.

Ključne reči: engleski jezik, šumarstvo, komunikacija, obrazovanje, istraživanje, globalizacija.

¹ Center for globalization studies (CGS), Belgrade, Serbia

² Academy of Technical and Art Applied Studies - School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Belgrade, Serbia; doloris.besic@yahoo.com

*Corresponding author. E-mail: eminajeremic@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental instrument in society, shaping communication, education, culture, and scientific progress. English has emerged as the dominant lingua franca, serving as the principal medium for international research, politics, economics, and technology. Its role in forestry is critical because environmental and ecological challenges are inherently global in scope. However, while English serves as a bridge for international collaboration, it is not a replacement for local expertise and languages, which remain crucial in addressing unique regional forestry realities. The discipline of forestry depends on ongoing knowledge exchange and cross-border collaboration. Issues such as climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable forest management require international cooperation. English enables forestry professionals to participate effectively in global discussions and contribute to shared solutions.

In recent decades, universities and research institutions worldwide have integrated English into their forestry programs. Scientific journals with the highest impact factors in forestry are almost exclusively published in English, making it the essential language for the dissemination of research. Moreover, international organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) publish guidelines, reports, and strategies in English, requiring forestry professionals to be proficient in English. (Unasylyva - No. 153 - The changing face of forest industry - Report: IUFRO forestry science serving society, n.d.) This introduction provides an overview of why English has become indispensable in forestry education, practice, and research (Crystal, 2003).

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The methodological framework of this paper is based on a literature review and qualitative analysis of international forestry sources. Scientific articles, official reports, and guidelines issued by FAO, IUFRO, and other international institutions form the basis of this research. Particular attention was given to the role of English in forestry education curricula, the availability of academic materials in English, and its presence in professional forestry practice.

The analysis also examined international conferences, such as the IUFRO World Congress, where English is the official working language. By comparing the accessibility of information in English with that available in local languages, this study identified the advantages and limitations that English presents to forestry professionals and students (Graddol, 2006).

3. RESULTS

The results of the literature analysis indicate several key dimensions of the importance of English in forestry:

3.1. Education

English is becoming the predominant medium of instruction in forestry faculties worldwide. As noted in paper *The English language dominates global conservation science – which leaves 1 in 3 research papers virtually ignored* (2021), the growing reliance on English reflects its central role in scientific communication. Numerous universities in Europe and Asia now offer master's programmes delivered entirely in English, and an increasing number of undergraduate courses rely on English-language textbooks. This trend provides students with access to a broader body of academic literature and strengthens their competitiveness in the international labour market.

3.2. Research

Most forestry journals, including *Forest Ecology and Management* and the *Journal of Forestry Research*, are published in English. This prevalence facilitates global exchange of research findings but poses challenges for researchers who lack proficiency in English. However, the use of standardised English allows forestry knowledge to be disseminated widely and accessed by a larger international audience.

3.3. Professional Practice

Forestry professionals engaged in international projects use English as the primary language for communication. Initiatives focused on climate adaptation, forest certification, and biodiversity monitoring involve multinational teams, with English facilitating effective coordination and communication. Local forest management plans also frequently incorporate English terminology to align with international standards.

3.4. Digital Resources

The digitalisation of forestry knowledge has reinforced the prominence of English. Online databases, such as Scopus and Web of Science, and educational platforms like Coursera and edX primarily offer forestry-related content in English. This trend benefits English-proficient professionals but restricts access for individuals without these language skills (Crystal, 2003).

4. DISCUSSION

The research findings emphasise the central role of English in advancing forestry as both a scientific discipline and a profession. Although English proficiency offers significant advantages, it also contributes to disparities. Students and practitioners in countries with limited English education encounter barriers to accessing current research and engaging in international collaborations. Regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South Asia face particular challenges, as limited English language resources hinder their participation in the global forestry

community. This situation may widen the gap in forestry expertise between developed and developing countries.

A further concern is the potential marginalisation of local languages and traditional ecological knowledge. Indigenous forest management practices, typically maintained and communicated in native languages, risk diminished visibility within the global discourse dominated by English. This challenge underscores the need to strike a balance between effective global communication and the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity.

A dual strategy may address these challenges: enhancing English language education for forestry students and professionals, while also supporting the translation of essential scientific materials into local languages. This approach would help prevent the exclusion of valuable knowledge and promote inclusivity in international forestry discussions (Crystal, 2003).

5. CONCLUSION

English is now firmly established as the global language of forestry. Its influence extends beyond communication, affecting access to knowledge, international collaboration, and professional growth. The study's results suggest that without English proficiency, forestry professionals may become isolated from the global scientific community. Incorporating English into forestry education is therefore essential for preparing future foresters to address global challenges, including climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss.

The paper concludes that enhancing English language proficiency in forestry represents a long-term investment in the discipline's resilience and continued relevance. However, this advancement should not undermine local knowledge and linguistic diversity, both of which are essential for sustainable forest management.

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Summary

English has become a vital tool in forestry, facilitating international collaboration, the dissemination of research, and technological advancements. This paper examines the importance of English in forestry education, scientific communication, and professional contexts. English enables access to global scientific literature, participation in international conferences, and collaboration with multinational organisations, thereby empowering forestry professionals to exchange knowledge and implement innovative solutions to environmental challenges. The integration of English into forestry curricula also promotes student mobility and expands career prospects, while supporting the global exchange of sustainable practices. The study concludes that English serves not only a linguistic function but also a strategic role by integrating forestry into a global framework for ecological preservation and sustainable development.

VAŽNOST ENGLESKOG JEZIKA U ŠUMARSTVU

Miroslava MARKOVIĆ, Renata GAGIĆ-SERDAR, Bojan KONATAR, Jelena BOŽOVIĆ, Vanja STOJANOVIĆ, Ljubinko RAKONJAC, Aleksandar LUČIĆ

Rezime

Engleski jezik postao je ključni alat u oblasti šumarstva, služeći kao most za međunarodnu saradnju, širenje istraživanja i tehnološki napredak. Ovaj rad istražuje značaj engleskog jezika u obrazovanju iz oblasti šumarstva, naučnoj komunikaciji i profesionalnoj praksi. Omogućavajući pristup globalnoj naučnoj literaturi, učešće na međunarodnim konferencijama i saradnju sa multinacionalnim institucijama, engleski jezik osnažuje stručnjake iz šumarstva da dele znanje i primenjuju inovativna rešenja za ekološke izazove. Pored toga, uvođenje engleskog jezika u nastavne programe šumarstva podstiče mobilnost studenata i otvara karijeru, dok istovremeno jača globalnu razmenu održivih praksi. Studija zaključuje da uloga engleskog jezika nije samo jezička, već i strateška, jer podstiče integraciju šumarstva u globalni okvir ekološke zaštite i održivog razvoja.