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Contemporary English Literature: The Impact of Globalization

Tojiqo`ziyeva Gulasal Shahobiddin qizi

asaltojiqoziyeva@gmail.com

Student, Chirchik State Pedagogical University

Scientific adviser: Isroilova Tursuntosh

Teacher, Chirchik State Pedagogical University

ANNOTATION

This article examines the impact of globalization on contemporary English literature, highlighting multicultural authors, hybrid identities, and global readership. It explores themes of migration, technology, and language, showing how English literature has become more diverse, inclusive, and reflective of cross-cultural interaction in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Globalization, Contemporary English Literature, Migration, Cultural Hybridity, Transnational Authors, Digital Literature, Identity, Multiculturalism, Literary Style.

INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, globalization has become a defining force that shapes almost every aspect of human life. It influences not only economic and political relations but also cultural identity and artistic expression. English literature, once tied closely to the cultural traditions of Britain and North America, has transformed into a global platform for diverse voices. Through migration, technology, and transnational exchange, contemporary English literature reflects the experiences of a connected yet divided world. This paper explores how globalization has influenced modern English literature, focusing on authorship, themes, and the role of digital communication in shaping a global literary community.

Globalization and the Expansion of Literary Boundaries

In earlier centuries, “English literature” referred mainly to works written in England or by native speakers from English-speaking countries. However, globalization has expanded the boundaries of what is considered English literature. Today, writers from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean use English as a creative tool to express their unique cultural experiences.

The Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, for instance, brings African perspectives into global literature through her novels *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. Similarly, Indian-American writer Jhumpa Lahiri and Japanese-born British novelist Kazuo Ishiguro write from transnational viewpoints that blend multiple cultural backgrounds. These authors use English not as the language of colonization, but as a global medium of storytelling. Through them, English literature has evolved from a national tradition into a multicultural and international phenomenon.

Themes of Migration, Identity, and Hybridity.

One of the most striking effects of globalization on contemporary literature is the growing focus on migration and identity. As people move across borders in search of opportunity or safety, writers capture the psychological and emotional consequences of displacement. In Adichie's *Americanah*, the main character experiences cultural confusion and identity conflict after moving from Nigeria to the United States. Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* portrays a similar struggle faced by children of immigrants torn between two worlds. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* also explore hybrid identities that arise from postcolonial encounters and global mobility.

These stories show how literature has become a space for negotiating belonging and self-understanding. Instead of presenting identity as fixed or national, contemporary writers portray it as fluid, hybrid, and evolving—an ongoing dialogue between the local and the global.

The Role of Technology and Digital Globalization.

Technology has played a crucial role in the globalization of literature. The rise of the internet, social media, and digital publishing platforms has made it possible for writers to reach readers across continents instantly. Online communities such as Wattpad and Medium allow emerging authors from developing countries to share their stories without traditional publishing barriers.

Digital globalization also transforms how readers engage with literature. Through e-books, online book clubs, and virtual literary festivals, global audiences can access a wide range of voices. This democratization of literature increases diversity and accessibility, although it also introduces challenges.

One concern is the dominance of English as the main language of global communication. While English connects people globally, it can overshadow local languages and literary traditions. As a result, globalization simultaneously promotes cultural exchange and risks linguistic homogenization. Writers and critics must therefore find a balance between global accessibility and the preservation of local identity.

The Global Reader and Cultural Exchange

Globalization has also reshaped the relationship between authors and readers. In the past, a novel's readership was largely national; today, books circulate internationally within days of publication. This global readership encourages writers to address universal human themes—love, loss, justice, freedom—while maintaining cultural specificity. Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, for example, explores ethical questions about humanity and technology that resonate worldwide. Meanwhile, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* remains deeply rooted in Indian society yet appeals to global readers through its emotional and moral depth. This balance between the



local and the universal defines much of contemporary English literature in the era of globalization..

Challenges and Critiques

While globalization enriches literature, it also presents serious concerns. Some critics argue that global publishing still favors works that conform to Western tastes or stereotypes about “exotic” cultures. The power of major literary prizes, such as the Booker and the Nobel, continues to shape what the world reads, often sidelining less commercial voices.

Moreover, the commercialization of diversity risks turning culture into a product. Globalization can sometimes turn literature into a market-driven enterprise rather than an authentic expression of human experience. The challenge, therefore, is to preserve depth, individuality, and cultural authenticity within a profit-oriented literary industry.

Globalization and Literary Style

Beyond themes and authorship, globalization has also influenced the style and form of English literature. Contemporary writers increasingly blend genres, languages, and narrative techniques drawn from multiple traditions. For example, Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* combines elements of magical realism with historical fiction, creating a hybrid style that reflects the diversity of postcolonial experience. Writers such as Zadie Smith and Mohsin Hamid mix colloquial speech, global slang, and digital-age dialogue to portray the language of multicultural societies. This stylistic hybridity mirrors the global condition itself—fragmented, fast, and interconnected. Moreover, literature now incorporates media influences such as film, social networks, and online storytelling, leading to more experimental narrative forms.

Thus, globalization not only changes what writers say but also how they say it. The literary voice becomes polyphonic—shaped by multiple languages, technologies, and perspectives at once.

CONCLUSION

Globalization has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of contemporary English literature. It has expanded its borders beyond nations, introduced multicultural authorship, and opened new possibilities through digital and stylistic innovation. Modern English literature is now characterized by diversity, hybridity, and global dialogue.

Yet globalization also brings contradictions—between inclusion and inequality, creativity and commercialization, diversity and dominance. The challenge for the future is to sustain a literary culture that values both global connection and local authenticity. Ultimately, globalization has made English literature a reflection of our interconnected world: complex, fluid, and constantly evolving. It unites voices across continents, reminding us that storytelling remains one of the most powerful ways to understand humanity in all its variety.



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