National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy"

English Department

FROM RESEARCH TO PUBLICATION: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

For the Faculty of Social Sciences and Social Technologies

Speciality: International Relations, Public Communications, and Regional Studies

Київ - 2026

Національний університет «Києво-Могилянська академія»

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Approved at the meeting of the English Department of …

Protocol No … of … 2026

Annotation

This guide provides a clear plan for researchers to move from simply describing events to performing deep, scientific analysis in International Relations. It explains that publishing in top journals requires more than just sharing information; it demands a perfect structure using the IMRAD model and a strong connection between theory and evidence.

The recommendations simplify the difficult parts of academic writing, like choosing a case study or managing complex data, by providing step-by-step instructions. By following this roadmap, scholars can meet high global standards, avoid common mistakes, and turn their observations of world politics into professional articles ready for the international stage.

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PART I. INTRODUCTION

The field of International Relations (IR) is a dynamic and demanding discipline that explores the complex interactions between states, international organisations, and non-state actors.

In the contemporary era, writing an academic article in the field of International Relations (IR) is more than just sharing information. It is like entering a tough competition where scholarly ideas must be very deep and research methods must be perfect to be successful. For a young scholar, the primary challenge lies in moving beyond simple news reporting to perform a deep, scientific analysis.

The world's scientific community now has very high standards. Authors should not only describe events; they must break them down using specific theories. Scholars must explain why they chose their research methods and show how local events fit into global politics.

Success in IR research depends on the match between the research question and the chosen methods.

Whether a researcher is examining the principle of non-intervention, the impact of cyber warfare, or humanitarian crises, they must follow a standard process to make sure their findings are both "valid" and "reliable."

These recommendations are important because the academic world is quickly changing. To join the global scientific community, researchers must do more than just write many papers. They must understand and explain difficult topics like hybrid war, digital diplomacy, and economic sanctions at a high professional level.

To publish in top journals, such as those in the Scopus database, authors must use real evidence and have a perfect structure. These are not just tips; they are the basic rules for getting papers accepted.

The special challenge for IR departments is that this field covers many subjects. A good article must be legally correct, politically smart, and economically logical at the same time. To see clearly through this complexity, a researcher needs an analytical framework

The goal of these methodological recommendations is to provide researchers with a clear plan to successfully manage the structural and intellectual requirements of global legal rules and political science. This guide acts as an accurate roadmap to connect a theoretical idea with a final article in professional journals like Foreign Affairs or the Journal of Peace Research.

This guide will help researchers understand how to organise their ideas using the IMRAD model (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) while following the specific logic of political analysis. It simplifies the technical work by providing a step-by-step "to-do" list for difficult tasks, such as choosing a case study or managing complex data.

Additionally, the guide teaches how to maintain a neutral academic voice and how to use digital tools effectively to improve scholarly writing. By following these rules, researchers can meet the high ethical standards of the global scientific community and reduce the common mistakes that often cause journals to reject their work.

For the young scholar, this is more than just a guide. It is a challenge to stop simply describing events and start mastering the difficult skill of academic proof. In this type of writing, every word must be precise, and every source must be a strong foundation for the work.

The original value of these recommendations is that they combine ethical standards with practical checklists. This changes how to prepare an article from a messy, disorganised process into a clear, smart scientific strategy.

By following these steps, researchers will be able to turn their observations of world politics into organised, persuasive, and professional articles ready for the global stage.

PART II. PREPARATORY PHASE

Building the Research Foundation

Before typing the first sentence of the article, the researcher must plan the research design of the study. This phase is not merely about collecting information; it is about careful planning to ensure the work is focused, purposeful and meets international academic standards.

1. Identifying the Research Gap and Scientific Novelty

A high-quality article starts by finding a specific problem that has not been solved yet. To achieve this, the author must analyse the most recent international articles from the last 5-7 years. The task is to find a "white spot" or a question that remains unanswered. This is how scientific novelty is created: the text must do more than just describe facts; it must offer a new theoretical or practical idea and contribute to the discourse of International Relations (IR).

2. Critical Thinking as an Analytical Tool

Critical thinking is a way of thinking that the researcher must use during the entire process. It is not a separate section of the paper, but a mindset that improves the whole work. In International Relations (IR) research, critical thinking is shown through three main actions:

1. Analysing ideas instead of just summarising them: different viewpoints should be compared, and both the strengths and the weaknesses of previous studies should be identified.
2. Evaluating evidence: data as the absolute truth should not be accepted. Instead, where the information comes from should be questioned, and logical connections between different facts should be looked for.

3. Creating an independent perspective: analysis should lead to independent and well-reasoned conclusions, which demonstrate the ability to evaluate information rather than just repeating what others have said.

By applying these steps, authors show that they are not just the reporters of information, but true researchers who can provide an independent and deep evaluation of world events.

3. Formulating the Title and Research Question

In IR, the topic must be specific, analytical, and relevant to the contemporary global agenda. Broad titles must be avoided. A topic should correlate with modern processes such as digital diplomacy, hybrid threats, or the transformation of security institutions.

The **Research Question** is the heart of the work. The entire article is a structured, logical answer to this one specific question. If the question is vague, your whole paper will be difficult to understand.

4. Methodological Strategy: Choosing Your Tools

Choosing a methodology means selecting the tools to collect and study data. In International Relations, it is vital that methods directly serve the research goal.

For publication in journals indexed in Scopus, the clarity and reproducibility (describing methods clearly so other researchers can repeat the work) of methodology are critical.

A choice can be made from:

• **Qualitative Methods:** These are ideal for deep exploration of context and meaning. Examples include case studies, discourse analysis, political-legal analysis, or content analysis.

• **Quantitative Methods:** These use numbers and data. Examples include statistical analysis, using global indices (e.g., Freedom House, Global Peace Index), or scenario modelling.

• **IR-Specific Approaches:** These include comparative analysis or policy analysis.

Methodological reasoning must explain why these specific tools were chosen. This transparency makes the research valid and trustworthy in the eyes of the global scientific community.

The foundation laid during this phase determines whether the article will be successful. A lot of top journals reject papers simply because the author moved to the writing stage without a clear gap, a precise question, or a strong methodology.

PART III. THE IMRAD MODEL AND THE HUMANITIES MODEL

To succeed in International Relations (IR), researchers must be able to adapt their work to different structural standards. While Ukrainian journals often follow a more traditional "humanities model," international journals (indexed in Scopus or Web of Science) strictly require the IMRAD model.

1. Structural Models for Academic Articles

There are two main ways to structure an article. For IR scholars, the best strategy is to combine the depth of the Ukrainian model with the clear organisation of the international model.

• The IMRAD Model (International Standard)

This is the required format for most high-level international journals. It focuses on the logic of the research process.

I – Introduction: What is the problem?

M – Methods: How did you study it?

R – Results: What did you find?

a – and

D – Discussion: What do the results mean compared to other studies?

• The Humanities Model (Traditional Ukrainian Standard)

Ukrainian journals often use a more descriptive structure. This usually includes:

Introduction (with a heavy focus on the "Literature Review").

Main Body (divided into thematic sub-sections).

Conclusions (summary of findings).

2. Adaptation for Scopus-Indexed Journals

If you want to publish in a top-tier international journal, your paper must be adapted to meet specific "entry standards." The Criterion and International Requirement (Scopus) below can be used as a checklist:

Abstract – Must be structured and between 200 and 250 words.

Keywords – 5–7 terms using standard international terminology.

Methodology – Must be clearly written so others can repeat the study.

Discussion – Must compare your results with other global research.

Language – Must use professional academic English.

3. Combining Models for Success

For IR faculty members, the goal is to be "competitive." This means your article should be:

1. Legally and politically precise (Ukrainian strength).

2. Methodologically strict and well-structured (International strength).

The Discussion Section is often the most important part of an international paper. In this section, you should not just summarise your own work. Instead, the findings can be compared to existing international studies to show how your research adds to the global conversation.

To ensure the manuscript meets every requirement before submission, the following points should be reviewed.

Is the abstract structured into Purpose, Methods, and Findings?

Is the methodology section detailed enough to be reproducible?

Does the Discussion section engage with recent articles (last 5-7 years) from international authors?

To increase the competitiveness of publications and succeed in international journals, researchers are encouraged to integrate both models into their writing.

PART IV. UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH ARTICLE STRUCTURE (IMRAD MODEL)

1. Title, Abstract, and Keywords

1.1. Title, Abstract, and Keywords: The First Impression

The success of a research paper in International Relations significantly depends on its first page. As the most visible part of work, this section determines whether editors will accept the manuscript for review and whether other scholars will discover it in global databases. An effective title is the first thing a reader sees, so it must be both clear and concise. It should describe the specific focus of the research without being too broad or using unnecessary words while remaining analytical. In the international academic arena, a title acts as a professional label that tells the reader exactly what to expect from your scientific analysis.

To make the research title sound more professional and "weighty", here are simple examples that can be used:

Example 1: Moving from Topic to Analysis

Descriptive (Weak): *The Conflict in Ukraine and International Law.*

Analytical (Strong): *Challenges to the Principle of Non-Intervention: An Analysis of the Conflict in Ukraine (2014–2024).*

Why it is better: It specifies a legal principle (non-intervention) and a clear timeframe.

Example 2: Moving from General to Specific

Descriptive (Weak): *Digital Diplomacy in the Modern World.*

Analytical (Strong): *The Impact of Digital Diplomacy on Strategic Communication: A Case Study of European Union Member States.*

Why it is better: It narrows the focus to "strategic communication" and a specific group of countries.

Example 3: Highlighting the "How" (Methodology)

Descriptive (Weak): *Cyber Warfare and Global Security.*

Analytical (Strong): *Evaluating Hybrid Threats: A Comparative Analysis of Cyber Warfare Strategies in Eastern Europe.*

Why it is better: It mentions the method (comparative analysis) and the specific region.

To create your own analytical title, try using this structure:

[The Specific Problem] + [Methodology/The Research Approach] + [Context/The Case Study]

Example: Regional Stability (Problem) with a Focus on Energy Security (Analytical Method): A Study of Central Asian Pipelines (Context).

1.2 Understanding the Abstract: Structured vs. Unstructured Formats

The abstract is a short version of the entire paper that helps readers to understand the research quickly.

For Scopus-indexed journals, a structured abstract is required because it helps busy researchers to find and understand the main facts quickly.

In International Relations, there are usually two types: structured and unstructured. An unstructured abstract is written as a single, unified paragraph without separate headings, which is common in many traditional journals. While a structured abstract uses titles like "Purpose" or "Methods" to divide the text, an unstructured one flows as one piece of writing. This format uses specific headings to guide the reader through your work.

However, most high-level international journals now require a structured abstract. Even without these section titles, all the important information in the same logical order should still be included.

Regardless of the format, a professional abstract should be between 200 and 250 words and must not include citations or complex or excessive theories.

To write an effective abstract, a clear logical path must be followed. First, it should begin by establishing the importance of the problem to show why research is necessary today. This establishes the real-world context of the study. Next, the researcher must state the objective of the article precisely, often using formal language such as "This study aims to evaluate" or "The purpose of this article is to examine." This allows the reader to understand exactly what you wanted to achieve. Following the goal, a clear description of the methodology is necessary to explain how the data was gathered and studied, such as case studies or statistical analysis. The most important part of the abstract is the reporting of the main results with statistical or logical precision, showing what the research actually discovered. Finally, the abstract should end with a direct summary of the practical significance, explaining how these findings contribute to the field of International Relations or to global political discussions. By following this system, the abstract becomes a powerful tool that increases the recognition and professional quality of the publication.

To better understand how to apply these rules, consider the following examples of a structured abstract required by Scopus and an unstructured abstract common in traditional journals.

Example 1: Structured Abstract (Scopus Standard)

Importance: The rapid growth of digital diplomacy has changed how states interact, yet many diplomatic services lack clear strategies for social media engagement.

Objective: This article aims to evaluate the effectiveness of digital communication strategies used by European embassies during international crises.

Methodology: The research uses a comparative case study approach, analysing over 1,000 official social media posts from five different countries over six months.

Results: The findings show that embassies using interactive content received 40% more engagement than those using only formal announcements. Furthermore, the speed of response was the most important factor in maintaining public trust.

Practical Significance: These results provide a practical framework for diplomatic departments to improve their global reach and crisis management during political shifts.

Example 2: Unstructured Abstract (Unified Paragraph)

The rapid growth of digital diplomacy has changed how states interact, yet many diplomatic services lack clear strategies for social media engagement. This article aims to evaluate the effectiveness of digital communication strategies used by European embassies during international crises. The research uses a comparative case study approach, analysing over 1,000 official social media posts from five different countries over six months. The findings show that embassies using interactive content received 40% more engagement than those using only formal announcements. Furthermore, the speed of response was the most important factor in maintaining public trust. These results provide a practical framework for diplomatic departments to improve their global reach and crisis management during political shifts.

When reviewing the differences between these two formats, researchers should keep the following observations in mind to ensure their work meets international standards.

The Content is Identical: Both examples follow the same "logical path" (Importance → Objective → Methodology → Results → Significance).

Word Count: Both examples are concise and stay well within the 200–250-word limit.

No Citations: These examples do not include references to other authors, which keeps the focus entirely on this specific study.

1.3 Keywords: Selecting for Reach and Indexing

Keywords are the primary tools used for indexing and discovery in the global scientific community. Selecting the right terms is a strategic task that ensures your paper appears when other researchers search for specific topics in databases like Scopus or Web of Science. By choosing precise words, a specific study is connected to the wider global discourse in International Relations. To ensure high recognition, researchers should select between 5 and 7 keywords. It is standard practice to use recognised international terminology rather than local or general phrases. For International Relations, these words should reflect both the general discipline and the specific focus of the study, such as "academic integrity," "IMRAD," or "foreign policy analysis." For example, instead of using a broad word like "politics," a researcher should use more specific terms like "foreign policy analysis," "asymmetric warfare," or "digital diplomacy."

When selecting your terms, avoid using words that are already in your title, as search engines automatically index title words anyway. Instead, use keywords to provide additional information about the methodology, such as "comparative analysis," or the theoretical framework, such as "neorealism."

By following this structured approach, avoiding vague language and choosing precise, standard terms, researchers can significantly increase the chances of the work being cited and recognised by the international academic community.

To ensure the research paper meets international standards, here are seven suggested keywords based on the title: "Regional Stability through the Perspective of Energy Security: A Study of Central Asian Pipelines." These terms follow global academic requirements by being specific, recognised by major databases, and distinct from the words already used in the title.

Geopolitics: This connects your study to the broader field of power relations in International Relations.

Transnational Pipelines: This is a more technical term for "pipelines" and is better for database indexing.

Resource Interdependence: This term describes the theoretical relationship between states that share energy resources.

Diversification of Supply: A key concept in energy security that explains the goal of these pipeline projects.

Caspian Basin: This specifies the geographic region where many Central Asian energy routes begin.

Strategic Infrastructure: This focuses on the physical and political importance of the pipelines themselves.

Sino-Central Asian Relations: Since China is a major actor in the region (as seen in recent 2024–2025 research), this keyword increases your paper’s reach.

These keywords are effective because they ensure the research appears in searches for both broad theoretical studies and specific regional analyses. For instance, using "geopolitics" instead of the more general term "politics" increases the precision of the search results. Such terms are standard in Scopus-indexed journals and enable other researchers to find the work more easily.

To ensure the manuscript meets every requirement before submission, the following points should be reviewed.

• Is the title specific, analytical, and relevant to modern international discourse?

• Does the abstract follow the structured format of relevance, goal, methods, results, and significance?

• Is the abstract between 200 and 250 words without using citations?

• Are there 5 to 7 keywords that match standard international terms?

• Is the language professional, neutral, and free of unnecessary jargon?

2. How to Write an Introduction

To write a successful introduction for a Scopus or Web of Science journal, researchers should follow the "funnel model," which moves the logic of the argument from a general background to a specific focus. This section, typically spanning one to two pages, must begin by establishing the "big picture" of the topic to show the importance of the study within the international academic space. Authors should clearly justify the relevance of their work by connecting it to global standards and current publication requirements. This initial stage allows the researcher to set a real-world context before narrowing the discussion down to the specific problem being addressed.

After establishing the general context, the introduction must identify a clear "literature gap" through a gap analysis. This involves demonstrating that a specific hole in existing knowledge exists, which justifies why the new research was conducted. For authors from non-English speaking countries, this is the time to address common challenges such as methodological weaknesses or previous inconsistencies with international standards. By using precise academic terminology and critical scientific concepts, the researcher can show exactly how their study fills this gap.

The final part of the introduction should state the research objective, questions, or hypotheses with total clarity. This specific focus serves as an argumentative bridge that leads the reader directly into the methodology. Following a clear and logical structure, beginning with the theoretical background of the study, identifying the gap in International Relations scholarship, and concluding with a precise research aim, significantly strengthens the professional quality and impact of the publication. This approach ensures that the work is not only visible in global databases but also recognised as a valuable contribution to the international scientific community.

3. How to Write a Methods Section

The methods section serves as the structural outline of a paper and must be written with enough detail to ensure verifiability and transparency. To follow international standards, researchers should use a formal tone that focuses on the process rather than the individuals, often employing the passive voice and nominalisation. This section begins with a clear description of the study design and the participants or data sources involved. It is essential to include specific details about the sample and any exclusion criteria used to select the data. By providing this information, a researcher demonstrates that the study was conducted with academic thoroughness and methodological precision and that the results are reliable.

Transparency is further supported by a thorough explanation of the materials, instruments, and procedures used during the research. Whether using case studies or statistical models, the researcher must describe every step of the data collection process. This includes mentioning specific software programs or mathematical models used for analysis to ensure statistical accuracy. The goal is to provide a complete guide that would allow another scholar to repeat the study and achieve the same results. This level of detail is a key requirement for high-level journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science.

Finally, the methods section must address ethical considerations and formal approvals. Using standard language to note ethical compliance shows that the research follows international moral guidelines. This is particularly important when the study involves human participants or sensitive political data. By combining these elements, ethical transparency, detailed procedures, and precise data analysis, the methods section becomes a powerful tool that confirms the professional quality of the publication. Following this structured approach ensures the research is respected by the global scientific community.

4. How to Present the Results Clearly

The results section is the most important part of the research paper because it presents the actual findings discovered during the study. To meet international standards, the language in this section must be strictly neutral and objective, meaning the researcher should report the data without adding personal opinions or interpretations. The primary goal is to provide a logical narrative that guides the reader through the most important facts. This is often achieved by using a combination of text, tables, and figures to ensure the data is easy to understand.

When presenting data, it is essential to avoid redundancy. This means the text should not simply repeat every single number found in a table; instead, the writing should highlight the main trends or the most significant findings. For example, in International Relations, a researcher might use a comparison with percentages to show differences between groups. It is standard academic practice to use a specific criterion, such as the p-value (a number used in statistics to help researchers decide whether their results are likely to be real or happened by chance), to define which results are truly important.

Good results sections distinguish clearly between raw data and the narrative summary. While tables and charts provide clarity for complex information, the text must emphasise the "weighty" facts that answer the research question. By keeping the reporting precise and focused on statistically significant results, the researcher creates a professional and high-quality section that is ready for Scopus-indexed journals. This objective approach ensures that the findings are presented with the logical precision required by scholars around the world.

5. How to Write a Discussion Section

The discussion section is the part of the paper where researchers explain the "why" behind their findings. It focuses on interpreting the results and connecting them to the wider scientific world. Instead of just repeating the data, the author must explain what the results actually mean and how they relate to previous research. This is done by comparing the new findings with the work of other scientists to see whether the results are similar or whether they show something completely different. By doing this, the researcher demonstrates how their work contributes to the worldwide academic conversation.

A professional discussion must also address both the practical and theoretical implications of the study. This means explaining how the findings can be used in real-world situations or how they change existing scientific theories. It is equally important to be honest about the strengths and limitations of the work. Every study has boundaries, such as a small sample size or specific geographic focus, and mentioning these limitations actually increases the credibility of the researcher. Acknowledging these points shows a deep understanding of the research process and helps other scholars to understand the context of the results.

Finally, the discussion should propose clear directions for future research. Based on the results and the identified limitations, the author can suggest what other scientists should study next to continue the progress in the field. By following this structure, interpreting results, comparing them to others, identifying limits, and suggesting next steps, the researcher creates a bridge between their specific data and the future of International Relations or other scientific disciplines. This comprehensive approach ensures that the paper is seen as a valuable and high-quality contribution to international journals.

6. Sharing Findings and Future Ideas

To write a strong conclusion for an international journal, a researcher must provide a short and clear summary of the main findings. This section should directly answer the original research question and emphasise the most important discoveries without simply repeating what was already written in the discussion or results. By focusing on the "big picture" and the practical meaning of the data, the author highlights the significance of the work and its potential to improve publication quality in the global academic community.

After summarising the findings, it is essential to suggest directions for future research. This involves explaining how other scholars can use the results to explore new questions or apply the findings to different contexts. Mentioning the limitations of the current study in a positive way can help to identify these future paths. By following this structured approach, the researcher ensures that the paper ends with a strong impact, showing both the value of the completed work and its role in the ongoing international scientific conversation.

PART V. ACADEMIC LANGUAGE: Mastering Academic Writing Style

Academic writing is not creative storytelling; it is a tool for precision, clarity, and objectivity. The goal is to communicate research findings in a professional, neutral voice that demonstrates credibility and methodological soundness.

1. Formal Academic Language

To achieve a professional scholarly style, researchers must maintain a formal and objective tone throughout their writing. This involves the deliberate avoidance of informal vocabulary and the use of more sophisticated alternatives, such as replacing the word "kids" with "children" or substituting "a lot of" with "a significant number" or "many." Furthermore, the use of contractions is strictly prohibited in scientific work; therefore, expressions like "do not" and "cannot" must always be written in their full forms. Authors should also eliminate slang, colloquial expressions, and overly casual phrasing to ensure the text remains grounded in a professional context. While storytelling styles are occasionally appropriate for specific case studies, they should generally be avoided in favour of a direct, analytical approach.

Precision and clarity are equally vital for high-quality academic publications. Vague terminology, such as "things," "stuff," "very," or "big," should be replaced with specific language that accurately describes the subject matter. It is essential to use terminology relevant to the specific discipline and to provide clear definitions for key terms when they are first introduced. To improve the impact of the research, authors should prefer precise verbs and nouns; for example, using "demonstrates," "indicates," or "suggests" provides a more professional tone than the more common word "shows." By adhering to these standards, the researcher ensures that the manuscript meets the rigorous requirements of international peer-reviewed journals.

2. Objectivity and Academic Tone

To achieve a professional academic standard, a researcher must maintain an impersonal style throughout the manuscript. This involves avoiding direct address to the reader and omitting rhetorical questions or emotional language, such as exclamation marks and dramatic wording. Personal pronouns like "I" or "we" should be limited unless the specific discipline requires them, while the passive voice is often appropriate for sections like the methodology to focus on the process, such as stating that "data were collected."

A neutral and critical tone is also essential for establishing credibility in scientific writing. Claims must always be supported by evidence rather than personal opinion, and the use of "hedging" helps to show necessary caution. Instead of using definitive phrases like "this clearly proves," a writer should use more careful terms such as "this suggests that" or "it appears to." This prevents overgeneralisation and acknowledges the complexity of the research, replacing broad statements like "everyone knows" with more accurate descriptions such as "many scholars argue."

Finally, the text must maintain a logical flow to ensure that the reader can follow the argument from beginning to end. Coherence is built through the strategic use of transition words like "furthermore," "however," "consequently," and "in addition." These markers create a clear progression of ideas and prevent the reader from becoming lost, ensuring that each paragraph leads naturally into the next to support the overall research objective.

3. Grammar and Mechanics

To ensure a high-quality academic manuscript, the writer must pay close attention to grammar and mechanics throughout the text. Professional writing requires strict subject-verb agreement to maintain clarity and the correct use of verb tenses to distinguish between different parts of the research. Generally, the Present Simple tense is used when discussing established theories or general truths, while the Past Simple is the standard choice for describing the methodology and specific results obtained during the study. To maintain a formal academic tone, the author should use indirect questions rather than direct ones and apply the passive voice when the action or the result is more important than the person performing it. Furthermore, using parallel structures for any lists or sequences helps the reader to follow the logic more easily, while the precise use of articles, prepositions, and modifiers ensures that the meaning is technically accurate.

Beyond basic grammar, the mechanics of the paper must be polished to meet international publication standards. This includes the correct application of punctuation, such as using commas, semicolons, and colons to organise complex ideas while strictly avoiding excessive exclamation marks. Accuracy in spelling and capitalisation is essential for credibility, as is maintaining total consistency in terminology, formatting, and citation style across the entire document. A professional presentation is further achieved by using consistent abbreviations and ensuring that all references and headings follow a unified pattern. These details ensure that the research is not only intellectually sound but also meets the formal expectations of Scopus-indexed journals and the international scientific community.

4. Features of Modern Academic English

Modern academic English is defined by several essential features that ensure research is professional and easy to understand. One of the most important qualities is clarity, which requires the writer to avoid ambiguity so that the reader perfectly understands the intended meaning. To maintain a high standard, authors must also practice conciseness by eliminating any redundant words or repetitive phrases that do not add value to the argument. Objectivity is another critical pillar of scientific discourse, meaning the text should maintain a neutral stance and rely strictly on evidence-based claims rather than personal opinions. This professional tone is supported by coherence, which involves using smooth transitions to create a logical flow between ideas and sections. Finally, the use of terminological accuracy is vital for global recognition. By using internationally recognised discourse and precise scientific terms, a researcher ensures that the work meets the standards of major databases and can be accurately indexed by the academic community worldwide.

5. Common Errors of Non-Native Speakers (ESL Researchers)

Researchers from non-English speaking backgrounds often encounter specific challenges that can lower the professional quality of their academic publications. A primary issue is the overuse of vague language, such as "a lot" or "things," which lacks the precision required for scientific papers. Furthermore, inconsistent tense usage can confuse the reader regarding whether a study is completed or represents a general truth. Redundancy is another common error, where authors use repetitive phrasing like "the reason is because" instead of more concise alternatives. Writers often make mistakes with articles, for example, using “the” before abstract nouns like *democracy* or using “an” with uncountable nouns like *information*. Beyond grammar, structural problems often weaken the research. Many papers suffer from being too descriptive rather than analytical, focusing on a formal literature review instead of identifying a real research gap. Some authors fail to formulate a clear research question, leading to a mismatch between the title and the actual content. Additionally, a lack of international context and the use of unverified online sources can make the work appear less credible to global reviewers. From a stylistic perspective, a significant error is the lack of "hedging." Professional researchers should avoid definitive claims like "this proves" and instead use cautious language such as "this suggests" to account for the complexities of their data. Authors must also avoid overgeneralizations like "everyone knows," as such phrases weaken the objective nature of the research. Finally, ensuring that conclusions are clearly stated rather than just formal summaries is essential for highlighting the scientific novelty of the work.

6. Practice and Application

To achieve mastery in academic writing, a researcher must consistently engage in the practical application of formal stylistic standards. This process begins with editing sentences for maximum clarity and precision, ensuring that every word serves a specific purpose in the argument. It is equally important to rewrite passages to remove emotional or informal language, which maintains the objective tone required for international journals. Furthermore, identifying common stylistic errors such as redundancy, the use of vague words, or inconsistent verb tenses helps to refine the professional quality of the manuscript. Finally, practising the strategic switch between active and passive voice allows the author to shift focus between the researcher’s actions and the research results, depending on the specific context of the section.

Academic writing style is defined by neutrality, precision, objectivity, and coherence. It requires careful attention to register, grammar, mechanics, and tone. By mastering hedging, avoiding redundancy, and maintaining logical flow, researchers present themselves as credible, cautious, and professional. For non-native speakers, awareness of typical errors and consistent practice in editing and rewriting are essential steps toward achieving fluency in scholarly communication.

7. Academic Integrity and the Technical Phase of Research

Maintaining high standards of academic integrity is the foundation of a credible research paper. This principle requires the honest and responsible use of all sources by giving proper credit to other authors whenever the ideas, words, or data of other authors are incorporated into the text. To achieve this, researchers must consistently use in-text citations, place direct quotes within quotation marks, and provide a properly formatted reference list or bibliography. It is essential to follow a specific citation style, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago, with absolute precision, as even minor inaccuracies in punctuation or formatting can impact the professional quality of the manuscript. Importantly, academic integrity must be applied throughout the entire paper rather than being treated as a separate formal requirement.

Contemporary research requires the use of digital tools to manage sources and ensure originality. Scholars are encouraged to employ reference management software to organise bibliographic data and minimise errors in formatting. When building a reference list, a balanced selection of sources is advisable, for example, approximately 60–70% international publications and 30–40% Ukrainian scholarship, with at least half of the sources published within the previous five to ten years to maintain relevance. To prevent plagiarism and self-plagiarism, verification systems such as Unicheck or StrikePlagiarism should be used. In most academic contexts, a text similarity index of up to 20% is considered acceptable, provided that all borrowed material is properly cited.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in academic writing is permitted for brainstorming ideas, editing language, and checking the coherence of arguments; however, it must comply with established ethical standards. Generating a complete text without the original author's contribution is unacceptable, as journal policies require a statement. Transparency regarding the use of AI is essential to preserve authorship integrity and prevent conflicts of interest.

Finally, each manuscript must undergo a quality control step before submission. Scholarly writing is rarely finished after the first draft and requires multiple rounds of editing. Reading the text aloud can help identify awkward sentences or unclear phrasing, while peer feedback from a mentor or colleague can reveal logical gaps or “blind spots” in argumentation. During the final review, it is vital to verify that every source listed in the bibliography is actually cited in the main text. The abstract and keywords should be prepared at the final stage to ensure that they accurately reflect the completed study and present a concise “mini version” of the research.

PART VI. SAMPLE ANNOTATION

Further is a sample annotation of the academic article: Xhelili, S. (2025). *Normative significance of the principle of non-intervention in contemporary international law*. *Foreign Affairs*, 35(6), 42–54. https://doi.org/10.59214/ua.fa/6.2025.42

The **title** addresses the importance of the principle of non-intervention in modern international law. The word *normative* refers to rules, standards, and legal principles that guide behaviour. *Significance* means importance or value. The *principle of non-intervention* is a rule in international law stating that states should not interfere in the internal affairs of other states. *Contemporary international law* refers to the current system of legal rules that regulates relations between countries.

The heading suggests that the article will analyse how important this principle is in today's legal and political context. It implies a discussion of the role this principle plays in shaping state behaviour and international relations.

From an academic perspective, the title is clear, formal, and specific. It presents the central concept, defines the focus of analysis, and identifies the context of the research. The wording is precise and appropriate for an academic article, as it clearly shows the scope and subject of the study.

Abstract

The principle of non-intervention, which requires states to avoid interfering in the internal affairs of other states, has become particularly significant in the modern system of international relations. This importance is largely connected with the transformation of global political and legal interactions under the impact of hybrid threats that combine military, cyber, informational, and political dimensions. At the same time, rapid digital development has created new challenges related to the regulation of information flows, transnational technological influence, and the protection of state sovereignty in cyberspace. These processes have intensified the tension between the traditional understanding of state independence and the growing role of international norms and obligations aimed at maintaining global stability and security. As a result, the principle of non-intervention functions not only as a classical norm of international law but also as an essential framework for balancing national sovereignty with contemporary global imperatives.

The **aim** of the research was to carefully examine how the legal meaning of the principle of non-intervention has changed over time. In particular, the study focused on three key aspects: first, the transformation of its legal content, that is, how its interpretation and scope have evolved; second, its normative consolidation, meaning the process through which this principle became formally established in international legal documents; and third, its practical application in real-world situations. Special attention was paid to the functioning of this principle under modern threats, including digital challenges, humanitarian crises, and security risks.

From the perspective of academic writing, this formulation clearly states the purpose of the research, which is a required component of a well-structured abstract.

The **methodology** of the research was based on several approaches. The study used system-structural analysis, which examines how different parts of a system function together. It also applied legal hermeneutics, meaning the interpretation and careful explanation of legal texts, and comparative jurisprudence, which involves comparing legal systems and laws in different countries. Finally, the case method was used with elements of legal qualification, that is, the analysis of court cases together with their legal evaluation.

This part of the abstract describes the research methods, which is an essential element of any academic abstract.

The **results** of the research confirm that the principle of non-intervention has evolved over time from a moral and political postulate into a clearly established international legal norm. Initially functioning as a general political idea governing interstate conduct, it gradually acquired formal legal status and was subsequently incorporated in key international documents, including the Charter of the United Nations, the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, and relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly.

In the case of *Nicaragua v. United States*, the principle of non-intervention was for the first time formally interpreted by an international court as a norm prohibiting not only direct armed action but also indirect forms of interference. The ruling clarified that intervention may occur through various non-military means when a state exerts control or pressure over another state's internal or external affairs. In later jurisprudence, the case of *Ukraine v. Russia* illustrated systematic violations of state sovereignty through a complex combination of military aggression, political pressure, economic expansion, and information operations. This case became a comprehensive example of multi-level interference encompassing classical military action alongside cyber operations, electoral influence, and propaganda activities aimed at destabilising state institutions.

Particular attention was given to the Ukrainian context as it represents a broad manifestation of contemporary hybrid interference affecting security, political stability, and communication infrastructures. The study of digital sovereignty, especially through the regulatory practices of the European Union, revealed the absence of a harmonised international legal framework capable of effectively protecting states from transnational influence exercised by global digital platforms. This regulatory gap demonstrates that international law has not yet developed a unified system for managing the power of multinational technology corporations operating across jurisdictional boundaries.

The research also identified a growing tendency to reconsider the permissible limits of state intervention in exceptional situations involving humanitarian catastrophes. While certain forms of international involvement may be justified in addressing severe human crises, such actions must be carefully balanced against the fundamental principle of state sovereignty and the preservation of political independence. The findings of the study underscore the necessity of updating existing legal standards and strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure more effective prevention and punishment of sovereignty violations.

The practical significance of the research lies in its potential application in the development of amendments to international treaties and the improvement of normative instruments regulating interstate relations, intervention practices, and digital governance.

The study examines the evolving interpretation of non-intervention in international law through case analyses, including Nicaragua v. United States and Ukraine v. Russia, to identify contemporary patterns of multi-level sovereignty violations, evaluate regulatory gaps in digital and humanitarian contexts, and propose legal updates and strengthened accountability mechanisms.

This set of **keywords** reflects the study's focus on modern challenges to international stability, including collective security, cybersecurity, hybrid warfare, sovereignty protection, and the evolving interpretation of intervention in international relations, highlighting the need for stronger legal and institutional safeguards in the contemporary global order.

The **introduction** is well structured and logically developed, moving from contextualisation of the research problem to literature review, gap identification, research aim, and hypothesis formulation. It demonstrates strong thematic coherence by linking the classical doctrine of non-intervention with contemporary transformations in international law caused by globalisation, technological change, and security challenges.

The conceptual framing of the study is academically relevant, particularly in presenting the tension between state sovereignty and emerging international regulatory imperatives related to human rights protection, humanitarian intervention, cyber security, and transnational threats. The discussion of functional and adaptive sovereignty contributes to modern international legal discourse, although these concepts would benefit from clearer definition or stronger doctrinal attribution.

The literature review successfully integrates classical and contemporary research; however, it remains partly descriptive. A more critical comparison of scholarly positions regarding humanitarian intervention, digital sovereignty, and institutional enforcement mechanisms would strengthen the analytical originality of the work. Additionally, the research gap could be more explicitly classified as theoretical, methodological, or empirical.

The research aim is clearly formulated and corresponds to the identified problem, focusing on the normative significance of the principle of non-intervention under modern security, human rights, and digital transformation challenges. The hypothesis is logically derived from the literature analysis and reflects the assumption that contemporary international processes are reshaping the interpretation of non-intervention.

Overall, the introduction is academically sound, theoretically relevant, and structurally consistent.

The **methodology** section presents a broadly adequate but somewhat overextended description of the methodological framework. It demonstrates strong coverage of relevant legal-analytical methods and sources, including doctrinal, comparative, case, and content analysis approaches, which is appropriate for a study of international law. However, the text would benefit from greater concision, a clearer hierarchy of methods, and a more precise articulation of how each method directly contributes to answering the research questions. Some methodological components are described in a rather list-like manner without explaining their operationalisation, and there is occasional redundancy in the enumeration of legal instruments and cases. Overall, the methodology is conceptually sound but should be streamlined and better focused on demonstrating the analytical procedure rather than source cataloguing.

The **results** demonstrate a comprehensive, well-structured, and theoretically grounded analysis of the principle of non-intervention in international law, showing a strong command of doctrinal, normative, and case-law material. Its major strengths lie in the integration of historical evolution, legal codification, practical application, and contemporary challenges such as humanitarian intervention, cyber influence, and hybrid warfare. The discussion is analytically ambitious and policy-relevant, particularly in linking the Ukrainian case to broader doctrinal development.

At the same time, the argumentation is occasionally repetitive and could benefit from tighter synthesis between sections, more precise formulation of key theses, and reduction of descriptive detail in favour of critical legal analysis. Some passages rely heavily on narrative summarisation of sources rather than advancing original interpretive insight. The treatment of controversial concepts such as humanitarian intervention and digital sovereignty would be strengthened by a clearer definition of analytical criteria and more explicit differentiation between legal doctrine, state practice, and political discourse.

All in all, the work represents a high-level scholarly contribution suitable for publication in an academic legal journal, subject to minor structural compression and sharpening of argumentative focus.

The **discussion** demonstrates that the principle of non-intervention has evolved from a classical sovereignty-based norm into a dynamically contested legal construct shaped by humanitarian concerns, cyber and informational threats, and geopolitical conflicts. The study extends existing scholarship by integrating doctrinal, empirical, and case-specific analysis, particularly in relation to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, hybrid warfare, and the limitations of international institutional enforcement. While confirming earlier findings on the persistent tension between state sovereignty and global responsibility, the research contributes by highlighting the procedural, technological, and normative instability of contemporary non-intervention mechanisms. Overall, the literature review supports the conclusion that the principle of non-intervention is no longer a universally stable norm but a context-dependent framework undergoing continuous transformation under modern international challenges.

The **conclusion** demonstrates that the principle of non-intervention has evolved from a political-moral concept into a codified but dynamically interpreted norm of international law. Contemporary challenges, particularly hybrid warfare, digital influence, and cyber operations, complicate the traditional boundaries of the principle, necessitating its conceptual and regulatory updating. The Ukrainian case illustrates the practical manifestation of multi-vector modern intervention and highlights both the possibilities and limitations of international legal and institutional responses. Overall, the research confirms the continuing foundational significance of the principle of non-intervention while emphasising the need for its adaptation to emerging technological and geopolitical realities.

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