



## THE ESCALATION OF ENGLISH IN MOROCCO: FROM THE BLUE TO THE BREAKTHROUGH

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### **Abstract:**

In the present time, English is incontestably the world's lingua franca. It has become the language of the modern era, and its conspicuous spread in all the vital domains of life has made it the world's global language par excellence. This state of affairs is substantially visible in many non-English-speaking countries around the globe, and Morocco is no exception. As an Arabo-Amazigh country, English has remarkably, albeit deliberately, managed to permeate the Moroccan linguistic market to the detriment of French, which has always been deemed the country's prioritized second language in the kingdom's stock of languages. This scene has urged Moroccan politicians and language planners to revisit the linguistic policy in the country, aspiring for a full integration of English into the national linguistic repertoire, particularly in the educational realm. In that vein, the present article aims to delineate the spread of English in the country within three different historical eras: the pre-colonial stage, the colonial stage, and the post-colonial stage, and the consequential efforts made towards its promotion.

**Keywords:** educational realm, English, lingua franca, language policy, Morocco

### **1. Introduction**

Today, the English language is undeniably the world's most spoken language par excellence, with an approximate number of 1.5 billion speakers (Statista Research Department, 2023). It is the mother tongue of more than 450 million speakers in different sovereign states such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and various islands in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Besides, it is an official language in India, the Philippines, Singapore, many Sub-Saharan countries, and some Commonwealth countries as well as in plenty of world organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations, to name but a few (Crystal and

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Potter, 2023). Moreover, English is the first choice of foreign language to be widely taught in most countries in the world. Due to this preeminence, English has inarguably earned the position of a “*global language*” (Parupalli, 2019b).

Granted such prestigious caliber, it is no surprise that accommodating this language into most countries’ linguistic policies has become a priority in order to keep up with the ever-growing demands of the modern era, in which English is the chief medium of communication in vital domains such as: diplomacy, trade, scientific research, technology and education. As a developing country aspiring for growth and prosperity, Moroccan authorities have also become conscious of the decisive role of English as an international language and as a key for integrating the global labor market, achieving economic development and ensuring educational advancement.

The present study endeavors to discuss the factors behind the rise of English as a global language and how it distinctively survived as a predominantly international language compared to its predecessors: Latin, Greek and Arabic, who used to be world languages back in time. Also, a brief description of how English has nowadays penetrated various domains worldwide will follow. Then, the article provides an exhaustive historical overview of the spread of the Anglo-Saxon language in Morocco with a specific reference to the ministerial measures for consolidating its status and fully integrating it into the Moroccan curriculum.

## 2. The Emergence of English as a World Language

Crystal (2003) alleges that for a language to gain global status, it does not necessarily have to be spoken as a first language by people in that country. A global language can be used as a first, second, or foreign language. Rather, a language becomes global only when it has a certain “role” that is acknowledged in every country. To attain this recognition, people have to give it a special place within their communities either by making it the official language in the country to be used as a medium of communication in fields like media, economy, politics, law and education or by prioritizing it in the country’s policy of foreign language teaching.

In opposition to the prevailing fallacy among laymen that attributes the expansion of English worldwide to the ease of its learning, Crystal (2003) and Parimal (2013) argue that the distinct global spread of the English language is not due to the simplicity of the language structure per se, which makes its acquisition relatively effortless. To substantiate their claim, they put forth three solid arguments:

- 1) the English language does exceptionally possess linguistic properties that make its learning easy, such as the relative lack of inflectional morphemes and honorifics as well as the absence of grammatical gender and lexical tone. Nonetheless, one should not overlook other aspects of the language that are more complex such as the amount of irregularity in its spelling system.
- 2) languages that are marked by heavy use of inflections and grammatical gender (such as French and Latin) and lexical tone (like Mandarin Chinese) used to be global languages at the time.

- 3) children in all cultures tend to learn their language over relatively the same period of time despite grammatical disparities in their languages. Therefore, global status has nothing to do with linguistic character.

In the same vein, the present-day international status of English cannot be attributed to the number of its speakers but rather to who those speakers are and how powerful they are (Faber, 2023). For instance, Latin spread as a global language during the era of the Roman Empire, not due to the high density of the Romans compared to the people they conquered but rather owing to their ferociously dominant military power. Even after the demise of the Roman Empire, Latin persisted as an international language in many European countries for a millennium, thanks to the power of Roman Catholicism (Osobliviai, 2023). Equivalently, Greek became an international language of communication in the Middle East for more than two millennia not because of the intellectual influences of prominent Greek scholars such as Plato and Aristotle but rather because of the fierceness of the armies of Alexander the Great (Lejeune *et al.*, 2024). Likewise, the spread of Islam by the ruthless Moorish forces in the eighth century led to a far-reaching escalation of Arabic across North Africa and the Middle East (Salikoko, 2008).

Crystal (2003), Zagada (2019), and Winchester (2023) contend that English has reached the status of “*a global language*” by virtue of extrinsic factors pertaining to the “power” of its people, especially political and military power. These factors can be categorized into geo-historical and socio-cultural factors. The former pertains to the extension of the British empire which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century, taking over territories on literally every continent. This eventually led, by the middle of the twentieth century, to the adoption of English as an official or semi-official language in the newly independent states. Ergo, English is now ubiquitous in every single part of the world as the language “*on which the sun doesn’t set*” (Quirk & Randolph, 1985, as cited in Crystal, 2003, p. 426). Also, the emergence of America, by the outset of the nineteenth century, as a dominant economic, industrial, and military power has greatly added to the number of English speakers all over the globe and contributed to its extension worldwide (Bharathi, 2015).

### **3. English in the Modern Era**

Nowadays, the English language is palpably expanding and evolving into a real-world language owing to the burgeoning progress in science and technology, particularly the internet and mobile phones. Crystal (2004) asserts that the production of a large proportion of online content in English accelerates its spread globally. This allegation is substantiated by recent statistics on the languages most frequently used for web content by sharing websites. The results reveal a sweeping dominance of 52.1% of world websites in the English language compared to 5.5% and 4.8% of web content delivered in Spanish and German, respectively (Statista Research Department, 2024).

Dahan (2013) attributes the ascending status of English to its symbiotic relationship with globalization. On the one hand, English serves as a lingua franca that

facilitates globalization. Areas like trade with multilingual companies, diplomacy, science and technology, and global media, including films, the internet and television, operate mainly in English. On the other hand, living in a globalized and interconnected world has increased the demands for English proficiency to promote educational and professional development, cross-cultural understanding and digital expansion. Devasia (2024) and Rosetta Stone (2024) acknowledge the critical role of learning foreign languages in the field of international business communication and unanimously place English on the top list of languages learned worldwide for effective global commerce. Hence, because of the promising prospects it offers, English was merged into the school curriculum in numerous nations as a second language, and pupils began learning it at an early age (Parupally, 2019a).

In the last couple of decades, English has become very pervasive due to its heavy leverage in numerous life sectors, and learning it has become an exigency for people's personal and professional prosperity. To back up this assertion, Crystal (2003, 2006), Parimal (2013), and Reddy and Mahavidyalaya (2016), among other scholars, identified several domains in which learning English is undoubtedly mandatory.

### **3.1 Business**

English is the language used by business organizations for their international correspondence, both in print and electronic media. It is the language used to carry the message across and reach an agreement with multiple companies and alliances to ultimately develop and expand overseas. Employees with good proficiency and fluency in English can easily integrate into corporate life as they are deemed very useful for the growth of their organizations at the international level thanks to their communication skills (Niyozova, 2020).

### **3.2 Tourism**

Success of tourism management depends chiefly on the ability to successfully satisfy the client's needs and attain mutual understanding with international tourists. English plays a vital role in this regard since it is employed as a language of intermediacy and negotiation in areas of lodging and transportation (Al-Saadi, 2015; Abdul Zalil & Lim, 2022). Safety instructions on planes and cruises, emergency procedures in hotels, and way directions are now exhibited in English in parallel with native languages. People with good linguistic competence in English can easily travel all around the world with the minimum likelihood of encountering communicative and cross-cultural hindrances, as English is considered an international language that enjoys the status of *lingua franca*. Consequently, learning it by tourism professionals and those who wish to travel to foreign countries proves to be a priority since English is the sole medium of communication and bilateral accord, despite linguistic and cultural discrepancies (Wilson, 2018).

### 3.3 Science and Technology

At the outbreak of the scientific and technological revolution at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a dire need amongst researchers and scientists from all walks of life for a common medium of communication to eventually ensure reciprocal agreement. In that regard, and because of its global status, English has been adopted as a de facto international “*lingua franca*” (Fane & Wastl, 2023). A shedload of scientific articles is now in English, and the vast majority of researchers among the non-native speakers deliver their oral presentations in international symposia in English, write their manuscripts in English, and correspond with their colleagues overseas via English (Brock-Utne, 2016). Therefore, not only can learning this language enable scientists and scholars to access the truly prodigious and treasured scientific literature, but it also allows them to communicate effectively with their peers worldwide, regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

### 3.4 Internet

Owing to the emergence of the British Empire and America as the world’s leading economic and military forces by the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, English has truly become the world’s language par excellence. It is undisputedly the language of the press, television, postal and telephone communication systems as well as the electronic networks, viz., the internet. This revolutionary invention first appeared in the late 1960s in the USA as the Advanced Research Project Agency Network (ARPANET) by the American government to connect computers in different locations for the exchange of information between scientists and academics, and its language was English. Later on, when people from non-English speaking countries made links to ARPANET, it was necessary for them to use English (Crystal, 2004; Flammia & Saunders, 2007).

Today, because of the technological boom that the world is witnessing in the use of mobile phones, emails and the internet, approximately 70% of the web content is in English (Kramer, 2023). Also, most students, teachers, scientists, and researchers nowadays depend largely on the internet to search for information on their subject matters, whereas some others use it for amusement. Consequently, many people perceive English as the language of the internet due to the vast number of English-speaking users and the high proportion of English-built websites (Ritcher, 2024).

### 3.5 Education

Undoubtedly, English has earned the position of the world’s lingua franca since the bulk of the world’s knowledge in the fields of science, media, literature, business, and technology is in English. Hence, it is no surprise that many countries have made it an official language or the chief foreign language to be taught at school. The rationale behind the integration of English into a country’s educational system is to render the learners linguistically proficient enough to genuinely fathom the vast knowledge available online in English. This intention will consequently enable them to keep up with the leading nations in the most vital fields of science, medicine, engineering, business, and information technology. At the tertiary level, English has been the medium of instruction

in several countries since the 1960s. Even in countries where English is not an official language, the syllabi in fields of engineering and science are written in English. So, students who learn English as a foreign language will certainly gain more knowledge in their respective fields and eventually thrive in their personal and professional lives (Sharma & Dwivedi, 2024; Neelambaram *et al.*, 2024).

It is worth noting, however, that despite the predominant use of English in the aforementioned domains, most nations still cling to their linguistic identity and promote multilingualism via the insertion of their local language(s) alongside English in signboards, official documents and media content. Such an approach helps integrate the global world while preserving the nation's cultural distinctiveness.

#### **4. The Infiltration of English in the Moroccan Linguistic Market**

According to recent statistics, English has incomparably earned the privilege of the world's Lingua Franca, with more than 1.5 billion speakers worldwide, either natively or as a second language (Statista Research Department, 2023). Indeed, it has become the dominant language of globalization, pervading every corner of the globe, including Morocco.

##### **4.1 The Pre-Colonial Stage**

Prior to the French and Spanish incursions, the linguistic landscape in Morocco was characterized by its simplicity (Lotfi & Noaman, 2014). Two languages used to cohabit peacefully, Arabic and Amazigh, despite the intense contact between them and the linguistic alterations it brought about. Still, sporadic and limited use of English was also traced in Morocco during the pre-colonial era as an offshoot of economic and diplomatic affairs with Britain and the United States of America.

According to the British Embassy Rabat (2013), the first diplomatic contact with Britain dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century when the king of England, John, son of Henry II (1167-1216), dispatched an embassy to Almohad Sultan Muhammad Al-Nassir (1199-1213) to request military support against France who took advantage of internal conflicts fueled by some rebellious barons and threatened to invade the country. In 1541, after the Portuguese withdrawal from Morocco, Britain sought to strengthen its political and economic ties with the Moroccan kingdom due to the latter's strategic geographical position. For that purpose, different treaties were signed by both parties to develop and facilitate commercial activities. Thereafter, trade expanded rapidly, with English merchants being granted special status by Moroccan authorities following strict recommendations by the Sa'adi Sultan Abd El Malek (1575-1578). The first Moroccan ambassador, Rais Merzouk Ahmed Ben Kacem, was sent by Sultan Ahmed El Mansour in 1588 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603). In the mid-seventeenth century, Moroccan-British relations expanded largely with the exchange of letters of friendship and cooperation between Queen Elizabeth I and some Sa'adi Sultans via their respective ambassadors (Rogers, 1991).

In the same vein, bearing witness to the noticeable infiltration of English into the Moroccan linguistic market was the Moroccan-American relations that commenced at the outset of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1777, Morocco was the first country to acknowledge America's independence (U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Morocco, n.d.). Eventually, the leader of the Alawi Dynasty, Sultan Mohammed III, issued a decree in favor of American ships to enter the Moroccan ports without any restrictions. Later, in 1786, Morocco sought to further fortify its alliance with America, a desire that was crowned by the signing of a treaty of peace and friendship. To return the favor, America's recognition of Morocco's independence in 1956 was the dawn of deeper and stronger relations on a large scale (Kachoub, 2021).

#### **4.2 The Colonial Stage**

Upon the French and Spanish settlement, the presence of English in the Moroccan linguistic landscape dwindled due to the coexistence of Amazigh and Arabic alongside French as the ostensibly dominant and supreme language. The sole contact with English at that time was confined to some diplomatic and economic relations with Britain and America.

Loutfi and Noaman (2014) traced two major stages in the history of Morocco in which English was noticeably used: the first one was when Tangier was legally designated as an international zone from 1923 until 1956. Tangier's strategic geographical location as the gateway to Africa and the Mediterranean rendered it an exception in the French and Spanish occupation agendas. It was not deemed a colony but rather a "free" land jointly ruled by France, Spain, and Britain. In this heady time, Tangier was perceived as a heavenly attraction for people from different walks of life: spies, businessmen, diplomats, writers, artists, and even criminals. Therefore, English was used as a lingua franca to ensure mutual understanding in such a heterogeneous society. The second notable event was during World War II when the Americans established three military bases in Kenitra, Tangier, and Casablanca as staging areas for bombers pointed at the Soviet Union. During that time, Moroccans became acquainted with English as they used to hear it every day from the American soldiers who settled in the major cities of Morocco, and "*that event was by far the most historical link between Moroccans and English*" (Ennaji, 2005, p. 115). There were a lot of casual encounters between the Americans and Moroccans, to the extent that the latter managed to virtually pick up a deluge of basic English words and expressions to foster mutual intelligibility.

#### **4.3 The Post-Colonial Stage**

After France and Spain relinquished their protectorates in 1956 and 1958, respectively, various changes occurred in the Moroccan linguistic landscape. Unlike French and Spanish, which are reminiscent of colonialism for Moroccans, English is the sole foreign language with no colonial overtones (Errihani, 2008). The advent of science and technology, along with the rapid diffusion of the internet, generated an urgent need for a lingua franca that promotes global communication and caters to the ever-growing

changes and demands that the world witnesses every day and, seemingly, English embraced that urgency.

Accordingly, there has been a growing conviction among Moroccan language planners that the future must shift urgently from French to the adoption of English in order to make a total disruption of the country's colonial past and also to keep up with the world's front runners in fields of business, economy, politics, tourism, scientific research and education as well (Belhiah, 2020). Moroccan authorities have become aware of such exigencies and, thus, planned initially to "impose" English gradually into the Moroccan educational system. In that respect, Sadiqi (1991) revealed that "*policy-makers in Morocco have certainly realized that international communication between Morocco and the rest of the world could not be achieved by French alone; it was realized that English is the key to communication in a very tangible sense*" (p. 73).

Similarly, Hyde (1994) maintained that "*in Morocco, it has been felt necessary to learn another "imposed" language: English*" (p. 295). Such intention emanated from the prestigious status English has gained across nations as a means for attaining intercultural understanding, socio-economic growth, and prosperity. Along the same lines, he asserted that:

*"Language nowadays deals in the image and can be marketed and sold like any other product or service: 'speaking English is the key to employment', 'speaking English joins you to the international community', 'speaking English makes for modernity', and so forth".* (p. 296)

Recent decades have witnessed a palpable proliferation of scholarly works investigating the rapid expansion of English in post-colonial Morocco. For instance, Sadiqi (1991) and Ennaji (2005), among others, have conducted in-depth inquiries in that regard and found out that English has gained considerable attention from Moroccan policymakers and educationalists after the independence. Although Arabic was declared the official language of instruction and French was the "*langue véhiculaire*" (lingua franca) via which scientific subjects were taught, English was one of the foreign languages students optionally chose to learn in senior high schools along with Spanish, German and Italian and, surprisingly enough, it is often chosen by students as their favorite foreign language.

To gratify the students' inclinations towards English over the other options and being conscious of the distinguished position this language enjoys globally, Moroccan authorities and language planners have allotted a number of week-hours for the teaching of English in secondary schools: three hours for science streams, six for humanities and eight for the Special English classes which are basically geared towards the pupils who are exceptionally brilliant in English (Elfatihi, 2019).

A consequence of this action led to a wider spread of English at the level of higher education. According to statistics by Sadiqi (1991), there were only two departments of English in the early seventies (Fes and Rabat) compared to eleven, a couple of decades later. This rise in the number of departments of English in Moroccan universities resulted



in a surge in the number of university graduates. Hence, the population of teachers of English in senior high schools jumped noticeably from 25 Moroccan teachers in 1967 to 276 in 1977 to over 3000 in 1999 (Ennaji, 2005). In order to cater for the training of these teachers, two official institutions were inaugurated: the “Ecole Normale Supérieure” (Teachers’ Training College) in Rabat and Meknès and the “Centre Pédagogique Régional” (Regional Center of Pedagogy) in Fes.

Privately sponsored educational institutions have also flourished in Morocco with the aim of optimizing the teaching of English and yielding a quality learning environment. Of these, one must mention the opening of Al Akhawayn University in 1995 in Ifran; the first Anglophone university in Morocco, the American Language Center and its branches all over Morocco, the British Council in Rabat and Casablanca in addition to the inception of American schools in Rabat, Tangier and Marrakech (Loutfi & Noamane, 2014). Likewise, another institution that is worthy of note is AMIDEAST; a leading American non-profit organization that was founded in Rabat in 1951, aspiring to bind the two countries together – Morocco and America. AMIDEAST focused on promoting the spread of English in the country at the expense of its rival, French, by fostering respect and mutual understanding between both nations through life-changing opportunities for education and cultural exchanges in the form of grants and scholarships (About Amideast | Morocco, n.d.). Over the years, all these institutions, in addition to dozens of English language centers in the private sector, have been promulgating English in this country.

Inconvertibly, the proliferation of English language institutes and centers arose from the nation’s keen awareness of the exalted position of English as the language of globalization. His Majesty King Mohamed VI urged the authorities, in his speech on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People, to revisit the educational language policy to ultimately respond to the growing and onerous demands of the modern era. In that respect, His Majesty declared, as cited in Belhiah and Belkassem (2016), that:

*“The education sector is facing many difficulties and problems. They are mostly due to the adoption of some syllabi and curricula that do not tally with the requirements of the job market. Another reason has to do with the disruptions caused by changing the language of instruction from Arabic, at the primary and secondary levels, to some foreign languages, for the teaching of scientific and technical subjects in higher education. Accordingly, students must be provided with the necessary linguistic skills so that they may fully benefit from training courses. Moroccans should, therefore, be encouraged to learn and master foreign languages.”* (p. 215)

This excerpt, alongside other official documents such as The Moroccan National Charter (1999), The Strategic Vision (2015-2030), The Roadmap for Education System Reform (2022-2026), and The Framework Law 17.51, which all aim, among other objectives, at facilitating access to foreign languages at an early age, have promptly exhorted language planners and decision-makers, all along the past few years, to

undertake serious measures to promote the status of English in the country and integrate it into the Moroccan linguistic character. In 2014, the ex-minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Lahcen Daoudi (2012-2016), issued a ministerial circular in which he stipulated the mastery of English for students majoring in engineering and medical studies before obtaining their doctorate and also for Moroccan university professor candidates as one of the recruiting criteria, especially in the domains of health, management, science, technology, and economics. In addition to that, Daoudi called for the gradual replacement of French with English as the primary language of instruction in higher education and preparatory classes starting in September 2017. In many of his official meetings, he declared that English is the language of scientific research and technological advancement par excellence. During his visit to Ibnou Zohr University in Agadir, he once stated straightforwardly, albeit a bit harshly, that *“a student who does not master English should dig his or her own grave”* (Bouziane & Saoudi, 2021, p. 188). He avowed that the rationale behind this decision lies in the fact that having a good command of the English language provides promising prospects to promote scientific research in universities and affords university graduates better opportunities to integrate into the labor market.

During his term as minister of Higher Education, Vocational Training, and Scientific Research (2018 – 2021), Said Amzazi has taken favorable actions, too. He established a cooperation with the American Ambassador to Morocco, David Fischer, which mainly sought to promote the Moroccan educational system via the implementation of several projects. This collaboration aims, inter alia, to provide training for Moroccan teachers of English in order to embed the language progressively into primary schools' curricula in the near future (Hatim, 2020).

Probably the most audacious and acclaimed action that gave a boost to the presence of English in higher education is attributed to Driss Ouaouicha, Minister Delegate to Said Amzazi in Charge of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Ouaouicha, a PhD holder from an American university and a former Dean, Vice-President, and President of Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, which has adopted English as a medium of instruction since its creation in 1995, announced that, by the onset of the academic year 2020 – 2021, the Moroccan higher education systems will substitute the three-year Licence system adopted by Francophone countries with the four-year Anglo-Saxon model: Bachelor program. In this reform, to echo Bouziane and Saoudi (2021), *“English is taught for four semesters to all university students in lieu of the Licence system, which abolished English at the tertiary level and maintained the dominance of French”* (p. 190).

Because of the professional opportunities it offers, English continued to gain momentum in Morocco to the loss of French. On May 2023, Chakib Benmoussa, minister of National Education, Preschool, and Sports, followed the footsteps of his predecessors and launched a project that will further amplify the presence of English in the country so as to cater to the new needs of young Moroccans. Practically, he issued a memorandum calling for the thorough spread of English in middle schools by the school year 2025-2026. This plan will be implemented progressively in a balanced way. During the 2023-2024

school year, English will be introduced to first-year students with a coverage rate of 10% and 50% for second-year classes. In the following academic year, the scope of coverage will be broadened to reach 50 % in the first year and 100% in the second year. By 2025-2026, English will be thoroughly integrated into the syllabi of the three levels in this cycle (Zouiten, 2023). According to Mohamed Zerouali, director of programs at the Ministry of Education, this initiative aims at providing equal opportunities to students from public and private schools, where English is already taught in the early grades. Besides, the escalation of English will encourage cultural exchange and, thus, help young people cultivate their cross-cultural competence and global connectivity (Arredondas, 2023).

Furthermore, on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Casablanca-Settat Regional Academy for Education and Training announced a pilot program to introduce the teaching of the English language in the region's primary schools' sixth grade starting from the academic year 2024/2025. According to the ministerial note by the academy, this operation will be tested in a limited manner. That is, it will not include all the primary schools in the region but randomly selected ones to assess their feasibility and efficiency before generalizing it (El Masaiti, 2024). This experiment stands as an endeavor to compensate for the challenges faced when introducing English-language science courses owing to insufficient language proficiency amongst students, thus further fostering their linguistic competence in English as the language of the modern era. This initiative aligns with the Moroccan Constitution's emphasis on foreign language learning for global engagement and cultural exchange, alongside The Roadmap for Education System Reform (2022-2026), The Framework Law 17.51, and the ministerial note (030x23) about the teaching of English in Moroccan middle schools which all ultimately aim at promoting linguistic diversity in the kingdom and fostering students' linguistic proficiency at an early age to enable them to readily integrate the labor market.

## 6. Conclusion

The spread of the English language in Morocco has evolved very remarkably over the years owing to cultural and historical influences. From its fragmentary leverage in the pre-colonial time with Britain and America to its present status as a key language for personal and professional elevation, English has undeniably become an integral component of the Moroccan linguistic repertoire. As globalization continues to influence the country, the position of English is very likely to grow offering new avenues for advancement and thriving both locally and internationally. Being aware of such historical trajectory will not only enrich our appreciation of the Moroccan linguistic landscape but it will also offer valuable insights on how historical sway and contemporary needs are likely to reshape a country's linguistic identity.

Sadiqi (1991) lists four factors behind the very noticeable spread of English in Morocco. First, since independence, the policy of education adopted by language planners and decision-makers has been supportive of English. This policy has materialized into various initiatives like the recruitment of British and American teachers, the inception of Al-Akawayne University in Ifran, and the regular organization of

summer schools, pedagogical meetings, and in-service training for the benefit of Moroccan teachers of English. Second, the emergence of English as the world's lingua franca is widely used internationally in fields such as commerce, diplomacy, tourism, and finance. Accordingly, the emphasis on English is stirred by the country's firm aspiration to access resources and opportunities around the world. Third, Moroccans hold positive sentiments towards English as being very useful for the future of Morocco, and fourth, the absence of any association between English and colonialism in Morocco.

The accelerated growth in information technology, especially satellite television and the internet, has rendered English even more popular in the country compared to French, which used to be the language of the elite and social prestige. According to an exhaustive survey conducted by the British Council (2021), the vast majority of Moroccan youth regard English as vital for unlocking educational, professional, and cultural opportunities. Likewise, the same investigation revealed that 40% of Moroccan youth consider English to be the most important language for prosperity and socio-economic development, compared to 10% who consider French, conventionally the language of the kingdom's elites, to be more important than its challenger.

Thus, granted its popularity and superiority, learning English has become one of the major priorities of governments, institutions, and individuals. Being able to communicate convincingly and eloquently in the spoken form or through composition in English is undoubtedly a prerogative, and learning it is assuredly urgent.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of statement.

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