
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Language-in-Education Planning for Foreign Languages in Morocco: Analyzing the Historical and Structural Impacts of History, Social Class, Ideology, and Power Dynamics

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ABSTRACT

The present paper analyzes language-in-education planning for foreign languages within the Moroccan educational system. These policies have been adopted and/or implemented as part of three successive educational reforms that the state has undergone in the last 25 years (e.g., the National Charter 1999, the Emergency Program 2008, and the Strategic Vision 2015). Despite the state's advocacy for varying foreign language instruction, these policies have been marked by a consolidation of French instruction as a primary foreign language and a shift to using it as a medium of instruction for science and technology subjects in middle and secondary education as part of language alternation pedagogy. The study adopts Tollefson's (1991) Historical-Structural Approach as a conceptual framework to analyze how the constructs of history, class structures, ideology, and power dynamics have influenced language-in-education planning to perpetuate the social, economic, and political privileges of a francophone-oriented elite. The latter have employed their economic and political power to influence the indecisive aspect of the language-in-education policies—both covertly and overtly—to increase socioeconomic inequalities and injustices, including linguistic disparities between the elite and lower social classes. This dominant position of French within the educational system has also been motivated by external influences, manifested in the heavy political and economic relationship with France, the former colonizer.

KEYWORDS

Language-in-education planning; Historical-Structural Approach; Class structures; Ideology; Power dynamics; social injustice; Morocco

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1. Introduction

The persistent need for both states and individuals to integrate into the competitive global market has increasingly emphasized communication in international or supranational languages (Phillipson, 1992; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). Given that language policy and language planning are part of resource management within a polity (Mesthrie, 2008; Ruiz, 1984; Tollefson, 1991), the state is often the primary language policymaker. Hence, considerable attention has been directed toward language-in-education planning (LEP), particularly in teaching these languages as foreign languages (FLs)/second languages and/or as media of instruction (MOI) in various contexts (Jahr, 1992; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). The state's motivations for LEP for FLs are multilayered (Ricento, 2000), including enhancing learners' proficiency in FLs to generate a linguistically competent labor force, facilitating their integration into the global economy, and promoting socioeconomic mobility and social justice (Shohamy, 2006).

Morocco is a particular case study in LEP. The state holds a presumed monopoly on the educational system, acting as the primary language policymaker and managing the teaching of several FLs, including French, English, and Spanish. These languages are in mounting competition within the educational sector and beyond. While French maintains its dominant status, the other FLs, specifically English, impose pressure, gaining more ground in the Moroccan linguistic landscape. Accordingly, the LEP for FLs in Morocco represents an arena where overt and covert ideologies and agendas are in contact, exerting power dynamics and ideological interests (Schiffman, 1996).

Over the past 25 years, Morocco has undertaken three educational reforms (National Charter 1999, Emergency Program 2008, and Strategic Vision 2015), the last of which is ongoing. These reforms include sections related to LEP, as no specific document has been issued proposing clear and well-defined language policies for education or other areas (Ennaji, 2005). Accordingly, this paper adopts Tollefson's (1991) Historical-Structural Approach (HSA) and Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to examine the historical development of the constructs of ideology, power, and social structure in shaping LEP for FLs in the Moroccan educational system, exploring how these policies and their implementation have or have not led to promoting socioeconomic mobility and social justice.

2. Literature Review

Before delving into the topic, delimiting the concept of FL is essential. The delineation of the term has long triggered an ongoing debate in applied linguistics. Commonly, it refers to any language foreign to a large speech community and is taught in schools to communicate with foreigners or to read texts in that language (Moeller & Koubek, 2001; Richards & Schmidt, 2013). Emphasizing the complexity of defining FL, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) identified three overlapping perspectives: the social, the educational, and the popular viewpoints, which often intertwine, creating a confusing picture for researchers. Similarly, Byram (2008) highlighted that the classification of a language as FL may be perceived differently depending on educational and political standpoints. Larsen-Freeman and Freeman (2008) further supported this view, asserting that a language is foreign when related to the speakers and their changing contexts. For this paper, Byram's (2008) viewpoint is adopted since languages that do not hold the status of official languages in Morocco are regarded as FLs, aligning with the classification used in the Moroccan Constitution (2011) and reflected in the educational system.

Acquisition planning, also called language-in-education planning (Tollefson, 1991), emerged as a subfield of language policy and language planning (LPLP). It was initially introduced by Cooper (1989), who defined this process as a deliberate effort to bring about linguistic change by altering people's behavior toward the structure and function of a language within an educational context. As technical as it may seem, LEP entails LPLP of languages as subjects and/or MOI. It also evolves to regulate and manage several ideologies and agendas, both overt and covert, exerting both internal and external power dynamics and interests (Diallo, 2005; McCarty, 2011b; McGroarty, 2002; Schiffman, 1996; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Tollefson, 1991, 2002; 2013).

In this context, it is evident that language policies, particularly those within educational settings, intentionally and systematically sustain the linguistic, socioeconomic, and ideological dominance of certain groups, thereby reinforcing existing socioeconomic inequalities (Bright, 1992; Cooper, 1989; Ferguson, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 1991; Wright, 2004). Accordingly, language policymakers influence LEP to convey ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes—either overtly or covertly—to alter language choice, status, and use through legislative and regulatory means.

LEP is part of a broader engineered and coerced social and political change that transcends language, contributing to the hegemonic control of society (Canagarajah, 2006; Ferguson, 2006; Phillipson, 1992; Reagan, 2004; Tollefson, 1991; Wiley & García, 2016; Wright, 2004). Schiffman (1996) argued that policies addressing language, including at the level of education, are influenced by both overt and covert aspects of those policies. The overt policies can be depicted as widely shared with the public in multiple formats (e.g., legislative texts, declarations, reform documents). Nevertheless, covert policies are challenging to identify; they are often undeclared but practiced at different levels of policy application. Since states usually have hidden agendas behind a given FL choice that transcend educational goals, the present study explores and analyzes the overt and covert goals that have shaped these policies.

In addition to ideological and cultural beliefs, history is paramount in shaping language policies, as endorsed in the literature (Ricento, 2000; Tollefson, 1991). Studying LEP policies and their application is feasible through historical contextualization, as historical and cultural events explicitly and implicitly mold these language policies. This is one of the motives driving the present study analysis. Tollefson (1991) argued that the elite in a given polity utilizes language policies, particularly in education, to maintain the existing class structure for their benefit by sustaining their ideology and regulating power dynamics at both the macro and micro levels of LEP throughout historical events. For the context of this paper, there appears to be no standalone, written document

that explicitly addresses LEP in Morocco, as Ennaji (2005) noted. Instead, LEP-related regulations are embedded in educational reform documents issued primarily by governmental bodies in charge of education, namely the Ministry of Education and the Higher Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research (HCETSR) since the late 1990s.

The choice of FLs to teach is determined by historical, cultural, economic, and political factors (Tollefson, 1991). In this respect, French has traditionally held the status of the primary FL and served as the MOI of science and technology disciplines in higher education. Since 2014, there has been a gradual and steady shift in its use as MOI for these subjects from primary through higher education. This attributed status of French within Moroccan education is due to the important political and economic ties the country shares with France, its former colonizer. In contrast, despite growing economic ties with Spain, the language has not enjoyed a similar status to that of French. Conversely, English has gained a significant share in the Moroccan educational system due to various factors, including its international status as a lingua franca of knowledge, economics, and foreign relations (Pennycook, 1995; Phillipson, 1992, 1998; Wright, 2004) and the rising popularity it enjoys among the Moroccan population (Sadiqi, 1991; Ennaji, 2005; R'bou, 2020; Zohir, 2013).

Cooper (1989) suggested that LEP goals are achieved by applying three means: First, emphasizing the methods for creating and improving learning opportunities in the intended language through several approaches, including providing adequate instructional materials and policies, assigning instructional hour volume, designing curricula, and training teachers (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). These processes are conducted in parallel with LPLP activities implemented in other domains (e.g., media, economy). Second, creating and improving incentives to learn the language has been accomplished through the state's choice of French as the primary FL in Morocco, and the MOI for Science and Technology subjects demonstrates the prestige the state attributes to the language for socioeconomic mobility and political power (Ennaji, 2005; Haarmann, 1990). Third, implementing methods to enhance the opportunities and incentives for learning the target language.

These methods vary depending on educational policymakers' decisions regarding the function and status they aim for in a given language. In the context of the study, the post-colonial educational reforms—e.g., the unsuccessful implementation of the Arabization LEP, sustaining the utilization of French as MOI for science and technology disciplines within higher education, and recently in high school—have, in various ways, sustained and reinforced the dominance of French in the Moroccan linguistic landscape.

Non-Western contexts have often replicated the Western non-neutral LPP models, assigning status to languages without adequately considering the specificities of their contexts (Pennycook, 2004; Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991; Wright, 2004). Hence, these post-colonial policies have been shaped by historical, political, social, economic, and attitudinal forces primarily serving external influences (May, 2006; Romaine, 2006). Such policies have facilitated the transmission of political and economic ideologies of supranational states – mostly former colonial powers – resulting in the hegemonic dominance of European languages in education, economy, and technology (Ricento, 2000). These processes have been implemented with the tacit support of emerging dominant groups — the elites — whose interests align with those of the former colonizers. This hegemonic approach to LPP, which did not include ethnic, cultural, linguistic, social, and historical factors in several African and Asian post-colonial contexts, has often led to the failure of those activities, reinforcing the socioeconomic inequalities between various social classes (Pennycook, 2004; Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991; Wright, 2004).

In the case of post-colonial Morocco, the still prevailing anti-colonial sentiment among the population and the influence of rising Arab nationalism, led by both conservatives and socialists, prompted the state to engage, in the early 1960s and beyond, in the Arabization LEP. The process aimed to reinforce the official status of Arabic as a language and MOI in the educational system and subsequently in other domains. The Arabization LEP failed for several reasons, including its hasty and ill execution, a halt in extending it to science and technology higher education schools, and the dominance and undeclared official status of French (Alalou, 2017; Ennaji, 2005; Fernández et al., 2012). Alongside socioeconomic and historical developments, this situation has perpetuated the ambiguous status and dominance of the French language in multiple domains, which has yielded inequalities among job seekers, impeding those who are not proficient in the language (Ennaji, 2005).

The spread of English globally in many educational contexts, as a language and MOI, was motivated by the perception that its instruction was neutral and did not uphold any ideology (Johnson, 2013). Nevertheless, the spread of English was driven by the new status it enjoys as a lingua franca of knowledge and trade due to globalization and the expansion of capitalist ideology and power, leading to the dominance of supranational languages (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Shin & Kubota, 2008). Said (1993) described this situation as the rise of electronics corporations threatening countries' independence, manifesting a supranationalism that transmits new forms of hegemonic, cultural, and linguistic neoimperialism. Wiley (2006) emphasized the authority of history in deconstructing these neoclassical LPP, as they require time and effort to establish the intended hegemonic social class structures (Tollefson, 1991; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997).

The global powers' reinforcement of supranational languages aligns with Phillipson's (1992, 1997) linguistic imperialism theory. That supranational ideology, structural relationships, and powers are systematically validated, established, and reproduced among socioeconomic groups through various dimensions, such as education (Phillipson, 1997; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996). Although Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism and the global spread of English has been criticized for its inaccuracy and lack of evidence (Spolsky, 2004; Brutt-Griffler, 2002), the contact between supranational and local languages, or between supranational languages themselves has unquestionably facilitated the global dominance of English. This spread is primarily attributed to the power dynamics and the political, economic, cultural, and military leadership of the British Empire and the United States (Bourdieu, 2001; Ferguson, 2006; Phillipson, 1992). Consequently, the lack of proficiency in the dominant supranational language in a country can impede certain groups' social and economic development (Johnson, 2013; Phillipson, 1997; Ricento, 2000; Spolsky, 2004).

This is valid for Morocco, where the French language exemplifies these power dynamics. The successive LEP measures have covertly promoted the language to serve the former colonizer's hegemony and interests while perpetuating the elite's socioeconomic and political privileges (Chahhou, 2014; Chakrani, 2013). English, however, was initially viewed positively and considered ideologically neutral in Morocco (El Kirat, 2008). The popularity of learning English has surged among Moroccans, leading to an emerging language competition between English and French (Ennaji, 2005; Marley, 2004; Sadiqi, 1991). This increasing linguistic competition is driven not only by developments within the educational system but also by external ideological influences, including the work of agencies (Wiley & García, 2016) such as the British Council, AMIDEAST, and the Institut Français, as well as the effects of globalization and the involvement of multinational corporations, as observed in several other countries (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; LoBianco, 2009; Phillipson, 1997; Shin & Kubota, 2008).

The societal debate over the choice and status of FLs in the Moroccan educational system, either as languages or MOI, has been continuous. This debate, as suggested in the literature, is ideologically driven, as the choice and status of FLs have contributed to reproducing the existing social structure and socioeconomic inequalities besides maintaining the dominance of a francophone elite over key domains in Morocco (Alalou, 2017; Chahhou, 2014; Chakrani, 2014; Ennaji, 2005). This debate was also motivated by successive educational reforms that have failed to serve the population equally and contribute to social justice. The societal debate intensified with the adoption and implementation of the current educational reform (i.e., Strategic Vision 2015), marking a shift to using French as MOI for science and technology disciplines at the middle and high school levels.

Varying contexts have continuously altered the concept of social justice. The modern perception of social justice reflects a Westernized view influenced by secular and consumerist values, which shape perceptions of human nature, society, and the state (Reisch, 2002). Social justice embodies principles of equity, freedom, and the rights of both individuals and society. However, Reisch argued that the practice of social justice in a given context often perpetuates inequality rather than alleviating it. This inequality emanates from humanity's struggle to seek freedom and happiness, which can lead to injustices between individuals (Held, 1980; Hobbes, 1996). This idealistic pursuit of equality, justice, and freedom creates social contradictions, resulting in social stratification. Accordingly, one social class, the bourgeoisie or the elite, holds power and dominates, promoting social justice as an ideal while, in practice, fostering social disparities and conflicts of interest (Horkheimer, 1972; Reisch, 2002; Avineri, 2018).

To maintain social order, the elite, through ruling mechanisms, enacts legislation that embodies the collective will, preserves individual freedoms, and promotes equality, of which language is the core attribute of power and ideology (Fairclough, 1989, 1995, 2013; Hobbes, 1996; Reisch, 2002). The elite endeavor to persuade individuals that social and economic equality is a priority, more rewarding than political rights, including linguistic ones. This view contradicts Ruiz's (1984) view of LPP, which emphasized that language policymakers should shift their perception of language from both a problem and a resource to a right. Therefore, language teaching should be recognized as both an individual and collective right fundamental to social justice. Despite the claims of inclusivity, language policies in education often covertly sustain inequalities that directly or indirectly benefit the dominant social group (Alcalde, 2015; May, 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Tollefson, 1991; 2006; Van Parijs, 2011).

3. Methodology

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The study adopts Tollefson's (1991) Historia-Structural Approach, which originated within the Critical Language Policy movement. This approach draws on the principles of Critical Theory, which seeks to deconstruct human reality by exposing ideological contradictions and uncovering the factors of dominance that perpetuate inequalities throughout history (Habermas, 1968, as cited in Held, 1980; Horkheimer, 1972). Tollefson's (1991, 2015) HSA emerged as a critique of the neoclassical approach to LPP, which views LPP as neutral and technicist processes focused on resource management based on cost/benefit principles. In this framework, language is perceived as a problem, and linguistic rights, including choices regarding language education, are often subordinated to the interests of the state (Johnson, 2013; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Rubin, 1971; Schmidt, 1998; Wright, 2004).

Neoclassical LPP has historically benefited the dominant socioeconomic groups, who have used their power to influence language choice in a polity through education, thereby perpetuating linguistic and socioeconomic disparities (Cooper, 1989; Ferguson, 2006; McCarty, 2002; Schiffman, 1996; Tollefson, 1991, 2013; Wright, 2004). Tollefson's HSA is posited to deconstruct LEP processes through a historical analysis. It identifies the factors that shape these policies and their implementation, including ideological stances, power dynamics, and structural classification, and how they have been employed to sustain socioeconomic inequalities (Tollefson, 1991, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2013, 2015; Tollefson & Tsui, 2014).

3.2 Research Questions

1. How have history, class structures, ideology, and power dynamics influenced language-in-education planning for foreign languages in Morocco since 1999?
2. To what extent have these language-in-education planning measures for foreign languages contributed to establishing social and economic justice, including linguistic justice, and facilitated individuals' socioeconomic upward mobility?

3.3. The Methodological Approach

The present paper adopts a qualitative approach to research based on the interpretation of the data by addressing the meanings attributed to social or human problems (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Defining the meanings in the data involves identifying patterns or themes that describe phenomena. This process often requires attentiveness and reflexivity in research (Creswell, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; May & Perry, 2014). To effectively design a qualitative study, successful interpretation of qualitative data necessitates meticulous consideration of the constructs of history and context, as the characteristics of the data are unstable and evolve over time (Richard & Morse, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Accordingly, interpreting qualitative data requires meticulous consideration of recurrent patterns, and applying logical, complex reasoning is pivotal in establishing a comprehensive understanding of various categorizations in the data and their interactions (Maxwell, 2013).

This research falls under the case study category, focusing on in-depth problem understanding by examining the context and utilizing data from various sources (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Ying, 2014). Here, the decisions made by the Moroccan LEP during a certain timeframe serve as a case study viewed through a broader global lens. The researchers adopt this approach, as the data for this study, primarily textual, are sourced from governmental documents and reports from organizations using QCA.

3.4. Research Instrument

The present study employed QCA for data collection. The choice of the data under examination justifies the selection of this method. First, LEP-related texts, including FL teaching, have been part of state-issued educational texts since 1999. Second, identifying and analyzing history, class structure, ideology, and power factors necessitate using QCA over statistical methods, as the latter cannot address the implicit and explicit construction of meanings in the text through classification and interpretation (Flick, 2013).

Qualitative content analysis is distinct from content analysis, as it employs systematic procedures for the descriptive thematic analysis of texts. This method identifies the core ideas and critical themes within the text to compare them to relevant theories and research questions (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Mayring, 2015; Schreier, 2014). Unlike content analysis, which focuses on syntactic forms, QCA emphasizes thematic, semantic, and contextual aspects of texts to derive themes (Mayring, 2015; Schreier, 2014). Because it explores meanings within qualitative data, it is well-suited for exploratory research design (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003). Thus, the researchers settled on QCA as the most adequate instrument to analyze and interpret official documents incorporating the LEP for FLs since 1999, guided by Tollefson's (1991) HSA.

3.5. Sampling

As mentioned, no independent document has been developed for LEP in Morocco to the extent that educational language policies were described as vague and arbitrary, as in several African countries (Ennaji, 2005; Bamgbose, 1991). Accordingly, LEP is incorporated in educational reform documents. Considering the time frame of the study (1999-2021) and taking into account that two official institutions are involved in educational matters, the Moroccan Ministry of Education (governmental) and the HCETSR (constitutional/consultative), the following documents were sampled for data collection:

Table 1. Documents sampled for the QCA of LEP for FLs in Morocco.

	Issued by the Moroccan Ministry of Education	Issued by the HCETSH
Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The National Charter for Education and Training reform document (1999) - The White Book (2002) - The Emergency Program for reforming Education (2008) - The Strategic Vision for Reforming Education (2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HCETSR (2008, Vol. 1) - HCETSR (2008, Vol. 2) - HCETSR (2009a) - HCETSR (2009b) - HCETSR (2014) - HCETSR (2016).

3.6. Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The study was initiated with a first reading of the documents to locate sections addressing the LEP for FL in those documents. In the second reading, QCA was conducted to identify recurring themes consistent with Tollefson’s (1991) HSA (i.e., history, class structure, ideology, and power). As emphasized in QCA (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Schreier, 2014), the themes were described, and their meanings were analyzed and interpreted, considering textual content and historical background. This analysis aimed to explore how these themes have influenced the LEP of FLs, perpetuating inequalities and reinforcing the dominance of a Francophone elite.

Research on QCA suggests multiple ways and flexibility in presenting and interpreting the adopted categories. This allows for the use of analytical strategies such as explanation, summary, comparison, personal experiences, assessment, and reflexivity despite the QCA’s descriptive aspect (Coffey, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The researchers presented data in a narrative analysis, elucidating how categories are elaborated to address the research questions (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Schreier, 2014a).

3.7. Validity and Reliability.

The present research was attentive to achieving maximum validity and reliability. Guided by the methodological framework, the researchers ensured validity through trustworthiness and authenticity during the QCA stages, maintaining that the generated codes should directly manifest or imply the themes of class structure, ideology, and power (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Schreier, 2014). The historical and socioeconomic contexts were also meticulously considered when interpreting the findings. Furthermore, expert and peer advice was regularly solicited for feedback about the interpretation process, including reporting inconsistent results. The researchers were aware that ideology closely influences LPP at various levels. Hence, they endeavored to remain conscious of bias.

4. Results

4.1 Class Structure

Several internal and external political and social events have marked the widespread changes in Morocco since the 1990s, undoubtedly impacting various domains, including the linguistic landscape (Chahhou, 2014). By the mid-1990s, the state recognized the failure of its post-independence economic and political choices, resulting in increasing socioeconomic disparities and inequalities between the francophone elite, who generally secured key positions in several sectors and other socioeconomic classes. Guided by the recommendations of multiple international institutions (e.g., World Bank, 1995), the state engaged in multifaceted reforms to establish gradual democratization, including the recognition of other varieties spoken in Morocco and the promotion of proficiency in FLs for Moroccan graduates (King Hassan II, 1994, August 20).

4.1.1 The National Charter (1999)

In 1998, the state engaged in reforming the educational system when the late King Hassan II appointed a Special Committee for Education and Training (Commission Spéciale Éducation-Formation—COSEF). Chaired by the King’s advisor, Dr. Abdelaziz Meziane Belafquih, the committee involved well-recognized and revered personalities representing academic, educational, scientific, economic, and political expertise. Serving as a think tank, they proposed the National Charter reform 1999, which incorporated several LEP decisions. The National Charter 1999 is a 56-page booklet initially written in Standard Arabic, with an official translation in French. The document was formulated as broad directives without detailed implementation procedures. This can be explained by the fact that it involved all components of society in the reform. The operationalization of the National Charter was comprehensively elaborated in the White Book (2002), which categorized various school curricula.

The National Charter addressed the LEP for FLs when it emphasized the obligation of the intended citizens, stating that they “have to master communication in Arabic, in both spoken and written forms, as it is among the nation’s fundamentals and official language. Furthermore, citizens should be open to languages widely spoken worldwide.” (National Charter, 1999, p. 7). The state

perceives that the success of its future citizens in the new millennium requires their mastery of supranational languages. Nevertheless, it did not specify these FLs, nor did it indicate their learning order and weight within the educational system. The broad term 'the widely spread FLs' evokes the state's unreadiness in deciding the status of FLs taught in the educational system. This indecisiveness was corroborated in Section 2, Pillar 1-25; the reform sought "to optimize and generalize quality education; it is essential to consider this Charter's guidelines and implementation by (...) improving programs and curricula, evaluating, orienting, renovating the school, and supporting and enhancing the teaching of foreign languages" (National Charter, 1999, p. 14).

In the same direction, the reform considered learning FLs among the pillars for ensuring equal opportunities for all students from childhood through professional careers. Hence, it suggested learning the first FL from the early stages of kindergarten while initiating students into the second FL starting from the final levels of primary education (National Charter, 1999, pp. 25-26), without specifying which language is the first FL and which one is the second. FL learning was emphasized in Pillar 5-96 (National Charter, 1999, p.31) as a component of standardized examinations that students must take as a requirement for graduation from high school. Students must take two exams in languages: one in Arabic and the other in a FL of their choice. The learners' choice of FLs they would learn and be examined on implies that individuals' choices are considered. However, this has never been a practice in the Moroccan educational system; FL learning is top-down. Accordingly, French has always been a mandatory first FL. Tollefson (1991) argued that the state's choices often influence individuals' language choices. Therefore, it is suggested that the top-down FL choice is influenced by the elites' belief that maintaining the existing social stratification depends on sustaining the linguistic status quo, where the dominance of French serves as a tool for socioeconomic privileges.

The reform recommended using various languages as MOI for science and technology. Besides Arabic Hence, Pillar 9-114 recommended that "at the higher education level, the educational authorities will introduce optional majors that are highly specialized in research and training in the most beneficial FLs in terms of scientific productivity and ease of communication" (National Charter, 1999, p. 39). The reform conditioned the success of this proposition on unifying the language as MOI between high school and higher education for science and technology modules without specifying the beneficial FLs. This implies that there would be no change in the status of FLs.

The ambiguity surrounding FL statuses in education persisted throughout Pillars 9-117 and 9-118 (National Charter, 1999, pp. 39-40). Several procedures were proposed for implementation at various levels of education, including the generalization of FL instruction, the enhancement of FL teacher education, and the establishment of regional networks for FL teaching outside of formal education in collaboration with specialized agencies. Notably, using FLs as MOI for culture, technology, or science modules was emphasized to reinforce the functional aspect of FLs toward their mastery. Although the National Charter introduced new procedures to enhance FL teaching, it remained vague regarding the statuses assigned to these FLs within the Moroccan educational system. This ambiguity and indecisiveness may stem from the fact that the document was intended to engage the public in the reform. Educational policymakers likely anticipated further elaboration of LEP in the curricula, namely the White Book 2002.

The White Book is an eight-volume document issued in 2002. It represents the general curricula for each school level, including the high school streams. Operationalizing the National Charter reform, the White Book was drafted by several committees representing various groups, including multidisciplinary academics, politicians, religious scholars, language policymakers, media experts, economists, businessmen, education specialists, and classroom practitioners. Unlike the National Charter, the White Book was explicit about the status of FLs within the educational system, maintaining French dominantly as the first FL from primary through high school (White Book, Vol. 2, p. 111). English and Spanish were assigned the status of the second FL and were intended to be taught starting in the fifth year of primary school. This goal was not achieved, as the expansion of the second FL in the Moroccan state school stopped in the third year of middle school at that time due to logistical resources, with a preference for English. This situation explains the gap between claims and applications.

The white book (2002, Vol. 1, p. 40) proposed a new five-secondary school-level pole structure that emphasized FL instruction alongside Arabic and Amazigh for effective communication and scientific contribution to the world. The aim is to successfully integrate vital sectors, such as tourism, administration, management, economics, and media. Economic motives were determinant in shaping LEP for FLs, as the state aspired to attract foreign investment and integrate into global knowledge. Despite the global dominance of English, the White Book avoided the second FL. This implies an alignment toward English while maintaining French as the first FL. The distribution of instructional hours for FL indicated a dominance of the French language compared to other FLs, considering that other languages share the status of the second FL, including English, Spanish, German, and Italian. With the state's alignment with English, it was implied that FLs would be used as MOI. There was no explicit reference to which FL would be used, implying that no change would be introduced regarding French as MOI for economics and technology studies in both high school and higher education.

The National Charter reform expanded the teaching of FLs and attributed noticeable teaching hours. Nevertheless, it sustained the dominant status of the French language as the first FL and MOI of science, technology, and economic studies. This decision refutes the state's claim to integrate the globalized economy and attract foreign investment. The state maintained the language status quo by accentuating the existing FL(s) sequence in both primary and middle school curricula.

4.1.2 The Emergency Program (2008).

The unpunctuality in implementing the National Charter reform and its limited achievement in meeting its objectives led to criticism from several institutions. A report by the HCETSR in 2008 evaluating the educational system criticized the deficiencies in educational attainment after eight years of reform implementation. The report warned the educational authorities about the persistent low mastery of languages impacting the school environment along the professional and social domains. Students' mastery of language skills, including FLs, is essential for enhancing learning competencies and is a fundamental factor in students' academic advancement throughout their life trajectories. The report determined that the learners' deficiency in mastering languages among Moroccan students is: "partially attributed to the linguistic diversity they experience as they are compelled to navigate multiple linguistic worlds: their mother tongues, the languages of instruction, and the languages of economy, media, and technology" (HCETSR, 2008, Vol. 1, p. 40).

Furthermore, the report recognized that the low mastery of FLs and low socioeconomic classes impede students' chances for socioeconomic mobility and reduce equality of opportunity compared to students from affluent social classes who receive their education in FLs. These inequalities are amplified in higher education, where FLs are used as MOI, specifically in French (HCETSR, 2008, Vol.1). Similarly, the report underlined the repercussions of the low language proficiency issue on learners' employment, reducing their chances of securing better opportunities for graduates with low mastery in FLs, particularly in the private sector. The report continued its criticism of language teaching within the educational system, pointing out the inconsistency in the choice of languages as MOI; "The education path up to the end of secondary school involves teaching scientific subjects in Arabic.

In contrast, the use of French dominates vocational training and higher education, particularly in scientific, medical, and technical fields." (HCETSR, 2008, Vol. 2, p. 71-72). This discrepancy creates challenges in knowledge acquisition and competencies. The second criticism was directed at teaching languages as subjects at various levels. The report underscored the absence of a clear national language policy, which impacted the regulation of how languages are taught within the Moroccan educational system. This resulted in weak language proficiency, including for FLs. To overcome this situation, the report emphasized the need to formulate a novel, transparent, and effective language policy to address the issue of languages as MOI and facilitate knowledge acquisition and professional integration for Moroccan graduates (HCETSR, 2008, Vol. 2).

The HCETSR explicitly identified the difficulties in implementing the National Charter reform, including in FL teaching. However, FL statuses remained ambiguous. In this respect, it continued to imply the necessity of maintaining French as the primary FL due to its historical role in the country's development. The report underlined that "the [Moroccan] school must fully assume its responsibility in (...) providing opportunities for an increasing number of students (...) to master foreign languages that are part of Morocco's historical trajectory and its tradition of openness to the world" (HCETSR, 2008, Vol. 1, p. 71).

In the same direction, another report by the HCETSR in 2009, evaluating students' acquisitions, confirmed the criticism of the National Charter's (1999) LEP of FL, particularly regarding the French language. The report revealed that 70% of primary and middle school students still need to meet the average grade in French despite the instructional hours dedicated to the language. Rural students performed worse than their urban counterparts, and significant disparities were noted between private and state school students, with private students excelling in French (HCETSR, 2009a). These findings suggest that social structures, socioeconomic status, and access to quality education are decisive factors in FL acquisition and mastery. Accordingly, low mastery of FLs, mainly French, impedes learners' success in higher education and professional integration (HCETSR, 2009a).

These conclusions were corroborated by various international reports, which incited the government to initiate the Emergency Program Reform in 2008. The new reform aimed to address the shortcomings of the National Charter 1999 and improve the educational system through urgent projects and resources. Nevertheless, the Emergency Program reiterated existing policies without proposing innovative solutions, particularly regarding FL education. Despite recognizing the paramount role of FLs in students' academic success and professional integration, it failed to introduce concrete measures to enhance FL teaching and learning. The drafter of the reform acknowledged the linguistic gap between secondary and higher education at FL instruction and the MOI but disregarded proposing adequate LEP measures, inviting the HCETSR to intervene in this regard.

The Emergency Program's indecisiveness toward FL education prolonged the status quo, perpetuating linguistic inequalities in Moroccan education. Graduates from public schools often face disadvantages in the private sector, where French is the lingua

franca. This situation reinforces socioeconomic inequalities that benefit the dominant elite (Chakrani, 2013; Ennaji, 2005; World Bank, 2007, 2008). In response to the Emergency Program, the HCETSR organized a conference to explore possible solutions for LEP issues in Morocco. The conference served as a platform for reflection on enhancing the mastery of linguistic competencies vital for education and socioeconomic opportunities by combining national and international practices, addressing topics such as the impact of language teaching on society and identity, the importance of multilingual education, and the need for effective language teaching methodologies (HCETSR, 2009b). The conference identified obstacles in FL teaching and recommended guidelines for quality language instruction. However, it did not propose concrete measures targeting LEP, which persists in the indecisiveness of Morocco's language policy, as in several African cases (Bamgbose, 1991; Ennaji, 2005). On a global scale, the Emergency program failed to achieve the goals set and respond to the socioeconomic needs and challenges of both the population and the state, perpetuating educational, linguistic, and socioeconomic inequalities and disparities at various levels (HCETSR, 2014; 2016).

4.1.3 The Strategic Vision (2015)

Acknowledging the failure of the National Charter and Emergency Program reforms, Moroccan educational authorities introduced 'The Strategic Vision for Reforming Education 2015-2030.' This ongoing reform claims to focus on aligning schools with Morocco's evolving social, political, and economic contexts to achieve three principles: equity and equality of opportunities, quality of education for all, and promotion of both individual and societal development (Strategic Vision, 2015).

As in the previous reform, LEP, including FLs, was addressed as part of the reform document. It highlighted "the importance of languages in improving learning quality, academic success, and the internal and external productivity of schools, in addition to promoting research and achieving integration" (Strategic Vision, 2015, p. 37). The role of language education, including FL, in facilitating the country's integration into the global sphere of economy and research was acknowledged by recommending the provision of linguistically competent human resources. The guiding of LEP for FLs recommended:

- Ensuring fairness and equal opportunities in language proficiency (...) to improve the quality of learning.
- By the end of secondary education, students should be proficient in two foreign languages besides Arabic and Amazigh (...), progressively ensuring the transition from bilingual to multilingual education (...).
- Prioritizing the functional role of languages in schools reinforces identity, fosters global openness, enhances cultural awareness, promotes research, and achieves socioeconomic and cultural integration.
- While Arabic will be the primary language of instruction, linguistic alternation will be implemented gradually, with French (...) in the short term at the secondary level and English at the same level in the medium term.
- Equipping teaching, training, and research staff with dual language proficiency is essential. They should also strictly adhere to their designated language of instruction. (...)
- Revising the curricula and programs for foreign language teaching aligns with the new approaches and educational methods.
- Diversifying the language of instruction, especially by adopting language alternation, strengthens learners' linguistic competencies and ensures consistency in the languages of instruction used across various levels of training. (Strategic Vision, 2015, pp. 37-38).

While language mastery and the use of languages as MOI are now the focus of the reform, the Strategic Vision (2015) resolved the state's indecisiveness and vagueness regarding language statuses and functions within the educational system. Accordingly, French was designated as the mandatory first FL from primary school through high school. It was also assigned as MOI for some modules, specifically for science and technology subjects in both high school and middle school. English was assigned the status of the mandatory second FL at the high school and middle school levels and is used as MOI for some modules in the medium term. It is projected to be introduced gradually at the primary school level. A third FL will also be introduced, with a recommendation for Spanish depending on specific needs. For higher education, the reform recommended varying the training offered in different languages as MOI, including FLs.

Additionally, the reform suggested encouraging scientific and technical research in English. For vocational education, while the dominant language used as MOI is French, it was recommended that training be introduced in English. To operationalize these LEP for FL measures, the 'Baccalauréat International' was established in 2014 in French, English, and Spanish as MOI, with dominance for the one using French as MOI. Additionally, language alternation pedagogy between Arabic and French was introduced in 2020 to ease students' transition into higher education and vocational training, allowing them to graduate with mastery of FLs (Strategic Vision, 2015). Subsequently, they could integrate into a competitive job market and promote themselves socioeconomically. Although the LEP of FLs attempted to promote English teaching in the educational system, they enforced French as a killer language in Morocco, using the same analogy Fishman (1998) argued for English.

The educational authorities' view of the leverage of LEP of FL on socioeconomic mobility is part of their perception of the Moroccan school's active engagement in building economy and knowledge. Hence, the Strategic Vision (2015) anticipates that an effective implementation of the recommended LEP of FLs would:

1. Enhance openness to contemporary knowledge, science, culture, technology, and innovations that shape new developmental and cultural models.
2. Facilitate and deepen communication channels with countries worldwide, strengthening the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts and improving Morocco's position in the global system while promoting its cultural, value-based, and developmental model.
3. Ensure adequate access to information, knowledge, and scientific resources.
4. Increase intangible capital in economic and human development fundamentally relies on investments in education, training, research, and information and communication technologies. (p.59-60)

One could suggest that some new measures have promoted English teaching as a language and MOI in the educational system. However, the LEP for FLs in the Strategic Vision (2015) persists in sustaining French as a language and MOI at all levels of the educational system. French is expanded as MOI to all secondary school scientific and technical majors in accordance with higher and vocational education. This expansion has allowed the language to determine students' access to valued higher education training and significant job positions. Conversely, students' socioeconomic situations are affected by decreasing inequalities, which lead to social justice or increasing inequalities that benefit the elite from social injustice (Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991).

The researchers suggest that the current reform implementation has not yielded clear indicators that the LEP for FL activities decreases linguistic injustice and socioeconomic inequalities in Morocco. One could observe an increasing dominance of French as a language and MOI in Moroccan schools. While part of this mounting dominance is ideological, the other side is socioeconomic. It is suggested that sustaining the dominance of the French language in the educational system maintains the elite's socioeconomic benefits and privileges in Morocco.

4.2 Ideology and Power

The Moroccan post-colonial political and socioeconomic policies through the 1990s resulted in difficulties at various levels, including education. The state acknowledged that previously implemented LEP measures could not achieve their goals. Conversely, they have fueled the power struggles in which languages have been utilized for ideological challenges for decades. In this respect, it is argued that LEP activities are tools for establishing ideological and socioeconomic power (Tollefson, 1991). These inadequately implemented LEP policies impacted the linguistic competencies of graduates whose skills, including proficiency in FLs, must align with global labor standards (World Bank, 1995). This was an incentive, among others, to reform the educational system. Hence, the National Charter reform was proposed.

4.2.1 The National Charter (1999)

The National Charter reform was introduced as part of a series of political and socioeconomic reforms. The drafting committee comprised members from diverse academic, economic, and political backgrounds, suggesting that the committee's work could not withstand the influence of ideological debate between proponents of Arabization and supporters of francophone education, given that the Arabization LEP was among the complaints regarding the breakdown of the Moroccan educational system. The prominence of francophone figures on the committee, including its chair, Dr. Belafqih, implicitly indicates the state's endorsement of consolidating the role of French in the Moroccan linguistic landscape.

Notably, the National Charter (1999) introduced its LEP, positing Standard Arabic (SA) as a core element of Moroccan national identity. Accordingly, the state positions itself as the primary language policymaker, particularly for Arabic. Through this, the state countered both the Islam and Arab Nationalist movements, which have employed Arabic as fundamental to their ideologies. At the same time, the reform called for openness to the world's popular languages (National Charter, 1999). This call was vague, as it did not specify which languages should be prioritized or the criteria for the FL choice. The National Charter's vagueness continued when highlighting the goals of the newly suggested structure of the educational system, including FL education. It did not, at any moment, designate the statuses and functions attributed to each FL within the education system. This ambiguity in LEP aligns with Ennaji (2005) and Bamgbose (1991), who highlighted the vague and arbitrary aspects of LPP in African countries.

Language-in-education planning in the National Charter (1999) revolved around three primary principles: (1) Promoting the teaching of SA as a language and MOI, (2) diversifying MOI for science and technology subjects, and (3) encouraging learners' FL mastery. The first principle reaffirmed the state's authority as the primary language policymaker, reinforcing SA among the ideological tools for maintaining the state's hegemony. The state's intervention in this regard countered Political Islam and Arab

Nationalist ideologies that challenged its use of SA to establish their hegemonies. At the same time, the state established a balance in the linguistic landscape where various languages challenged one another. The second and third principles reflect a response to calls for promoting FL education and adapting the Moroccan educational system to the needs of the global economy. The ambiguity and indecisiveness of the National Charter regarding FL statuses and functions imply both covert and overt ideological pressures favoring French as the key to socioeconomic and academic mobility. This resulted in its dominance as FL and MOI, particularly for science and technology majors in higher education. At the same time, Arabic was challenged as a MOI and assigned the sole function of safeguarding national identity.

English and Spanish were assumed to have their historical status as second FLs within the Moroccan educational system. The reform drafters continued to disregard clarifying LEP for FLs. This could be attributed to the National Charter document being intended for a public audience. In contrast, educators were meant to receive a detailed outline of the reform in the White Book (2002). Following the same approach as the National Charter, drafting the White Book (2002) involved diverse perspectives from several figures across various fields and backgrounds. This diversity of views often led to conflicts of interest, with ideological and power dynamics influencing decision-making. This explains the time difference between issuing the National Charter in 1999 and the White Book in 2002.

In its first volume, the White Book (2002) maintained vagueness regarding FL statuses and functions. Only in Volume 2 did the document explicitly refer to French as the first FL, reinforcing its historical status within the educational system and clearing suppositions regarding any possible change of FL status in education. Accordingly, French was maintained as the first FL for primary education, expanding its teaching to the second year of the same level. Teaching the second FL(s) starting from the fifth grade was suggested. However, the measure of teaching the second FL(s) was never implemented. Notably, the explicit reference to French as the first FL while refraining from doing so for the second FL(s) implies a decision that French would be reinforced as the major taught FL despite the increasing linguistic competition that English imposes.

This was also reflected in middle school, where French was reaffirmed as the first FL. Experimenting with language alternation pedagogy in FLs and SA as MOI was also proposed (White Book, 2002, Vols. 1-2). However, this step was not executed for unexplained reasons. Expanding second FL instruction at this level was promising; however, its implementation was limited to the third year of middle school, predominantly in English. For the high school level, with the newly proposed restructuring into poles, FL education is emphasized to enhance scientific productivity, communication with the global community, and support sectors such as tourism, the economy, and media (White Book, 2002, Vol. 1). Within this scope, educational policymakers view French as adequate to fulfill these roles. This standpoint reflects a historically ideological choice rather than an educational one, indicating the influence and power dynamics the former colonizer exerts through the francophone elite over key domains in Morocco (Chakrani, 2013). The choice of French as the first FL in high school has drifted away from global changes, where English stands out as a lingua franca for knowledge and global integration. Therefore, reinforcing the teaching of French as the first FL through a significant volume of instructional hours serves as a barrier to control the pressure the English language exerts on the linguistic landscape in Morocco, which is reflected in the growing positive attitudes towards English (Marley, 2004, 2005; R'Boul, 2020; Sadiqi, 1991; Zouhir, 2013).

The dominant status of French is expressed explicitly in the suggested establishment of French as a MOI for science and technology subjects in high school, a step toward unifying the MOI with higher education and equipping the Moroccan job market with graduates proficient in French. This decision exposes both the external and internal Francophone hegemonic influence. The external influence is manifested in the political and economic power that France, the former colonizer, has over various sectors of public life in Morocco, including education. At the same time, internally, the hegemony of the Francophone elite perceives the French language as vital to sustaining their political and socioeconomic power through various decisions that enforce the dominance of the language within the educational system (Chahhou, 2014; Chakrani, 2013; Ennaji, 2005).

Conversely, the slow expansion of the instructional volume of English in both middle and high school implies that there is an attempt to control the increasing linguistic competition that English imposes on French, motivated by the global status of English as the lingua franca of knowledge and the economy and Morocco's need to adjust its education and economy to globalization standards. Despite the National Charter's promises, its achievements were limited, affecting the quality of education and yielding both international and local criticism. The state proposed the Emergency Program (2008) to address the education crisis in response to this impasse.

4.2.2 The Emergency Program (2008)

Criticism was leveled at the National Charter reform. The HCETSR (2009a) report indicated that the measures implemented for LEP did not improve language mastery, including in French. Therefore, they negatively impacted learners' academic and socioeconomic mobility. The report recommended re-evaluating primary education to adapt to its socioeconomic and cultural context by

enhancing language skills, particularly in Arabic and French (HCETSR, 2009a). Similarly, the report disapproved of the prevalent focus on French in the Moroccan educational system, limiting openness to other major international languages. In this regard, it emphasized two key failures of the National Charter reform: the non-implementation of the unification of language as the MOI between secondary and higher education and inadequate linguistic choices, particularly for FLs, which impede knowledge acquisition and job market integration. Therefore, these French-oriented LEP measures and their poor implementation, such as the vague LEP decisions, inadequate language teaching methods, and unequal access to quality FL education, resulted in learners' low mastery of French, which posed a barrier to socioeconomic and academic success, benefiting students from privileged backgrounds (HCETSR, 2008, Vols. 1-2). This situation established an unjust educational system that enforced socioeconomic injustice and inequalities, including linguistic ones (HCETSR, 2008, Vols. 1-2; HCETSR, 2014).

To address these limitations, the HCETSR (2009a) urged the formulation of a clear and realistic national language policy that focuses on resolving the issue of languages as MOI while providing impartial access to FL learning of at least two FLs that align with international standards and examinations. Paradoxically, despite these recommendations, the report leaned toward French by explicitly referring to it as the first FL, encouraging its adoption as MOI in secondary education to align it with higher education. Conversely, it disregarded naming English and Spanish, referring to them as major international languages (HCETSR, 2009a). This report's stance entails ideological partiality toward French by being explicit about its function and imprecise regarding other FL languages, mainly English. This suggests the unreadiness and arbitrariness of educational authorities in making linguistic choices that could reduce ideological influence and respond to the needs of all social classes.

The arbitrariness and readiness of educational authorities were evident in the new reform, the Emergency Program (2008), which was meant to address political and economic criticisms received from various internal and external bodies. For FL education, linguistic choices and outdated pedagogy were perceived to hinder the socioeconomic development of the people. Moreover, this situation decelerated efforts to meet globalization's demands and expand cross-border job opportunities. Furthermore, the unregulated growth of private schools increased the language gap between public and private education. In this regard, one could suggest that the state is gradually losing control over the LEP for FL in private education, which could lead to linguistic tension in the long run if not monitored (HCETSR, 2009a; PIRLS, 2007; World Bank, 2007, 2008).

In contrast to the promises, the Emergency Program (2008) reiterated the National Charter's LEP, including FLs, failing to propose novel and realistic decisions that could demonstrate the political will to overcome the limited outcomes of the National Charter reform. The disparity between the state's promises claimed in the Emergency Program and the factual implementation exposed a lack of political will and indecisiveness in addressing educational issues, including LEP, which impacts Morocco's socioeconomic development. This situation reveals that educational authorities are imprisoned in a dichotomous ideological divergence between, on the one hand, the need to prepare the country and its population for future global challenges in which English is imposing itself as a lingua franca of the global economy, affairs, and knowledge, and on the other, the historically ideological influence of francophone hegemony, which dominates key sectors in Morocco. Francophone hegemony is represented externally by solid political and economic ties with the former colonizer. In contrast, the francophone elite internally exerts power in the political and economic sectors.

With no tangible achievements of the Emergency Program, the Moroccan educational authorities enforced the arbitrariness of policymaking and implementation, leading to educational and political accountability issues. This context impacted the outcomes of the adopted and implemented LEP. Given the country's precarious external and internal economic and political situation stemming from the changes of the Arab Spring, the state was obligated to listen to the increasing dissatisfaction of the population regarding political and economic governance. The population demanded more political, socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic rights. The Emergency Program era closed in this context, leading to a new educational reform.

4.2.3 The Strategic Vision (2015)

An evaluation of both the National Charter and the Emergency Program reforms by the HCETSR (2014c) revealed, regarding the LEP of FLs, that the disparity in the language as MOI between secondary and higher education for science and technology subjects made French a barrier to academic success. Additionally, it criticized the failure to generalize the teaching of English at all levels despite the promises of both reforms. This situation denotes chronic deficiencies in language policy implementation. A later evaluation by the same institution, focusing on the same group, reported a high demand for Moroccan students to learn French and English as languages. At the same time, SA is preferred as a MOI for science and technology subjects in higher education (HCETSR, 2016).

This preference questions the persistence of educational authorities in enforcing French as MOI. Hence, it explains the top-down LEP, which overlooks the perceptions and attitudes of the recipients of those policies. The report implies two conflicting interests

in the LEP for FLs in Morocco: a top-down approach that overtly and covertly enforces French as the predominant FL language and MOI, in line with the elite's agenda and supported by the Amazigh Cultural Movement, which has been demanding recognition of linguistic and cultural rights. The Amazigh Cultural Movement sees Arabic as a representation of Arab Nationalism and Political Islam; therefore, it views Arabic as a threat to its linguistic rights. The consolidation of French is promoted through language alternation pedagogy, considering "French important since it is the language of openness to the world and other cultures. It is also an essential tool for communication, especially for higher education, which provides almost all its courses in this language" (HCETSR, 2016, p.36).

The opposing interest is manifested in the LEP recipients' demand for quality FL education, leaning towards English. This group, endorsed by Arab Nationalists and Political Islam, resists alternating SA and French as MOI, perceiving SA as a vital symbol of their Islamic identity and cultural heritage. Thus, they believe that its status as the primary language and MOI should be maintained and enhanced. Additionally, they fervently support the increasing societal demand for promoting English instruction to replace French in the long term. This undoubtedly produces ideological tension and a gap between the state's LEP measures and public opinion (Ennaji, 2005). Notably, there is often a need for more clarity in the discourse surrounding the second ideologies that explicitly favor Arabic, contradicting actual practice, as they choose a French-based academic path for their children. Within this heated societal debate over language policy in Morocco, and as part of the post-Arab Spring political and economic reforms, educational authorities proposed the Strategic Vision reform in 2015 based on the principles of establishing equity and equality of opportunity, quality education for all, and promoting both the individual and society.

The Strategic Vision (2015) reflects the political underpinnings of the reform. It states that the educational system should attain the state's political and socioeconomic goals, including preserving the Islamic religion, fostering a unified national identity, promoting democracy, encouraging cultural and linguistic plurality, and welcoming other cultures and civilizations. Hence, it emphasizes the critical role of LEP in enhancing learning quality, academic access, research, and integration.

Within this framework, the reform resolved the state's indecisiveness regarding FL statuses and functions. French was enacted as the first FL early in primary education and as an MOI for science and technology from middle school through higher education as part of language alternation pedagogy with SA (Strategic Vision, 2015). Consequently, the lion's share of the 'Baccalaureate Internationale' launched in 2015 has been delivered in French as the MOI. Additionally, since 2020, all secondary school science and technology subjects have been delivered in French. English explicitly takes the status of the second FL, intending to expand its instruction beginning in the fourth year of primary school in the medium term. It was also decided to use it as MOI for limited classes of the 'Baccalaureate Internationale'.

Given the time frame for adopting French and English as MOI and the volume of instructional hours allocated to each FL, it appears that the state's measures and their implementation manifest an inclination toward reinforcing the dominance of French within the educational system in alignment with its use as a lingua franca in the economic sector in Morocco. This inclination is covertly reflected in the laissez-faire approach of the educational authorities to regulate LEP in private education as they do in public education, despite their authority. This situation creates an apparent disparity between private school students with access to quality education in FLs, mainly French as a language and MOI, unlike their peers in public schools who struggle with poor-quality FL instruction. Accordingly, French has become a barrier to academic success and has impacted social justice.

Both ideological and socioeconomic factors drive this linguistic shift. First, the country's historical ties with France, the former colonizer, including mutual political and economic interests, have sustained the francophone influence in education, limiting the country's openness to other international investors primarily using English for communication. Second, with their political and economic power, the Moroccan francophone elite employs LEP to perpetuate French hegemony and secure their privileges, as discussed generally in the literature (Shahamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991). This elite faces continuous opposition from the political Islam movement and nationalist ideologies, which view Arabic as central to preserving the Arab-Islamic identity. To them, the consolidation of French in the educational system threatens this identity. Hence, their discourse calls for consolidating the teaching of SA and promoting the teaching of English to counter the prevalence of the French language in Morocco (Bullock, 2014; Ennaji, 2005).

The ideological debates surrounding LEP, particularly FLs, reflect the power challenge between opposing forces. As Tollefson (1991) concluded regarding the elite-driven LEP, one group—primarily the political and economic elite—exerts its influence on the LEP choices, measures, and implementations; this is also the case for Morocco. This influence, whether overt or covert, is top-down, disregarding the views, stances, and attitudes of the recipients of those policies, often leading to resistance to language policies and, subsequently, their failure (Lewis, 1981; Menken & García, 2010). Notably, in recognizing the tensions resulting from LEP, the state maintains a balance in how it approaches the contact of various languages in the Moroccan linguistic landscape, including education.

5. Discussion

The post-independence era in Morocco was marked by ideological and power struggles between the monarchy and political parties, with prominent figures fighting against colonialism and an unstable economy that failed to meet the population's needs. These internal changes, along with global shifts in power toward the prevalence of capitalism, multinational corporations, and the rise of English as a global lingua franca, were significant. Considering that language policy is historically driven by economic interests, ideological orientations, and power dynamics (Hornberger, 2006; May, 2006; Phillipson, 1992; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 1991; Wiley, 2006), the post-independence LEP in Morocco, notably the Arabization, created a complex linguistic landscape that favored French as the dominant unofficial language, perpetuating social class divisions (Chahhou, 2014; Daniel & Ball, 2009; Ennaji, 2005; Johnson, 2013).

While the Arabization LEP sought to unify the country under an Arab-Islamic identity, its hasty and inadequate implementation, in addition to the state schools' low-quality instruction of FLs, mainly French, positioned the language as a gatekeeper for socioeconomic mobility (Fernández et al., 2012). Ultimately, the Moroccan francophone elite employed LEP to reinforce their control over political, economic, and administrative sectors while simultaneously sustaining their privileges and interests due to their access to quality French-language education, both domestically and abroad (Chahhou, 2014; Ennaji, 2002, 2005; Marley, 2005). Meanwhile, the lower classes, primarily educated in SA, faced a diminished educational quality in languages, particularly in French, leading to higher dropout rates and limited upward mobility. As concluded in the literature (Chakrani, 2013; Ferguson, 2006; Fernández et al., 2012), this situation exacerbated social and economic inequality, fostering linguistic and social injustice and leading to political and economic tensions.

5.1 Social Structure

The National Charter reform addressed this issue by reviewing the previous LEP to achieve social justice and prepare the country for the challenges of the third millennium. Its promotion of FL education deliberately avoided specifying which language should be prioritized besides SA. The state's choice to strike a balance between those opposing FLs as MOI and the proponents of language alternation explains the reform's indecisiveness regarding FLs. Also, the reform's proposed LEP for FLs advocated equal opportunities across social classes. However, the limited implementation of these propositions, with French receiving more focus than other FLs, resulted in a top-down approach that disregarded the LEP recipients' attitudes, choices, and perceptions. Thus, this enforced hegemonic control by language policymakers, as argued by Shohamy (2006). In this respect, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) contended that LEP is multilayered, and by neglecting the needs and choices of learners and their families, true equality of opportunity is undermined.

The Moroccan educational authorities failed to expand using FLs as MOI in middle and secondary education. The disparity in instructional hours among FLs in the educational system reinforced the status of French as the primary FL. This served the elite's interests in consolidating French hegemony over education and sustained their economic and political power, as argued by Tollefson (2002). Accordingly, French prevailed as a MOI in higher education, particularly for science and technology, leading to linguistic inequalities between those who mastered the language and those who did not. In discussing linguistic imperialism, Phillipson (1992) advocated for the ability to use the dominant language and employ it to sustain privileges through exploitation, injustice, inequality, and hierarchy.

The inadequate implementation of the National Charter, including the absence of a clear and well-defined LEP, unclear linguistic choices, and statuses, as seen in many African countries (Bamgbose, 1991; Ennaji, 2005), was acknowledged in the states' various reports as a threat to linguistic and social justice. These LEP activities benefited students from privileged backgrounds or those attending private schools. Mastery of FLs, primarily French, is a key factor in students' access to and success in higher education, specifically in science, technology, and business schools, impacting their future careers. This LEP created a linguistic divide with public school students, leading to social and linguistic inequalities in Morocco (HCETSR, 2008, Vol.1-2, 2014).

The attempt to address the limitations of the National Charter's LEP in the Emergency Program (2008) was not effective. The reform reiterated the measures proposed in the National Charter, including varying languages as MOI, addressing the linguistic gap between secondary and higher education, and enhancing FL instruction. The Emergency Program (2008) persisted in the educational authorities' indecisiveness in proposing a clear and well-defined LEP policy that marked the implementation of all post-independence policies. This aligns with Kaplan (1990), who argued that the central government is often responsible for the poor implementation of LEP decisions due to their narrow scope, which does not consider the available resources and the nature of the environment during policy implementation.

The state's *laissez-faire* stance concerning LEP in the Emergency program and the increasing, unmonitored encouragement of private education to alleviate the state's expenditure on public schools intensified French teaching, particularly as MOI in private

education. This situation has fortified French as a gatekeeper for higher education access and professional careers that privilege the francophone elite and parts of the middle class who can afford access to quality education, leading to exploitation, injustice, and hierarchies toward other social classes that encounter difficulty using the dominant language in continued political, economic, and social control (Collins & Blot, 2003; Fairclough, 2013; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 2012; Tollefson, 1991).

By appearing to be a problem rather than a solution to educational issues, the Emergency Program received domestic criticism, reflected in the HCETSR reports (2014, 2016). The Strategic Vision (2015) was proposed to overcome these challenges within this context. The reform proposed the most articulate and well-defined LEP, including FLs, to date. Emphasizing the need to transition to multilingual education rather than a bilingual one, the reforms redefined the statuses of each language in the educational system. While it aimed to preserve Moroccan identity with its various components, it fostered openness toward prioritizing scientific research and achieving the economic, social, and cultural integration of Moroccan graduates both within and abroad.

The Reform's LEP for FLs underscored the state's commitment to equity and equality of opportunity, quality learning, and societal advancement through language mastery, particularly FLs. However, the current implementation of the Strategic Vision reveals a continued prioritization of French in the short term compared to other languages. This is seen in the dominance of French in the 'Baccalaureate Internationale', the shift to teaching science and technology in French in secondary and middle education as part of the language alternation pedagogy, and the increased instructional hours allocated to French across all educational levels. Considering Shohamy's (2006) argument about de facto mechanisms for manipulating and orienting language policies, it is argued that these LEP measures reflect the state's covert and overt support for French, opposing a growing societal demand to promote English for its global significance.

Despite various LEP measures aimed at English in the medium term, the state's reinforcement of the dominance of French in the educational system reflects a predominant view that perceives historical, socioeconomic, and political ties with France as vital for the advancement of Morocco. This stance aligns covertly with the reform's vague objective of enhancing the economy by promoting "widely used languages" without providing a clear rationale for considering French as one of them. In this respect, it is argued that the reinforcement of French in Morocco results from a combination of historical influence, social structures, ideological considerations, and power dynamics through which the dominant elite has employed French to trade benefits (Bullock, 2014; Chakrani, 2013).

5.2 Ideology Influence and Power Dynamics

The failure of successive post-independence political, economic, and educational choices, including LEP, has benefited a dominant Francophone elite that has employed these policies, both covertly and overtly, to serve its agenda of maintaining privileges and interests by favoring French as the lingua franca of key sectors in Morocco (Chakrani, 2013). In contrast, these policies have undermined the lower classes' socioeconomic mobility, leading to political tensions, power struggles, and social injustice. Additionally, the globalization of the economy and knowledge, the international shift in political and ideological power towards supranational states and organizations, and the emergence of English as a lingua franca exerted influence on Morocco to reconsider its language policy in alignment with new ideological and economic power dynamics (Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 1991).

Recognizing these growing social and economic inequalities, the limitations of previous policies, and the state's need to maintain control through non-coercive strategies, it proposed and adopted the National Charter's (1999) reform, encompassing the LEP of FLs. These LEP measures served as mechanisms to sustain the power and privileges of the state and, through it, the dominant elite through a compromise of opposing ideologies. While it reaffirmed SA as a fundamental element of national unity to counter potential accusations of undermining SA in favor of French (Ennaji, 2005) and encouraged the teaching of the Amazigh language, it emphasized the need to open up to global languages.

Nevertheless, the National Charter's indecisiveness in clearly defining these FLs, their statuses, and their functions in the educational system implies that the state's perception of the historical prestige and assumed domination of French does not require emphasis or change (Chakrani, 2013). Along the same lines, the National Charter (1999) recommended that the state introduce the proposal of using FLs as MOI for science and technology by adopting the most advantageous FLs for scientific productivity, especially in higher education. This recommendation suggested an implicit acknowledgment of the failure of Arabization in modernizing education. This failure was claimed to result from limited resources and logistics attributed to education (Fernandez et al., 2012; Bullock, 2014). However, it is also the outcome of external and internal influences, including the Moroccan elite's manipulation of Arabization LEP to serve its interests, contributing to linguistic, social, and economic inequalities, primarily through the language gap between secondary and higher education (Al-Jabri, 2003; Chakrani, 2013; Phillipson, 1997).

The proposal to shift to FLs as MOI was indirectly introduced without specifying the status of FLs to prepare the public to recognize the necessity of learning FLs for scientific knowledge and to avoid resistance from proponents of Arabization. This aligns with Tollefson (1991), who argued that dominant languages are presented as the solution to linguistic inequality and serve as a mechanism to achieve language change in education. This policy implicitly favored French, the dominant MOI for science, technology, and economics in Moroccan higher education. The consolidation of French language dominance was evident in the White Book (2002), a document representing the curricula of various education levels. Accordingly, French was emphasized as the primary FL to be taught at all levels.

English and Spanish were given the status of FLs, with a preference for English. The explicit dominance of French over English and Spanish reflects both external and internal power dynamics. Internally, the elite's control of key sectors in Morocco, particularly the economy, influences a top-down reinforcement of French instruction to sustain their privileges while disregarding the views and attitudes of the recipients of LEP activities (Hornberger, 1996; Wiley & Garcia, 2016). Externally, the increasing global pressure for the English language in Morocco, its role as the global lingua franca in trade, economics, and politics, and the growing popularity of the language among Moroccan youth threaten the dominant position of the Moroccan educational system (Chakrani, 2017; Ferguson, 2006; Phillipson, 1997; Sadiqi, 1991).

Implementing the National Charter marked some progress in FL teaching but fell short of its objectives, particularly in students' mastery of FLs (HCETSR, 2008, Vol.1-2, 2014). The slow implementation of the reform, the absence of a clear LEP, and the resources allocated to each FL, along with the practical orientation of educational authorities, reinforced the dominance of French in Morocco's educational system and created resistance to the reform, as concluded in the literature (Ruiz, 1984). This situation benefited the elite and a portion of the middle class at the expense of linguistic and social justice for other classes. Hence, the Emergency Program (2008) was adopted to address the limitations of the National Charter reform.

While the Emergency Program (2008) intended to address the shortcomings of the National Charter, it continued its ambiguous and indecisive approach to the LEP of FLs (Errihani, 2017). The educational policymakers failed to propose a practical and well-defined LEP. Conversely, it restated the National Charter's (1999) measures, delegating this task to HCETSR. This approach reflected the Ministry of Education's lack of authority and incapacity to be proactive. It highlighted an implicit shift of power and political influence in the field of education policies to the HCETSR.

It is argued that educational policies are often adopted and implemented after achieving the necessary compromise. However, the fact that the Ministry of Education's proposition to consult the HCETSR on the issue of LEP, mainly FLs, after the reform was adopted, underscored the arbitrary nature and lack of clear LEP, as seen in African countries (Bamgbose, 1991; Ennaji, 2005). In contrast, the HCETSR's proposal for a conference on LEP was not meant to make decisions but to recommend practical solutions to LEP issues in Morocco. The conference recommendations were directed toward promoting multilingual education in Morocco, clarifying the statuses and functions of languages taught in schools, and calling for homogeneity in language as MOI across all levels of education (HCETSR, 2009).

The formulation of those recommendations implies criticism of former language education policy choices, including Arabization, for their impact on Morocco's social and economic development, creating a barrier to learners' adaptability to higher education (Ferguson, 2006; Spolsky, 2004). The Conference's criticism of Arabization and the use of Arabic as MOI in secondary education implied a covert incentive to shift toward French as MOI, presenting it as a solution to linguistic inequality (Ferguson, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 1991, 2013).

It was ideologically claimed that students with low proficiency in French would harm their employability in the market where French is the lingua franca. This claim restricted graduates to the francophone job market, while English could present global opportunities in a globalized economy. The HCETSR (2014, 2016) criticized the vagueness and controversy surrounding the LEP for FLs in the Emergency Program. Echoing Tollefson's (2000) discourse of equality, the reports criticized the state's reliance on French to provide equal opportunities, despite its usefulness, while ignoring the expansion of teaching other FLs, particularly English. The reports recommended considering the attitudes and stances of students, parents, and educators regarding FLs, who are increasingly calling for the promotion of English instruction (HCETSR, 2016).

The educational authorities' persistent support of French instruction as a language and MOI has intensified linguistic injustice in Morocco, benefiting the elite who gain proficiency in French through private education. This eases their integration into higher education and the job market, placing French as a gatekeeper for upward socioeconomic mobility (Tollefson, 1991). The ideological and power struggle influenced the LEP of FLs in the National Charter (1999) and the Emergency Program (2008) reforms. Poor policy implementation and the elite's dominance over legislation and execution impeded the reforms and their outcomes.

However, the increasing internal and external pressure for a more equitable LEP to address economic, social, and academic issues incentivized the state to propose the Strategic Vision (2015) educational reform.

The political and social demands for economic equality, social justice, and linguistic balance during the Arab Spring of 2011 presented a context for the state to launch reforms, including education. Thus, in response to internal and external criticism (HCETSR, 2008, 2014Loi, 2016; PIRLS, 2007), the state introduced the Strategic Vision (2015). The reform emphasized equity and equality of opportunity, quality for all, and advancing societal development. The Strategic Vision (2015) marked a novel approach to addressing LEP issues, including embracing multilingualism, recognizing linguistic diversity as essential to knowledge access, social and economic progress, and fostering democratic values.

Accordingly, FL teaching was prioritized and enforced by legislation with the enactment of the 'Loi Cadre 51.17' (2019). A law that, prior to its adoption, generated intense political and ideological societal debate, including accusations of undermining SA, a component of the Moroccan identity, and fostering the dominance of French in the educational system. While the state denied these accusations, the ambiguity of the 'Loi Cadre 51.17' (2019) toward FLs and the Strategic Vision's (2015) clear identification of the statuses and functions of FLs were employed as a non-coercive and repressive mechanism (Tollefson & Tsui, 2014) to reinforce the dominance of French as a primary FL and MOI for science and technology subjects across all levels as part of the language alternation pedagogy.

An example of the conflicting political views reflecting the power struggle over the issues of FLs in education is the internal inconsistency of the statements made by officials of the Moroccan Ministry of Education. While the Secretary of State for Higher Education asserted that the Loi Cadre 51.17 (2019) promoted various languages as MOI and did not dictate French specifically, the Moroccan Minister of Education was clear that French would remain dominant in the Moroccan educational system for at least the next decade. Conversely, teaching English as the First FL was not an option for the near future, despite efforts to expand its teaching (Hespress, 2019a, August 22, 2019b, August 22). These conflicting views of proponents and opponents of French reflect the power dynamics in the political, ideological, and societal debate surrounding the LEP of FLs, as concluded in the literature (Chahhou, 2014; Tollefson & Tsui, 2014).

Both ideologies serve the agendas and interests of their proponents, perceiving education as the key to imposing their hegemony (Tollefson, 1991; 2002; Tollefson & Tsui, 2014). The Moroccan elite's endorsement of French promotion in education as the primary language and MOI is fundamental to perpetuating their economic, social, and political privileges, both internally and externally, with France. Additionally, they employ this mechanism to manage the increasing pressure that English exerts on the Moroccan linguistic landscape (Sadiqi, 1991; Chakrani, 2017). Conversely, opponents of French view both French and English as symbols of neocolonialism that undermine the Arab-Islamic identity of the nation. However, they call for the promotion of English instruction along with SA to counter the dominance of French.

Although the Strategic Vision (2015) reform is still under implementation, this discussion concludes that historical events, class structures, ideological interests, and power conflicts have shaped Morocco's LEP of FLs since 1999. The interaction of these factors has consolidated the dominant position of French as a language and MOI, positioning it as a language of socioeconomic upward mobility and success. This situation has privileged the Moroccan elite, allowing them to perpetuate their ideological and socioeconomic advantages while reinforcing linguistic, social, and economic inequalities and injustices.

6. Conclusion

Language-in-education planning either leads to linguistic change or maintains the linguistic status quo, specifically in contexts where language conflicts exist. Globalization has intensified ideological confrontation, with languages becoming the central battleground (Phillipson, 1992; 1998). Since the state is the primary language policymaker in Morocco, including in education, it has found itself in a controversial position, balancing, on the one hand, the interests of the influential group and popular demands for social justice, including linguistic equality, and on the other hand, the external pressures of globalization, including the emergence of English as a lingua franca, as advocated in the literature for LEP Hegemony (Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991; Tsui & Tollefson, 2004).

Morocco has adopted and implemented several LEP measures for FLs in three successive educational reforms from 1999 to the present: the National Charter 1999, the Emergency Program 2008, and the Strategic Vision 2015. While the Strategic Vision (2015) is still being implemented, this paper concludes that these reforms, including LEP, have perpetuated socioeconomic injustice and linguistic inequalities in Morocco in favor of the dominant Francophone elite. The latter has employed the vagueness and arbitrariness of LEP implementation, covertly or overtly, to consolidate and enforce the dominant position of French across all levels of education as a language and MOI (Chakrani, 2013; Ennaji, 2005; Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991), despite several measures to promote the teaching of English.

This debate over FL choice in education advanced educational arguments. However, it has been shaped by historical contexts, class structures, ideological purposes, and power dynamics, which imposed top-down educational language policies that disregarded the bottom-up models in LEP. Hence, these LEP measures failed to achieve their objectives and were often met with resistance (Lewis, 1981; Menken & García, 2010; Spolsky, 2004; Wiley & Garcia, 2016).

Finally, the paper recommends the following implications to address the issue of LEP for FLs. For research, as this paper was being drafted, several LEPs for FLs have been implemented as part of the ongoing Strategic Vision (2015), including expanding the teaching of English in middle and primary education. Therefore, a follow-up study is recommended to assess the impact of these LEP measures in the short and medium term. Second, this paper focuses on top-down LEP. Hence, it is suggested to study the impact of these policies on their recipients by surveying their attitudes, perceptions, and stances. At this level, the state has acknowledged a continuous lack of clear and well-defined language policies, including those in education. Therefore, it is highly recommended that this situation be addressed to ensure consistent policies both in formulation and implementation to foster accountability.

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