

The Perceived Value of English in Moroccan Society Across Generational Lines

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Abstract

The importance of English cannot be ignored. Increasingly, non-native speakers need to communicate and interpret information in the English language worldwide. Morocco is no exception. Because of the growing importance of international tourism in Morocco and the rise of its status on the global stage, this research seeks to better understand the instrumentality and desirability of the English language in the eyes of Moroccans. The current understanding of the value of English in Morocco exists primarily from the perspective of students, providing an important but incomplete view of the importance of English in Moroccan society. To gain a fuller understanding of its perceived value, this research examines the attitudes and opinions of people across generational lines. This research was guided by the question “What is the perceived value of English in Moroccan society across generational lines?” We answered this question through a survey that gathered information on demographics, English language background, English use (e.g. what percent of your daily conversations are in English?), and English attitudes (e.g. how important do you think English will be in your future?). After comparing responses across generational lines to identify any important differences, we found a strong correlation between attitudes towards English and actual use of the language suggesting that English is highly valued in Morocco, especially among the younger generation.

Introduction

English is considered the unofficial language, or lingua franca for the world. Morocco is no exception. As a polyglot country, it already has a traditionally rich linguistic landscape with Moroccan Arabic (Darija), Modern Standard Arabic, French, Spanish, and three dialects of Amazigh, all spoken widely throughout the country on both regional and national levels (Buckner, 2009; Zouhir, 2013). This study will focus on the perceived value of English across several generations of Moroccans in 2023. Because of the growing importance of international tourism in Morocco and the rise of its status on the global stage, this research will seek to better understand the instrumentality and desirability of the English language in the eyes of Moroccans (Agliz, 2016; Kachoub, 2021; Loutfi, 2014).

Language is our primary source of communication, the way in which thoughts and ideas are shared. There are thousands of languages in the world that vary across cities, countries, and continents; some with a few thousand speakers and others with millions (Ilyosovna, 2020). In a rapidly globalizing and increasingly interconnected modern world, the need for efficiency in communication has never been greater (Ilyosovna, 2020; Rao, 2019). The importance of English cannot be ignored. English is the dominant language through which the world's largest companies conduct their business, computer informatics is coded, and international ports of travel communicate (Dewey, 2007; Ilyosovna, 2020; Rao, 2019). Increasingly, non-native speakers need to present complex ideas, collaborate and negotiate internationally, and interpret rapidly changing information in English (Dewey, 2007; Warschauer, 2000). The rise of the internet and the prominence of Hollywood in global media allow us to export anglo-European culture through online resources, music, films and TV shows, world news and other literature, and discussion forums (Ilyosovna, 2020; Rao, 2019). The younger generations seem to embrace

it more quickly as a gateway of opportunity while the older generations frequently resist it as a potential threat to long held traditions (Belhiah, 2020).

Foreign languages are of growing importance in Morocco given the rise in tourism and the rapid age of globalization in which we are living (Agliz, 2016). In 2016, seventy-four percent of Moroccans surveyed believed that English should replace French as the primary second language (British Council, 2016). Many Moroccan political groups, government representatives, and teachers have advocated for a larger role for English in the Moroccan educational system, suggesting that bilingualism is the key to a successful future for the nation when it comes to a language that holds such prestige and opportunity for economic growth (Marley, 2004; Redouane, 2016). A recent study by Belhiah (2020) on students' motivations to study English in Morocco indicated that students believe English is a worthwhile language to study because of its linguistic beauty, fascinating culture, career implications, and overall usefulness for the future.

The Global Position Of English

The English language holds an unparalleled status on the global stage, surpassing any other language in all of history. It is revered as a symbol of prestige and success, serving as a key to intercultural connections that transcend geographical borders. This section will present a concise overview of the spread and influence of English worldwide, thus facilitating an exploration of Morocco's position within the broader international context.

1.1 A Historical Overview

English has evolved from a regional language to a global lingua franca, influencing a wide array of societal aspects worldwide. The emergence of English as a universal language can be traced back to the early medieval period when various tribes from the European continent

settled in the British Isles, bringing their linguistic traditions with them (Mamadjanova & Malikova, 2023). The language took root over time and wove its way into society, shaping English into a versatile and adaptable language capable of residing within diverse cultural contexts. The expansion of the British Empire, specifically British colonial power, during the 17th and 18th centuries led to a wider spread of the English language to the ends of the Earth, converting it to the primary language of administration, commerce, and education in a multitude of regions worldwide (Mamadjanova & Malikova, 2023). This colonial connotation dubbed English as a language of power and opportunity across diverse linguistic landscapes.

Furthermore, innovations of the industrial revolution, technological advancements, and the rise of global trade and business accelerated the spread of English, facilitating cross-cultural interactions and the exchange of ideas in English (Mamadjanova & Malikova, 2023). As a result, English knowledge became imperative for participation in the emerging global economy and international exchange of information.

Mamadjanova and Malikova (2023) explain that driven by the economic, political, and cultural influence of Anglophone countries, namely the United States and the United Kingdom among others, English solidified its position as a global lingua franca in the 20th century. The dominance of the language was further reinforced by the widespread use of English in international diplomacy, business, science, and entertainment (Mamadjanova & Malikova, 2023). Additionally, the onset of mass media, telecommunications, and the internet revolutionized communication systems, accelerating the global diffusion of English and enabling individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds to access and utilize the language for communication and information exchange. (Mamadjanova & Malikova, 2023; Rao, 2019; Warschauer, 2000). The historical development of English as a global language depicts a complex interplay of historical,

socio-political, and technological elements that continue to shape and be shaped by the influential forces of globalization.

1.2 Current Global Status of English

English has attained unparalleled significance, as evidenced by its widespread global use. According to Melitz (2016), English currently stands out as the most widely spoken language in the world, surpassing any previous dominance of other languages. This is further backed by Mamadjanova and Malikova (2023) and Buckner (2009), who note that while English was just one of various world languages of great importance used for international communication until the last century, the prevalence of English adoption as a second or foreign language has increased in non-English-speaking countries, soaring into a position of superiority in the span of a mere half century. This rapid expansion has led to a significant demographic shift, revealing that non-native speakers have come to outnumber native English speakers with around 375 million people speaking it as a first language and over 750 million speaking it as a second language (Buckner, 2009; Dewey, 2007; Rao, 2019; Sadiqi, 1991). Between these statistics and English holding an official or otherwise special status in nearly 70 countries, English is viewed today as a global lingua franca (Dewey, 2007; Rao, 2019). Buckner (2009, p. 208) quotes Lysandrou and Yvonne Lysandrou (2003) stating: “The number of English-speaking people continues to grow at an exponential rate; approximately a quarter of the world’s population have a command of English, and it is confidently expected that this ratio will rise to a third within the next two to three decades.”

In order to conceptualize and comprehend the global spread of English, we must take a look into the role of globalization. Within the modern day framework of globalization, it is apparent that the majority of the world population is using one internationally recognized

language to communicate across geographical and cultural borders, that language being English (Rao, 2019). Every other major language (Chinese, French, Portuguese, Spanish, German, etc.) is associated with a particular country or culture whereas English is not limited to association with a particular place or culture; it is used either as an official language or mother tongue in Britain, America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Namibia, Ghana, Lesotho, Botswana and numerous other Anglophone countries (Ennaji, 2005). Buckner (2009, p. 118) states, “The English language is intricately implicated in the processes of globalization; it is at once the product of, and pathway to, globalization.” Therefore, English is not only the language of America or Britain but rather a universal language, a public domain. In this age of globalization, English has been broadly observed as a universal international language in countless realms including science and academia, engineering and technology, tourism, business, media and broadcasting, medicine, internet, politics and diplomacy, trade and commerce, banking, advertising, transportation, and global safety to name a few (Melitz, 2016; Rao, 2019; Sadiqi, 1991). In sum, just about every field has been impacted by the spread of English. The following paragraphs will delve deeper into some of these areas that have adopted English as a lingua franca.

Perhaps the most prominent tools for the diffusion of language and culture today are the internet and media. English is the language of the internet, which has over half of its content written in English while 6% or less of internet sites are designed in any other given language (Ilyosovna, 2020; Rao, 2019). Through both the internet and media, “English plays a central role in international communication and cultural exchange” (Mamadjanova & Malikova, 2023, p. 890). The world’s leading newspapers, magazines, television programs, films, music, and literature are written and broadcast in English, meaning that the language gives people access to

all of these assets and cultural perspectives in nations all around the globe (Ilyosovna, 2020; Mamadjanova & Malikova, 2023; Rao, 2019). This stems from the most famous and internationally recognized content of the media industry having its roots in Hollywood, the global symbol of entertainment based in the United States where English is the mother tongue (Ilyosovna, 2020; Rao, 2019). Nonetheless, the prevalence of English in media beyond entertainment remains consistent in its influence. Academic research is conducted primarily in English and an estimated 90% of articles in some academic spheres, such as linguistics, are written in English to make them accessible to learners and educators in any location worldwide (Rao, 2019; Warschauer, 2000). Observations have been made that the vast majority of students, teachers, and researchers who have access to academic content in English take advantage of the opportunity it offers to enrich their knowledge of content as well as elevate their qualifications, including language skills (Rao, 2019). Thus, English holds a prestigious status not only within entertainment media but also within the realm of education.

Employment opportunities are among the reasons it is advantageous for individuals to enrich their education with learning English. In light of businesses increasingly managing international companies in this globalized era, most job providers seek out candidates with language skills, particularly the ability to communicate in English (Rao, 2019). In the business sector today, English is used extensively for all trade, commerce, and economic exchange in order to communicate effectively between companies despite cultural dissimilarities (Rao, 2019; Warschauer, 2000). As the primary language of the United States as well as official language of the UK, Canada, India, and parts of South America, English is an indispensable language of business today (Ilyosovna, 2020). Tourism is another area that requires the use of English as a universal language in the era of globalization. It goes without saying that international travel

comes with the difficulty of language barriers, yet today traveling is much easier with a basic English knowledge given its status as a lingua franca (Ilyosovna, 2020). Given that English is spoken so widely in countries all over the world, the need to know a local language in order to travel to a new place has been nearly erased because English serves as a common language for people to communicate, facilitating the opportunity to study, work, and travel all over the world (Ilyosovna, 2020; Rao, 2019). Dewey explains how English is unmatched in global status:

“English is like no other language in its current role internationally, indeed like no other at any moment in history. Although there are, and have previously been, other international languages, the case of English is different in fundamental ways: for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is found and purposes it serves” (2007, p. 333).

Ultimately, English has grown to a state of global dominance on the world stage. This spread has imposed extensive implications for the world as we know it. English proficiency is increasingly perceived as a token of status, power, and prestige within education systems, businesses, employment possibilities, and commerce (Mamadjanova & Malikova, 2023). Some view this as a threat to the extinction of smaller languages, labeling English as a ‘predatory’ or colonial language (Buckner, 2009). Others view a harmonious existence within the introduction of English into global society, noting that the difference in language status is based on instrumentality rather than on power and dominance (Buckner, 2009). Regardless of personal views, it is abundantly evident that English in the modern world has woven its way into society across geographical borders and into the functions of daily life.

1.3. A Comparison to Other Global Languages

In order to further understand the role of English worldwide, we must also examine it directly against other world languages. As we have established, English is not a language associated with one specific country whereas other languages of wide international use – French, Chinese, Russian, etc. – are associated with a much more defined region, both culturally and politically (Rao, 2019; Sadiqi, 1991). Sadiqi explains that for this reason, English has gained popularity in so many domains as well as become the primary lingua franca among tourists all around the world. Not to mention, countries that do not hold English as an official language make use of English in higher education and in everyday life. Sweden and the Netherlands are a prime example of two countries in which English has no official status yet the educational course syllabi are written in English because the overwhelming majority of literature in various subject areas is available strictly in English (Rao, 2019).

Two factors that distinguish English among other widely-used global languages are its “tool-like” utility in international relations and power pursuits, and its extensive use in nearly every niche of international culture (Sadiqi, 1991). Rao (2019) and Sadiqi (1991) expand on this idea, explaining that Mandarin Chinese is spoken by a far greater quantity of people than English, nonetheless even the Chinese are endeavoring to learn English in order to expand their businesses to other regions of the world. While Mandarin may have more speakers, it remains a regional language while English is the preferred language at the international level for global interaction. Sadiqi (1991) continues, explaining that on the other hand, the Russian language is not spoken as widely as English or Chinese yet Russians hold near equal power as Americans. Since the Russian language is not used in major global realms the way English is, the strength and spread of the language is diminished in comparison to English. This goes to show the

massive success of English in penetrating cultural divides and intertwining itself into society in various contexts across international borders.

1.4. Future Predictions in the Age of Globalization

Looking to the future, the expansion of English on a global scale is only predicted to continue and reach further across the globe. Modern forms of communication and the development of technology continue to foster the rapid spread of English in every aspect – local, regional, and global – more intensely than ever (Dewey, 2007). This trend of English growing in its role as the lingua franca is expected to escalate throughout the 21st century. In fact, according to recent projections by Warschauer (2000), the quantity of native English speakers is expected to decrease relative to the world population, while the quantity of people who speak English as a second or additional language will exponentially increase. He explains that while in the previous century native English speakers far outnumbered non-native English speakers, that association will be completely altered in the coming century as English continues to expand and new learners attain basic English proficiency. Another shift that is predicted to happen is towards a more global economy, incorporating additional regions of the world into the current global market, further stimulating the demand for people to learn English in all types of professions (Warschauer, 2000).

As English increasingly becomes the language of international communication and business, Anglophone cultures will continue to be promoted throughout the globe (Buckner, 2009). As this shift occurs, those in the developed world will profit while those in developing nations could both benefit and be harmed. English is and will continue to be a language that carries inequality due to its power status in the world today. Buckner (2009) and Warschauer (2000) rationalize that the growing number of individuals will challenge inequality and become a

gateway to economic opportunity because English will be a language that everyone can access regardless of class, or status (Buckner, 2009; Warschauer, 2000). While English can be viewed as both an instrument of inequality and a pathway to economic opportunity, its continued growth on the global scale provides potential for the underprivileged and marginalized to have a voice in society and to find better opportunity (Dewey, 2007; Warschauer, 2000).

The Position Of English In Morocco

2.1 A Historical Overview

Morocco's linguistic environment has evolved and diversified over time. In order to understand the place of English in the language landscape today, we must explore the history of language in the nation. In the era before colonization, Moroccans spoke either Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, or Amazigh, with no presence of foreign languages infiltrating society (Loutfi & Noamane, 2014). French was introduced into the linguistic profile when France officially seized Morocco in 1912, taking control of all aspects of society from government to culture for over 44 years (Loutfi & Noamane, 2014; Zouhir, 2013). During this time period, the French language was imposed as the language of high status in Morocco, mandated as the primary language of instruction in education and essential to gaining status and power within society, thus pushing Morocco's native languages aside (Loutfi & Noamane, 2014; Redouane, 2016; Zouhir, 2013). Shortly after French was introduced, Spanish entered the landscape during the Spanish occupation in 1916 (Redouane, 2016). The language was briefly endorsed as the language of education and administration in the Northern region of Morocco, however, it never gained the level of prestige that the French language embodied (Redouane, 2016; Zouhir, 2013).

It was not until well into the dominant reign of France that English found its footing in the kingdom of Morocco amidst what was easily the most crucial historical connection between Morocco and the English language. During the Second World War, American troops established military bases and settled into the regions of Casablanca, Kenitra, and Tangier (Ennaji, 2005; Jaafari, 2019; Loutfi & Noamane, 2014; Redouane, 2016). It became common to hear English in Morocco's large cities where the soldiers stayed and Moroccans had to learn the language for the purpose of communication (Ennaji, 2005; Loutfi & Noamane, 2014). Before Morocco's independence, while French was the official language, Moroccan students had to learn two foreign languages in addition to French in school and therefore English was introduced to students at a very young age, furthering its spread (Ennaji, 2005).

The post-independence age brought stark changes in language trends in Morocco with French, the language of colonization, decreasing and English weaving its way deeper into society. Morocco opted for Arabization during this period, a policy which demoted French from its position as an official language, newly making Arabic the official language (Marley, 2004; Zouhir, 2013). This was significant being that Arabic is the original language of Moroccan culture and tradition. The goals of Arabization were to bring unity to the nation and to restore the Arab-Islamic identity of pre-colonial Morocco (Marley, 2004; Zouhir, 2013). While Arabization aided in restoring the national identity of Morocco, it did not erase the fact that foreign language had been not only introduced but deeply ingrained into society. This policy made way for English to gain standing because it did not have colonial connotations preventing its spread like its counterparts, French and Spanish, which were no longer the preferred foreign languages for Moroccans as a result (Jaafari, 2019; Sadiqi, 1991). In addition to Arabization promoting the spread of English post-independence, the National Charter for Education and Training enacted a

new language policy that reinforced the benefit of foreign languages without naming French or English by name, thus leaving room for Moroccans to turn from the colonial French language to English which holds less control over the people (Marley, 2004; Redouane, 2016). The approach of the Charter made way for Moroccans to have a high proficiency level in Modern Standard Arabic while also gaining competency in foreign languages, thus promoting a return to multilingualism (Marley, 2004). Other policies, specifically within the realm of education, implemented since Morocco's independence have been nearly unanimously favorable towards English. Despite the dominance of French, English has succeeded in integrating itself into the educational system of Morocco (Belhiah & Abdelatif, 2016; Jaafari, 2019). Beyond the scope of education, ever since Morocco became a free nation, English has only increased in popularity, becoming one of the most critical foreign languages to shape the linguistic repertoire of Morocco (Belhiah & Abdelatif, 2016).

2.2 Contemporary Overview of Morocco's Linguistic Landscape

The present-day linguistic ecology of Morocco is incredibly complex, consisting of a harmony of national, colonial, and foreign languages that each have variations based on their historical roots, geographical spread, typology, and sociolinguistic purpose (Sadiqi, 1991; Soussi, 2021). This blend of languages consists of a notable presence of Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, Amazigh, French, Spanish, and English among other languages and varieties of minimal influence in Moroccan society (Redouane, 2016; Zouhir, 2013). The Amazigh language is native to Morocco and has been present as long as there have been people in Morocco. It is still spoken in Morocco, mainly by nomadic tribes and people in rural areas far from the cities (Soussi, 2021).

Arabic is and always has been defined as a representation of Morocco's unity, morals, and originality as a nation which gives reason for its status as the official constitutional language and to preserve the Moroccan identity that comes along with its association (Laaraj, 2023). Amazigh, while a symbol of originality, has faded with time to hold less significance within the Moroccan identity. Currently Darija, the Moroccan dialect of Arabic, serves as the primary means of communication and social function for daily life as well as the lingua franca that can be understood and accepted by Moroccans of all backgrounds and geographical locations (Laaraj, 2023). The interplay between Modern Standard Arabic and Darija coins Morocco as a diglossic nation, one where Standard Arabic is used more formally in religious, educational, and administrative settings while Moroccan Arabic is primarily a more casual spoken language (Belhiah, 2020). That said, Standard Arabic, in the current age of language competition, is losing status and prestige as foreign languages have emerged and grown in their importance and instrumentality in society while Darija continues to be essential for daily interactions (Laaraj, 2023).

Concerning foreign languages, French still prevails in economic, administrative, and higher education dominance as a widely used medium of instruction and a language of social capital (Belhiah, 2020; Laaraj, 2023). Throughout time, French has built a legacy of success, prestige, advancement, and innovation, giving it an edge in the modern day language rivalry of multilingual Morocco (Belhiah, 2020; Laaraj, 2023). Yet despite its success, the colonial connotations associated with French make it a language that is extensively viewed negatively by the Moroccan people (Laaraj, 2023). To a lesser degree than French, Spanish continues to influence the nation's language diversity in specific regions yet it also holds colonial connotations which are not favorable to the spread of the language (Laaraj, 2023). That's where

English comes in, as a foreign language without colonial associations and the most sought out international language worldwide, English is rapidly gaining prestigious ground in Morocco (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; Jaafari, 2019; Loutfi & Noamane, 2014). The depth and extent of English use in Morocco has grown exponentially, functioning not only as a foreign language but as a crucial piece of Morocco's linguistic identity today (Kachoub, 2021).

2.3 Current Status of English in Morocco

As English has found its way into a prominent role in Moroccan society, it has quickly become “the fastest growing language in Morocco” gaining significant ground over the linguistic repertoire (Laaraj, 2023, p. 3). While English is not an official language in Morocco, it has certainly earned recognition in official contexts, particularly in the realm of education (Laaraj, 2023). Students are increasingly choosing to study English above other languages, causing the number of learners to skyrocket in recent years (Laaraj, 2023). At the national level, English is taught to cultivate communication skills, cultural exchange with other nations, and to contribute to the socioeconomic status of Morocco (Ennaji, 2005). English has gained such traction and support because of its instrumental worth and cultural renown both in the Moroccan economy and for communication on the international stage (Buckner, 2009). These factors provide both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for individuals to pursue the endeavor of learning this esteemed language. Moroccan youth have realized the growing importance of English for their personal development, social standing, economic opportunity, and for intercultural exchanges, while authority figures and other Moroccan locals have also begun to recognize the deep value of English in the globalized era we are living in (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; Laaraj, 2023).

The use of English has become a cohesive part of daily life in Morocco today. It is no longer strictly used for international interactions but rather is spoken and practiced every single

day, most evidently among the younger generation (Kachoub, 2021). As the “range and depth of functional uses of English are expanding,” it has become evident that English has moved from being simply the second foreign language in Morocco to being an added language of consistent use within society (Kachoub, 2021, p. 152).

The growing status of English has come with a level of competition against other languages, both native and foreign, for esteemed status and recognition. Mainly, the biggest rival of English in Morocco is French (Sadiqi, 1991). While English is currently considered more essential to acquire, these two languages have been perceived to be on somewhat of a level playing field when it comes to their depth of use for official communication purposes and informal day-to-day interactions (British Council, 2021; Kachoub, 2021). Many countries today rely politically and economically on English-speaking countries because they hold power and dominance on the international stage, especially the United States (Sadiqi, 1991). Morocco is no exception to this standard of dependence and since France does not hold the same global dominance, this makes English important in Morocco to a new degree (Sadiqi, 1991). The power that English is gaining seems to not only challenge the status of French but also that of Arabic, especially in the realm of education (El Kirat & Laaraj, 2016; Ennaji, 2005). These languages have historically been the primary means of instruction in Morocco and research shows that English will continue to grow and become more attractive to learn at their expense (El Kirat & Laaraj, 2016). While Spanish never sustained the same status as these other languages, English has undoubtedly superseded Spanish in the fields of economics, education, diplomacy, media, finance, and tourism (Ennaji, 2005; Laaraj, 2023). Above all these other languages, English has evidently gained prestige and an instrumentality for wider communication that other languages simply cannot provide (Soussi, 2021).

As mentioned, English has a particularly high rank within the education system and therefore we cannot accurately examine its position in Morocco without discussing the role it occupies within education. In Moroccan public education, English curriculum is introduced in the final year of middle school and continues being taught until students graduate from high school (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; Jaafari, 2009). It is currently only incorporated in primary schools at the private level although many educators have advocated for English to be introduced in public primary schools because it is presumed that earlier exposure will provide students a greater ease in learning the language, gifting them a competitive advantage in the job market (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; Jaafari, 2019). While reforms at the primary level are a work in progress, the widespread use at the secondary level has sparked an even greater spread in higher education as English has become the most favored medium of instruction in that context (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; Ennaji, 2005; Sadiqi, 1991). Studies reveal that “the highest number of university registered students is concentrated in the departments of English, which implies that learning English is becoming very popular in today’s Moroccan Higher Education” (Laaraj, 2023, p. 5203). In private Moroccan institutions, both for early education and continuing education, English is a required subject. In many schools, English is the only language of instruction (Ennaji, 2005; Redouane, 2016). Rabat American School (RAS) is a prime example. Within this International Baccalaureate institution, “85% of students are learning English as a second language, and around 60% of students are Moroccan. The school contains grades k-12 and is set up in the American style, with English as the primary language of instruction” (Robertson, 2015, p. 29). It is also important to look at recent reforms that have been implemented because as English has been continually on the rise, Moroccan policy makers within the field of education have made official changes to both the curriculum and the

opportunities offered for English learning (Zouhir, 2013). The quantity of students who register for English classes has increased exponentially each year, causing a substantial demand for there to be more English departments within the school system (Sadiqi, 1991). In the 1970s, there were a meager two English departments in all of Morocco's institutions for higher education and within fifteen years that number had reached eleven, continuing to a growth of fourteen currently existing English departments today (Jebbour, 2021; Sadiqi, 1991). As the demand for English instruction has grown, both within early and higher education, the nation has created an increasing number of jobs for English teachers and professors (Buckner, 2011). Additionally, an English international Baccalaureate was established in 2014, allocating more time to English teaching which urged Moroccan students to become fluent in the language in order to obtain a doctorate degree (Belhiah, 2020; Soussi, 2021). Most recently, new English policy is on the rise as the Moroccan Ministry of National Education has officially announced a nationwide plan to gradually expand the integration of English in secondary schools which will see its completion in the 2025-2026 academic year when English instruction will be fully implemented in every grade level of middle school rather than beginning the final year (Zouiten, 2023).

English is also highly esteemed in various contexts beyond the realm of education in Morocco, revered socially among Moroccan citizens and by government officials (Buckner, 2009). In King Mohamed VI's 2013 discourse for the 60th Anniversary of the Revolution of the King and People, he publicly promoted foreign languages, stating that Moroccans should be encouraged to push beyond the country's official tongues and not only be exposed to foreign languages but to achieve mastery in them (Redouane, 2016). This support at the governmental level for foreign language, combined with the colonial connotations associated with other foreign languages, has given English an edge in the linguistic competition. Increasingly in the Moroccan

job market, people are required to have competency in English for the instrumental skills it provides in broadening their degree of knowledge and understanding as well as adapting to high demands (Redouane, 2016; Soussi, 2021). English is also used widely in exchanging products and services due to the Free Trade Agreement Morocco signed with the United States in 2004, that removed duties from products with the goal of enhancing trade between the two nations (Kachoub, 2021). This legislation naturally played a major role in forcing English into the wider landscape of Morocco. English is used extensively in more relaxed contexts as well, serving as a primary language of input through mediums such as music, films, radio, television, and social media (Kachoub, 2021). Exposure to English within these domains is incredibly high given the global status of English and its influence on media.

2.4 Attitudes Towards English in Morocco

Collectively in Morocco, the attitude of society and of individuals towards English is favorable (Belhiah, 2020; Buckner, 2011; Marley, 2004; Sadiqi, 1991). To disclaim, much of the existing research on this topic has been conducted within the context of education, therefore the attitudes conveyed are primarily from an educational standpoint, although it is widely accepted that these findings hold true as a representation of greater Moroccan society in the age of globalization we are currently living. Students are enthusiastic and highly determined to learn the English language because of the social ties it holds internationally, its unparalleled popularity, and the promising opportunities it provides within academic research, technology, and international business (Jaafari, 2019; Redouane, 2016). Additionally while Moroccans are very passionate about preserving their national identity, they are not apprehensive towards English as a threat to that identity but rather they view it as an indispensable means of broader communication (Jaafari, 2019; Sadiqi, 1991). The positive attitudes associated with English and

its surging popularity are further cemented by the negative attitudes Moroccans hold towards French given its colonial legacy (Jaafari, 2019; Laaraj, 2023; Loutfi & Noamane, 2014). Despite its unofficial status, English is viewed in Morocco as an instrumental tool, especially for science and technology. Overwhelmingly, students advocate for English being the instructional medium for science and technology at the university level with many pushing for all university subjects to be taught in English (Chakrani & Huang, 2014; El Kirat & Laaraj, 2016). Students more and more are preferring this switch from French to English instruction in order to give them a competitive advantage in the job market and enable them to pursue academic research (El Kirat & Laaraj, 2016). The views of teachers, government representatives, and political group leaders align with those of students, desiring to replace French with English as the primary foreign language (Redouane, 2016). At the high school level, English is also widely favored by students as their preferred foreign language over French, Spanish, and German (Ennaji, 2005).

2.5 Future Predictions in the Age of Globalization

Current studies on the position of English in Morocco concur that English will undoubtedly overtake French in the long-term linguistic landscape of Morocco (Belhiah, 2020; Ennaji, 2005). Noting both the decay of French given its lasting colonial ideology and the increasing international acknowledgement of English as the language of cultural globalization and modern technology, English is projected to become Morocco's primary foreign language in the next few years (Belhiah, 2020; British Council, 2021). It goes without question that if Moroccans want to communicate with the rest of the world, they will need to learn English. The current statistics and future projections reveal that Moroccans are very aware of this and are working towards the goal of proficiency. The government in Morocco currently still favors French above English because of the French government's strong historical support for

Morocco's claim to the Sahara while the United States claims a neutral stance (Belhiah, 2020). This being said, the factors of globalization, international business and exchange, tourism, social media and the internet, science and technology, and the internationalization of education, hold more weight in today's global world and are all predicted to continue rapidly intensifying the expansion of English in Morocco, deeming it both possible and necessary for Moroccans to learn (Belhiah, 2020; Ennaji, 2005). Therefore, it can be concluded that unless the superiority of the language is challenged, English will continue to permeate throughout Morocco, dominating over local languages to weave its way more deeply into everyday use (Chakrani & Huang, 2014).

Factors Contributing To The Expansion Of English In Morocco

Morocco is positioned between three key regions: Europe, the Arab/Maghreb region, and the rest of Africa, making it vulnerable to many conquests which have greatly impacted linguistic diversity (Redouane, 2016). Following Morocco's colonial era, Arabization specifically boosted the value and desirability of English, leading to a degradation of French (Zouhir, 2013). Not to mention, English is the only foreign language in Morocco that is not associated with colonial ties, making it more appealing to hold onto and incorporate into daily life than French or Spanish (Belhiah & Abdelatif, 2016; Ennaji, 2005; Zouhir, 2013). Additionally, university students hold the perception that English has more instrumental uses than French or Spanish and many even described the language as "more beautiful" or "richer" than French (Sadiqi, 1991). Since Moroccans hold such positive sentiments towards the language, its position continues to be elevated in the nation (Ennaji, 2005). The spread of English in Morocco is also greatly attributed to its importance on the international stage with its pervasiveness in media, tourism, and other domains beyond the classroom that provide students

the advantage of learning the language through ample opportunities outside of school (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; Laaraj, 2023). English is the answer to a global demand for a lingua franca which is evident in Morocco due to many of the following factors.

3.1 Communication and Socialization

The majority of people learning English in Morocco take on this endeavor with the goal of being able to communicate and socialize with people interculturally (Belhiah, 2020). As a result, the widespread use of English across numerous disciplines in Morocco continues to increase in order to foster this cross-cultural communication and shared understanding which is necessary in the globalized world in which we currently find ourselves (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023). Communication in English is essential for facilitating relations between Morocco and other countries and for sharing ideas with people from diverse places around the world (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; Buckner, 2011). Nowadays, that exchange of ideas across cultural and geographical borders demands the use of a lingua franca, thus English continues to be on the rise for the purposes of communication (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023).

3.2 Media and Technology

English is very obviously the language of contemporary media and technology. This is a result of globalization which has been rapidly propagated because of the rise of the internet, demanding the need for a lingua franca (Zouhir, 2013). Modern technology has woven its way into Moroccan society, increasingly pressuring Moroccans to learn English in order to have the benefits of the internet for accessing information, news, and culture at their fingertips (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; British Council, 2021; Ennaji, 2005). Many students have expressed their motivation for learning English as a means to comprehend American songs, movies, television,

and music; all of which globalization has pushed widely into Morocco (Buckner 2009; Buckner, 2011; Ennaji, 2005).

3.3 Career and Economics

Moroccans are well aware of the benefits of English within the job market. People see mastering English as the key to making strides in success because of the valuable skills it provides for employment purposes (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023; Buckner, 2009). Many even prefer to pursue studies in England or North America for the purpose of attaining the highest paying jobs in the labor market and the opportunity to obtain employment in international enterprises and corporations (Buckner, 2011; Ennaji, 2005). English has also seen growth in Morocco for its instrumentality in business, trade, and diplomacy; driving businessmen and economists alike to learn the language (Ennaji, 2005; Zouhir, 2013). Specifically the introduction of the US-Morocco Free Trade Agreement saw a surge of international trade, creating new jobs in Morocco that require exceptional English abilities (Buckner 2009; Buckner 2011). This rise of English appeals to both Morocco's upper and lower class because the upper class perceive it as a language that grants them privilege and status while the lower class view it as a means to have more opportunity to be integrated into the global economy and receive wider access to jobs whether in tourism or teaching roles in the public sector (Buckner, 2011). Among these concrete reasons for the rise of this prestigious language, students consistently highlight an association between English and the "American dream" which they desire for themselves (Buckner, 2009). As Buckner explains, this notion is connected with individuals realizing personal fulfillment to a degree, but most sought after is the economic fulfillment which comes with English being linked to modernization in Morocco. She continues by acknowledging that this can help incorporate the Moroccan people into the wider global economy full of economic opportunity.

3.4 Education

English as a global language naturally permeates into Moroccan education, esteemed as the language of “modern knowledge” (Chakrani & Huang, 2014). Not to mention, educational policy has been entirely favorable towards English since Morocco’s independence, promoting its spread (Ennaji, 2005; Sadiqi, 1991). English is increasingly taught in schools due to its socio-economic and communicative advantages (Ennaji, 2005). For these reasons, students are encouraged to study at English-speaking institutions, further promoting the spread of English (Buckner, 2009). In 1995, Morocco’s first English institution, Al-Akhawayn University, opened its doors in Ifrane, giving English a major boost nationally (Ennaji, 2005). Since that monumental moment in history, Ennaji reports that nationwide the number of English schools and teachers, students majoring in English, and English departments have all increased. English being taught from secondary school has also contributed significantly to its spread, introducing the language to students progressively earlier on in life (Ennaji, 2005). The growing opportunities for students to learn English in their education in Morocco have made students more aware of the value and instrumentality of English, furthering its diffusion throughout the nation (Sadiqi, 1991).

3.5 Tourism

Morocco has become one of the world’s most sought out tourist destinations, further placing English in a role of great importance given its indispensable status in tourism. Beginning in the early sixties, waves of tourists, especially from the Anglophone world, began flooding into Morocco (Sadiqi, 1991). The rising number of tourists has woven the language into daily life from business transactions to guided tours, hotel stays and restaurant service (Bekou & Mhamed, 2023). Tourism is the primary reason English is highly regarded outside of education in Morocco

(Sadiqi, 1991). The nation has been working on developing the industry and its infrastructure, spending billions of dollars with an aim to bring in millions of new tourists in the coming years (Buckner, 2009). This rise of tourism today is creating copious new job opportunities for Moroccan citizens which necessitate competency in English (Buckner, 2011).

Previous Studies

My research centered on determining the perceived value of English across generational lines in Morocco. In reviewing the existing literature that is available within this field of research, I found a multitude of studies on the value of English in Morocco. While many pieces of literature informed this research, a few key studies are to be highlighted. Two of these works come from Elizabeth Buckner. The first was published in 2009 entitled *English Language Learning in the Context of Globalization: Insights from Morocco*, which the outline of my paper closely follows. The second in 2011, *Culture, Class and Status Competition: The Growth of English Language Learning in Morocco*, guided my research heavily as I modeled a large portion of my survey after Buckner's. Two other studies of notable relevance are Hassan Belhiah's 2020 publication, *English as a global language in Morocco: A qualitative study of students' motivations for studying English*, and the *Shift to English in Morocco* research published by the British Council in 2021.

In Buckner's 2009 study, she employs classroom observations, discussion sessions, surveys, student writing samples, and interviews to examine student motivations with the aim of understanding the sociolinguistic role of English in Morocco. She found that English is considered immensely more important to students now than in the past. In a survey consisting of 50 multiple choice questions with a control and an English language learner group,

approximately 80% of respondents across both categories agreed that all Moroccans should learn English. The survey additionally measured the reasons students are learning English and the most common response selected was “international importance” as well as for future employment. We can see from her findings that Moroccans’ sentiments towards English are overwhelmingly positive and also that Moroccans, whether currently studying the language or not, believe that English will be the most important language for their future.

In Buckner’s 2011 publication, she delivers results from a mixed-methods approach between a survey, smaller focus groups, and interviews targeted towards urban Moroccan youth ages 15 to 30. A total of 421 students across 23 classrooms at seven institutions both private and public, were examined to identify the growth of English in Morocco’s complex linguistic landscape. 82% of students appear to maintain that English is important for all Moroccans to learn. Additionally, the vast majority of students note that English will be the most important language for their future. Many respondents also mentioned that English is more economically powerful than Arabic and is therefore the most important language to them personally. It was made largely clear that the majority of youth in Morocco find English to be greatly important today, more so than in the past.

In Belhiah’s paper, he presents findings from a survey of 286 Moroccan students ages 18 to 21 majoring in English across various universities. His objective was to shed light on the global spread of English in Morocco by analyzing students’ motivations for choosing to study English at the university level. Several students demonstrated positive attitudes towards English, describing their love and passion for studying the language. Others went as far as to say it was one of the most important aspects of their lives. Students expressed their affection for English culture including a love for English films, music, television, and history. Additionally, students

explained that while English is not currently used widely in day-to-day conversations, they long to speak English on a daily basis because they view it as a language crucial to their self-image, emotional well-being, and as essential for their future. Participants recognized that English skills would be instrumental for them in the job market and for building connections with people around the world due to the international status of English. These students state that they chose to stick with learning the language because their English teachers are friendly and caring and the curriculum is fun, interactive, and engaging.

The findings of the British Council investigation are based on 1,211 responses to an online survey of 15 to 25 year-olds in urban areas of Morocco. The intention of the study was to answer several key questions including how young people in Morocco perceive English. Nearly half of respondents believe that English is the most important language to learn in Morocco. In addition, 85% of people foresee the number of young Moroccans learning and speaking English increasing significantly in the coming years. The leading reason for this is because English is viewed as the language of the future and as an essential skill for an individual's career. Not to mention, the overwhelming majority of participants strongly believe that English should become the primary second language in the country instead of French. 74% of respondents agree that English will replace French as Morocco's primary foreign language which is favorable in their eyes because of the economic and career benefits they foresee English providing. This shift, according to participants, would boost tourism and elevate Morocco's standing as the gateway to Africa on the national level as well as provide individuals with the opportunity to gain access to high-quality education, receive better job opportunities, and attain higher income.

While these studies offer a helpful foundation for defining the value of English in Morocco, my research aims to move beyond existing research, which is primarily concentrated

on student perceptions of the importance of English, providing an important but incomplete view of the importance of English in Moroccan society. To gain a fuller understanding of its perceived value, it is important to examine the attitudes and opinions of people across generational lines. By surveying Moroccans across generations, I sought to better understand what is the value Moroccans place on the English language overall. This study is the first in-depth, intergenerational analysis of the perceived importance of English in Morocco, a leading nation in Africa. It also provides potential for future research for longitudinal studies in the same vein.

Methodology

Research question: What is the perceived value of English in Moroccan society across generational lines?

To answer this research inquiry, I designed a survey consisting of 39 questions that ask about demographic information, English language background, language use, and language attitudes (see appendix for the English version). The format of the questions was based on a previous study by Elizabeth Buckner (2011) examining the growth of English language learning in Morocco. All data collection and recruitment materials were originally written in English and then translated into French and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The survey, consent forms, research methods, and all supplemental materials and translations were also approved through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process to ensure ethical standards and accurate practices.

In May and June of 2023, I traveled to Morocco for six weeks as part of the Undergraduate Research Study Abroad program at the University of Minnesota Duluth. To collect data, I administered my survey to Moroccans through the online platform Qualtrics during my time in-country. Respondents were able to answer in the language of their choice

(English, French, or MSA). Our primary distribution method was through our university contacts in Rabat, and from there to parents and grandparents to complete the full generational spectrum that we were seeking. The survey was also shared via social media and by word of mouth as I traveled throughout the country. We gathered four major types of information: demographics, languages studied, actual use (e.g. what percent of your daily conversations are in English?) and the attitudes (e.g. how important do you think English will be in your future?) towards English in Moroccan society. I compared responses across generational lines to identify any important differences.

In total, 142 Moroccans were surveyed. After all responses were collected, survey answers were translated back to English for data analysis. Males comprised 46 percent of respondents with the remaining 54 percent female, resulting in a relatively balanced representation of genders. These responses were heavily concentrated in Rabat because of our network there but extend to different regions throughout the entire country. Participants were divided into five age groups as follows:

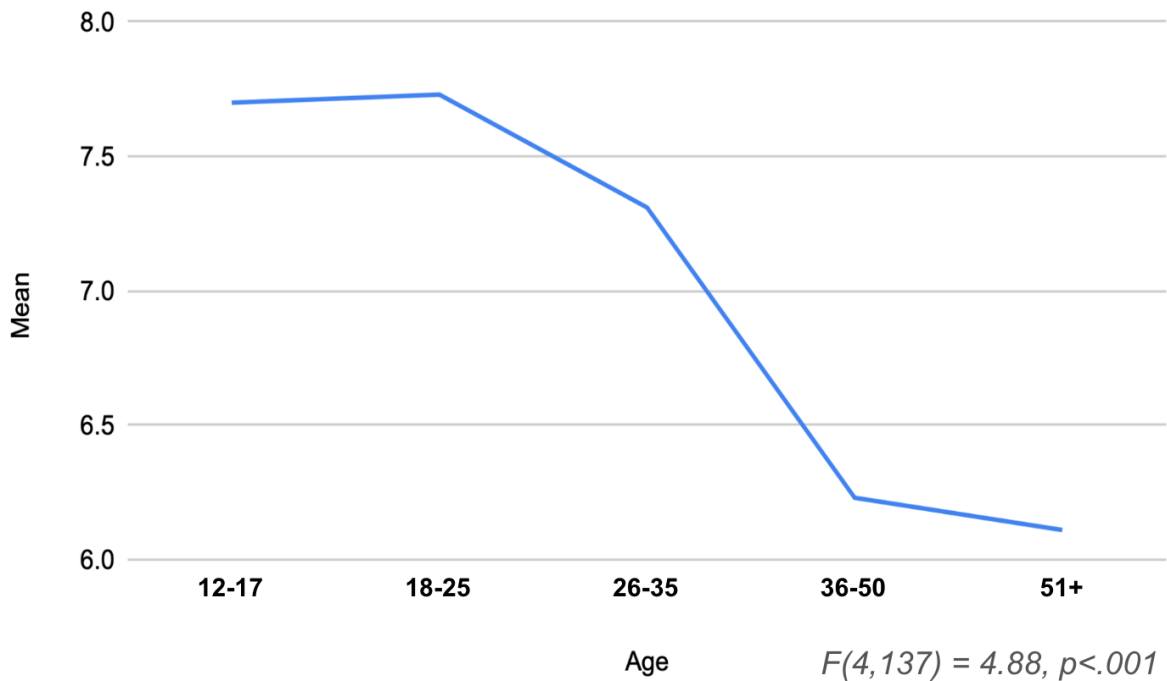
- 12-17 years old (adolescents/youth)
- 18-25 years old (students)
- 26-35 years old (young professionals)
- 36-50 years old (mid-career professionals)
- 51+ years old (late-career professionals/retired)

A minimum of 20 responses were collected in each age group to ensure statistical significance.

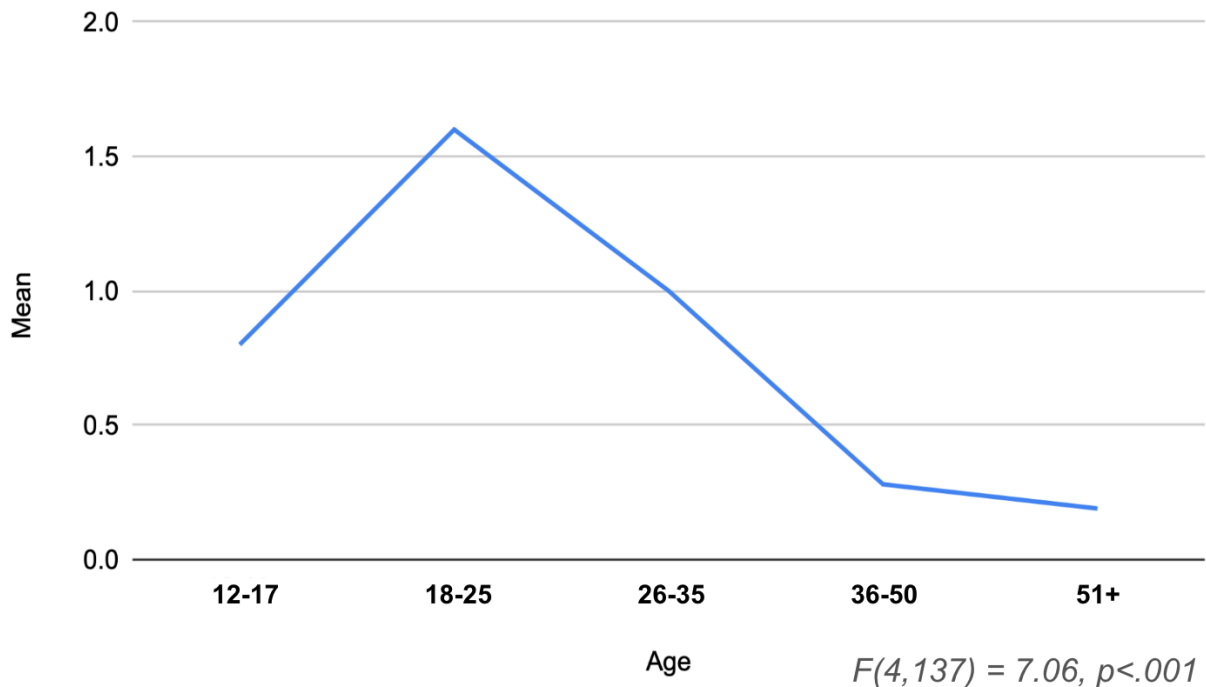
Research Findings

Figure 1

English Language Attitudes Scale



This scale on language attitudes was created based on a number of questions asking how Moroccans feel about the English language. We can see the most positive attitudes towards English among the two youngest groups (youth and students) and then identify a steady decline through the working age population (young and mid-career professionals), with the lowest among the oldest group (late career professionals or retired population). The trendline is clear. The youth have the strongest feelings toward English while the oldest have the weakest. It is important to note, however, that even with this decline, the numbers are still relatively high overall. Notice the graph starts at 6 rather than 0 for the mean scale. We can conclude from this that there is an overall positive attitude towards English in Moroccan society.

Figure 2*English Language Use Index*

For English language use, we used a set of questions asking respondents about different contexts and what language they use in each context (i.e. the language I speak most at home is, the language I speak most at work is...). We took note of the instances where English was reported as the answer and we used the data to make an index scale for the use of English. We also asked respondents to self-report their use of English with the question “What percentage of your day do you spend in English?” (See Table 3 below). The two graphs are nearly identical and almost completely overlap indicating consistent and valid data. The resulting charts indicated that younger generations (ages 12-35) have a higher use case for English than the older generations (ages 36+). This aligns closely with the language attitudes scale in which the youngest generations have the most favorable attitudes towards English with a decline over time. It is important to note, however, that the youngest age group (youth) uses English less often than

the two next age groups (students and young professionals). While their self-reported use is still high, we see that there is a significant drop in use between these two young age groups. We can conclude from this that the youngest generation simply does not have the same use case scenarios for English, despite their high regard for English (as indicated in the Language Attitudes scale). This suggests that it is not usage alone driving attitudes toward English. Group 2 (students) has an incredibly high use case for English which aligns with their favorable attitudes towards the language. This generation includes students in higher education and people starting their first jobs, contexts where English is most prevalent in Morocco. Finally, we see a decline in use across the remaining generations with a very low instance of use for the two oldest generations, yet they still have a relatively high positive attitude towards English.

Figure 3

Self-Reported English Language Use

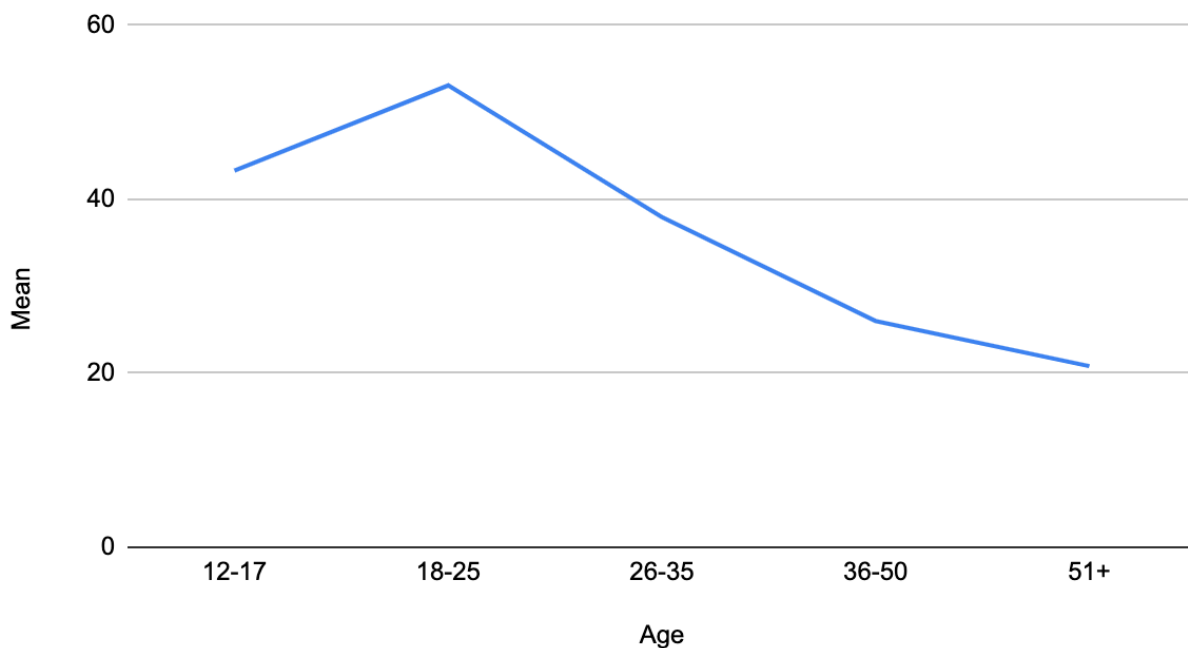


Figure 4*Motivations for Learning English (In Percentages)*

Motivation	12-17 yr olds	18-25 yr olds	26-35 yr olds	36-50 yr olds	51+ yr olds
Employer Sponsors	0	4	22	8	10
Future Employment IN Morocco	35	38	48	24	5
Future Employment OUTSIDE of Morocco	40	34	48	16	5
Future Study	55	28	0	4	5
Relatives	35	34	22	20	10
Tourists/Students	3	14	7	3	2
Online Peers	45	34	26	20	14
Language & Literature	50	58	35	24	33
Travel or Live Abroad	65	49	39	40	38
Research	0	9	0	8	24
Teach	0	2	4	0	0
Other	0	9	0	12	10
N/A	0	2	0	0	0

Based on the previous graphs, we have identified positive attitudes towards English and strong use case scenarios for the language. What we wanted to explore further was the motivation for learning English, something that we suspected might differ by age group. We asked people to tick off from a list any and all motivating factors for them to learn English. Motivations for learning English do indeed vary across the board by age. The darkest color indicates the highest percentage of respondents (45+%) identifying that factor as a motivation for learning English. Likewise, the lighter colors (30-44%, 15-29%, 1-14%, 0%) indicate a decreasing percentage of the same. Additionally, the highest response from each generation is noted in bold.

We see the highest numbers among the younger age groups, which aligns with the data that we see from our Language Attitude Scale and Language Use Index Scale. The youngest age

group (youth) is highly motivated by travel and opportunities to live abroad in the future. They are driven by a future orientation and a sense of adventure. There is also a deep appreciation they hold towards the beauty of the language and the social opportunities it provides through connection with online peers, the media, and literature. The motivation of connecting with online peers is strongest amongst the youth and then it declines with age. For Language & Literature we asked the question “do you think English is beautiful?” The question assumes some familiarity with cultural elements of the language, specifically within pop culture. It is essentially this aesthetic measure that the table notes as a strong motivator for the young generation (12-35). While this young generation is most motivated by a desire to travel and familiarity with anglo culture. Employment scores are also strong, indicating an appreciation for the utility of English in their professional lives. The data mirrors to some extent the strong attitudes despite a lack of opportunity to use English that we see elsewhere. The data suggests that English is viewed as important for any future employment opportunities working in or outside of Morocco. The data shows a strong appreciation for both the aesthetics and utility of English among the youngest age group (ages 12-17) that fades into the older age groups but never entirely leaves. The results indicate the strongest motivation for learning English among the younger generation (12-35) and weakest among the oldest age group. All age groups show a desire to learn English, though those motivations tend to vary by age. The older generations are using English for travel and to keep in touch with family. An interesting data point is that scores are incredibly high across the board for communicating with relatives outside of Morocco compared to communicating with anglo tourists inside of Morocco. We expected to see more people indicate speaking with anglo-tourists as a motivating factor given the rise of the tourism industry in Morocco. These numbers are, instead, consistently weak across the different age groups. The other surprise was

the high scores for communicating with family abroad. Why would they need to learn English to speak with their kids who study or live abroad? But we know that Moroccans often remain in these countries and start families of their own. Their kids, primarily English-speaking given their new context, could have some difficulty speaking with family back in Morocco in Darija, the Moroccan dialect of Arabic. More than once while in Morocco, friends of the older generation needed to dial up family in the US or Canada to translate something for me.

Finally, we included a category for “other” motivations. Two factors were frequently named by participants under the “Other” category: research and teaching. Both were listed often enough that we decided to disaggregate them as their own categories. Respondents had to write this term in themselves, indicating an important aspect of language use. Teaching indicates the professionals who teach English in the schools while research could be interpreted in different ways: research for employment, for travel, or for curiosity. The Internet has opened up vast fields of opportunities for personal research, fields articulated primarily in English.

Summary Of Results

1. English is highly valued in Morocco, especially among the younger generation.
2. There is a strong correlation between attitudes towards English and use of the language in Morocco. The youngest three age groups value English the highest and use it the most.
3. The youngest generation (ages 12-17) values English highly despite having a more narrow scope for use than the next age group (ages 18-25).
4. In general, younger generations are motivated to learn English for both aesthetic and instrumental reasons (to travel/live abroad, connection with online peers, employment opportunities in or outside of Morocco).

5. The generation of young professionals and students in higher education are highly motivated to learn English for employment opportunities.
6. The older generations are motivated by travel and research to learn English; they are not looking for future employment the way the young generation is.
7. There is a high value Moroccans place on learning English to communicate with relatives who live and travel abroad more than they are motivated to learn English for communicating with tourists inside of Morocco.

Limitations Of The Study

In several ways, the research was very limited and cannot fully capture the value of English in Morocco. Our time frame of data collection was short, therefore the findings simply represent a snapshot of the current use and attitudes towards English. In order to draw more substantial conclusions about the value English holds in Morocco, this study would need to be repeated over time (every few years perhaps) to collect longitudinal data. While Moroccans from various regions throughout the country were surveyed, recruitment was done primarily through the International University of Rabat (UIR) and social media which limits the representativity of the population both regionally and across generations. A technology barrier also exists with the older generation. In order to get people in the 36-50 and 51+ age groups to take the survey I had to find younger Moroccans who were willing to read off the questions to their parents and grandparents to help them take the survey.

Conclusions

Based on the results, there is no doubt that English is perceived as valuable in Morocco. This research highlights the attitudes towards and use of the English language in Moroccan society. Analysis of the data reveals a striking pattern: English holds significant value, particularly among the young generations. This conclusion is supported by both their positive attitudes towards the language and their eagerness to engage with it, despite limited opportunities for its practical application. A strong connection exists between the attitudes people have towards English and how much they use it. English language use is lower in the youngest age group (ages 12-17), strong in the students (18-25), then gradually declines with age. The youth indicate an appreciation for English, despite fewer opportunities to use it. Overall, younger Moroccans tend to value English the most and use it more often than older Moroccans. They are motivated by both the beauty of the language and the practical benefits it offers. To younger generations, English is a pathway to the world through opportunities it provides for travel, connecting with people online, and finding jobs, both in Morocco and abroad.

Although older generations show less enthusiasm towards English, they still place value in the language and are motivated to learn it. Their motivations are a blend of personal and instrumental factors, yet they vary from the motivations of the young generations who are more future oriented. The older generations view English as essential for travel, staying connected with family outside of Morocco, and for academic research. Additionally, the focus on using English to stay in touch with relatives who are traveling and living abroad reflects Moroccans' deep cultural appreciation for family, going beyond the importance of the language itself.

English is key to keeping family ties and bonds strong which Moroccans value highly and therefore it adds value to the English language in their eyes.

To conclude, our research highlights the many ways English has woven its way deeply into Moroccan society with increased value over the years. Morocco is not an anglophone society, and has many other languages people speak socially, politically, and academically. Despite these competing languages, there is a shift happening that is positioning English as the preeminent language of communication. English helps people travel, advance professionally, stay connected to their relatives and the world beyond Morocco, and pursue higher education. As Morocco moves forward in this increasingly globalized and interconnected modern world, we expect that the value of English will only continue to grow in the nation.

Future Direction

This research has shown that English holds a position of high value in Moroccan society, especially among the young generations. Given that this study provides insight into the value of English in Morocco in 2023 alone, we anticipate this study to be replicated again every few years to map a change that is happening in Moroccan society. We view this survey as a baseline that would be useful to perform longitudinally to track the value of English moving forward as the current findings are simply a snapshot in time. As each age range progresses across time, it will be fascinating to trace the change in English value. English is the language of instruction in higher education and is predicted to soon be the language of early education as recent legislation has been favorable to English in Morocco. When I was in-country in May of 2023, a policy was passed to introduce English in Morocco's public education system beginning in the first year of secondary education. While English is taught in high school and secondary school right now, it is

not the primary language. This is why we see the use case is still low. Soon the youngest generations of Moroccans will have a more broad scope for using the language. Additionally, there seems to be strong support from both the general public and the government to move the introduction of English in school even younger into primary schools. With recent legislation and our prediction that more English legislation is on the way in the years to come, we would expect to see even stronger numbers favoring English in the future. The current findings are a baseline for this longitudinal study that could help inform policy and cultural competence regarding the value of English in Morocco for years to come.

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Appendix

Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study on the value of English in Morocco. It consists of a brief 39 question survey that should take between 3-5 minutes to complete.

You have been selected as a potential participant because you are a Moroccan citizen. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study. All of your responses are anonymous and confidential.

This study is conducted by:

Johanna Broten, Department of World Languages and Cultures, University of Minnesota Duluth
Dana Lindaman, Department of World Languages and Cultures, University of Minnesota Duluth
Jill Boettcher, Department of Education, University of Minnesota Duluth

If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask you to complete the following survey, which asks about your background with English, current use and attitude towards English, and brief demographic questions about yourself.

The records of this study will remain confidential. In any type of report we may publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or to withdraw at any time without affecting these relationships.

We thank you in advance for your participation; your responses will help us better understand the role of English in Morocco.

For more detailed information about this study, [click here](#).

By answering yes, you agree to take this survey.

- Yes
- No

I. Demographic Information

1. Age:
12-17 18-25 26-35 36-50 51 or older
2. Gender:
Male Female Prefer not to answer
3. The place I grew up is:
Urban Rural
4. What city or village are you currently living in or near? _____
5. What is your current status? (select all that apply)
Employed Unemployed Student
6. What is your native Language, the language you spoke growing up at home?
Moroccan Arabic (Darija)
Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)
Amazighe
French
Other (Please specify): _____
7. What foreign languages have you studied (select all that apply)?
English French Spanish German Italian Chinese Russian
Other (Please specify): _____

II. English Language Background

8. How long have you studied English?
<1 year 1-3 years 4-7 years 8+ years
9. What is your current level of English?
Beginning Intermediate Advanced
10. Why do you learn English (select all that apply)?
 - My current employer wants me to study English
 - To improve future employment opportunities in Morocco
 - To improve future employment opportunities outside Morocco
 - To study in an English-speaking country
 - To communicate with English-speaking relatives
 - To meet and interact with English-speaking tourists or students

- To meet and communicate with English-speaking peers online
- Because I like English language and literature
- To travel or live in an English-speaking country
- Other (Please specify): _____

III. Language Use

A. Please complete the following statements:

11. The language I speak most in my home is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
12. The language I speak most in my school is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
13. The language I speak most at work is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
14. The language I speak most with my family is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
15. The language I speak most with my parents is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
16. The language I speak most with my siblings is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
17. The language I speak most with my friends is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
18. The language I speak most in public spaces is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
19. The language I speak most in the market/store is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
20. The language I speak most in religious contexts is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____
21. The language most used to conduct business is:
 Amazighe Darija MSA French English N/A Other (Please specify): _____

22. What percentage of your day do you spend in English?

IV. Language Attitudes

23. Rank the languages in order of importance in your eyes:

_____ Darija _____ MSA _____ Amazigh _____ French _____ English

B. Please complete the following statements:

24. Of all the languages I know, the language I consider mine is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

25. My favorite language is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

26. Of all the languages I know, the most beautiful language is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

27. The easiest language for me is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

28. The hardest language for me is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

29. The language I feel most comfortable speaking is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

30. The language that is most useful for daily life is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

31. The language that will be most useful to me in the future is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

32. The most important foreign language for Moroccans is:

Amazighe Darija MSA French English Other (Please specify): _____

C. Rate how much you agree with the following opinions:

33. I think learning English is fun.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

34. I think all Moroccans should have to learn English.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
35. A mastery of Arabic is more important for me personally than learning English.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
36. Learning English is more important than learning French.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
37. It is more important for Moroccans to learn English now than it was in the past.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
38. English is very important in my life right now.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
39. My future plans include the use of English in some way.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree