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Issue 12 of *Revue ITEC*, entitled “*Inclusive Education and Innovative Technologies*,” brings together a collection of scholarly contributions that explore emerging approaches, policies, practices, and innovative technologies that contribute to creating more inclusive, accessible, and learner-centred educational environments. At a time when educational systems are undergoing profound transformations, the intersection between inclusion and technological innovation has become increasingly significant.

Inclusive education extends beyond ensuring access to learning; it encompasses the creation of equitable educational environments that recognise learner diversity, reduce barriers to participation, and respond to different needs, abilities, and backgrounds. At the same time, the rapid development of digital and emerging technologies is creating new possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning, expanding access to educational resources, and responding to diverse learner needs.

The contributions in this issue address a range of topics, including inclusive education, special needs education, innovative pedagogies, teacher education and professional development, as well as the role of emerging technologies in expanding learning opportunities and addressing the diverse needs of learners. Collectively, the articles underscore the importance of combining pedagogical innovation with inclusive practices to promote equity, active participation, learner empowerment, and lifelong learning.

By bringing together perspectives from different disciplines and educational contexts, **Issue 12** seeks to contribute to current discussions on how innovation and technology can be harnessed to address contemporary educational challenges and foster more inclusive and learner-centred educational environments.

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The Politics of Language-in-Education in Morocco's News Media: A Corpus-Based Comparative Framing Analysis of Morocco's Trilingual Press (2018–2023)

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Abstract

Morocco's language-in-education policy has gone through a lengthy phase of public contestation. From the 2018 controversy over Moroccan Arabic (Darija) in primary textbooks, through the 2019 adoption of Framework Law 51.17 and its mandate of foreign-language instruction in scientific subjects, to the 2022–2026 roadmap's strategic pivot toward English, scholarship has highlighted the legislative and pedagogical dimensions of these reforms but has paid comparatively little attention to how reform is mediated for public consumption and none to how a single reform is rendered into divergent realities across a trilingual press. This paper addresses that gap through a corpus-based comparative framing analysis of a purposive corpus of 58 Arabic, French, and English language news items spanning 2018–2023 and organized into nine policy-event blocks. The analysis draws on Entman's framing model (1993) and Semetko and Valkenburg's generic frames (2000), reading the results through Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1995) alongside Bourdieu's account of linguistic capital (1991) and Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism (1992). The study identifies a register-specific division of discursive labour. On one hand, there is an identity-preservation frame predominating the Arabic coverage; on the other, a technocratic/managerial frame in French coverage and then an emancipatory global-market frame in English coverage. By contrast, educational equity is structurally displaced since it surfaces chiefly in a small set of English-language international commentaries and remains marginal in the domestic registers that reach the most affected publics. The study argues that this divergence reproduces competing elite projects, and it closes with evidence-based recommendations for a more inclusive language-planning process.

Keywords: language policy, media framing, corpus-based discourse analysis, multilingual education

1. Introduction

On 22 July 2019, Morocco's House of Representatives adopted Framework Law 51.17, the most consequential piece of education legislation in a generation. It is an enabling statute; in Moroccan practice a framework law fixes the guiding principles, objectives, and timetable for a sector and obliges the government to issue the implementing texts that follow. Law 51.17 gave binding form to the reform vision set out by the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research in its 2015–2030 strategic vision (CSEFRS, 2015), covering access,

governance, financing, and teacher training across the education system. Its most contested provision was Article 31, which authorised "linguistic alternation" and, in practice, legitimised the teaching of scientific subjects in French. What happened next depended on the language in which one read about it. In the Arabic press, the law was an act of "re-Francisation," even of "linguistic predation," a betrayal of the constitutional standing of Arabic. In the French press, it was a procedural milestone, a "first step" toward quality, reported through vote tallies and implementation timetables. In the English press, it was a "controversial bill" that had plunged the ruling Islamists into crisis, a story of political conflict shading, in the analytical outlets, into one of class. One law had entered public circulation as three different events.

This study takes that divergence as its object. It asks what happens to language-in-education policy between the moment it is made and the moment it reaches the publics whose children it governs, and it locates the answer in the framing work of a trilingual press. The question matters because policy rarely reaches citizens as legislation; it reaches them as news, and the frames through which the press renders a reform set the terms on which publics consent to it, contest it, or ignore it. In a country where the languages of the press map onto positions in a hierarchy of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), the choice of register is never only a channel.

The article proceeds as follows. The remainder of this introduction situates the 2018 to 2023 reform sequence in its historical context, states the problem and the research gap, and sets out the questions guiding the study. Section 2 develops the theoretical framework, joining framing theory to critical accounts of Bourdieu's (1991) linguistic capital and Phillipson's (1992) linguistic imperialism. Section 3 describes the corpus, the frame typology, and the coding procedure, together with their limits. Section 4 presents the findings register by register and through the single-event analysis of Framework Law 51.17. Section 5 discusses the findings as hegemonic work and draws out their theoretical implications; Section 6 turns to the implications for language-planning practice; Section 7 outlines the study's limitations; and Sections 8 and 9 set out the future directions arising from them and the study's conclusions.

1.1. Background of the Study

The contemporary politics of education in Morocco cannot be understood apart from the uneven multilingual order the country inherited and formed from its colonial past. The French Protectorate (1912–1956) imposed French as the language of administration, science, and economic life, and although successive post-independence governments pursued a policy of Arabization that enshrined Modern Standard Arabic as the language of the state, religion, and national history, they never succeeded in displacing French from the economy and the professions' domains (Ennaji, 2005; Grandguillaume, 1983). The Arabization program was, moreover, implemented asymmetrically. It advanced through primary and secondary public schooling while the scientific, medical, and engineering streams of higher education remained French-medium (Benrabah, 2007; Errihani, 2006). The structural consequence was a discontinuity at the threshold of the university; a moment at which students schooled entirely in Arabic in the under-resourced public sector encountered, often for the first time, a French-medium curriculum that their more privileged, privately educated peers had long inhabited.

Between 2018 and 2023, this settlement was reopened in a sequence of widely publicized episodes. In 2018, the appearance of Darija lexis, including the names of traditional foods such as *baghrir* and *ghriyba*, in primary textbooks triggered a national debate over the place of the vernacular in formal education. In 2019, after a protracted parliamentary battle, the legislature adopted Framework Law 51.17, whose Article 31 authorized "linguistic alternation" and, in practice, legitimized French-medium instruction in scientific subjects. From 2021 onward, an

online “Yes to English” campaign and the subsequent 2022–2026 reform roadmap signaled a strategic reorientation toward English, including a requirement of B1 English proficiency for undergraduate diplomas and the phased introduction of English in middle schools. Each of these episodes generated dense and ideologically charged coverage across Morocco’s Arabic, French, and English-language outlets.

1.2. The Problem and the Research Gap

As mentioned before, language policy rarely reaches citizens as legislation; it rather gets to them as news. The frames through which the press presents a reform shape the terms on which publics conform to, challenge, or reject it. Yet the substantial literature on Moroccan language policy has concentrated on official texts and on classroom attitudes and practice (Chakrani & Huang, 2014). Where media coverage has been analyzed, it has typically been examined one register, and often one text, at a time: Alaoui’s (2025) critical discourse analysis of the Darija textbook controversy, for instance, proceeds from a single Arabic-context newspaper article. This single-register habit overlooks a feature particular to a trilingual public sphere. The same reform may be translated into materially different realities depending on the language in which it is reported, and those divergences may track the interests of different social constituencies. Absent a comparative reading across registers, the structural logic of Moroccan language politics, i.e., its distribution of advantage and its mechanisms of legitimation, remains only partially legible.

1.3. Purpose, Significance, and Scope

This study compares how Moroccan digital media framed language-in-education reform across the 2018–2023 period. Its principal contribution is to treat the trilingual press (Arabic, French, and English) as one fractured discursive field in which competing frames perform distinct ideological work instead of three parallel channels reporting a single event. The relevance of this reframing is both scholarly and practical because it extends framing and language policy research to a multilingual mediascape that has rarely been studied comparatively. This offers language planners a picture of how reform is legitimized, contested, and in important respects, depoliticized for different audiences. The scope is deliberately bounded. The corpus comprises digital journalism where the analysis is interpretive and qualitative, supported by descriptive coding rather than inferential statistics. The choice aims for analytical depth rather than representative breadth.

1.4. Research Questions

Building on the research gap identified above, this study examines how a single reform sequence is rendered into divergent realities across Morocco’s trilingual press, and how that divergence distributes advantage among the publics each register serves. It attempts to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. Which media frames dominate the Arabic, French, and English language coverage of language-in-education reforms, and how do they diverge across the three registers?

RQ2. How do these frames relate to the social and political constituencies served by each linguistic register?

RQ3. To what extent does the question of educational equity, which in this context is the differential access to social mobility produced by the language regime, enter the framing contest across the three registers?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Moroccan Linguistic Marketplace and Its Colonial Genealogy

Morocco is generally characterized as a multilingual society in which Modern Standard Arabic, French, Amazigh, and Moroccan Arabic (Darija) coexist within a hierarchical and contested order (Ennaji, 2005; Sadiqi, 2003). That coexistence is neither neutral nor static. Modern Standard Arabic carries constitutional and religious legitimacy. French, without official status, remains the de facto language of the economy, the upper administration, and the scientific disciplines. Amazigh secured official recognition in the 2011 Constitution but has struggled to convert that recognition into institutional presence. Darija, the language of everyday life, has historically been excluded from formal domains altogether (Boukous, 1995; Errihani, 2006). The reforms of 2018 to 2023 unsettled all of these arrangements at once, which partly explains the intensity of the controversies they provoked.

The scholarly consensus treats this configuration as a legacy of colonial language planning that post-independence policy reproduced rather than dissolved. Arabization, launched to build a cohesive national identity, ended up entrenching a two-tier system. Public schooling was Arabized at the primary and secondary levels while the scientific streams of higher education stayed French-medium, and a private sector emerged to prepare an elite minority for precisely that transition (Benrabah, 2007; Marley, 2004). Seen in this light, the reforms under study are less a break with the past than successive attempts to manage, or in some readings to exploit, a contradiction that has structured Moroccan education for half a century.

2.2. Linguistic Capital, Symbolic Violence, and Linguistic Imperialism

Bourdieu's (1991) sociology of language supplies the study's foundational concepts through three linked constructs: the linguistic market, symbolic violence, and misrecognition. A linguistic market exists wherever linguistic products are subject to evaluation and pricing within institutions, and competence in the legitimate variety functions as capital convertible into social and economic advantage. In the Moroccan case, French operates as elite cultural capital, its mastery an institutional passport to the private sector and the professions (Hammoud, 1982). Two further mechanisms explain how this arrangement holds. Symbolic violence names the imposition of a linguistic hierarchy as legitimate in a form that conceals the power relations sustaining it, so that an arbitrary social advantage, the head start of those raised in Francophone households and schooled in French, is recast as an objective requirement of scientific rationality. Misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) names the corresponding disposition among the dominated, who accept the legitimacy of the dominant language and so participate in their own exclusion, which registers to them as personal failure rather than structural design. These constructs carry a testable expectation into the analysis: the most effective register will be not the one that attacks a rival language but the one that removes the language question from contention altogether. Section 4.4 shows the French technocratic frame doing precisely this.

Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism extends the analysis to the recent ascent of English and supplies a second, equally specific set of tenets. Phillipson defines English linguistic imperialism as a subtype of linguisticism, the ideologies and structures through which an unequal distribution of power and resources is legitimated and reproduced along linguistic lines. He models the relation as one between an English-dominant centre and a dependent periphery, sustained through both structural means, the institutional and material allocation of resources to English, and ideological means, the representation of English as a neutral, democratic, and universally beneficial instrument of connectivity. This last tenet is the one on which the present study turns. The claim that English is a neutral good conceals the particular

commercial and geopolitical interests its spread advances, and it is this claim that the English-register coverage reproduces when it frames English as liberation from an outdated colonial dependency. Read through Phillipson, the emancipatory frame examined in Section 4.5 does not dissolve linguistic stratification but relocates it, substituting a market-oriented dependency on English for the colonial dependency on French while leaving the logic of stratification intact.

2.3. Media Framing and the Construction of Policy Reality

News media do not simply transmit policy; they constitute it as an object of public understanding. Entman's (1993) widely adopted definition holds that to frame is to select certain aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in order to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Framing, on this account, is not bias in the ordinary sense. It is the unavoidable structuring of attention, and it is consequential because it shapes which solutions appear thinkable at all (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Scheufele, 1999). Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) gave the concept empirical traction by identifying five generic frames that recur in political news/conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and attribution of responsibility offering a tractable and transferable vocabulary for comparative coding.

Where Entman and Semetko and Valkenburg describe the architecture of frames, Fairclough's (1995, 2010) three-dimensional model situates them within social life. The model distinguishes a textual dimension concerned with description, a discursive-practice dimension concerned with the interpretation of production and consumption, and a social-practice dimension concerned with explanation in terms of power. This layering is relevant to this study as it seeks to move from observable lexical and rhetorical choices to claims about hegemony. Researchers have increasingly paired the model with corpus methods, using systematic textual evidence to guard that move from description to explanation against selective reading (Baker, 2006; Baker et al., 2008; Mautner, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

2.4. Framing in a Trilingual Public Sphere: The Gap

Despite these traditions, a gap remains at their intersection. Language-policy scholarship has documented the structure of Morocco's linguistic marketplace but has rarely examined how the press mediates it. Framing scholarship, for its part, has analyzed how news constructs policy reality but has seldom considered a public sphere fragmented across languages that carry different histories and serve different constituencies. The trilingual Moroccan mediascape is precisely such a case. It offers an unusual opportunity to observe how a single reform is framed differently for audiences positioned differently within the linguistic hierarchy. This study addresses that gap directly, asking not only which frames appear but also what social work their distribution performs (Spolsky, 2004).

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

The study employs a corpus-based comparative framing analysis; a qualitative design in which a compiled corpus of media texts is systematically coded for frames and then interpreted through critical-theoretical lenses. The design is comparative across three linguistic registers and across nine policy-event blocks that structure the corpus. It is corpus-based in that the analysis proceeds from a defined and documented body of texts rather than from illustrative examples selected ad hoc. Because the available corpus consists of headlines and analytic summaries rather than complete running text, the design does not incorporate corpus-linguistic

frequency or collocation procedures, which require full texts and a substantially larger and more balanced Arabic component to be defensible. The descriptive coding reported below is therefore offered as a structured heuristic for organising the qualitative reading, not as a statistical measurement.

3.2. *Corpus and Sampling*

The corpus comprises 58 news items published between 2018 and 2023 and compiled purposively (see Appendix A). Items were selected to capture the principal friction points of the reform sequence and organised into nine thematic policy-event blocks, from the 2018 Darija textbook controversy to the 2023 expansion of English and Amazigh instruction. For each item the corpus records the headline, outlet, date, web address, and an analytic summary of the article's angle. The three sub-corpora draw on different segments of the Moroccan mediascape. The Arabic sub-corpus is built from high-circulation and ideologically committed domestic outlets; the French sub-corpus from elite domestic political and business titles; and the English sub-corpus from a single domestic outlet, Morocco World News, alongside a range of international titles. Table 1 reports the corpus composition by policy-event block and linguistic register, while Table 2 lists the full set of outlets in each register, their scope, and the number of items each contributes.

Table 1
Corpus Composition by Policy-Event Block and Linguistic Register

Policy-event block (period)	EN	FR	AR	Total
1. Darija textbook controversy (2018)	4	9	0	13
2. French vs. English debate (2019)	2	0	1	3
3. Framework Law 51.17 (2019)	8	4	6	18
4. Post-law analysis (2019–2020)	2	0	0	2
5. “Yes to English” campaign (2021)	2	0	0	2
6. 2022–2026 reform roadmap (2022)	4	5	0	9
7. English expansion & Amazigh (2023)	3	2	0	5
8. Tamazight (cross-cutting)	1	0	0	1
9. Analytical & international pieces	4	0	1	5
Total	30	20	8	58

Table 2
News Media Outlets by Linguistic Register, Scope, and Number of Items

Register	Outlet	Scope	Items (n)
Arabic	Hespress	Domestic	5
	Howiya Press	Domestic	1
	Al-Islah	Domestic	1
	Maroc Law	Domestic	1
Subtotal			8

French	Le360	Domestic	6
	TelQuel	Domestic	4
	Aujourd'hui le Maroc	Domestic	4
	Médias24	Domestic	3
	Le Matin	Domestic	1
	2M	Domestic	1
	Yabiladi	Domestic	1
Subtotal			20
English	Morocco World News	Domestic	17
	University World News	International	2
	The Arab Weekly	International	1
	The African Exponent	International	1
	Oxford Business Group	International	1
	Middle East Monitor	International	1
	The Eastern Herald	International	1
	World Education News & Reviews	International	1
	Harvard Kennedy School JMEPP	International	1
	Yale Review of International Studies	International	1
	Harvard International Review	International	1
	U.S. International Trade Administration	International	1
	Minority Rights Group International	International	1
Subtotal			30
Total			58

Two features of the sample bear directly on interpretation. First, the three registers are unequally represented (English $n = 30$, French $n = 20$, Arabic $n = 8$), an imbalance that partly reflects the documented difficulty of compiling Arabic-language digital sources with stable archives. Second, the English sub-corpus is dominated by a single domestic outlet, Morocco World News, alongside several international titles, which produces a domestic–international imbalance within that register. These are properties of the available coverage, not artefacts to be concealed. The analysis is calibrated to them since it makes claims about dominant tendencies rather than precise distributions, to which this study will return to their consequences in the limitations section.

3.3. Analytical Instrument: The Frame Typology

Each item was coded for a single dominant frame using an adaptation of Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) five generic frames. Because the study's third research question concerns educational equity, a dimension the generic typology does not isolate, a sixth category was added: an equity / social-justice frame capturing explicit attention to differential access, class, and exclusion. Frame assignment followed Entman's (1993) criteria of problem definition and moral evaluation, applied to the manifest content of the headline together with the recorded summary. Table 2 sets out the operationalized typology and the indicators that guided coding.

Table 3

Frame Typology and Coding Indicators

Frame	Definition	Illustrative indicators in this corpus
Conflict	Emphasises disagreement between parties, individuals, or institutions.	Parliamentary clashes, party splits, petitions, “outrage,” “controversial.”
Responsibility	Attributes responsibility for a problem or its solution to government or actors.	Ministerial statements, procedural milestones, roadmap commitments.
Economic consequences	Frames the issue in terms of costs, budgets, employability, or growth.	Budget figures, “market-ready graduates,” quality and competitiveness.
Morality / identity	Frames the issue through values, religion, culture, or national identity.	Sovereignty, “coloniser’s language,” constitutional and Arab-Islamic identity.
Human interest	Gives the issue an individual, emotional, or experiential angle.	Street interviews, personalised polemic, viral reactions.
Equity / social justice (added category)	Frames the issue through differential access, class, or exclusion.	Two-tier system, public/private divide, class politics, dropout.

3.4. Coding Procedure, Reflexivity, and Analytic Limits

Coding proceeded in two passes. In the first, each item received a single dominant-frame label, yielding the distribution reported in Table 3. In the second, items were re-read within their policy-event blocks to trace how framing varied across registers during the same event and to identify recurrent lexical and rhetorical motifs: the characterization of reform as predation, for instance, as functional alternation, or as liberation. The coding was conducted by a single researcher and is therefore interpretive. Where summaries were ambiguous, the more conservative attribution was preferred, and the frame counts should accordingly be read as indicative rather than exact. Reflexively, the researcher's position as a Moroccan scholar is both a resource, affording contextual and linguistic competence across the three registers, and a standpoint whose assumptions the critical framework is intended to make visible rather than suppress. The principal analytic limits, addressed more fully below, follow from the corpus's composition and from its reliance on headlines and summaries rather than full texts.

4. Findings

4.1. Overall Frame Distribution

Table 3 reports the distribution of dominant frames by register. The pattern is pronounced. Morality and identity frames concentrate almost entirely in the Arabic items; responsibility and economic-consequences frames dominate the French items; and the English items spread across

conflict, responsibility, and economic frames while carrying nearly all of the equity framing found anywhere in the corpus. Read against Table 1, the distribution also reveals telling absences. The Arabic register is silent on the 2018 Darija controversy and on the 2022 roadmap; the French register is silent on the 2021 "Yes to English" campaign. These absences are themselves analytically meaningful, and the discussion returns to them.

Table 4

Distribution of Dominant Frames by Linguistic Register (number of items)

Dominant frame	Arabic (n=8)	French (n=20)	English (n=30)
Conflict	1	4	8
Responsibility	1	8	8
Economic consequences	0	5	6
Morality / identity	5	1	2
Human interest	0	2	0
Equity / social justice	1	0	6

4.2. Characteristic Lexis and Motifs by Register

Beyond the dominant-frame counts, a second reading isolated the salient lexis and rhetorical motifs that recur within each register, summarized in Table 4. The terms listed are drawn from the headlines and summaries of the corpus itself, and they are presented not as frequency data but as the characteristic vocabulary through which each register builds its frame. Their juxtaposition makes the division of discursive labour unusually visible. Where the Arabic register reaches for the lexicon of predation and sovereignty, the French register reaches for that of measurement and management, and the English register for that of obsolescence and opportunity.

Table 5

Characteristic Lexis and Rhetorical Motifs by Register

Register	Characteristic lexis and motifs	Framing function
Arabic	"linguistic predation" (iftirās lughawī, إفتراس لغوي) and "linguicide" (ibāda lughawiyya, إبادة لغوية), as an unconstitutional (ghayr dustūrī, غير دستوري) "re-Francisation" (i'ādat faransat al-ta'lim, إعادة فرنسة التعليم) conducted in "the coloniser's language" (lughat al-musta'mir, لغة المستعمر), and as a threat to Arab-Islamic identity (al-hawiyya al-'arabiyya al-islāmiyya, الهوية العربية الإسلامية)	Defends cultural and religious capital; constructs reform as existential threat.
French	"measurable commitments" (engagements mesurables), "budgetary shock" (choc budgétaire), "purely functional" (purement fonctionnel), "roadmap" (feuille de route), and "quality" (qualité)	Renders reform technical; depoliticises the language question.
English	"outdated," "market-ready graduates," "global competitiveness," "controversial," "two-tier," "class politics."	Frames English as emancipation; aligns schooling with global markets.

4.3. The Arabic Register: An Identity-Preservation Frame

Arabic-language coverage frames reform predominantly as a question of identity, sovereignty, and constitutional fidelity. The most explicit instances appear in the ideologically committed outlets. *Howiya Press* characterised Framework Law 51.17 as "linguistic predation" and warned of "linguicide," while *Al-Islah* framed the law as an unconstitutional "re-Francisation" of education and presented the BIOF (Baccalauréat International - Option Français) track as a vehicle of class-based linguistic discrimination favouring the Francophone bourgeoisie

(Howiya Press, 2019; Al-Islah, 2019). In the high-circulation press, *Hespress* relayed former head of government Benkirane's description of the policy as promoting "the coloniser's language" and reported the debate through an explicitly anti-colonial frame that invoked Frantz Fanon, the Martinican theorist of colonialism whose work on language and colonial subjectivity is foundational to postcolonial thought (Hespress, 2019b). *Hespress* publishes parallel Arabic, French, and English editions; all Hespress items in this corpus, and all references to Hespress in this section, are drawn from its Arabic edition. The reference does more than lend polemical weight. By summoning Fanon's (1952,2008) argument that adopting the colonizer's language means internalizing the hierarchy it carries, the coverage recasts a curriculum decision as colonization continued by linguistic means, a vernacular diagnosis of the very symbolic violence this study's framework names. Across these items, reform is constructed not as a pedagogical adjustment but as an existential threat to the Arab-Islamic character of the nation.

Two qualifications temper this picture. First, not all Arabic coverage is polemical. Some *Hespress* reporting on the law's adoption is procedural and comparatively neutral, foregrounding plurilingualism and Amazigh development. Second, and more striking, one Arabic item runs against the grain of the register entirely: a legal analysis in *Maroc Law* foregrounds the unresolved Arabic-to-French transition gap at the university level, offering the corpus's clearest articulation of equity from within the Arabic register (Maroc Law, 2018). That this voice is exceptional is itself part of the finding. Within the Arabic register, the equity question is available but subordinated to the question of identity.

4.4. The French Register: A Technocratic-Managerial Frame

French-language coverage is markedly different in tenor. In this regard, reform is framed as administration: a matter of implementation metrics, budgets, and procedural milestones. *Médias24*'s reporting on the 2022–2026 roadmap is emblematic, presenting the reform through "12 measurable commitments", three strategic axes, and a projected rise in the education budget from 62.5 to 88 billion dirhams (Médias24, 2022). Where identity-based opposition surfaces at all, it is reframed as political posturing. *Aujourd'hui le Maroc* characterised parliamentary resistance to Articles 2 and 31 as *surenchère* (one-upmanship) and relayed the minister's "purely functional" account of language alternation largely without contestation (Aujourd'hui le Maroc, 2019). The dominant frames here are responsibility and economic consequences, which together strip the policy of its socio-political charge.

The effect is a form of ideological containment. While rendering the language question technical, a problem of budgets, benchmarks, and timetables, the French register does not so much defend French as place it beyond debate, presenting the language's continued centrality as a common-sense requirement of modernisation. From a Bourdieusian perspective, this discourse may be read as an instance of symbolic violence, whereby the arbitrary advantage of French is naturalised through the presentation of political decisions as administrative necessities.

4.5. The English Register: An Emancipatory Global-Market Frame

English-language coverage introduces a third frame, one that disrupts the Franco-Arabic binary by positioning the turn toward English as liberation from an outdated colonial dependency. Coverage of the 2021 "Yes to English" campaign relayed activists' description of French as "outdated" and their demand for English as the first foreign language (Middle East Monitor, 2021), while international higher-education outlets framed reform in terms of "market-ready graduates" and global competitiveness (University World News, 2022). Survey evidence is mobilised as proof of a democratic, youth-led demand: the British Council finding, reported in

the country-profile literature, that a substantial share of young Moroccans prioritise English. (British Council, 2021). The English register is also where the corpus's conflict framing is most concentrated, a concentration that reflects both the contentiousness of the domestic episodes and an international appetite for the "language war" narrative.

Yet a critical reading suggests that this emancipatory frame may substitute one external dependency for another. When educational success is framed through market-readiness and global competitiveness, a local claim for fairness is quietly rearticulated as alignment with international labour-market demand, the very dynamic Phillipson (1992) anticipates. The English register thus performs a double movement. It names the injustice of the inherited French regime more openly than either domestic register, while channelling the resulting energy toward a market-oriented horizon that leaves the underlying logic of linguistic stratification intact.

4.6. Three Realities of Framework Law 51.17 Across the Registers

The Framework Law 51.17 block (n = 18) is the only policy event represented across all three registers, and it therefore offers the clearest test of the divergence thesis. The same legislative moment is rendered three times over. In the Arabic register, the law is "re-Francisation" and "predation," a betrayal of constitutional identity (Howiya Press, 2019; Al-Islah, 2019). In the French register, it is a procedural achievement "adopted in committee," a "first step" toward quality, a functional instrument whose passage is reported through vote tallies and implementation plans (Le Matin, 2019; Aujourd'hui le Maroc, 2019). In the English register, it is a "controversial bill" that "sparks outrage" and "plunges the ruling Islamists into crisis," narrated as conflict and, in the analytical pieces, as a symptom of class politics (The Arab Weekly, 2019; Yale Review of International Studies, 2019). Three registers of one law resulted in three incompatible problem definitions. That the divergence documented in Table 3 reappears intact within a single event is the strongest demonstration the corpus affords that it is systematic rather than incidental.

4.7. The Displacement of Equity

The third research question asked how far educational equity enters the framing contest. The answer is qualified rather than simply negative. Equity is not wholly absent. It is in fact most visible in the English-language analytical and international items: the Yale Review's account of the "class politics" behind the language debate, analyses of how Arabization produced a two-tier system, reporting on Morocco's literacy crisis, and coverage of Tamazight's declining enrolment (Yale Review of International Studies, 2019; Morocco World News, 2019; Minority Rights Group International, 2023). What is striking is where that visibility stops. The equity framing is largely confined to commentary written for international or elite-analytical audiences, while within the domestic Arabic and French registers, which reach the publics most affected by the language regime, equity is marginal: the Arabic register subordinates it to identity, the French register to implementation. The corpus thus suggests not a uniform silence on equity but its structural displacement to the periphery of the domestic conversation.

5. Discussion

5.1. Framing as Hegemonic Work

Viewed through the lens of Fairclough's (2010) social-practice dimension, the divergence documented in the findings appears less as journalistic happenstance than as the textual signature of competing elite projects, each protecting a particular form of capital. The Arabic identity-preservation frame defends the cultural and religious capital on which traditionalist and Islamist authority rests. Through recasting a curriculum dispute as neo-colonial aggression, it mobilises popular sentiment while deflecting attention from the pedagogical shortcomings of absolute Arabization. The French technocratic frame may be read as defending the economic and administrative capital of the Francophone bourgeoisie. Through rendering the language question a matter of budgets and benchmarks, it forecloses debate about how reliance on French operates as a gatekeeping mechanism. The English emancipatory frame appears to break this circuit by speaking the language of equality and aspiration. Yet, as Phillipson (1992) would predict, it tends to substitute a market dependency for a colonial one, converting a claim for fairness into a pipeline for global competitiveness.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The analysis both confirms and refines existing theory. It confirms the Bourdieusian reading of Moroccan language politics as class reproduction (Benrabah, 2007; Ennaji, 2005), but it locates the mechanism in the differentiated framing work of a trilingual press. In doing so it suggests a modest extension of the framing literature itself. Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) generic frames were developed for, and largely applied within, single-language national mediascapes. The present case indicates that in a multilingual public sphere, the salient unit of analysis may not be the frame as such but its distribution across registers: the division of discursive labour through which different frames are assigned to different language publics. The added equity frame, meanwhile, earns its place by revealing a pattern the generic typology would have rendered invisible; thus, it is not equity's absence but its displacement.

These results align with prior accounts of Morocco's two-tier linguistic ecosystem (Marley, 2004) and with critical readings of the English turn as a new dependency (Phillipson, 1992). They depart, however, from a tempting but less accurate thesis: that the registers share a uniform "equity blind spot". One notable finding emerges instead. Equity is present in the corpus but socially misplaced, audible in English-language analysis for cosmopolitan readers and largely inaudible in the domestic registers where it would carry the greatest political consequence. This displacement permits the structural question of who is excluded by the language regime and how to be acknowledged in forums that cannot act on it, while remaining absent from those that might.

5.3. Interpretive Cautions

Two cautions bound these claims. The source imbalance, particularly the thinness of the Arabic sub-corpus and the dominance of a single English outlet, means the distributions in Table 3 should be read as indicative tendencies rather than population estimates; a fuller Arabic sample might temper or complicate the identity-frame finding. And because the analysis works from headlines and summaries, it characterises the framing of articles more reliably than the gradations within them. Neither caution unsettles the central finding of register-specific framing, corroborated as it is by the single-event analysis of Framework Law 51.17, but both properly bound its precision.

6. Implications for Policy and Practice

If Morocco's trilingual media field does not host a single public conversation about reform but produces three competing realities, and if, in doing so, it keeps the equity question at the margin

of the registers that matter most for public mobilisation, then managing reform requires managing its mediation. Two recommendations follow.

The first is to develop media-sensing capacity within language-planning bodies. Because reform is contested in the press well before it is implemented in schools, planning agencies would benefit from systematic monitoring of cross-register coverage. Tracking how each register frames a given measure would allow planners to anticipate the identity anxieties of the Arabic public, the depoliticising tendencies of the French register, and the market-oriented enthusiasms of the English register, and to communicate accordingly.

The second is broader, addressed to research and practice alike: media analysis belongs within the language-planning toolkit, not adjacent to it, because the frames through which reform reaches the public are part of the policy environment that determines whether reform succeeds.

7. Limitations

The study's reach is bounded in three respects, each concerning a different aspect of the evidence rather than a separate defect. Naming them precisely also clarifies what the analysis does and does not claim.

7.1. Data and Method

The corpus comprises headlines and analytic summaries rather than full article texts, and the frame coding was conducted by a single researcher. The first constraint supports frame-level analysis, in which the headline and lead typically carry the framing work, but it precludes the fine-grained intra-textual reading of metaphor, modality, and argumentative structure that a full critical discourse analysis affords, and it forecloses corpus-linguistic procedures such as keyword and collocation analysis. The second means the coding is interpretive; although the more conservative attribution was preferred in ambiguous cases, the scheme was not tested for inter-coder agreement. Neither constraint unsettles the central finding of register-specific framing, which the single-event analysis of Framework Law 51.17 corroborates independently of any individual coding decision, but both properly bound the precision of the frame counts, which should be read as indicative tendencies rather than exact distributions.

7.2. Corpus Scope and Balance

The three registers are unequally represented, the Arabic sub-corpus is small ($n = 8$), and the English register is dominated by a single domestic outlet, Morocco World News, alongside several international titles. A related caution concerns the internal diversity of the Arabic-language field, which is not ideologically homogeneous. The Arabic sub-corpus draws substantially on ideologically committed outlets such as *Howiya Press* and *Al-Islah*, whose editorial orientations differ markedly from those of mainstream or party-affiliated dailies such as *Assabah*, *Al Alam*, and *Al Ahdath*. The identity-preservation frame documented here should therefore be read as characteristic of the committed Arabic outlets sampled rather than of the Arabic press in its entirety. These are properties of the available coverage rather than artefacts to be concealed, and the analysis is calibrated to them, making claims about dominant tendencies rather than precise proportions. A register-balanced sample would test how far the identity frame generalises, but the divergence across registers, the study's principal claim, is robust to the imbalance, since it appears within the single Framework Law 51.17 event where all three registers are present.

7.3. Linguistic Coverage

The corpus is trilingual rather than genuinely plurilingual, and two absences mark its edges. The first is the near-total absence of coverage foregrounding Tamazight (Amazigh). Despite Tamazight's recognition as an official language in the 2011 Constitution and its centrality to any honest account of Morocco's linguistic ecology, it appears only at the margins of the corpus, chiefly in a single international human-rights report on its declining school enrolment, and not at all in the Amazigh language itself. This silence is partly an artefact of the comparative scarcity of archived Amazigh-language digital journalism and partly a feature of the mediascape under study, in which the language debate is conducted overwhelmingly among Arabic, French, and English while the country's indigenous language remains peripheral. Either way, the marginalisation of Amazigh, itself a profound equity question, falls largely outside the present frame. The second absence is Spanish, which is not incidental to Morocco's linguistic field: the northern zone lived under a Spanish protectorate until 1956, Spanish retains a residual presence in the Rif, it remains a widely taught foreign language, and Spanish outlets report on Moroccan affairs with sustained attention. Its exclusion reflects the corpus's focus on the three registers through which the domestic reform debate was actually conducted, but it forecloses an analytically valuable comparison, since Spanish occupies a singular position as a former colonial language that never converted its history into the institutional capital French commands. Both absences bound the scope of the present claims to the trilingual field, and both mark the most productive directions in which the analysis can be extended.

8. Directions for Future Research

Each of the constraints above opens onto a corresponding line of inquiry, and together they define a research programme for the comparative study of framing in multilingual public spheres.

The most immediate step is the assembly of a full-text trilingual corpus, permitting the combined corpus-assisted and critical discourse analysis increasingly favoured in the field (Baker et al., 2008; Mautner, 2009), so that the descriptive frame patterns identified here can be tested against, and enriched by, systematic textual evidence. A register-balanced design would accompany it, with multiple outlets per language, an explicit separation of domestic from diasporic and international English-language sources, whose framing interests may differ, and a spread across the Arabic-language field wide enough to establish whether the identity-preservation frame holds beyond the committed outlets. The coding scheme would be strengthened by establishing inter-coder reliability among analysts competent across the three registers.

A second priority is the deliberate inclusion of the languages the present corpus leaves at its margins. Amazigh-language media and coverage centred on Tamazight should be incorporated both to redress the imbalance and to examine whether the displacement of equity documented here extends to, or operates differently around, Morocco's indigenous language. A quadrilingual corpus incorporating Spanish-language coverage of the same policy events would function as a natural control case, allowing future work to test whether the framing patterns documented here track colonial provenance as such or the position a language holds in the present market of linguistic capital, a distinction the Bourdieusian framework predicts should matter, while also capturing how Morocco's reforms are framed for a neighbouring European public and its Moroccan diaspora.

Finally, the inquiry could extend beyond digital print journalism to broadcast media and, most importantly, to user-generated discourse on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook, where ordinary citizens contest, rework, or accept the frames that mainstream outlets supply, and where voices marginalised in the formal press, Amazigh speakers among them, are often more audible. Comparative extension to other post-colonial multilingual settings, in the MENA region and beyond, would then test whether the division of discursive labour observed here is particular to Morocco or characteristic of multilingual public spheres more generally.

9. Conclusion

This corpus-based comparative framing analysis has argued that Morocco's trilingual digital media landscape functions as a fractured ideological field rather than a unified public sphere. Across the 2018–2023 reform sequence, the Arabic register framed language-in-education reform as a threat to identity, the French register as a problem of administration, and the English register as an opportunity for market-driven emancipation: three frames whose distribution mirrors competing elite projects and the forms of capital each seeks to protect. The most consequential pattern, however, concerns what the domestic registers do not say. The question of who the language regime leaves behind is displaced to a thin band of English-language commentary addressed to international readers and so remains largely outside the conversation conducted in the languages of the publics most affected. Recognising this displacement, and designing both pedagogy and communication to counter it, is a precondition for any genuinely inclusive language-policy reform. The study's contribution is to render that displacement observable and to show that in a multilingual society the politics of education are waged partly in the choice of the language that tells the story of education.

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Appendix A. Corpus Sources (Primary Data)

The corpus analysed in this study comprises the 58 news items listed below, organised by policy-event block in the order in which they were analysed (EN = English, FR = French, AR = Arabic). Items originally published in Arabic are given with an English translation of the title and are marked accordingly.

Block 1. The Darija Textbook Controversy (September 2018)

- Morocco World News. (2018, September 4). *Morocco's Education Ministry defends use of Darija in primary school*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/09/87087/education-ministry-darija-school/>
- Morocco World News. (2018, September 9). *El Othmani: Darija cannot be used in education*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/09/253245/saad-eddine-el-othmani-darija-education>
- Morocco World News. (2018, September 12). *Ministry of Education on alert as controversy over Darija continues*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/09/86949/ministry-of-education-on-alert-as-controversy-over-darija-continues/>
- Morocco World News. (2018, September 25). *Doubting Darija: Why it's still controversial to use Moroccan language in classrooms*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/09/86689/controversy-darija-primary-school/>
- TelQuel. (2018, September 5). *Le PJD et l'Istiqlal s'insurgent contre la darija dans les manuels scolaires*. https://telquel.ma/2018/09/05/lentree-de-la-darija-dans-les-manuels-scolaires-fait-debat_1609455
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- Le360. (2018, September 7). *Polémique sur la darija : la Toile en colère contre Nouredine Ayouch*. <https://fr.le360.ma/societe/revue-du-web-polemique-sur-la-darija-la-toile-en-colere-contre-nouredine-ayouch-173967/>
- Le360. (2018, September 12). *Darija à l'école : Ayouch traite ses détracteurs de « chiens »*. <https://fr.le360.ma/politique/darija-a-lecole-ayouch-traite-ses-detractions-de-chiens-174294/>
- Le360. (2018, September). *Darija dans les manuels scolaires : le PJD s'en prend au... PJD*. <https://fr.le360.ma/politique/darija-dans-les-manuels-scolaires-le-pjd-sen-prend-au-pjd-173873/>

Block 2. The French vs. English Debate (January–March 2019)

- Morocco World News. (2019, January 24). *Education minister disregards English in Morocco, not in London*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/01/83404/education-minister-english-morocco-london/>
- Morocco World News. (2019, March). *French vs. English: How Morocco is debating foreign languages in schools*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/03/82479/french-english-morocco-languages-schools/>
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Block 3. Framework Law 51.17 — The Language Alternation Policy (April–August 2019)

- Morocco World News. (2019, April 2). *Moroccan intellectuals sign petition against French in schools*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/04/81556/morocco-intellectuals-petition-french/>

Morocco World News. (2019, April 4). *Moroccan coalition: Ditching Arabic in schools for French is a crime*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/04/81503/morocco-coalition-arabic-french/>

Morocco World News. (2019, May 5). *The challenges of Morocco's many languages lead to academic debate*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/05/80840/morocco-spoken-languages-academic-debate/>

Morocco World News. (2019, July 23). *Moroccan MPs approve controversial bill to bolster French language in education*. <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/07/78508/moroccan-mps-french-language-education/>

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