# Second Language Shift in North Africa: Impacts on Student Mobility

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## Overview

- Describe the historical role of French in North Africa and examine the emerging shift toward English.
- Identify the political, economic, and social drivers influencing this linguistic transition.
- Analyze the impact of this change on public and private higher education systems.

## The Historical Dominance of French

### A Colonial Legacy Across North Africa

- **1830** — Algeria colonization begins
- **1881** — Tunisia protectorate begins
- **1912** — Morocco protectorate begins
- **1956** — Tunisia independence & Morocco independence
- **1962** — Algeria independence

**ALGERIA**
French retained in higher education post-independence

**TUNISIA**
French dominant in universities and administration post-independence

**MOROCCO**
**70%** of public university STEM programs taught in French

Over **80** Million people across Algeria, Tunisia & Morocco inherited French as the language of higher education.

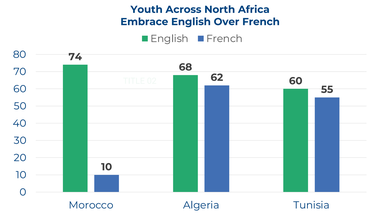
Sources: British Council Survey (2025); EF English Proficiency Index (2025); Algerian Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research (2023)

## The Regional Generational Pivot Toward English

**Morocco:** **74%** of youth rank English as the most important language to learn *(British Council, 2025)*

**Algeria:** English introduced in primary schools *(2022)* and mandated English-medium instruction in universities in 2023 *(MoHESR Algeria, 2023)*

**Tunisia**: EF EPI score **498**, ranked above global average *(EF EPI, 2025)*




## Economic and Political Drivers of Change

### 1 Key Policy Initiatives

**2023 National Language Policy**
Morocco's formal endorsement of English in higher education, research, and international diplomacy

**Teacher Training Program**
20,000 non-linguistic university teachers enrolled in English proficiency development

**Curriculum Reform**
Mandatory English integration across STEM and business disciplines

### 2 Economic Motivations

**Gateway to Africa positioning**
English as the bridge language for international business

Sources: Morocco Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research (2023); British Council Morocco Survey (2025); World Bank MENA Economic Report (2023)

## Social Identity and Digital Influence

### The Generation "Z" Chooses English as a Language of Preference

"We're not rejecting French—we're choosing English as a language of freedom and opportunity."
— Moroccan Youth Survey, 2025

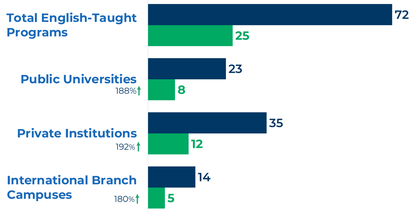
## Digital Learning Trends in Morocco

- **92%** **Youtube:** use daily for language practice
- **87%** **Netflix:** watch original content with English audio
- **78%** **Instagram:** follow English-language influencers
- **65%** **Duolingo:** use for structured learning

Sources: British Council Morocco Digital Survey (2025); Moroccan Youth Survey (2025)

## Transformation of Moroccan Higher Education System

### Rapid Expansion of English-Taught Programs Across Morocco




Sources: Morocco Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research (2024); Campus France Morocco Report (2024)

- University of Rabat launched **6** new English programs in engineering and data science
- Mohammed VI Polytechnic University now offers **8** fully English-taught degrees
- Private sector leads with **60%** of new programs delivered exclusively in English
- Ministry mandates English proficiency testing for all STEM graduates

## Shifting Patterns in Outgoing Mobility

From **12%** in 2019 to **22%** in 2024
Moroccan students choosing English-speaking destinations

UK, Canada, USA
**22%** of total outbound students
11,000 · 14,800 · 19,500

France: still #1 destination with **43,500** students
43,000

Technology · Business · Medicine

STEM and Business
Leading fields for English-destination students

English-Speaking Destinations
**12% (2019) → 22% (2024)**

(Source: Campus France Morocco, 2024)

## Morocco as a Regional Education Hub

### Attracting Global Talent Through English-Medium Education

**5,000** International students enrolled in 2024

**25%** Increase since 2020

Nigeria · Senegal · India · Kenya

Campus France Morocco, 2024

## References and Sources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