

## REPRESENTING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ALGERIAN EDUCATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EL KHABAR NEWSPAPER COVERAGE

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the government policy of introducing English in primary education by analysing El Khabar, and its online coverage of the policy to understand how it was reported with particular attention to the newspaper's framing and evaluative stance. Using media content analysis, this study analysed 23 articles released online between 2019 and 2025 drawing on media framing theory and the concept of language policy as discourse. The findings show that El Khabar presented the English language as a symbol of globalisation and development, and as a shift towards reducing the dominance of French in the Algerian educational system. The newspaper framed the policy as an economic and institutional initiative, highlighting employment, investment, and coordination between public institutions and universities. The newspaper struck an equilibrium between endorsement and neutrality about the policy by making use of diverse genres of journalism, including news reporting, columns of opinion, feature reporting, and photojournalism. The information that was reported was taken from original sources, i.e., educational and professional personnel, students, parents, and overseas institutions, to add credibility to the authority of the newspapers as a mediator between the policymakers and the public, while drawing on practical and pedagogical knowledge. This study argues that El Khabar portrayed the English language policy as a decision that was not only about primary education but also about Algerian institutional reform and modernisation. This research offers recommendations to journalists, policymakers, and educators to enhance the successful implementation of the English language policy in primary education in Algeria.

**Keywords:** El Khabar; English language policy; language policy as discourse; media content analysis; media framing theory; primary education

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## 1. Introduction

English is important in the educational system because it is the language of technological advancement, economic mobility, and international communication. These factors have increased the demand for English speakers across various industries (Grini & Benrabah, 2025). In Algeria, French colonization, which lasted for approximately 132 years, had a profound impact on Algeria's historical and sociopolitical context, which in turn shaped the country's educational system. The colonial era had a significant impact on language usage in that country after its independence in 1962.

After Algerian independence, Arabic was recognized as a national and official language; however, it was not until 1991 that the government reinforced its Arabization policy to use Arabic in administration, education, and public communication. It required that official documents, court proceedings, and public signage be in Arabic. Between 1970 and 1990, French was taught in schools as the first mandatory foreign language starting from the fourth grade (Benrabah, 2007). English was introduced in primary schools in 1993, as learners had to choose between French and English. However, this educational reform was abolished due to the Francophone lobby opposition, and the English language was only taught in middle schools due to the efforts of the pro-Arabisation lobby (Gherzouli, 2019). In 2002, Tamazight was also granted the status of a national language, making the country linguistically heterogeneous with the presence of distinctive languages such as Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Tamazight, and French (Gherzouli, 2019).

English language instruction and lessons have played a significant role in the Algerian educational system alongside the French language, notably in middle and high schools. However, the French language was the only foreign language taught alongside Arabic in junior schools. In 2022, the Algerian President, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, claimed, "French is a war gain, but English is an international language" (Ennahar Online, 2022). The President followed his announcement with the actual implementation of the English language in primary schools, which started in September 2022 with the recruitment of graduates in English language and translation.

The government policy raised confusion about the lack of experience and professional training among teachers (Grini & Benrabah, 2025). It also challenged primary students as they faced cross-linguistic interference and curriculum overload. While children are naturally inclined to learn new languages due to their developmental curiosity and cognitive capacity, it remains unclear whether a strategic plan is in place to ensure successful outcomes, given the readiness of primary students, teachers, and the availability of resources (Benaissa & Boudouh 2025; Imerzoukene, 2023).

Nonetheless, the President's decision was remarkable as it encouraged the use of the English language among young learners, which attracted national and international media outlets (press, television or online). Although the practical implementation of English language instruction in primary schools officially began in September 2022, El Khabar's coverage preceded this stage and focused on setting the public agenda, debating the decision, and preparing audiences for its eventual implementation. The newspaper stated that the government's move towards implementing English in junior schools was historic and would lessen French language dominance (Laroussi, 2025).

The literature concerning the policy of the English language in primary schools is limited; it focuses on the impacts of acquiring the English language on primary school students, as well as curriculum-related issues (Grini & Benrabah, 2025; Guerza & Nedjai, 2023; Saoudi, 2022; Imerzoukene, 2023). Far less attention has been paid to the discursive and mediational dimensions of this policy, particularly how it is constructed, legitimised, and

evaluated through national media discourse. This research draws on media frame theory and language policy as a discourse approach. It examines a comparatively underexplored gap in how one Algerian online newspaper, *El Khabar*, framed government policy on English instruction in primary schools. Given the central role of mass media in shaping public interpretations of educational reform, analysing the journalistic frame, tone, stakeholder positioning, and narratives used throughout the policies will provide insight into how the meanings of language policies are created and disseminated within society. This study will answer the following research questions:

1. How does *El Khabar* frame the government's decision to introduce English language instruction in primary schools, in terms of problem definition, policy justification, and proposed remedies?
2. What dominant journalistic genres, themes, and discursive patterns characterise *El Khabar*'s coverage of the English language policy?
3. What evaluative tones and attitudes are employed in representing the policy, and how do they contribute to legitimising or normalising the reform?
4. How are stakeholders' reactions and policy outcomes discursively constructed in *El Khabar*'s reporting?
5. What recommendations regarding the implementation of English language instruction are advanced, and how do they reflect broader narratives of educational modernisation and reform?

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

This study examines how educational reforms are created and conveyed in news discourse by utilising media framing theory and the concept of language policy as discourse. Media framing theory, which has its roots in communication research from the 1960s, aims to explain how the media shape public perception by choosing, highlighting, and arranging information in specific ways. In this context, media outlets influence how the audience determines specific aspects of reality and how they interpret media messages differently (Iacob, 2022). Although they mediate dialogue between political elites and the public, their coverage can be biased, thereby influencing public perception (Chen et al., 2023). Academics have emphasised the importance of framing analysis for identifying bias and interpretive patterns in media reporting (Zaklana, 2025). Framing serves as a communication tool for defining, interpreting, and assessing problems and events. It became popular in mass communication drawn on qualitative analysis (Kuan et al., 2021). Framing has also demonstrated how selective lexical choices, repetition of key phrases, and the use of statistics combine to influence audience perceptions (Boutora & Belkhiri, 2025).

Entman (1993), conceptualises framing as a process that performs four key functions: defining problems, diagnosing causes (identifying the causes that created the problem), making moral evaluations (evaluating the causal agents), and treatment recommendations (suggesting remedies). As Entman puts it, media frames select and highlight some aspects of perceived reality while marginalizing others in an attempt to advocate particular interpretations and judgments concerning any event or policy. In this sense, framing includes four elements: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the wider cultural context. The framing process occurs through a series of stages. Frame-building process is the development of the frame's structure by using institutional, professional, and ideological influences to create a news story (De Vreese, 2005).

Frame setting is how media frames help shape the audience's interpretations based on their existing knowledge and social settings. Framing can also have individual and collective effects on the audience and societal influence on the general population, as it helps determine how people form opinions, make evaluations, and make decisions.

When analysing media, framing analysis involves identifying keywords, sentences, metaphors, symbols, visuals, headlines, and the text's organization that are used repeatedly, and uncovering the patterns they form (Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). It includes different structures of texts, talks, interaction and cognition that reflect the specific importance of news events (Van Dijk, 2023). Frame Analysis can also be found in the work of Tankard (2001), who identifies devices that help frame media content, including headlines, leads, source/quote material, images/stats, and conclusion statements. In the research being conducted, framing tools will assist in identifying and classifying the major themes, tones, and policy-related narratives of the introduction of English in primary schools by El Khabar.

In addition to media framing theory, this study draws on the idea of language policy as discourse, which views language policy as a socially constructed process negotiated through public texts, including media discourse, rather than as official legislation. According to this viewpoint, newspapers have a significant influence on how language policies are perceived, accepted, and challenged in society.

According to Tollefson (1991), power is used to create language policies that reflect the interests of politically, socially, and economically powerful groups. They are also used to legitimise certain ideological preferences about language (Liyu, 2022). Similarly, Ruiz (1984) suggests that language policies will reflect people's orientation toward languages — i.e., that they see languages as a problem, a right, or a resource. These orientations will shape how and why people view, value, prioritize, or marginalize languages in the educational systems of the society. In the context of English language policy, these orientations will influence how people view English as a tool for progress and global integration or as a source of pedagogical and social concern.

In this light, Corson (1999) views school language policies as an effective discursive form that can facilitate rather than hinder educational equity. Language policies, according to Corson (1999), are discursive texts in which institutional goals take precedence over students' needs, thereby limiting students' access to linguistic resources. For Johnson (2004), policy-making and maintenance are influenced by discussion and are products of cultural values, beliefs, and power structures in society. This indicates that the manner in which policymakers express their policies may affect the perception of the policies by the rest of the community, including teachers and parents.

According to Fairclough (1989), critical discourse theory indicates that social relationships, ideologies, and structures of power are all reflected within our discourses. Foucault (1976/1978) shows how many discursive representations of a single idea normalise it to the point that acceptance or resistance becomes unquestionable; however, there are still some voices (not the dominant ones) that can challenge the narrative established by the dominant voices. This research uses the concept of language policy as a discourse analysis tool to study how El Khabar constructs meaning regarding the introduction of English into primary schools, particularly through constructing meaning around the legitimacy of the new policy, the reactions to it from stakeholders, the perceived advantages of the policy, and the social implications.

Together, media framing theory and language policy as discourse offer a useful lens for analysing El Khabar's reporting of the introduction of English in primary schools. The way in which media framing theory represents policies, and the emphasis and selection of

specific themes, tone, narratives, and language policy, as a discourse, explains the reasons for the importance of such representations by situating them in a broader system of power relationships and ideologies. These theories will guide the content analysis by identifying dominant frames, policy outcomes, and recommendations, and by clarifying stakeholder reactions and institutional perspectives. Combining these theoretical perspectives will offer a critical interpretation of how English language policy is discursively constructed and mediated in Algerian online newspaper discourse rather than descriptive enumeration. The conceptual and analytical frameworks guiding this study are summarised in Appendix I.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research design**

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis with a discourse-oriented framing approach to examine how El Khabar constructs and mediates the Algerian government's decision to introduce English in primary education. Drawing on media framing theory and the concept of language policy as discourse, the analysis focuses on identifying dominant frames, discursive patterns, and evaluative orientations through close reading and thematic interpretation of news texts.

#### **3.2. Sampling and data collection**

El Khabar is a popular Algerian newspaper, widely read and respected for its coverage of government and education news. The newspaper has many subscribers and is available online. The newspaper was established in 1990 and has become the most popular newspaper in Algeria, with many online versions available to many Algerians (Boumechta, 2021; Djeflal & Elbar, 2021; Foughali, 2025; Nessighaoui, 2025).

To obtain data from El Khabar's official website, this study uses a purposive sampling approach to select articles that offered substantive discussion of the English language policy, allowing for in-depth qualitative analysis of framing and discourse. Eligible articles for this study will be selected based on the following criteria:

- a. Articles that focused on policy issues related to the teaching of the English language in primary grades.
- b. Articles focusing on issues related to the implementation of the English language policy in primary grades and the perceived effects of that policy on staff, students, and parents.
- c. Articles that were published as news, opinion, or editorial pieces, or analytical articles.
- d. Articles unrelated to primary education or those referring only to the English language in peripheral ways were excluded.

Based on these criteria, 23 articles were identified for the study.

#### **3.3. Units of analysis**

Sentences were treated as units of meaning, as they frequently encapsulate evaluative positions, causal attributions, or policy judgments relevant to framing functions. Analysing sentences enabled close examination of how specific discursive moves contribute to broader framing patterns across texts. Across the 23 articles, 146 sentences were identified as directly engaging with the English language policy. These sentences were examined in relation to the analytical dimensions outlined in the theoretical framework of this study to explore how framing functions and language policy orientations were discursively constructed.

### 3.4. Coding

A qualitative coding framework was developed based on sensitizing concepts derived from media framing theory and language policy as discourse. Rather than testing variables, the coding process aimed to identify recurring frames, evaluative orientations, and discursive strategies through which the policy was constructed. While frequency counts of coded segments were recorded to indicate the relative salience of particular frames, these counts were used descriptively and did not constitute a quantitative test. Analytical emphasis was placed on interpreting how frames functioned discursively within and across texts. Coding was conducted thematically and interpretively, guided by the theoretical concepts. The categories listed below represent recurring analytical dimensions observed in the data rather than predefined variables. The main coding categories included:

- Characteristics of coverage (length, date of publication, genre of article, and visibility based on viewer counts)
- Inclusion of images and videos in articles
- Indicators of credibility (official sources, experts, government officials, or unnamed sources)
- Areas of focus: policy implementation, stakeholders' reactions, teacher training, curriculum reform, policy outcomes, and recommendations.
- Evaluating the tone (supportive, neutral, or critical, based on evaluative language and framing) was guided by Entman's (1993) moral evaluation function.
- Identify framing categories by analysing repeated thematic sentences, such as those related to modernisation, expert approval, or implementation strategy.
- Examine stakeholder reactions and policy outcomes by reviewing statements that reflect public, parental, or institutional responses to the policy's impact.
- Recommendations: explicit suggestions regarding language teaching, pedagogy, or policy improvement.

### 3.5. Reliability and validity

To increase reliability, the coding categories were established before the content analysis. The sentences were classified according to these coding categories for all the articles. Each translated text was tested by another Arabic-English speaker to verify its equivalence in themes, ensuring that all translations were contextually accurate and thus less prone to translation biases.

Furthermore, validity was ensured by drawing on theoretical justifications from both framing theory and discourse on language policy. Such theoretically- driven categories enabled the creation of a coding process that was legitimate rather than mere descriptive classification.

### 3.6. Translation procedure

Texts in El Khabar, originally in Arabic, were translated into English. A high degree of linguistic and cultural familiarity by the researcher was important during the analysis, since the researcher is an Arabic native speaker, thus making translation of the text easier. Given that translation occurred, thematic understanding rather than literal translation has been used to convey texts which otherwise get lost in translation. Translations for grammatical accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and consistency with the original text of translations have been reviewed by a second multilingual translator fluent in both Arabic and English.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. *Framing the policy as modernisation and strategic reform***

This section presents the findings from this qualitative discourse-oriented framing analysis, focusing on how El Khabar reports, shapes, and mediates the discourse of English introduction into primary education, featuring recurring interpretative frames. One of the recurring frames for English education is portrayed as a symbol of national modernisation and strategic reform, identified with the problem-definition role advanced by Entman (1993).

The introduction of English in Algeria is presented as a response to global realities in technology, economics, and communications. The policy does not position itself as a pedagogical debate but rather as a much larger socio-political issue, set against the backdrop of Algeria's attempt to modernise and reposition itself on the world stage. English was repeatedly framed as technologically crucial, described as "the language of technology and communication in all fields." Its validity is an inescapable requirement for participation in the current global world. Consequently, learning English has become a necessity due to ongoing technological advancements.

The newspaper, through its use of a modernisation frame, argues that not only does it improve communication skills among children, but also offers them opportunities to improve their quality of life through claims that "the goal of teaching English to children is to give them the skills they need to have a higher quality of life and more opportunities to succeed in the workplace." This approach ensures that English language education is based on a clear reason for language policy, linking language learning to future job opportunities and economic sense. The President's decision to adopt English is also seen as historic because it moves away from the dominance of French in education policy and signals a new era of renewal and change after colonialism. In this manner, it is evident that El Khabar has constructed an English language policy as a strategic and progressive move rather than an issue of educational change, thereby normalizing it. Descriptive patterns of thematic focus and framing are provided in Appendix III.

### **4.2. *Institutional feasibility and implementation capacity***

The results of the qualitative discourse analysis reveal that El Khabar extensively used Entman's 'causal interpretation' function to present the introduction of English in primary education as a feasible, manageable, and well-planned policy. The newspaper did not present the policy as an unexpected or experimental move, but rather as one that followed careful institutional preparation to address potential problems.

This approach highlighted several closely intertwined aspects of policy planning, including pedagogical training, teacher hiring, curriculum change, and educational infrastructure (See Appendix III). Taken together, these aspects work discursively to normalize the reform and dispel doubts about its implementation. The training of teachers was one of the most highlighted aspects, described as an "essential pedagogical component to provide intensive training programs that allow teachers to fully grasp the curriculum; this will help counter discouraging voices that anticipate the failure of change efforts." Such statements explicitly acknowledge potential resistance while simultaneously positioning the state as proactive and responsive.

Curriculum reform was another aspect emphasized as a measure of the institutions' preparedness. The newspaper emphasized the phased implementation of the English curriculum, which started in the third grade and was subsequently extended to the fourth and fifth grades. This was in addition to other reforms, such as reducing session length.

The recruitment drive also reinforced the narrative of feasibility. El Khabar reported that more than 5,000 contract jobs will be available for English and translation graduates. Middle school English inspectors will provide training for these new hires. The reform also aims to create economic opportunities by generating jobs and attracting investment. The newspaper further stated that the reform will establish an online recruitment system, distribute English textbooks to approximately twenty thousand primary schools, and enhance school infrastructure. References to staff housing regularization, reception days, and renovation activities further situated the English language policy within the broader context of educational reform. Collectively, these representations positioned the English language policy as institutionally grounded and effectively managed.

#### *Evaluative neutrality and controlled support*

The manner in which El Khabar's spoken language analysis describes how Entman's function of 'moral evaluation' has first and foremost manifested through a position of evaluatively neutral perspective for the newspaper. In particular, instead of taking an open stance for or against the implementation of English in primary school, the newspaper reported the facts, along with voices from institutions, so that the introduction of the policy would be perceived as rational and not create controversy.

The discursive neutrality thus portrayed by the newspaper helps normalise this policy and limit explicit moral judgement by framing the reform's description in terms that assume the public will understand it as administratively appropriate rather than politically debatable. The newspaper used a variety of journalistic formats, including news articles, feature articles, opinion articles, and photojournalistic articles, to illustrate its coverage. Each of the articles' formats placed greater emphasis on the informational aspect of reporting and highlighted the English language's broader contribution to society in Algeria through education, employment, and global communication. There was heavy use of factual and expert reporting, which kept the evaluative tone relatively low and prevented polarisation.

The results of a source selection process were integral in establishing support for a moral assessment of the policy. The principal primary and secondary sources utilized by El Khabar included institutional/professional sources (i.e., Ministry of National Education officials, former Minister Abdelhakim Belaabed, English-language inspectors, teachers, parents, and parents' association representatives). Additionally, international and transnational sources of authority, such as the US embassy in Algeria, the US-based publication Politico, former diplomats of Great Britain and France, and the Association for French Language Studies (AFLS), also contributed to the credibility/legitimacy of the reform while demonstrating that the reform was globally aligned and professionally supported rather than being ideologically motivated. Corpus characteristics and source distributions are summarised in Appendix II.

Although there were some positive elements of journalism's coverage, such as the emphasis on potential benefits, what was not present in regard to any criticism of the policy was an important feature; because of its restriction of opposing views and giving preferential treatment to the views of institutions, El Khabar's neutral portrayal of the policy created a perception of journalistic objectivity, but in actuality it offered implicit support for this type of policy. Therefore, moral judgment predicted an action; through neutral controlled presentation, and thus served as a mechanism for the creation of social acceptance of the policy, and to a major degree, to preclude any disputation regarding its application.

#### 4.3. *Stakeholders' voices and policy legitimacy*

Through its reporting on the introduction of English in primary education, El Khabar prioritised certain stakeholders while downplaying others, thereby illustrating how the policy's legitimacy was constructed discursively through the selective representation of voices. The primary actors represented across all of the articles were government officials and state institutions, as the authoritative speakers in each of the articles. This dominance represents a top-down framing of language policy where reform is articulated through official discourse and institutional rationality. The prominence of these actors played a role in legitimising the policy by portraying it as state-led, coherent, and endorsed administratively, and hence met the moral evaluation function identified by Entman through authority rather than through overt arguments for persuasion.

Although the voices of international organizations and education professionals were less prominent in the coverage, they helped support the policy's credibility and showed it fit with global and professional standards. Mentioning international actors made the reform seem in line with international expectations, while educators' input gave it a solid educational foundation. This suggests the policy was seen as both globally legitimate and technically sound.

In contrast, parents and students were the least represented groups in the coverage, compared to other stakeholders. When parents did provide input, their words were mostly neutral or very cautiously supportive, and they strongly avoided any strong support or criticism. Therefore, by being usually portrayed as neutral, this discursive process works to manage any potential challenge to the policy by viewing parents as passive observers, rather than active participants in the policy debate. The articles included very few comments from students, even though they are the primary subject of these proposed reforms; therefore, the absence of the student voices from the coverage represents a larger trend in the marginalisation of student agency within the policy discussion. Stakeholders' positions toward the policy are detailed in Appendix IV.

The opposing views were made explicit in the coverage, which implies the existence of a type of discursive closure, suggesting that opposing views are excluded or made irrelevant. The emphasis on the voices of the institution and the experts in the coverage by El Khabar has created the impression of a socially acceptable and uncontroversial policy. Sentences such as "within the framework of reforming the educational system" and "a step in the right direction in the development of the skills of the student" reinforced the impression of inevitability.

Overall, the representation of stakeholders served not only to provide source diversity but also to create a space in which legitimacy was constructed. Inequitable distribution of voices, however, reveals language policy as an exercise of expert governance rather than public debate.

#### 4.4. *Policy outcomes and suggested recommendations*

El Khabar's coverage of the introduction of English in primary education reflects Entman's treatment recommendation function through the projection of anticipated solutions, reforms, and future consequences. The newspaper not only announced the policy but also constructed a narrative framing it as a broader socio-economic reform. Treatment recommendations and reported outcomes are presented in Appendix IV.

The newspaper offered recommendations for successful policy implementation, which were viewed as practical educational reforms. It suggested using social media platforms, YouTube, and language-learning applications as pedagogical solutions for English learning.

The newspaper noted that these solutions align with the contemporary learning environment. The use of songs, as well as other games and short stories, was viewed as appropriate for improving speaking, reading, and listening skills. The use of these pedagogical methods in the curriculum also served as a rationale for the policy, showing how to develop innovative approaches for teaching students with different learning styles and abilities; thereby identifying practical ways for successful implementation through strategies informed by creativity and technology, as supported by research.

The newspaper identified natural economic and institutional ramifications of changes to the education system, including anticipated demand for English teachers, increased investments in private language education, and growing parental demand for private English instruction, as evidence of continuing support for the policy through education. These changes were not seen as additional burdens for schools but as signs of growth and opportunity within education. Therefore, treatment recommendations to improve classroom practices and achieve these changes were accompanied by recommendations to activate the economy beyond the educational sector.

Another policy outcome highlighted by El Khabar concerned the linguistic landscape in Algeria. El Khabar framed the policy as a challenge to the historical dominance of French. The outlet suggested that implementing English would change the country's post-colonial identity. This change would move Algeria away from its original identity shaped by the French language, emphasised by the statement "this shift shows the extent to which France has lost its influence over Algeria as one of its former colonies." The statement positioned the reform as an important geopolitical undertaking. While noting that French had not been formally removed as the primary language taught to children, El Khabar concluded that implementing English will be "the beginning of radical changes."

While the majority of the discussion remains positive and future-oriented, several concerns have been identified. Reports suggest that incorporating English lessons into the primary curriculum, in addition to French, presents challenges due to the already demanding nature of the curriculum. Nevertheless, such concerns are characterized as technical barriers rather than fundamental objections to the reform. The English language policy was shaped by both the projected recommendations and the predicted effects of that policy, which meant that all recommendations and outcomes were seen as future-focused, transformational, and strategically needed. The anticipation process changed the way El Khabar reported on English-language policy as a form of anticipation mediation regarding Algeria's future in education, the economy, and language.

## **5. Discussion**

El Khabar's coverage of the implementation of English-language teaching in Algeria's primary education system is best understood in the context of Algeria's socio-political and linguistic history. One of the major aspects of Algeria's history is that its language regulations have been heavily influenced by French colonization, during which French became the dominant language. Even after independence from France, it has remained the most dominant foreign language in schools. It has been an integral part of the system of power, identity, and class distinction across Algeria. There has been significant opposition to introducing English into Algeria's education system during the early 1990s.

The introduction of English as a medium of instruction to the early grades of Algeria's educational system in 2022 is not only about replacing an existing system. It is a revolutionary change not only in how the upcoming generation will use English, but also in how Algerians as a nation will use it. From the way the news service El Khabar is reporting on this issue, there is an intention to shift the perspective on the use of English, without

referring to the existing political tensions surrounding it. Rather, the news report defines English in a neutral, progressive manner that highlights its global relevance, rather than defining it as an adversary to the French language in a combative manner.

This depoliticized representation is in contrast to those found in the French media, where the increasing use of English in Algeria has been represented as a challenge to Francophone power and cultural orientation. Although the French media discourse positions English in a geopolitical struggle for postcolonial power, El Khabar embeds the policy in local discourses of reform, quality education, and globalization. This contrast shows how media representation is conditioned by different ideological contexts and confirms the argument that language policy is not merely implemented through official policy, but is refracted through national discursive contexts.

When considering media framing, El Khabar presents English in the news as an institutional necessity rather than a contested issue in society. The media prioritise executive and expert opinion above all else in their reporting about preparation within the system, such as administrative readiness, pedagogical planning, and feasibility. The emphasis on institutional authority and expert endorsement helps to contain scope for disagreement and presents the reform as logical and necessary. This strategy conforms to Entman's framing model, in which framing is seen as a process of gradual stabilization, reducing controversy and marginalising critical perspectives.

It is important to understand El Khabar's news coverage does not necessarily align with the standards of journalistic objectivity. Neutrality is often used as part of a legitimizing strategy when viewed from a discourse perspective on language policy. The newspaper primarily uses institutional statements and news coverage, therefore limiting opportunities for the public to discuss the ideological, pedagogical, and social ramifications of the language policy. Thus, it presents the language policy as technical rather than a socially negotiable choice. Since there has been no sustained pedagogical critique or dissenting voices, the inevitable conclusion is that the reform is self-evident and cannot be challenged in any legitimate way.

The projected outcomes and recommendations further reinforce this framing. El Khabar sees teacher recruitment, the growth of private language schools, and the use of technology in language education as ways to boost the economy and improve education quality by hiring English teachers. This aligns with views of language policy as an exercise of power, in which the state directs linguistic reform to serve economic benefits and structural objectives. El Khabar argues that English provides a strong, logical foundation for future language policy. This suggests that economic value and effective teaching both play key roles in shaping language education policy.

On a broader level, it would seem that El Khabar is playing an active role in normalising the introduction of English in primary education, not least by portraying it as legitimate, modernising, and uncontested. In this way, it is not only that El Khabar is selectively framing the issues, controlling who has a voice in the conversation about them, and creating an impression of neutrality, but also that it is changing the language policy from a politically sensitive issue to a necessary reform for the administration. This study illustrates how media discourse shapes people's understanding of language policy, not by outrightly persuading them to do so, but through subtle constructions of inevitability, authority, and advancement in a postcolonial environment.

## **6. Study limitations and recommendations**

One weakness of the research is its focus on a single newspaper, El Khabar, and its focused sample of 23 newspaper articles. The findings may not be entirely representative of the entire debate in the media regarding the Algerian government's decision to introduce English language education in primary schools. Moreover, the lack of research on other national and global newspapers means there are limited opportunities for extensive comparative analyses of how newspaper structures and perspectives shape the framing of language policies.

In terms of research methodology, this study is based on content analysis and media frame analysis, both of which are interpretive. Although it is theoretically grounded, the analysis does not include data on the message's reception, i.e., how the audience received it. Moreover, because it uses a cross-sectional method based on a single policy, it lacks dynamism in how the media framing message may change over time.

Future studies could also broaden their focus and consider including state and international publications to examine how various news media cover education reforms, thereby enabling cross-cultural comparisons of the framing of language policies. Investigations would also examine how language evolves in media discourse over time during progressive, evolving education reforms. In addition, embedding audience reception studies, such as surveys or interviews with educators, parents, and students would help bridge the gap between media discourse and public interpretation.

In addition, the incorporation of audience reception studies, such as surveys and interviews with educators, parents, and students, would also bridge the gap between media discourse and public interpretation. Practically, it has been suggested that journalists be summoned to address educational policy issues in greater depth and breadth, such that the voices of educators, linguists, policymakers, and parents are represented in their writings. The question of how the media influences the educational process and how the media affects the individual child has been considered, and the role of the media in the educational process has been recognized.

Finally, it could also be worth examining, in future research, the manner in which a language policy frame can be mediated through the media, to what degree it impacts people's perspectives of a language practice in a school, and how these perceptions, in return, influence a language policy implementation in an education system. Such research would further illuminate how media discourse contributes to the normalisation or contestation of language policies within educational systems.

## **7. Conclusion**

This research focused on how the implementation of English in primary education has been discursively described in online newspaper articles by El Khabar, particularly examining how dominant framing, evaluative judgements, and representations of both institutional and social actors are constructed in this narrative. The analysis shows that language policy is represented in El Khabar through a discourse of a globalised world, concerned with the development and modernisation of education, but there is no indication that it is a politicised issue.

The study reveals that El Khabar focused on themes such as readiness, practicability, and legitimacy of institutions. At the same time, it limited discussion about critical pedagogy and ideology, as seen through media framing theory and language policy as discourse. Using Entman's classification of media, the coverage treated the language policy as a technocratic reform, emphasizing technical problem-solving, technical expertise, management of the issue,

and a development-oriented approach. The moral evaluation of this policy was predominantly achieved through neutral and sometimes positive representations of the policy, which helped legitimise it and present English as a means of growth, employment, and international engagement, while relegating alternative or opposing points of view.

This study further demonstrates that language discourse serves as an arena for power relations in postcolonial societies through both the ways language policies are developed and implemented and the ways they are enforced, grounded in the concept of power. As illustrated by El Khabar's characterisation of the English language as reducing the symbolic superiority of the French language, this represents a broader national discourse on redefining the linguistic relationship in Algeria within the framework of linguistic reorientation and postcolonial repositioning. Meanwhile, reliance on official sources for information and on objective reporting styles underscores how sensitive the debate is over language policy development and enforcement in Algeria, as well as the restrictions on open public discourse on language reform. This study contributes empirically by offering a qualitative framing analysis of Algerian media discourse on English language policy. More broadly, this analysis illustrates the intersection of media and language policy discourse in shaping public perceptions of educational reform. In postcolonial and multilingual contexts, where language is closely associated with identity, power, and status, media serves a critical function in influencing perceptions of language policy.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I

**Table 1**

*Conceptual and analytical frameworks of the study.*

| Theoretical perspective             | Key scholars                            | Core concept                       | Analytical framework                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Media framing theory</b>         | Entman (1993)                           | Problem definition                 | How the English language policy is defined as an educational, social, or political issue. |
|                                     |                                         | Causal interpretation              | How responsibility, justification, or rationale for the policy is constructed.            |
|                                     |                                         | Moral evaluation                   | How value judgments toward the policy are articulated (positive, neutral, critical).      |
|                                     |                                         | Treatment recommendations          | How solutions or future actions related to the policy are suggested.                      |
| <b>Framing devices</b>              | Tankard (2001); Pan & Kosicki (1993)    | Framing tools                      | Use of headlines, sources, visuals, structure, and conclusions to shape meaning.          |
| <b>Language policy as discourse</b> | Tollefson (1991)                        | Language and power                 | How policy discourse reflects institutional authority and power relations.                |
| <b>Language orientations</b>        | Ruiz (1984)                             | Language as resource/problem/right | How English is ideologically positioned within education discourse.                       |
| <b>Policy as discourse</b>          | Corson (1999); Johnson (2004)           | Discursive construction of policy  | How language policy is normalised, or legitimised through media discourse.                |
| <b>Critical discourse theory</b>    | Fairclough (1989); Foucault (1976/1978) | Discourse and ideology             | How repeated representations shape what is accepted as natural or inevitable.             |

**Note.** This table summarises the conceptual and analytical framework guiding the qualitative framing analysis.

## Appendix II

**Table 2**

*El Khabar coverage of the government policy of introducing English language in primary schools in 2019-2025.*

| Indicator                        | Value                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Number of analysed articles      | 23                           |
| Total education related-articles | 431                          |
| Average publication frequency    | One article every 3-4 months |
| Average article length           | 216 words                    |
| Article section                  | Nation, Society, World       |
| Multimedia inclusion             | 1.13 per article             |
| Total online readership          | 421.130 views                |
| Average readership per articles  | 18.310 views                 |
| Social media platforms           | X, Meta                      |

**Table 3**

*Journalistic genre used in reporting English language policy*

| Journalistic genre | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|----------------|
| News reports       | 82.61          |
| Feature articles   | 4.35           |
| Opinion columns    | 4.35           |
| Photojournalism    | 8.70           |
| Total              | 100            |

**Table 4**

*Sources used in reporting the English language policy*

| Source category                   | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Education staff and professionals | 56             |
| Parents                           | 20             |
| University students               | 8              |
| Foreign institutions              | 16             |
| Total                             | 100            |

**Table 5**

*El Khabar attitude towards English language policy*

| Tone     | Percentage (%) |
|----------|----------------|
| Positive | 34.78          |
| Negative | 0              |
| Neutral  | 65.22          |
| Total    | 100            |

### Appendix III

**Table 6**

*Areas of focus in El Khabar's coverage of the English language policy*

| Areas of focus                                             | Article count | Coverage (%) |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Government's English language policy at the primary level  | 3             | 13.04        |
| Policy implementation                                      | 8             | 34.78        |
| Stakeholders' reaction                                     | 4             | 17.39        |
| The economic and social impacts of the government's policy | 1             | 4.35         |
| Availability of English language textbook                  | 4             | 17.39        |
| Teachers' pedagogical training                             | 3             | 13.04        |
| <b>Total</b>                                               | <b>23</b>     | <b>100</b>   |

**Note.** Frequencies refer to sentence-level coding units.

**Table 7**

*El Khabar's representation of content in coverage of the English language policy*

| Framing                                                                 | Frequency (sentences) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| English language learning as a symbol of modernisation and progress     | 9                     | 6.16           |
| The decision of the government framed as strategic and expert-approved  | 13                    | 8.90           |
| Phased implementation of English at the primary level across all grades | 4                     | 2.73           |
| Pedagogical training for English teachers                               | 11                    | 7.53           |
| Curriculum reform measures                                              | 5                     | 3.42           |
| Recruitment of teachers with English and translation degrees            | 18                    | 12.32          |
| Policy outcomes                                                         | 23                    | 15.75          |
| Policy recommendations                                                  | 13                    | 8.88           |
| Educational infrastructure and implementation logistics                 | 50                    | 34.25          |
| <b>Total</b>                                                            | <b>146</b>            | <b>100</b>     |

**Note.** Frequencies refer to sentence-level coding units.

### Appendix IV

**Table 8**

*Stakeholders' attitudes toward the English language policy*

| Attitude | Government officials and institutions | Parents | Educators | Students | International entities |
|----------|---------------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|------------------------|
|----------|---------------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|------------------------|

|                   |        |     |        |      |        |
|-------------------|--------|-----|--------|------|--------|
| <b>Supportive</b> | 85.71% | 40% | 64.28% | 100% | 66.66% |
| <b>Opposed</b>    | 0%     | 0%  | 0%     | 0%   | 0%     |
| <b>Neutral</b>    | 14.28% | 60% | 35.71% | 0%   | 33.33% |

**Table 9**

*Recommendations suggested in El Khabar in English language instruction*

| <b>Recommendations</b>                                                              | <b>Frequency (sentences)</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>The integration of social media, YouTube, and language apps</b>                  | 5                            | 3.42                  |
| <b>Use of songs, games and short stories</b>                                        | 4                            | 2.73                  |
| <b>Private language learning for daily practice of English</b>                      | 3                            | 2.05                  |
| <b>Parents should not accompany their children during English learning sessions</b> | 1                            | 0.68                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                        | 13                           | 8.88                  |

**Table 10**

*Reported outcomes of the English language policy*

| <b>Outcomes of the English language policy</b>                                                | <b>Frequency (sentences)</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Expected demand for English teachers and growth of private language education</b>          | 7                            | 4.79                  |
| <b>English emerged to disrupt the traditional French dominant status in Algeria.</b>          | 6                            | 4.10                  |
| <b>Parents paying substantial fees for private language education.</b>                        | 5                            | 3.42                  |
| <b>Parents' concerns about the academic load and the dual learning of French and English.</b> | 3                            | 2.05                  |
| <b>Early exposure to English can be beneficial to primary school students.</b>                | 2                            | 1.36                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                  | 23                           | 15.75                 |