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ARTICLE**Which Culture for Teaching French? A Critical Study of the First-Year Middle School Textbook in Algeria's Middle Cycle****Nouadri Samia Ilhem**

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Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8397-7340>**Doi Serial**<https://doi.org/10.56334/sci/8.8.55>**Keywords**

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**Abstract**

This research addresses the issue of deculturation in the teaching of French as a foreign language at the lower secondary level in Algeria, through an analysis of the first-year middle school textbook. The study investigates the extent to which this textbook incorporates Francophone cultural elements into its pedagogical content. It also explores the possible marginalization of French culture in favor of other cultural references, mainly Algerian culture and universal culture. Based on a qualitative analysis of the textbook's sequences, the research evaluates the representation of different types of culture (French, Algerian, universal) and their role in shaping the learning experience. The aim is to determine whether the textbook offers a balanced cultural exposure to Francophone contexts, in line with the goals of teaching French as a foreign language, or whether it contributes to the progressive erasure of French culture, thereby reducing the intercultural dimension of language learning. The findings highlight the political, educational, and identity-related stakes embedded in the textbook's editorial choices, and underscore the need for a deeper reflection on cultural integration in FLE educational materials.

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**Introduction**

In a constantly changing world marked by unprecedented technological acceleration, the teaching of foreign languages has become an essential necessity. This teaching should not be limited to the mere transmission of linguistic knowledge but should also aim at fostering socialization, intercultural openness, and an understanding of foreign civilizations.

The cultural dimension of language learning was only truly acknowledged with the emergence of the concept of communicative competence in the 1960s. This approach, by integrating culture with language, assumes that effective communication in a foreign language also requires mastery of its cultural references, social codes, traditions, and context of use. In this regard, Frédéric Lambert (1994) aptly stated: "To teach a language outside of its cultural environment is to make it a dead language."

Like many other countries, Algeria has not remained outside this global dynamic. French, as the first foreign language taught in the Algerian education system, is seen as a strategic tool enabling students to face the challenges of globalization. The official documents defining the objectives of French as a Foreign Language (FFL) education in Algeria confirm this perspective. Among these objectives are:

Familiarization with other Francophone cultures, in order to understand the universal dimensions each culture conveys;

Openness to the world, to allow students to gain perspective on their own environment, reduce cultural barriers, and develop attitudes of tolerance and peace.

These directions clearly show that the Algerian educational system recognizes the need to integrate the cultural dimension into foreign language teaching. But are these objectives truly reflected in teaching materials especially the textbook, which remains the central pillar of classroom instruction?

Thus, analyzing the presence or absence of Francophone cultural elements in this textbook becomes particularly relevant. The first year of middle school is a key stage: it bridges primary school learning and the expectations of the middle cycle, while also contributing to the student's cultural and identity development.

This research aims to:

Identify the place given to Francophone culture in the first-year middle school textbook, in comparison with Algerian and universal cultures;

Highlight the potential effects of deculturation in the curriculum on learning French at this educational level.

These findings raise a central question:

Does the first-year middle school textbook provide real and coherent access to Francophone culture in line with the objectives defined in Algeria's official FFL teaching program?

To answer this question, we propose the following hypotheses:

The textbook for first-year middle school promotes access to Francophone culture, enabling learners to better immerse themselves in it.

Conversely, its content offers only limited or superficial access to this culture due to political and educational choices that favor other cultural references.

To meet the research goals, we adopted a descriptive and analytical approach.

The first step involves describing the structure and organization of the textbook. The second step is based on a textual content analysis of the sequences, using an evaluation grid designed to identify and quantify references to Francophone, Algerian, and universal cultures. This method will provide a clear view of the balance (or imbalance) between the various cultural dimensions integrated into the textbook.

The theoretical framework of this research is rooted in the concept of communicative competence introduced by Dell Hymes (1972) and later expanded by Canale and Swain (1980). This competence goes beyond grammatical mastery; it includes the ability to adapt language according to cultural context.

It has been further expanded by the notion of intercultural competence, developed by scholars such as Byram (1997), who emphasizes that language is never neutral and that any language learning process must involve

openness to cultural otherness. Thus, teaching French without its cultural dimensions deprives the learner of an essential part of the language.

In FFL didactics, several studies highlight that language and culture are inseparable (Cuq, 2003; Porcher, 1995). The textbook, as a reference tool, should reflect this link by offering learners learning situations grounded in diverse Francophone cultural contexts.

The absence or marginalization of the target culture can lead to what is called *deculturation*—the partial or total erasure of cultural references specific to the language being taught—thereby reducing both the communicative power and the emotional engagement of learners.

Finally, this research adopts a critical reading of educational language policies in postcolonial contexts, particularly in Algeria. Authors such as Benrabah (1999) and Grandguillaume (2004) have shown that the selection of linguistic and cultural content in school textbooks is never neutral but reflects identity and political tensions.

## 2. Literature Review

### Language and Culture: An Inseparable Relationship

The connection between language and culture is extensively documented in educational literature. According to Byram (1997), a language cannot be effectively taught without integrating the cultural elements that underpin it. He introduced the concept of *intercultural competence*, which involves enabling the learner not only to communicate in the target language but also to understand, interpret, and compare cultural behaviors and values. In this perspective, Porcher (1995) and Cuq (2003) affirm that teaching French as a Foreign Language (FFL) must be both linguistic and cultural, incorporating social, historical, and symbolic dimensions specific to Francophone contexts.

“Teaching a foreign language also means teaching how to see the world through another culture.”  
(Porcher, 1995)

**Culture in FFL Textbooks** The textbook is a central tool in FFL classrooms, especially in highly centralized education systems like Algeria's. It reflects not only the pedagogical goals outlined in the curriculum but also the ideological and cultural choices of a country. Several studies (Cuq & Gruca, 2017; Blanchet & Asselah Rahal, 2007) have shown that textbooks can, consciously or not, marginalize certain cultural aspects—particularly in postcolonial contexts. The absence or superficial inclusion of Francophone culture is often tied to efforts at political neutrality or the reaffirmation of national identity.

In Algeria, scholars like Benrabah (1999) and Grandguillaume (2004) highlight that historical tensions surrounding the French language have shaped educational policies, often at the expense of an open, culturally enriched approach to Francophonie. This has led some researchers to speak of *pedagogical deculturation*: foreign language instruction stripped of its authentic cultural environment.

**Communicative Competence and the Intercultural Dimension** Since the 1970s, with the rise of communicative approaches in language teaching, culture has been reintroduced as an essential component of linguistic competence (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980). Culture is no longer a mere backdrop—it is a necessary tool for understanding social interaction. More recent work (Narcy-Combes, 2005; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) emphasizes the importance of critical cultural learning, which enables learners to navigate between their own cultural frameworks and those of others.

**Language Policy and Identity Issues in Algeria** French language teaching in Algeria is embedded in a complex history shaped by colonization, Arabization policies, and the search for balance between national identity and global openness. Algerian language policies, analyzed by Dourari (2003) and Bennabi (2012), reveal a desire to reposition French as a utilitarian language (for employment, science, and technology), while limiting its cultural influence. This is directly reflected in textbooks, where French culture is often absent, diluted, or replaced by a “neutral” universal culture seen as less politically sensitive.

**Pedagogical Consequences of Deculturation** Numerous studies suggest that the lack of coherent cultural content can negatively affect student motivation and hinder deep learning (Germain & Netten, 2001; Gacemi, 2021). A textbook without cultural grounding weakens emotional ties to the language, limits learners' ability to identify with it, and prevents them from developing an intercultural worldview. In this sense, deculturation becomes a barrier to building full linguistic competence especially at an age when students are developing their personal and cultural identities.

The literature presents a shared conclusion: teaching a foreign language without its cultural context impoverishes the language and can distort its use. In Algeria's case, this choice appears more ideological than pedagogical and deserves to be examined through a concrete analysis of school textbooks. This review provides the theoretical framework needed to assess to what extent the first-year middle school textbook does or does not fulfill the cultural goals of FFL instruction.

### 3. Method

**3.1. Corpus Presentation** The textbook selected for this study is the first-year middle school French textbook. The goal of this section is to highlight the absence of cultural elements as conceived within the texts in this manual.

**3.2. Description of the First-Year Middle School Textbook** This FFL textbook is designed for learners aged 11 to 12. Its design aligns with the reform of the Algerian education system that began in the 2016 academic year. Before analyzing the textbook's content, it is important to describe its physical features, as the first interaction with a textbook—especially for young learners—is visual and tactile. Richaudeau (1970) defines the textbook as “a structured printed material, intended for use in a planned learning and training process.”

**3.3. Physical Appearance of the Textbook** The cover consists of two parts: the front and back covers. On the front, we first read at the top center the phrase “People's Democratic Republic of Algeria” written in Arabic and in white. Below it, also in Arabic and white, is “Ministry of National Education.” In the middle, we see the subject title, *Mon livre de langue française* (“My French Language Book”) in bold yellow, and the level *1<sup>ère</sup> Année Moyenne* (“First Year of Middle School”), also in yellow. The entire cover is bordeaux, a color derived from the famous French city known for producing some of the world's most prestigious wines. This color symbolizes maturity, but also connotes luxury.

The front cover also gives an initial impression of the textbook's content through images and visuals such as wind turbines (suggesting renewable energy use) and an iceberg (indicating the dangers of global warming).

The back cover retains the same bordeaux color, with a white rectangular section at the bottom in Arabic displaying the sale price (235.00 DZD), the National Office of Publications, and the publication date (2016–2017).

### 3.4. Structure of the Textbook

The first-year middle school French textbook consists of 174 pages, organized as follows:

The **first page** features a diagonal orange banner at the top with the title “*Mon livre de langue française 1<sup>ère</sup> AM*” (“My French Language Book – 1st Year Middle School”) written in bold white letters. Below this, the names and roles of the textbook's authors are listed, as shown in the table below:

Authors of the French Textbook – 1st Year Middle School

Name and Surname	Position
Anissa Madagh	Inspector of Education and Middle School Teaching
Chafik Meraga	Middle School French Teacher
Halim Bouzelboudjen	Middle School Teacher
Groni Mohamed Zohir	Graphic Designer

The **second page** contains the foreword titled “*Bienvenue dans ton nouveau manuel de français*” (“Welcome to Your New French Textbook”). This message, written by the textbook’s authors, addresses the two key actors in the teaching/learning process: the teacher and the student. It outlines what students will learn in 1st Year Middle School: how to explain and give instructions in a variety of communicative situations. The foreword also introduces the different learning units through which the four core language skills will be developed.

The **fourth and fifth pages** present the **table of contents** in the form of a synoptic chart, which details the content of the program.

On the **sixth and seventh pages**, a rectangular banner displays the phrase “*Je découvre mon livre*” (“I Discover My Book”). These two pages explain the different sections and icons used throughout the textbook to help users navigate and understand the material more easily.

The textbook is structured around **three projects** (now referred to as “tasks” in the new annual plans issued by the Ministry of National Education in September 2022). Each project begins with a **problem-solving situation**, aligned with the new *competency-based approach* introduced in the second-generation curriculum reform. Each project is further divided into sequences.

We will present a detailed breakdown of the textbook’s content in a table, highlighting the changes made to the sequence titles and content based on the new annual plans developed by the Ministry in 2022. These changes were implemented in response to the decision to gradually return to the standard education system after more than two years of emergency measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic that affected Algeria.

Project Overview – 1st Year Middle School French Textbook

Project Title	Sequences	Number of Texts
Project 02: With my classmates, I create an informational file to explain scientific progress and its consequences.	Sequence 01: I explain scientific progress.	10
	Sequence 04: Understanding and producing an explanation: reformulation.	10
	Sequence 02: I explain different types of pollution	
	Sequence 05: Understanding and producing an explanation: exemplification.	
Project 03: Under the slogan 'For a better life', I create with my classmates a collection of guidelines to behave as eco-citizens.	Sequence 01: I encourage the use of clean energy.	09
	Sequence 06: Understanding and producing prescriptive texts: advice and/or recommendations.	09
	Sequence 02: I act for eco-citizen behavior.	
	Sequence 07: Understanding and producing prescriptive texts: order and prohibition.	

**Note:** Sequence 03 of the second project, titled “*I explain climate change*,” was removed during the curriculum reduction implemented amid the COVID-19 pandemic. It was merged into a single sequence—Sequence 04—according to the 2022 annual teaching plans.

The textbook follows a **project-based pedagogical approach** aimed at developing the four core language skills:

Oral comprehension

Written comprehension

Oral production

Written production

It also provides **linguistic resources** such as vocabulary, grammar, and verb conjugation, which are intended to be **reused in integration activities** at the end of each sequence, based on the type of text studied.

#### 4. Reading the Content of the Textbook

##### 4.1. Texts in the Textbook

The texts that make up the textbook—especially those used to develop two key skills: reading comprehension and listening comprehension—appear to be the best indicators for assessing the presence or absence of cultural content conveyed by the target language. These texts play an important role in shaping the learner's personality.

The first-year French textbook primarily contains **non-literary texts**. Literature is notably absent, meaning students are not exposed to French culture through literary works. Regarding the types of texts included, explanatory and prescriptive texts dominate throughout the three projects.

This focus is confirmed by the National Education Inspectorate in the annual teaching plans released in September 2022, which outline the core competencies expected of first-year middle school students at the end of the school year:

*“At the end of 1st Year Middle School, through a problem-solving approach using audio and visual materials, while respecting national values and drawing on transversal skills, the student should be able to understand and produce, both orally and in writing, explanatory and prescriptive texts appropriate to the communicative situation.”*

(National Education Inspectorate, 2022)

##### 4.2. Values to Be Instilled Through the 1st Year Curriculum

Beyond linguistic skill acquisition, the authors of this textbook—aware that the first year of middle school serves as a transitional and harmonizing stage between the two levels of fundamental education—emphasize several **core values** that should be instilled in the learner:

**Identity:** The student is made aware of the key elements that make up their Algerian identity, including Islam, Arab heritage, and Amazigh heritage.

**National Awareness:** The student recognizes what constitutes national unity beyond Algeria's geographical expanse and diverse population—shared history, culture, values, a common destiny, and national symbols.

**Citizenship:** The student is taught to clearly distinguish between rights and duties as a future citizen, and to apply this understanding objectively in interactions with others (as outlined in the Algerian Constitution).

**Openness to the World:** While remaining grounded in their own identity as a foundation of personality, the student is encouraged to take an interest in other civilizations, perceive similarities and differences between cultures, open up to global cultures, and respect cultural diversity.

##### 4.3. Cross-Curricular Competencies to Develop

In addition to the four main skills (oral and written comprehension; oral and written production) targeted for first-year learners, the authors of this textbook also aim to foster a variety of **cross-curricular competencies** across several domains:

*Intellectual Competencies*

Develop strategies for solving problem-based situations.

Analyze, summarize, and synthesize information.

Express personal opinions.

Evaluate and self-evaluate to improve one's work.

Develop critical thinking skills.

*Methodological Competencies*

Independently search for information in documents to solve the problem at hand.

Use reference materials such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, and grammar books.

Take and organize notes.

Design, plan, and present an individual project.

Develop autonomous working methods.

*Communicative Competencies*

Communicate clearly, legibly, and appropriately.

Use available communication resources effectively.

Use ICT tools (Information and Communication Technologies) in both academic and extracurricular contexts.

*Personal and Social Competencies*

Build and structure one's personality.

Interact positively, asserting one's individuality while respecting others' opinions.

Integrate into group work and collaborative projects according to one's abilities.

Show interest in cultural activities: book fairs, exhibitions, events, etc.

Show consistent effort and perseverance in tasks undertaken.

Accept group evaluations; develop initiative.

Demonstrate creativity in personal projects.



## 5. Results

### 5.1. Descriptive Text Analysis

To assess the presence or absence of Francophone cultural elements in the first-year middle school textbook, we analyzed the texts that structure each sequence—from the introductory texts to the writing workshop texts. This analysis seeks to identify references to three cultural spheres: **universal culture**, **Algerian culture**, and **French culture**, and to determine which one is underrepresented.

Ultimately, the analysis reveals the **very limited space dedicated to French culture** throughout the textbook.

Sequence 1: I explain the importance of eating properly

This sequence includes eleven texts:

Three for identifying the type of text

One for reading comprehension

Five for language components (vocabulary, grammar, conjugation, spelling)

One for recreational reading

By the end of this sequence, the student is expected to understand and produce explanatory discourse, particularly focusing on the method of **definition**.

We conducted a thematic analysis of each text to determine whether it aligns with a **universal humanist culture**, **Algerian culture**, or **French culture**.

#### Findings:

**Universal and Algerian cultures** dominate the content.

Four texts cover themes like hygiene and health, which are universal concerns affecting all humans regardless of culture.

**Algerian culture** is reflected in five texts, such as those referencing *El Moudjahid* (an Algerian newspaper) and the *Units for Screening and Monitoring from the Ministry of Health*, rooting the content in the local context.

**French culture** appears only once: in **Text 4**, which mentions *Louis Pasteur*, the French scientist credited with key advances in microbiology. In France, Pasteur is a scientific icon and a symbol of progress.

Sequence 2: I explain the importance of eating properly

(This seems to be a repeated title, likely meant to describe a different sequence but retaining the same name.)

This sequence also includes eleven texts:

Three for identifying explanatory texts

One for reading comprehension

Five for linguistic resources



One for a writing workshop

One for reading for pleasure

By the end of the sequence, the student should be able to understand and produce explanatory discourse, with a focus on the method of **illustration**.

#### Findings:

**Six texts** deal with scientific or public health topics that promote **universal culture**. Subjects like bananas, turtles, the role of vitamins, nutrition, and obesity convey universally relevant information.

**Four texts** explicitly reflect **Algerian culture and context**. Topics such as early childhood education, *terfès* (desert truffle), olive trees, and childhood obesity showcase elements of Algerian society, geography, history, and public concerns.

**French culture** appears in **only one text**, which references a French source: “Joël Sadeler, *Sucrieries et jongleries*, Lo País...” This is the only instance of an explicit French cultural reference.

Sequence 3: I explain the importance of moving regularly

This sequence progresses through ten texts, including:

Three for identifying explanatory texts among different types,

One for reading comprehension,

Four for language components (vocabulary, grammar, etc.),

One for a writing workshop,

One for recreational reading.

By the end of this sequence, students are expected to understand and produce explanatory discourse using the method of **enumeration**.

#### Findings:

**Texts 2, 4, 7, and 9**, which focus on physical activity and health, promote **universal values** related to physical and mental well-being—values supported globally by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.

**Algerian culture** is reflected in several texts:

“*Bleu, blanc, vert*” refers to the **history of French colonization in Algeria**, the **War of Independence**, and the **national anthem “Kassaman.”**

“*The Fennec*” introduces an iconic animal of the **Algerian desert**.

“*Noureddine Morceli*” highlights **national pride** and the **importance of sports** in Algerian culture.

**French culture** appears in a limited way:

In “*Bleu, blanc, vert*”, it is referenced through the **French flag** and the **teaching of “La Marseillaise”** in Algerian schools during the colonial period.

It is also present in **Text 6**, based on the reference used and the characters mentioned (*Bouboule* and *Baballe*), which are linked to a **French cultural context**.

Sequence 4: I explain the progress of science

This sequence (listed as Sequence 1 of Project 2 in the textbook) includes ten supporting texts:

Three for identifying explanatory text types,

One for reading comprehension,

Four for language components,

One for a writing workshop,

One for recreational reading.

By the end of this sequence, students are expected to understand and produce oral and written explanations using the **fourth explanatory method: reformulation**.

This sequence implicitly reveals that the **majority of the texts (8 out of 10)** convey a **universal culture**, highlighting the impact of scientific and technological progress on the daily life of human beings.

The text “*Ali the Fisherman*,” taken from a work by **Tahar Ouetar** and translated from Arabic, tells the story of a generous fisherman. It reflects **Algerian values and traditions**, such as the importance of generosity and respect for authority figures, thus conveying **Algerian culture within an Algerian context**.

**French culture** is **implicitly present** in the text “*The Princess and the Pea*.” Although the author is Danish, the literary tone and presentation reflect a **Francophone cultural environment**.

Sequence 5: I explain the different types of pollution

This sequence (the second in Project 2, according to the textbook) includes **ten supporting texts**, with:

Three for identifying explanatory texts,

One for reading comprehension,

Four for linguistic resources,

One for a writing workshop,

One for recreational reading.

By the end of this sequence, students are expected to understand and produce oral and written discourse using the **fifth explanatory method: exemplification**.

This sequence deals mostly with **explicitly scientific themes**, and **universal culture dominates the majority of the texts**.

However, two exceptions stand out:

*“They Enter the Legend”* by **Malek Haddad**

*“The Homeland”* by **Mohammed Dib**

These texts reflect **Algerian history and identity**.

By contrast, **Francophone culture is marginalized** in this sequence.

Sequence 6: I encourage the use of clean energy

This sequence (the first of Project 3, according to the textbook) includes **nine supporting texts**:

Three for identifying prescriptive texts,

One for reading comprehension,

Four for language components,

One for the writing workshop.

Unlike other sequences, this one does **not include a recreational reading text**.

By the end of the sequence, the student is expected to understand and produce a **prescriptive text** that includes **advice and/or recommendations**.

This sequence emphasizes the use of **green energy** to combat pollution. As a result, **most of the texts (9)** deal with **scientific topics**, thereby conveying **universal culture**.

**Algerian culture** is still present, though in fewer texts:

It is subtly referenced in **Texts 5 and 7**,

But **strongly emphasized in the text “Boussoulem”** by **Akli**. This text focuses on the **Kabylie region of Algeria**, describing daily life with references to **dried figs, olive oil, fava bean couscous, and buttermilk**—all representative elements of **Algerian cultural identity**.

**French culture is entirely absent** from this sequence.

Sequence 7: I Act for Eco-Citizen Behavior

Sequence 7, which corresponds to **Sequence 2 of Project 3** according to the textbook, is structured around **nine supporting texts**, including:

Three for identifying prescriptive texts,

One for reading comprehension,

Five for language components.

By the end of this sequence, the student is expected to understand and produce a **prescriptive text** that includes **commands and prohibitions**, both orally and in writing.

We observe that **Algerian culture dominates nearly all the texts**. This is evident through several elements, such as:

References to **Algerian companies** (e.g., *Sonelgaz*),

Mentions of **geographic locations** (e.g., southern Algeria, Oran),

And the use of **Algerian newspapers** (*El Moudjahid*, *Ouest Tribune*) to simulate publications meant for national circulation within an Algerian context.

In **Texts 4 and 9**, the themes of **environment, sustainable development, and eco-citizenship** reflect **universal culture**, as these are concerns shared globally.

However, **no aspects of French culture** are present in any of the texts in this sequence.

## 6. Discussion of Results

The analysis of the **seven sequences** in the textbook reveals a marked variability in the representation of the **three cultural spheres: universal, Algerian, and French**. This uneven distribution reflects **inconsistent editorial and pedagogical choices**, which can significantly impact how learners build their cultural references.

**Sequences 1 and 2** show a clear dominance of **universal culture**, making up **55% of the cultural content**, while **Algerian culture** represents **36%**, and **French culture** appears only marginally (**9%**). This suggests an opening toward general global awareness, with limited local anchoring.

**Sequence 3** marks a relatively balanced moment, with **40% universal culture**, **40% Algerian culture**, and a noticeable increase in **French culture (20%)**, indicating a **tentative effort** to integrate Francophone elements into the learning path.

However, this balance is broken in **Sequence 4**, where **universal culture dominates (80%)**, and both **Algerian and French cultures** fall to **10% each**.

This trend deepens in **Sequence 5**, maintaining the same **80% for universal culture**, reducing **Algerian culture to 20%**, and **completely excluding French culture**.

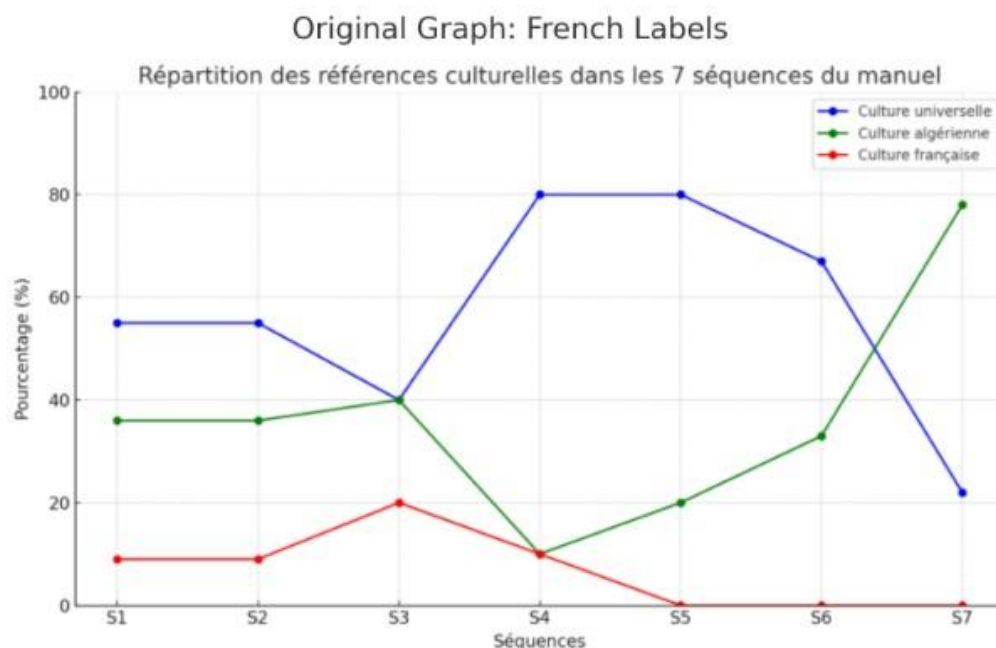
**Sequence 6** brings a **slight rebalancing**, with a decrease in universal content (**67%**) and a modest increase in Algerian culture (**33%**), but **French culture remains entirely absent**, reinforcing its progressive marginalization.

Finally, **Sequence 7** reverses the previously dominant pattern, showing a **strong presence of Algerian culture (78%)**, a **reduced presence of universal culture (22%)**, and **no representation of French culture** whatsoever.

## Conclusion of the Analysis

The data shows that while **universal culture** holds a central place in the textbook, its presence **fluctuates significantly** from one sequence to another. **Algerian culture**, though more consistently included, lacks a **stable or strategically planned role** throughout the curriculum.

French culture, which should naturally hold a prominent place in the context of teaching French as a Foreign Language (FFL), is either marginally represented or entirely absent. This significant omission raises serious concerns regarding the cultural alignment of the textbook with the stated goals of the Algerian middle school curriculum. It prompts a critical reassessment of the true objectives behind French language instruction and highlights a potential disconnect between curricular intentions and classroom implementation.



**Figure 1:** This diagram highlights significant variations in the representation of the three types of cultures across the sequences of the first-year middle school textbook. There is an overall predominance of universal culture, with peaks reaching 80% in sequences 4 and 5. Algerian culture, although more regularly present, does not follow a clear pedagogical progression. As for French culture, its presence is very marginal or even non-existent in the later sequences, raising questions about the coherence of the textbook with the cultural objectives defined by the official FLE (French as a Foreign Language) curriculum in Algeria.

## Conclusion

At the end of this study dedicated to analyzing the French language textbook for the first year of middle school in Algeria, it becomes clear that the teaching of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) within this educational resource suffers from a significant cultural imbalance. While the official program objectives emphasize the importance of exposure to Francophone culture and the development of intercultural competence, the content analyzed reveals a weak or even absent presence of this culture in the majority of sequences.

The analysis showed that universal culture predominates in the textbook overall, although it does not follow a consistent pedagogical logic. Algerian culture, while more visible, remains irregularly represented. In contrast, French culture—despite being central to the teaching of FLE—is largely marginalized, representing a concerning gap between the program's intentions and their actual implementation.

This situation raises several pedagogical and identity-related issues. On the didactic level, the absence of cultural references specific to the Francophone world deprives learners of a genuine immersion in the target language and undermines their motivation. On a symbolic level, it reflects a form of deculturation, in which the French language is taught as a neutral tool, stripped of its historical, social, and cultural depth.

This research therefore calls for a re-examination of editorial and curricular choices in the design of Algerian FLE textbooks. Thoughtfully, progressively, and contextually integrating Francophone culture does not mean ignoring local cultural references, but rather fostering a dialogue between cultures, grounded in plurality, mutual understanding, and openness.

For future research, it would be relevant to broaden this study to include other levels of the middle school cycle or other textbooks, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of culture in FLE teaching in Algeria, and to initiate a broader reflection on language education policies and their actual impact on classroom practices.

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