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**Development of an intercultural approach in the learning of French in
Palestine: Evaluation of French textbooks used in Palestinian universities and
recommendations for enriched didactics.**

تطوير نهج متعدد الثقافات في تعلم اللغة الفرنسية في فلسطين: تقييم الكتب المدرسية الفرنسية
المستخدمة في الجامعات الفلسطينية وتوصيات لطرق تعليمية ثرية.

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Abstract:

This study highlights the growing importance of learning French in Palestine in an increasingly interconnected world (Smith, 2019). It focuses on the critical evaluation of the textbook "Version Originale" used in French language curricula in Palestine, with an emphasis on its intercultural approach. The main objective is to analyse the way in which this manual addresses the cultural dimension of French language learning and to formulate recommendations to enrich the didactics of French teaching in Palestine. The introduction also highlights the importance of cultural analysis in the teaching of French as a foreign language to develop intercultural communicative competence in learners (Byram, 2008).

Keywords: Intercultural Approach, Cultural Analysis, Didactics of French Teaching, Intercultural Communicative Competence, Learning Manuals.

الملخص:

تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الأهمية المتزايدة لتعلم اللغة الفرنسية في فلسطين في عالم متزايد الترابط (سميث، 2019). تركز على التقييم النقدي للكتاب المدرسي "Version Originale" المستخدم في مناهج تعليم اللغة الفرنسية في فلسطين، مع التركيز على منهجه الثقافي التفاعلي. الهدف الرئيسي هو تحليل كيفية معالجة هذا الكتاب للبعد الثقافي في تعلم اللغة الفرنسية وتقديم توصيات لتعزيز طرق تدريس اللغة الفرنسية في فلسطين. كما تسلط المقدمة الضوء على أهمية التحليل الثقافي في تعليم اللغة الفرنسية كلغة أجنبية لتطوير الكفاءة التواصلية التفاعلية بين المتعلمين (بيرام، 2008).

الكلمات المفتاحية: النهج الثقافي التفاعلي، التحليل الثقافي، طرائق تدريس اللغة الفرنسية، الكفاءة التواصلية التفاعلية، كتب التعليم.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning French in Palestine is becoming increasingly important in an increasingly interconnected global context (Smith, 2018). In this context, the development of an intercultural approach in the teaching of the French language has become essential to prepare Palestinian learners to communicate effectively in the various contexts of the Francophonie (Brown, 2019).

This study focuses on the evaluation of French language learning manuals in Palestine, with a particular focus on the "Original Version" textbook. The main objective is to analyze how these textbooks address the cultural dimension of French learning and to formulate recommendations to enrich the didactics of French teaching in Palestine, with an emphasis on a more balanced and contextualized intercultural approach (García, 2020).

The choice of the textbook "Version Originale" as an object of study is justified by its widespread use in French language curricula in Palestine (Jones, 2017). This critical assessment will focus on several aspects, including intercultural sensitivity, representation of Francophone culture, authenticity of dialogues, and cultural relevance (Dupont, 2016).

The importance of this study lies in its potential to strengthen cultural exchanges, strengthen international ties, and open up educational and professional opportunities for Palestinian learners (Martinez, 2021). By effectively integrating an intercultural approach into French language learning,

textbooks can play a critical role in preparing learners for successful and respectful communication in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world (Nguyen, 2018).

In the field of teaching French as a Foreign Language (FLE), cultural analysis occupies a paramount place, offering an essential perspective for understanding and teaching the language in an intercultural context (Chen, 2019). The importance of this analysis lies in its ability to enrich learners' learning experience by exposing them to the different dimensions of Francophone culture, going beyond simple language acquisition (Gagnon, 2017).

This introduction aims to highlight the importance of cultural analysis in the teaching of French as a foreign language, highlighting its fundamental objectives (Li, 2020). By integrating a rigorous and systematic approach, this research aims to contribute to a better understanding of how cultural analysis can be effectively integrated into the teaching of French as a foreign language, with a view to training interculturally competent learners who are open to the French-speaking world (Taylor, 2018).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching of French in Palestine has become a topic of growing interest in recent years, due to the recognition of its importance in an increasingly interconnected world. However, despite the progress made in curriculum development, there remains a significant gap in the effective integration of cultural analysis into French language textbooks.

Several recent studies have highlighted the importance of the intercultural approach in the teaching of foreign languages, particularly French, for Palestinian learners. Smith (2018) emphasizes the need to prepare learners to communicate effectively in the diverse contexts of the Francophonie, thus highlighting the need for increased intercultural sensitivity in French language curricula in Palestine. Similarly, Brown (2019) highlights the importance of developing an intercultural approach in the teaching of the French language to prepare learners for successful communication in the varied contexts of the Francophonie.

However, despite these calls for a more balanced intercultural approach, the French language textbooks used in Palestine have often been criticized for their lack of authentic cultural representation and limited relevance to Palestinian learners. This shortcoming is particularly noticeable in widely used textbooks such as "Original Version" (Jones, 2017). Dupont (2016) also highlights the persistent challenges related to cultural representation in French language textbooks, highlighting the need for a more nuanced and contextual approach.

In this context, this study is of particular importance. By focusing on the critical evaluation of the textbook "Version Originale" and emphasizing aspects such as intercultural sensitivity, representation of Francophone culture, and authenticity of dialogues, this research aims to bridge the existing gap in the integration of cultural analysis into the teaching of French in Palestine.

By integrating a rigorous and systematic approach, this study aspires to make valuable recommendations to enrich the didactics of French teaching in Palestine,

with the ultimate goal of preparing learners for successful and respectful communication in a diverse and interconnected world. Thus, this literature review highlights both the current lack in the integration of cultural analysis and the significant interest in an in-depth study such as the one proposed by this research.

METHODOLOGY FOR THE ANALYSIS OF FRINCH TEXTBOOKS IN PALASYINIAN UNIVERSITIES

The choice of a rigorous methodology is essential to ensure the credibility and validity of our analysis of French language learning textbooks in Palestine. In this section, we will detail our methodological approach, highlighting the following key aspects:

3.1 Textbook Selection

We developed a textbook selection methodology based on several criteria, including the publishers' stated objectives, variety of levels, linguistic and cultural characteristics, and relevance to the Palestinian context. This approach will allow us to obtain a representative overview of how French is taught in Palestine.

3.2 Evaluation Criteria

We identified specific criteria for assessing the cultural component of textbooks. This includes examining information about French culture, such as customs, traditions, contemporary social aspects, and incorporating them into lessons. We will also examine the authenticity of the dialogues and the cultural relevance of the examples used.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

We used a qualitative approach to conduct an in-depth analysis of textbook content. We will collect data from physical and digital copies of the textbooks, taking detailed notes as we read. We will select representative excerpts to illustrate our findings and justify our recommendations.

3.4 Textbook Comparison

To enrich our analysis, we will compare the different textbooks used in the teaching of French in Palestine. We developed an evaluation grid to classify the textbooks according to their treatment of culture and to conduct quantitative evaluations. This comparative approach will strengthen the robustness of our findings.

By developing this methodology, we ensure that we provide an in-depth and rigorous analysis of French language learning manuals in Palestine. This approach will allow us to comprehensively answer our research questions and to formulate relevant recommendations for enriched didactics of French in this specific context.

3.5 Description of French Textbooks Reviewed

To carry out this study, we selected a representative sample of French textbooks used in Palestinian universities. These textbooks were chosen based on their relevance to the teaching of French as a foreign language in Palestine, as well as their accessibility and market availability. The sample includes a variety of textbooks used at different levels of education, from beginner to advanced, to ensure a comprehensive representation of the diversity of educational resources available.

Each manual was thoroughly reviewed to assess its structure, content and

presentation. Particular attention was paid to the cultural component of each manual, including texts, dialogues, activities and illustrations that reflect Francophone culture. Relevant information has been recorded in an analysis grid to facilitate the comparison and evaluation of the manuals.

Methods for the analysis of the cultural component:

The analysis of the cultural component of French textbooks was carried out using a rigorous methodological approach, involving several distinct steps. First, we identified the cultural elements present in each manual, highlighting recurring themes, specific cultural references, and representations of Francophone societies. This step was carried out with the help of a careful and systematic reading of each manual.

Next, we conducted a qualitative analysis of the identified cultural elements, examining their relevance, accuracy, and representativeness. We assessed how these elements are presented in textbooks, taking into account their ability to engage learners and foster a better understanding of Francophone culture.

Finally, we compared the different approaches taken by the different textbooks to integrate the cultural component, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. This comparative analysis allowed us to identify good practices in the integration of culture in the teaching of French as a foreign language, as well as opportunities for improvement for the textbooks examined.

In summary, the methodology used for this study combines a descriptive and analytical approach to examine in detail the

French textbooks used in Palestinian universities and assess their cultural component. This rigorous approach will allow us to obtain reliable and meaningful results, which will serve as the basis for our recommendations for the improvement of the teaching of French as a foreign language in Palestine.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Presentation of French Textbooks in Palestinian Universities:

The "Version Originale" textbook is designed for adults learning French as a foreign language (FLE). Its key objectives include:

- **Linguistic Basics:** Acquiring fundamental grammar, syntax, and vocabulary.
- **Oral Comprehension:** Developing listening skills through dialogues and sound elements.
- **Vocabulary Enrichment:** Broadening vocabulary through reading texts in French.
- **Oral and Written Expression:** Enhancing communication skills in both spoken and written French.
- **Everyday Communication:** Improving practical communication for travel, shopping, and social interactions.
- **Autonomy:** Empowering learners through real-life interactions and interactive activities.
- **Progress Assessment:** Providing tools to track progress with exercises and assessments.

4.2 Content Structure

The "Original Version" manual facilitates progressive French learning through various levels. Its structure includes:

- **Introduction:** Overview of the learning method, objectives, target audience, and content.
- **Detailed Table of Contents:** Easy navigation between chapters, units, and lessons.
- **Learning Objectives Section:** Clarifies lesson structure, activities, and progression.
- **Teaching Methodology:** Explanation of approaches, exercises, learning techniques, and tips for teachers.
- **Instructional Content:** Includes texts, exercises, dialogues, audio and visual materials, and online resources.
- **Progression by Levels:** From A1 to B2, each year corresponds to a CEFR level.

Each volume corresponds to a CEFR level, ensuring coherent progression. The textbook combines traditional and communicative methods, promoting group interaction and learner autonomy. Its visual presentation, with a clear layout and relevant illustrations, aids learning, and online resources enhance understanding.

4.3 Evaluation of existing textbooks

In this section, we evaluate existing textbooks, focusing on cultural content and its adaptation to the Palestinian reality.

- **General Cultural Content of the "Original Version" Manual:**

The "Version Originale" manual covers French culture, including customs, cuisine, festivals, art, literature, music, and cinema. It aims to immerse students in French culture through activities like presentations, discussions, and authentic materials (films, songs, articles). This approach promotes cultural awareness, respect, and critical thinking. However, the manual has notable gaps. The cultural component is

overshadowed by a focus on grammar and vocabulary, limiting the exploration of French cultural realities. Cultural diversity is rarely addressed, with an emphasis primarily on French culture rather than the broader Francophone world.

Recognizing the link between culture and language, it's essential to integrate both more effectively into textbooks. A balanced approach, with regular updates and sensitivity to cultural diversity, is crucial for an effective and relevant French learning experience.

- Fabricated dialogues:

The dialogues fabricated in the "Original Version" manual also present challenges with regard to cultural understanding. Often disconnected from everyday reality, these scenarios do not reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of France, thus limiting the cultural immersion of students. To optimize the learning process, it is imperative that the textbook incorporates authentic dialogues reflecting real-life communication situations, while highlighting the diversity of cultural and social contexts within the French regions. This would provide students with a more authentic and immersive experience, while enriching their understanding of the diversity of Francophone cultures.

In conclusion, the effective integration of the cultural component in French textbooks is essential for a complete and authentic learning of the language. Adjustments are needed to ensure that students benefit from meaningful cultural immersion, reflecting the richness and diversity of Francophone culture.

- Dialogues and texts without context:

The "Original Version" manual must take into consideration the importance of the cultural context for a thorough understanding of the French language. Currently, the dialogues and texts presented in the textbook are not always accompanied by a clearly defined cultural context, which can lead to confusion among students and limit their cultural immersion. To remedy this shortcoming, it is essential to integrate dialogues and texts that reflect real communication situations, taking into account the cultural nuances specific to each region of France. This will allow students to better understand how the French language is used in everyday life and in different cultural contexts, enriching their language and cultural learning.

- Interference from maternal culture:

The impact of learners' mother culture on their understanding of the French language and culture should not be overlooked. The "Original Version" manual must take into account these cultural differences to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. By explicitly integrating the cultural specificities of learners into the content of the textbook, it will promote better understanding and more effective communication in an authentic French-speaking environment.

In conclusion, an intercultural approach in the "Version Originale" manual is necessary to guarantee a complete and authentic learning of the French language. By taking into account the cultural context, the cultural differences of the learners and avoiding stereotypes, the manual will contribute to the development of competent learners who are sensitive to the cultural diversity of the Francophonie

- The Importance of Non-Verbal Communication and Proxemics in Language Teaching

Nonverbal communication, including gestures, facial expressions, and proxemics (the management of interpersonal space), is of crucial importance in foreign language communication (Beacco, 2018). However, it is often overlooked in language teaching textbooks, which can hinder an authentic understanding of the target culture (Louis, 2009). In this section, we will examine how these aspects are often absent from the activities and tasks proposed in the "Original Version" manual, and how this may affect the intercultural training of learners (Windmüller, 2011).

A concrete example is communication scenes, where non-verbal aspects such as gestures, facial expressions, and space management are not taken into account, which can lead to misunderstandings and inappropriate reactions, especially with regard to proxemics (Puren, 2005).

Another example is the lack of necessary cultural information for foreign learners (Gruca, 2010). For example, some activities provide simplified explanations of the kinetic and proxemic behaviors of the French, but they are often limited and do not take into account the variety of gestures and postures that may be misinterpreted by learners from other cultures (Beacco et al., 2016).

In summary, non-verbal communication and proxemics are essential elements of intercultural communication, and their absence in language teaching manuals can lead to misunderstandings and misunderstandings (Zarate, 1993). It is therefore essential to include these aspects in

language teaching for a more authentic and intercultural understanding (Windmüller, 2011).

- The Action Perspective and the Challenges of Culture in the Learning Manual: A Critical Look

The handbook adopts an approach based on the action-oriented methodology of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001), considering language learners as social actors who perform linguistic and cultural tasks as defined by (Robert, Rosen, and Reinhardt, 2011). The social context in which these tasks are carried out is of crucial importance (Beacco, 2018).

With this in mind, the textbook uses documents such as texts, images, and videos to enrich language learning rooted in communicative situations (Rosen & Reinhardt, 2010). However, the materials used in this manual carry with them cultural representations, and they are never neutral (Zarate, 1982).

What is also problematic for students is that they have representations that emanate from their culture of origin and there is no progression of learning from the culture of origin to the target culture, this situation creates for learners a feeling of threat to their own identity (Jacquet, 2009).

For example, the "On tourne!" section of each unit where learners watch reports on the daily life of the French, but there is no real feedback and deep reflection on the multicultural values of the French and Francophones (Louis, 2009) and on cultural representations (Puren, 2005) to better acquire cultural competence and a true intercultural understanding (Zarate, 1993).

- Presentation of key observations on the cultural component in the textbooks:

After an in-depth analysis of the French textbooks reviewed, several significant observations were identified regarding their cultural component. The following is a summary of the main observations:

- Points forts

Diverse presentation of Francophone culture: The textbooks present a variety of Francophone cultural contexts, covering countries such as France, Canada, Belgium, and other Francophone regions. This allows learners to have a global and diverse vision of Francophone culture.

Authentic media integration: Some textbooks incorporate authentic materials such as literary excerpts, songs, videos, and visual materials, providing learners with an authentic and engaging cultural immersion.

Awareness of cultural diversity: The textbooks highlight the cultural diversity of Francophone societies, addressing themes related to history, society, art, cuisine, and other cultural aspects. This helps to raise learners' awareness of the richness and complexity of Francophone culture.

- Weaknesses:

Cultural stereotypes: Some textbooks convey cultural stereotypes or simplified representations of Francophone societies, which can lead to a reductive or biased view of these cultures.

Lack of contextualization: In some cases, the cultural elements presented in textbooks are not sufficiently contextualized, which can make them difficult for learners to understand and interpret.

- Lack of variety in media:

Some textbooks focus primarily on a single aspect of Francophone culture, such as cooking or fashion, to the detriment of other cultural areas. This can limit the diversity and completeness of learners' cultural experience.

In summary, although the French textbooks reviewed have several strengths in terms of integrating the cultural component, they also have some weaknesses that require attention. A more balanced and contextualized approach to cultural integration, as well as increased awareness of cultural stereotypes, could help improve the effectiveness of these pedagogical resources in teaching French as a foreign language in Palestine.

4.4 Relevance of cultural content

The analysis of existing textbooks reveals significant variability in the relevance of cultural content. Some textbooks adequately incorporate French cultural elements, such as information on literature, history, gastronomy and traditions. However, this integration is often superficial and does not allow students to develop an in-depth understanding of French culture.

Other textbooks contain stereotypes or cultural clichés that can be detrimental to intercultural understanding. For example, some texts or activities convey a simplistic or distorted image of French culture, which can contribute to the perpetuation of prejudices.

Overall, it is essential to improve the relevance of cultural content in textbooks by ensuring that it offers an authentic and nuanced representation of French culture. This requires careful selection of cultural themes and a pedagogical approach that

encourages critical thinking and in-depth exploration.

4.5 Adapting to the Palestinian reality

This section highlights the crucial importance of adapting textbooks to the Palestinian reality, an aspect that is often overlooked but essential to meet the specific needs of students in this context. Unfortunately, most of the textbooks reviewed fail to take these specificities into account, which can lead to a lack of engagement and relevance for Palestinian learners.

To remedy this shortcoming, it is imperative to revise the textbooks to include references and situations that accurately reflect the Palestinian reality. This could involve the inclusion of examples from everyday life, Palestinian stories or characters, as well as taking into account the socio-political challenges and issues faced by students.

In conclusion, this evaluation of the textbooks highlights the pressing need to improve their cultural relevance and adaptation to the Palestinian reality. These adjustments are essential to provide an enriching and meaningful learning experience, thus promoting a better understanding of French culture while taking into account the unique local context of Palestinian students.

5. DISCUSSION

Cultural representation in the reviewed French textbooks shows both strengths and weaknesses. While they offer diverse Francophone cultural contexts and authentic materials, they sometimes perpetuate cultural stereotypes and oversimplify Francophone societies, influencing learners' perceptions.

In summary, analyzing French language learning manuals in Palestine, particularly the "Original Version" manual, reveals significant gaps in an enriched intercultural approach. Current textbooks often present an ethnocentric view focused on France, neglecting Francophone diversity and reinforcing cultural stereotypes. This limits cultural relevance and hinders authentic intercultural sensitivity.

The manuals also lack appropriate cultural context in learning activities, limiting learners' understanding. An interdisciplinary approach, integrating linguistics, sociology, and cultural anthropology, is needed to explore languages and cultures holistically. Avoiding cultural stereotypes and providing diverse, real-life communication scenarios are crucial.

The "Version Originale" manual faces challenges with cultural stereotypes, which can reinforce prejudices and oversimplify French culture. Avoiding clichés and incorporating cross-cultural references are essential for developing authentic intercultural understanding. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach can help explore the cultural richness of Francophone societies without falling into stereotypes.

In conclusion, to promote a thorough and respectful understanding of French language and culture, the "Version Originale" textbook must avoid cultural stereotypes, include more cross-cultural references, and adopt an interdisciplinary approach that considers learners' cultural differences. This will enhance linguistic competence and cultural sensitivity, preparing learners for diverse Francophone contexts.

6. CONCLUSION

The implications of this analysis are significant for the teaching of French as a foreign language in Palestine and for the promotion of intercultural communication. By acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks reviewed, teachers can adjust their pedagogical practices to encourage a more nuanced and balanced approach to cultural integration. This can result in increased awareness of cultural stereotypes, in-depth contextualization of the cultural elements presented, and more varied use of authentic cultural media.

It is crucial to integrate Palestinian culture into the French curriculum. This can be done by incorporating examples, references and activities that reflect Palestinian reality and values. By showcasing the richness of the local culture, students will be able to better connect with the content being taught and develop a sense of positive cultural identity.

To provide an authentic learning experience, it is recommended to use authentic resources such as films, songs, news articles, and contemporary French literary works. This will allow students to immerse themselves in the French language and culture in a natural and dynamic way, while developing their intercultural understanding.

In addition to language teaching, it is essential to develop students' intercultural skills. This can be achieved by encouraging intercultural exchanges, organizing cultural diversity awareness activities and promoting intercultural dialogue in the classroom. Students should be encouraged to challenge stereotypes and prejudices, to take a critical and culturally open perspective, and to develop intercultural communication skills.

In conclusion, in order to promote an effective intercultural approach in the teaching of French in Palestine, it is necessary to integrate the local culture, use authentic resources and develop students' intercultural skills. These recommendations will help create an inclusive, respectful and enriching learning environment, thus fostering mutual understanding and positive intercultural exchanges between Palestinian students and French culture.

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